

RSC Playmaking Creative Challenge #2: 'Woo Her With Some Spirit'

INTRODUCTION

In Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, a rich man called Baptista will not allow his youngest daughter, Bianca, to marry until he has found a husband for his eldest daughter, Katherine. But Katherine has a reputation for being fierce, and so no suitors come forward, until 'mad-brain' Petruchio comes to town. Both Katherine and Petruchio are rebels, fighting against the expectations society has placed on them.

In the first speech Petruchio tells the audience of his unusual way of wooing Katherine, basically by doing the opposite of everything she does.

In the second speech, Katherine is furious with her father for arranging her marriage to Petruchio, saying that she'll be a laughingstock if she marries 'mad' Petruchio!

CHALLENGE

- Read both the speeches and choose one.
- What stands out about the way they talk about the each other? What words do they use to describe the other?
- Try reading it aloud. What words stick out for you? How do they describe each other and their actions?
- Try reading it different ways, here are some examples:
 - As if you need to share a secret and don't want to be overheard.
 - As if you want to declare it to the whole town.
 - As if you are defending your actions, being interviewed in a court room.
- Think of your own 'As if...' Ask yourself, 'what might the character be trying to achieve by saying these words?'
- Share anything that you discovered by doing this in different ways – you could write your thoughts down or discuss them with someone else.

- You may want to edit your chosen speech down further, to just a few lines.
- Now have a go at performing the speech, or a short section of it.
- Why not try filming yourself? Think about finding a suitable quiet place to film.



Photo by Ikin Yum © RSC

IF YOU WANT TO

If you'd like to go a step further, try learning some of the lines and filming yourself. Then, if you are happy to share it, send your video to us and we may include it in our Playmaking Festival 2020 film.

Please remember when submitting video content¹:

- Schools must have full permissions from parents before sending video to the RSC
- Do not submit material that uses or discloses a student's full name
- Do not film or submit things that might reveal a young person's exact address, school or somewhere they go regularly (e.g. a sports club or activity)
- Do not film anyone else under the age of 18
- Make sure you wear appropriate clothing
- Remember to keep yourselves safe – i.e. do not share content that feels too personal, complicated or sad.

For safeguarding reasons, please can home learners submit any videos to school. The Lead Teacher can then pass on to us and we can confirm permissions for any video used in our final film.

Some video files can be very large so you may need to compress the file or use a platform like WeTransfer or Dropbox.

Send any videos to Playmaking@rsc.org.uk rather than individual members of the team.

Thank you and have fun!

¹ More information can be found in our Online Safeguarding Guidelines

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

PETRUCHIO (Act 2, Scene 1 edited)

I'll attend her here,
And woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale:
Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly washed with dew.
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks
As though she bid me stay by her a week;
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day
When I shall ask the banns, and when be married.

KATHERINE (Act 3, Scene 2 edited)

No shame but mine. I must, forsooth, be forced
To give my hand opposed against my heart
Unto a mad-brain rudesby full of spleen
Who wooed in haste and means to wed at leisure.
I told you, I, he was a frantic fool,
Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behaviour,
And to be noted for a merry man,
He'll woo a thousand, 'point the day of marriage,
Make feast, invite friends, and proclaim the banns,
Yet never means to wed where he hath wooed.
Now must the world point at poor Katharine,
And say, "Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife,
If it would please him come and marry her!"