**Excerpt from *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act V, Scene 2**

*In this play, a nobleman from Padua, Baptista Minola, has two daughters, Kate and Bianca. Bianca is beautiful and sweet, and three different men want to marry her. However, Baptista has decreed that Bianca, as the younger daughter, may not marry until her elder sister Kate has a husband. Unfortunately, Kate is the title shrew. She is sharp-tongued and quick-witted, feels some serious hostility toward suitors, and has a tendency to violence. She strongly resents the societal expectation that she marries, but she must recognize that marriage is the only route to safety or some kind of happiness. This increases her anger levels exponentially.*

 *So two of Bianca’s suitors get in touch with Petruchio, from Verona. Petruchio is looking for a wife, and his only requirement is that she have a huge dowry, since he is in need of money. He is also loud, quick-witted, frequently drunk, and more than a little eccentric. He isn’t worried about Kate’s fearsome reputation, and he sets out to tame her. Eventually, he does, through some unorthodox methods, like starving her, putting her through long and uncomfortable journeys, and even making her look insane in front of strangers. He does all this using love terminology, so theirs is a bizarre relationship. He eventually wears her down, convincing her that they can have a very happy marriage if she just learns to do whatever he tells her.*

*In the last act of the play, Petruchio, after pretty much psychologically torturing Kate, takes her to her sister’s wedding to Lucentio. There, Petruchio, Lucentio, and another new husband make a bet. Each will summon his wife, and the one whose wife responds with greatest obedience will win the bet. The other men are convinced that Petruchio will lose this bet big time, but instead it is their own wives who disobey their summons. Kate, on the other hand, appears at her husband’s call, dragging the other two wives in with her. She proceeds to lecture these young women on their duties as wives and women, proving that at last the shrew has been tamed.*

What is Kate’s initial command to the other two ladies?

**KATE:** Fie, fie, unknit that threat'ning unkind brow

And dart not scornful glances from those eyes

To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor.

Explain the similes and how they develop her argument.

It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads,

Confounds thy fame as whirlwinds shake fair buds,

And in no sense is meet or amiable.

A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,

Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty,

Explain the simile and how it develops her argument.

And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty

Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.

Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,

Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee

According to Kate, what is a husband’s role?

And for thy maintenance; commits his body

To painful labor both by sea and land,

To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,

Why does a woman owe her husband obedience?

Whilst thou li'st warm at home, secure and safe;

And craves no other tribute at thy hands

But love, fair looks, and true obedience--

Too little payment for so great a debt.

Such duty as the subject owes the prince,

How does Kate describe a woman who argues with her husband?

Even such a woman oweth to her husband;

And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,

And not obedient to his honest will,

What is she but a foul contending rebel

And graceless traitor to her loving lord?

I am ashamed that women are so simple

To offer war where they should kneel for peace,

Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,

According to Kate, what physical proof is there that women are designed for obedience and sweetness?

Whey they are bound to serve, love, and obey.

Why are our bodies soft and weak and smooth,

Unapt to toil and trouble in the world,

But that our soft conditions and our hearts

Should well agree with our external parts?

Come, come, you froward and unable worms,

My mind hath been as big as one of yours,

My heart as great, my reason haply more,

What does Kate say she has realized about women’s strength and intellect in comparison with men’s?

To bandy word for word and frown for frown.

But now I see our lances are but straws,

Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,

That seeming to be most which we indeed least are.

Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,

What stage direction should a director include in the last four lines?

And place your hands below your husband's foot,

In token of which duty, if he please,

My hand is ready, may it do him ease.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Kate use parallel structure for emphasis? Use specific examples from the text.
2. How has Kate changed, as evidenced by her speech?
3. What is the purpose of Kate’s speech?
4. What is the theme of Kate’s speech?