

The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Induction, Scene 2
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

SCENE II. A bedchamber in the Lord's house.

Enter aloft SLY, with Attendants; some with apparel, others with basin and ewer and appurtenances; and Lord

SLY

For God's sake, a pot of small ale.

First Servant

Will't please your lordship drink a cup of sack?

Second Servant

Will't please your honour taste of these conserves?

Third Servant

What raiment will your honour wear to-day?

SLY

I am Christophero Sly; call not me 'honour' nor 'lordship:' I ne'er drank sack in my life; and if you give me any conserves, give me conserves of beef: ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear; for I have no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor no more shoes than feet; nay, sometimes more feet than shoes, or such shoes as my toes look through the over-leather.

Lord

Heaven cease this idle humour in your honour!
O, that a mighty man of such descent,
Of such possessions and so high esteem,
Should be infused with so foul a spirit!

SLY

What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burtonheath, by birth a pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if she know me not: if she say I am not fourteen pence

on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the
lyingest knave in Christendom. What! I am not
bestraught: here's--

Third Servant

O, this it is that makes your lady mourn!

Second Servant

O, this is it that makes your servants droop!

Lord

Hence comes it that your kindred shuns your house,
As beaten hence by your strange lunacy.
O noble lord, bethink thee of thy birth,
Call home thy ancient thoughts from banishment
And banish hence these abject lowly dreams.
Look how thy servants do attend on thee,
Each in his office ready at thy beck.
Wilt thou have music? hark! Apollo plays,

Music

And twenty caged nightingales do sing:
Or wilt thou sleep? we'll have thee to a couch
Softer and sweeter than the lustful bed
On purpose trimm'd up for Semiramis.
Say thou wilt walk; we will bestrew the ground:
Or wilt thou ride? thy horses shall be trapp'd,
Their harness studded all with gold and pearl.
Dost thou love hawking? thou hast hawks will soar
Above the morning lark or wilt thou hunt?
Thy hounds shall make the welkin answer them
And fetch shrill echoes from the hollow earth.

First Servant

Say thou wilt course; thy greyhounds are as swift
As breathed stags, ay, fleeter than the roe.

Second Servant

Dost thou love pictures? we will fetch thee straight
Adonis painted by a running brook,
And Cytherea all in sedges hid,
Which seem to move and wanton with her breath,
Even as the waving sedges play with wind.

Lord

We'll show thee Io as she was a maid,

And how she was beguiled and surprised,
As lively painted as the deed was done.

Third Servant

Or Daphne roaming through a thorny wood,
Scratching her legs that one shall swear she bleeds,
And at that sight shall sad Apollo weep,
So workmanly the blood and tears are drawn.

Lord

Thou art a lord, and nothing but a lord:
Thou hast a lady far more beautiful
Than any woman in this waning age.

First Servant

And till the tears that she hath shed for thee
Like envious floods o'er-run her lovely face,
She was the fairest creature in the world;
And yet she is inferior to none.

SLY

Am I a lord? and have I such a lady?
Or do I dream? or have I dream'd till now?
I do not sleep: I see, I hear, I speak;
I smell sweet savours and I feel soft things:
Upon my life, I am a lord indeed
And not a tinker nor Christophero Sly.
Well, bring our lady hither to our sight;
And once again, a pot o' the smallest ale.

Second Servant

Will't please your mightiness to wash your hands?
O, how we joy to see your wit restored!
O, that once more you knew but what you are!
These fifteen years you have been in a dream;
Or when you waked, so waked as if you slept.

SLY

These fifteen years! by my fay, a goodly nap.
But did I never speak of all that time?

First Servant

O, yes, my lord, but very idle words:
For though you lay here in this goodly chamber,
Yet would you say ye were beaten out of door;
And rail upon the hostess of the house;

And say you would present her at the leet,
Because she brought stone jugs and no seal'd quarts:
Sometimes you would call out for Cicely Hacket.

SLY

Ay, the woman's maid of the house.

Third Servant

Why, sir, you know no house nor no such maid,
Nor no such men as you have reckon'd up,
As Stephen Sly and did John Naps of Greece
And Peter Turph and Henry Pimpernell
And twenty more such names and men as these
Which never were nor no man ever saw.

SLY

Now Lord be thanked for my good amends!

ALL

Amen.

SLY

I thank thee: thou shalt not lose by it.

Enter the Page as a lady, with attendants

Page

How fares my noble lord?

SLY

Marry, I fare well for here is cheer enough.
Where is my wife?

Page

Here, noble lord: what is thy will with her?

SLY

Are you my wife and will not call me husband?
My men should call me 'lord:' I am your goodman.

Page

My husband and my lord, my lord and husband;
I am your wife in all obedience.

SLY

I know it well. What must I call her?

Lord

Madam.

SLY

Al'ce madam, or Joan madam?

Lord

'Madam,' and nothing else: so lords
call ladies.

SLY

Madam wife, they say that I have dream'd
And slept above some fifteen year or more.

Page

Ay, and the time seems thirty unto me,
Being all this time abandon'd from your bed.

SLY

'Tis much. Servants, leave me and her alone.
Madam, undress you and come now to bed.

Page

Thrice noble lord, let me entreat of you
To pardon me yet for a night or two,
Or, if not so, until the sun be set:
For your physicians have expressly charged,
In peril to incur your former malady,
That I should yet absent me from your bed:
I hope this reason stands for my excuse.

SLY

Ay, it stands so that I may hardly
tarry so long. But I would be loath to fall into
my dreams again: I will therefore tarry in
despite of the flesh and the blood.

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

Your honour's players, heating your amendment,
Are come to play a pleasant comedy;
For so your doctors hold it very meet,
Seeing too much sadness hath congeal'd your blood,
And melancholy is the nurse of frenzy:
Therefore they thought it good you hear a play
And frame your mind to mirth and merriment,
Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.

SLY

Marry, I will, let them play it. Is not a
comondy a Christmas gambold or a tumbling-trick?

Page

No, my good lord; it is more pleasing stuff.

SLY

What, household stuff?

Page

It is a kind of history.

SLY

Well, well see't. Come, madam wife, sit by my side
and let the world slip: we shall ne'er be younger.

Flourish

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Induction, Scene 2
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)