

## LITERATURE:

What was Petruchio's objective in this play? Did it change during the play? How?

Petruchio's first objective was to find a wife with a wealthy father. However, once he had met Kate and her father had agreed that they would be married, his objective changed to making sure that he would have a happy marriage, by teaching Kate not to argue with him.

What was Kate's objective in this play? Did it change during the play? How?

Kate's objective at the beginning of the play was really to get her own way. She didn't want to be married and she didn't really want her sister to be married. Once Petruchio arrived, her objective was to convince him that he didn't want to marry her. After he *had* married her, she wanted to make sure that she would, once again, get her own way, but mostly just to stop Petruchio from acting so crazy. By the end, though, she just gave in to Petruchio and lost any really objective.

What was the main conflict in the play? Were there secondary conflicts among other characters?

The main conflict was, of course, Petruchio's attempt to marry and then to subdue Kate. There were two other secondary conflicts, the first of which was between the two "professors" of Kate's sister Bianca, both of which were trying to win her love. The second was between a servant and his master, who had switched places at beginning of the play in order for the master, Lucentio, to court Bianca. The servant, trying to help Lucentio win Bianca's father's trust, tricks a traveler into becoming a false father to Lucentio, so he can get the money Lucentio needs to "buy" the wedding. However, Lucentio's real father soon shows up, and that throws everything into chaos.

What did you think of Petruchio's method of "killing a wife with kindness" and feigning "madness"? Was it fair? Did it work?

I didn't think it was at all fair, but sleep deprivation and lack of food, coupled with Petruchio's irrational attitude that nothing brought before her was good enough for her, seemed to finally break Kate's will near the end of the play.

What happened at the end of the play? Were the conflicts resolved? How?

Yes, the main conflict was resolved by Kate giving in to Petruchio's reverse psychology. The first secondary conflict was resolved by Lucentio, pretending to be a professor, marrying Bianca. The third is resolved after Lucentio's father is calmed down by his son and the master and servant go back to their proper places.

Were there any "twists" or unexpected occurrences at the end of the play? Were they believable? Why or why not?

The main twist was Lucentio's father showing up to check on his son. That one was pretty believable, as what father wouldn't want to know what he son was doing? The second twist was, I think, the fact that Bianca wasn't as sweet and gentle as all the men thought she was. This was believable in the play version we went to see, as they added in some hints towards it, but it wasn't really believable in the audio version we listened to beforehand.

Was there a "theme" or "themes" in this play? Explain.

The main theme seemed to be the dominance of males over females, which understandably made me feel a little bit uneasy while watching it. However, that's if you take everything at face value. If it's a farce on what men want out of a marriage, as some have suggested, then the theme is very different. This leads well into your next question.

In your opinion, is the play outdated? Explain.

As with any of Shakespeare's plays, the language is a bit old-fashioned, but in some places, you can see that not much has changed. The rude humor, allusions, wordplay and slapstick humor in *The Taming of the Shrew* are just as funny today (although, of course, that's a point of view) as they were back then. In other places though, as I said above, it feels very outdated. In our modern society, men and women should be treated equally, and be equals in a relationship. So the arranged marriages and the characters' views on women feel very archaic to us today.

#### PERFORMANCE:

Tell me why you felt the play was well-performed. Which actor(s) did you like best and why? Did you feel all the characters were believable? If yes, why and, if no, why?

I felt the play was well-performed for the simple reason that it kept me entertained for the two hours or so I watched it for. The actors all seemed to be enjoying themselves, and all the characters were very vivid. Having said that, I did like actors who played Petruchio and Kate. They did a great job bringing the stars of the show to life. I felt that most of the characters were believable within the fiction of the story and the time period. However, some of the dialogue felt a bit forced at times, particularly whenever a monologue came up (of course, you run that risk with any monologue), and Lucentio's father could have been more angry with his son.

Tell me what you thought about the costumes. What did you think of Kate's costumes? Did they tell you anything about her character? What about Bianca's costumes? What did tell you about her? Did Petruchio's costumes help you to understand what his character was about and what was going on in the story?

The costumes were excellent, although not in keeping with the original time period of the play. I liked the more modern feel of the costumes, and my mom said that with all the white suits, some of the characters looked straight out of the *Godfather*! Kate's costumes were, in the first act, a reflection of her character. She was strong-willed and didn't want to be subservient to anyone, so she wore clothes that were very different than her sister's. Bianca wore white dresses which was meant, I assume, to be a reflection of what the men thought about her (that she was very subservient and feminine). Petruchio's costume, a simple pinstriped suit, didn't really tell me that much about his character. I'd be interested to know if it meant more to you.

What parts of the play did you enjoy the most and what parts did you like the least and why?

I enjoyed the more slapstick and off-the-wall scenes, such as the scene where Petruchio arrives to marry Kate, and another scene where he punishes his servants for serving his wife food that wasn't "good enough" for her. My least favorite scene would have to be the last one, as Kate's monologue at the end feels very forced and odd, coming from a woman.

What parts of the play were more difficult to understand and why? Could the actors or the director have done anything to make it easier for you to understand what was going on?

The play was actually very easy for me to understand, compared to the tape version we listened to beforehand. Even with a book to follow along with the story, I lost track of who was pretending to be who pretty quickly. The play, because it was visual, cleared all of that up for me. So no, I was very happy with the actors' and the director's rendition of the story.

I do have one quick question: In the tape version we listened to, there was a prologue where a miserable drunk is tricked into thinking he is a rich lord, who then sits down to watch the play "The Taming of the Shrew". In the version we listened to, nothing was done with that: it just felt like Shakespeare never finished that story behind the story. Was there an ending to that subplot, and, if not, do you know why it is there?