

Characters

Petruchio (300 lines), the original tamer of the shrew, now a widower who does not miss his acrimonious first marriage. He looks forward to his second wife being gentler and more compliant. Petruchio is concerned with his reputation as women-tamer extraordinaire, and is prone to bouts of ill temper, but genuinely wants Maria's affection rather than mere obedience.

Maria (300 lines), the new second wife of Petruchio. Aware of her husband's reputation for spousal treatment, once she is set on the course of commanding his respect by whatever means necessary, she does not waver, nor exhibit many scruples about her tactics.

Livia (150 lines), sister of Maria. Promised to old Moroso, whom she despises and abuses. In love with young Rowland, and intends to marry him, but is scared of premature discovery ruining her plans. Does not approve of Maria's tactics, but soon enough realizes she needs the women's help to succeed in her own marital aspirations.

Petronius (150 lines), father of Maria and Livia. Wants his daughters comfortably married off to money, and reacts to their continued non-compliance with bluster and threats.

Biancha (150 lines), cousin of Maria and Livia, and the brains of the operation. Persuades Maria to run her husband-taming campaign, and invents a trick to help Livia achieve her marital goals.

Moroso (100 lines), an old rich man, friend of Petronius, and Livia's suitor. He is aware of the age difference, and willing to forgive outright abuse at the least hint of the possibility his suit may succeed.

Rowland (150 lines), in love with Livia. Insecure and mistrustful, he expects Livia to abandon him for Moroso's money despite her constant reassurances. Takes the least excuse to break up with Livia and swear off all love.

Sophocles (100 lines), a friend of Petruchio. That one friend who's always there, which routinely places him on the front lines of Maria's taming tactics.

Tranio (100 lines), a friend of Petruchio and Rowland. Helps Biancha with her plan to get Livia and Rowland together (while collecting on a bet in favor of this outcome).

Jaques (100 lines), Petruchio's servant. Pragmatic, perpetually harried, and often obliged to deliver bad news.

Petruchio

Petruchio's second wife Maria has refused his bed, has commenced some very expensive remodeling ideas with ordering away items she finds unfashionable, responded to his claims of illness by quarantining him, and other such inconveniences.

Go trim the House up.
And put the things in order as they were.

I shall find time for all this: could I find her
But constant any way, I had done my business;
Were she a Whore directly, or a Scold,
An unthrift, or a Woman made to hate me,
I had my wish, and knew which way to rayne her:
But while she shews all these, and all their losses,
A kind of linsey woolsey, mingled mischief
Not to be ghest at, and whether true, or borrowed,
Not certain neither, what a hap had I,
And what a tidy fortune, when my fate
Flung me upon this Bear-whelp! here she comes,
Now, if she have a colour, for the fault is
A cleanly one, upon my Conscience
I shall forgive her yet, and find a something
Certain, I Married for: her wit: I'll mark her.

Rowland

Jealous of Livia, Rowland has broken up with her, and swears off all love to his friend Tranio.

I'll no more love, that's certain, 'tis a bane,
(Next that they poison Rats with) the most mortal:
No, I thank Heaven, I have got my sleep again,
And now begin to write sence; I can walk ye
A long hour in my chamber like a man,
And think of some thing that may better me;
Some serious point of Learning, or my state;
No more ay-mees, and miseries, *Tranio*,
Come near my brain. I'll tell thee, had the devil
But any essence in him of a man,
And could be brought to love, and love a woman,
'Twould make his head ache worser than his horns do;
And firk him with a fire he never felt yet,
Would make him dance. I tell thee there is nothing
(It may be thy case, *Tranio*, therefore hear me:)
Under the Sun (reckon the mass of follies
Crept into th' world with man) so desperate,
So mad, so senceless, poor and base, so wretched,
Rogue, and scurvy.

Moroso

Forcefully rejected by Livia, the old Moroso complains to her father, who intends to make the marriage happen despite his daughter's objections.

That I do love her, is without all question,
And most extremely, dearly, most exactly;
And that I would ev'n now, this present Monday,
Before all others, Maids, Wives, Women, Widows,
Of what degree or calling, Marry her,
As certain too; but to be made a Whim-wham,
For all my kindness to her!
Give fair quarter, I am old and crazy,
And subject to much fumbling, I confess it;
Yet something I would have that's warm, to hatch me:
But understand me I would have it so,
I buy not more repentance in the bargain
Than the ware's worth I have; if you allow me
Worthy your Son-in-Law, and your allowance,
Do it a way of credit; let me show so,
And not be troubled in my visitations,
With blows, and bitterness, and down-right railings,
As if we were to couple like two Cats,
With clawing, and loud clamour.

Maria

Petruchio threatens to abandon Maria and travel. Maria calls his bluff, encouraging him to go ahead - for his own good, of course.

A way of understanding I long wish'd for,
And now 'tis come, take heed you fly not back Sir,
Methinks you look a new man to me now,
A man of excellence, and now I see
Some great design set in you: you may think now
(And so may most that know me) 'twere my part
Weakly to weep your loss, and to resist you,
Nay, hang about your neck, and like a dotard
Urge my strong tie upon you: but I love you,
And all the world shall know it, beyond woman;
And more prefer the honor of your Country,
Which chiefly you are born for, and may perfect,
The uses you may make of other Nations,
The ripening of your knowledge, conversation,
The full ability, and strength of judgement.
Than any private love, or wanton kisses.
Go worthy man, and bring home understanding.
For if the Merchant through unknown Seas plough
To get his wealth, then dear Sir, what must you
To gather wisdom? go, and go alone,
Only your noble mind for your companion,
And if a woman may win credit with you,
Go far, too far you cannot: still the farther
The more experience finds you: and go sparing,
One meal a week will serve you, and one suit,
Through all your travels: for you'll find it certain,
The poorer and the baser you appear,
The more you look through still.

Livia

Livia's lover Rowland suggests eloping before she's made to marry the old Moroso. Livia is confident she can find another way.

I love you, and you know how dearly, *Rowland*,
Is there none near us? my affections ever
Have been your servants;
'Twill be a childish, and a less prosperous course,
Than his that knows not care: why should we do,
Our honest and our hearty love such wrong,
To over-run our fortunes?
For let it be admitted, we have time,
And all things now in other expectation,
My father's bent against us; what but ruin,
Can such a by-way bring us? if your fears
Would let you look with my eyes, I would shew you,
And certain, how our staying here would win us
A course, though somewhat longer, yet far surer.
For hold this certain: begging, stealing, whoring,
Selling (which is a sin unpardonable)
Of counterfeit Cods, or musty English Croacus;
Switches, or Stones for th' tooth-ache sooner finds me,
Than that drawn Fox Moroso.
No, *Rowland*, no man shall make use of me;
My beauty was born free, and free I'll give it
To him that loves, not buys me. You yet doubt me.

Jaques

Jaques is sent to bring his master's new bride to his chambers for their wedding night, to which she responds with banter. He suspects this is only the beginning of his troubles.

Ha, is the wind in that door?
By'r Lady we shall have foul weather then:
I do not like the shuffling of these women,
They are mad beasts, when they knock their heads together:
I have observ'd them all this day; their whispers,
One in another's ear, their signs and pinches,
And breaking often into violent laughters:
As if the end they purpos'd were their own.
Call you this weddings? Sure this is a knavery,
A very trick, and dainty knavery,
Marvelous finely carried, that's the comfort:
What would these women do in ways of honor?
That are such Masters this way? Well, my Sir
Has been as good at finding out these toys,
As any living; if he lose it now,
At his own peril be it. I must follow.