



Discussion Questions: *Vinegar Girl*

“Words, Words, Words” Book Club—May 2022

1. What are your first impressions of the novel? Are there any passages that stuck out to you? If asked, what would you say this novel is about?
2. Were you familiar with *The Taming of the Shrew* before reading this novel? If so, how did the context of Shakespeare’s play inform your reading? If not, does reading this novel make you more curious about the play?
3. Why do you think Kate was given a job in the pre-school? How did her interactions with the children reflect on other parts of the story?
4. Adam and Natalie are two characters without clear origins in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Do you have theories as to who they might be? Why do you think Tyler included them? What do they help reveal about Kate?
5. Do you find Kate’s behavior “shrewish” in this novel? How does her relationship with Pyotr change her behaviors, or does it? Is she “tamed” by the end of the novel, and what does “tamed” mean in this sense?
6. Shakespeare’s play famously culminates in a speech given by Katherine [praising wifely obedience](#), while in Tyler’s novel the focus is on sympathy for the pressures men face. What do you think of this update? Were her changes enough? Does this feel authentic to the character of Kate that Tyler has created? Does reading the original change your response to this moment in the book?
7. Tyler’s writing often focuses on family relationships and she brings that to her portrayal of the Battista family. What did you make of the family dynamic? Were there relationships you were drawn to or wished to have seen more of?
8. Much is made of Kate’s hair. Why do you think Tyler chose to focus on this feature?
9. Since *Vinegar Girl* came out in 2016, there has been increasing cultural discussions about sex and gender. Do you find that *Vinegar Girl* challenges traditional gender roles or supports them? What might be different about this book if it were written today?
10. At the end of the book we see that Kate and Pyotr now have a child. How do you anticipate Louie’s upbringing will differ from Kate’s?