Sound and Fury!

Shakespeare wrote *The Taming of the Shrew* as

a)	Dark comedy	ž
b)	Documentary	ž
c)	Ironic social comment	ž
d)	Farce	ž
e)	All of the above	ž

In Shakespeare's day as in ours, the popular dream of marriage, *de jure* or *de facto*, has been a wonderful balance of high excitement and deep content. But for too many people, predominantly women, the reality has been a nightmare of intimidation and violence.

One thing that has changed in Western society is that now the law generally recognises women as individuals in their own right, rather than as appendages or property ('Who giveth this woman?), and gives them, at least in theory, the final say in the choice of a marriage partner.

In *Shrew*, Baptista, a wealthy redneck, gives Katherina, his feisty teenaged daughter, to Petruchio, a young fortune-hunter. Until the marriage, Katherina gives them both hell, but once she is under his direct control Petruchio 'tames' her, subdues her, using a degree of mental cruelty which these days ought to land him in serious trouble.

In *Sound and Fury*, the senior drama class is set to work its way through *Shrew*, treating the play as pure farce. Both Cat and Pietro, however, come from families broken by domestic violence, and the auguries are not good.

But Pietro is an exceptional young man, and over the course of one extraordinary week his patience, his kindness, helps Cat overcome her bitterness and leads her to an unlikely reconciliation with her unhappy father.

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