

## **The Taming of the Shrew**

By Jack Wooldridge

For our Stage Literature study today, we went to see the New Jersey Shakespeare Company's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Before I start, be warned: this play was written in another time, and the end is quite sexist. But overall, it's a really funny and exciting play about one man's attempt to turn the nastiest woman into the nicest wife.

The play starts in the city of Padua, where Lucentio, son of the Italian merchant Vincentio, has arrived and is preparing to do what his father wishes in the city when he sees a beautiful girl, Bianca, who he knows has to be the one he will marry. Unfortunately, her father will allow no one to court her until her older sister Kate, an incredibly rude and bad-tempered woman, has a husband. Lucentio switches places with his servant, Tranio, and disguises himself as a tutor in order to court Bianca in secret. Unfortunately, he has competition: Hortensio, a handsome suitor and Grumio, a rich old man.

Meanwhile, Petruchio has also arrived in Padua, and upon hearing of Kate and the size of her dowry, decides that he will marry her. Kate doesn't think much of his proposal, unsurprisingly, but her father gives his consent anyway and Petruchio agrees to be married on the coming Sunday. However, as the wedding day approaches, Kate and her father find that Petruchio isn't quite the man they thought he was...

This was an excellently performed and costumed play. The costumes had been definitely updated, with everyone very snappily dressed. My parents said that with his white suit and hat, one of the characters looked like someone out of the *Godfather*! The play itself was very amusing, with the jokes well timed, plenty of physical and blue jokes (as befits Shakespeare), and some laugh-out-loud sections. While the plot does display a very old-fashioned view of men and women, you have to remember when it was written. An excellent play!