

The Taming of the Shrew

by William Shakespeare

Introduction, sc. 1 (line 4 - Verse)

Lord

Sirrah, go you to Barthol'mew my page,
And see him dress'd in all suits like a lady:
That done, conduct him to the drunkard's chamber;
And call him 'madam,' do him obeisance.
Tell him from me, as he will win my love,
He bear himself with honourable action,
Such as he hath observed in noble ladies
Unto their lords, by them accomplished:
Such duty to the drunkard let him do
With soft low tongue and lowly courtesy,
And say 'What is't your honour will command,
Wherein your lady and your humble wife
May show her duty and make known her love?'
And then with kind embracements, tempting kisses,
And with declining head into his bosom,
Bid him shed tears, as being overjoy'd
To see her noble lord restored to health,
Who for this seven years hath esteem'd him
No better than a poor and loathsome beggar:
And if the boy have not a woman's gift
To rain a shower of commanded tears,
An onion will do well for such a shift,
Which in a napkin being close convey'd

Shall in despite enforce a watery eye.

See this dispatch'd with all the haste thou canst:

Anon I'll give thee more instructions.

Exit a Servingman

I know the boy will well usurp the grace,

Voice, gait and action of a gentlewoman:

I long to hear him call the drunkard husband,

And how my men will stay themselves from laughter

When they do homage to this simple peasant.

I'll in to counsel them; haply my presence

May well abate the over-merry spleen

Which otherwise would grow into extremes.