

② Tranio / Lucentio

41 *The Taming of the Shrew* ACT 1. SC. 1

~~GREMIO I am agreed, and would I had given him the
best horse in Padua to begin his wooing that would
thoroughly woo her, wed her, and bed her, and rid
the house of her. Come on.~~ 145

~~«Gremio and Hortensio» exit.~~

~~Tranio and Lucentio remain onstage.~~

TRANIO

I pray, sir, tell me, is it possible
That love should of a sudden take such hold?

LUCENTIO

O Tranio, till I found it to be true, 150
I never thought it possible or likely.
But see, while idly I stood looking on,
I found the effect of love-in-idleness,
And now in plainness do confess to thee
That art to me as secret and as dear 155
As Anna to the Queen of Carthage was:
Tranio, I burn, I pine! I perish, Tranio,
If I achieve not this young modest girl.
Counsel me, Tranio, for I know thou canst.
Assist me, Tranio, for I know thou wilt. 160

TRANIO

Master, it is no time to chide you now.
Affection is not rated from the heart.
If love have touched you, naught remains but so:
Redime te «captum» quam queas minimo.

LUCENTIO

Gramercies, lad. Go forward. This contents; 165
The rest will comfort, for thy counsel's sound.

TRANIO

Master, you looked so longly on the maid,
Perhaps you marked not what's the pith of all.

LUCENTIO

O yes, I saw sweet beauty in her face, 170
Such as the daughter of Agenor had,
That made great Jove to humble him to her hand
When with his knees he kissed the Cretan strand.

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TRANIO

Saw you no more? Marked you not how her sister
Began to scold and raise up such a storm
That mortal ears might hardly endure the din? 175

LUCENTIO

Tranio, I saw her coral lips to move,
And with her breath she did perfume the air.
Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her.

TRANIO, «aside»

Nay, then 'tis time to stir him from his trance.—
I pray, awake, sir! If you love the maid, 180
Bend thoughts and wits to achieve her. Thus it
stands:

Her elder sister is so curst and shrewd
That till the father rid his hands of her,
Master, your love must live a maid at home, 185
And therefore has he closely mewed her up,
Because she will not be annoyed with suitors.

LUCENTIO

Ah, Tranio, what a cruel father's he!
But art thou not advised he took some care
To get her cunning schoolmasters to instruct her? 190

TRANIO

Ay, marry, am I, sir—and now 'tis plotted!

LUCENTIO

I have it, Tranio!

TRANIO

Master, for my hand,
Both our inventions meet and jump in one.

LUCENTIO

Tell me thine first. 195

TRANIO

You will be schoolmaster
And undertake the teaching of the maid:
That's your device.

LUCENTIO

It is. May it be done?

TRANIO

Not possible. For who shall bear your part 200

And be in Padua here Vincentio's son,
Keep house, and ply his book, welcome his friends,
Visit his countrymen and banquet them?

LUCENTIO

Basta, content thee, for I have it full.
We have not yet been seen in any house, 205
Nor can we be distinguished by our faces
For man or master. Then it follows thus:
Thou shalt be master, Tranio, in my stead,
Keep house, and port, and servants, as I should.
I will some other be, some Florentine, 210
Some Neapolitan, or meaner man of Pisa.
'Tis hatched, and shall be so. Tranio, at once
Uncase thee. Take my colored hat and cloak.

[They exchange clothes.]

When Biondello comes, he waits on thee,
But I will charm him first to keep his tongue. 215

TRANIO So had you need.

In brief, sir, sith it your pleasure is,
And I am tied to be obedient
(For so your father charged me at our parting:
"Be serviceable to my son," quoth he, 220
Although I think 'twas in another sense),
I am content to be Lucentio,
Because so well I love Lucentio.

LUCENTIO

Tranio, be so, because Lucentio loves,
And let me be a slave, t' achieve that maid 225
Whose sudden sight hath thrall'd my wounded eye.

Enter Biondello.

~~Here comes the rogue. — Sirrah, where have you
been?~~

~~BIONDELLO~~

~~Where have I been? Nay, how now, where are you?~~