

# A Series of Worksheets for *Pretty Shrewd* by Clive Duncan

by Kristina Leitner and Andrew Milne-Skinner

## Pre-reading activities

1. Looking at the title of the play, what are your immediate associations? What kind of play might you expect? A comedy? Crime story? Political play? (*comedy*)
2. Draw a sociogram of the characters in the play, showing their inter-relationships. Use direction arrows, with symbolic motifs (↖ ↗ ☠ ☘ etc.), to explain relationships. Label your diagram further while you are reading the play so that you can gradually build up a more detailed sociogram.
3. Draw a stage diagram of Pete's Café. Keep it at your side while you are reading the play. In this way you can see how position, movement and direction can be symbolic when the play is actually staged.

## While-reading activities

### Scene 1 - Pete's Café

4. How does Pete feel about Luke at the very start? (*impatient, frustrated*) Why?
5. Kate mentions Romeo and Juliet. Which scene in Shakespeare's play is she referring to? In which way does this reference help to set the scene? How does Kate use it? (*mockingly*)
6. How does Pete react to Kate's interruption? (*annoyed, angry, being ironic*)
7. How would you characterise the relationship between Pete and Kate on the following scale? One that is...  
friendly – on good terms – neutral – disrespectful – hostile – hateful
8. From how Kate speaks and acts, what sort of person do you think she is? (*clever, sharp, impulsive, etc.*)
9. LUKE: If you had your way you'd lock Bianca in a cupboard.  
According to this phrase, how would you describe Pete's behaviour towards Bianca? (*protective, strict, cautious, authoritarian, etc.*)
10. PETE: It's more than that; do you think I want to run a café for the rest of my life? What does this statement imply? (*that he wants to get on in the world, that he is ambitious*)

11. LUKE: “Not in Pete’s Café – we’re back in the ‘sixties – the fifteen sixties!”  
Why is this comment so humorous? (*he is not referring to the 1960s but to the late medieval 16<sup>th</sup> century*)
12. Find out what the Heimlich manoeuvre is, and enact this part of the scene.
13. Why is the reference to Heimlich possibly ironic? (*it not only refers to the physician who first used this medical technique, but also the German meaning of the word, namely ‘secretive’*)
14. In which way does the blowing of the refrigerator fuse act as a metaphor? (*electric / erotic current*)
15. How does Pete feel when he fully realizes what the relationship between Luke and Bianca really is about? (*betrayed*)
16. Why does Pete accuse Luke of being a ‘traitor’? (*because he thinks Luke has gone behind his back over Bianca*)
17. What do you understand by a ‘male chauvinist pig’? (*a man who believes men are more important, intelligent, etc. than women*)
18. Identify and number the ‘four easy stages’ for getting round someone, for getting someone to see that their behaviour is socially unacceptable. Keep a note of these ‘four easy stages’ so that you can refer to them as and when Kate uses each of them.
- Step 1: confuse him. To soften him up. Tease him, infuriate him, frighten him, shock him*
- Step 2: surprise him*
- Step 3: make him feel calm and relaxed, that everything is all right, that he’s on top of the world...*
- Step 4: Squash him flat!*
19. What do you normally ‘squash flat’? (*an insect, e.g. beetle or fly*)
20. How does Kate challenge Pete about ‘having values’?
21. How does Pete respond to Kate on this point?
22. How important are values to you in your life? Discuss.

## Scene 2 - Pete’s Car

23. Kate replies to Pete’s question with a counter-question that has nothing to do with what Pete is asking about. Find the example. Why does she do this? (According to Deborah Tannen in *You Just Don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, this is called ‘uncooperative overlapping’.)
24. What is Pete implying when he says, “We’re going to a folk singing festival – not a lap dancing club.”? (*that she is dressed inappropriately for the occasion, possibly even in a sexually alluring way*)
25. In which ways does Kate provoke Pete?

26. KATE: What? Politics?

PETE: Talking about your... body is not political.

KATE: I was talking about you, as a typical representative of the male population. You look at me as an object not as a person. You don't want to mentally engage but you are ready to physically engage.

Explain in your own words what Kate is saying here.

27. PETE: You want me to look at you – otherwise you wouldn't wear such revealing clothes. Do you think Pete's comment is fair and justified here?

28. KATE: Oh, I do. But just because I have a female form it doesn't mean that I don't have intelligence and a personality. But to be taken seriously I need to be wearing a sack, glasses and have short hair – like a man. That's political.

To what extent do you agree that women need to dress smartly and more like men to be accepted and successful?

29. Find examples of how “women have been struggling for equality for over hundred years”. Research this if necessary.

30. So, are rock bands always male? Film directors, too? Research this if necessary.

31. How does Kate get her own way in stopping at the service station?

### **Scene 3 – Motorway service station**

32. Name three of Kate's actions to irritate Pete.

33. KATE: Peter! You care about me – how sweet.

What's Kate's tone of voice here? (*ironic, sarcastic, etc.*)

### **Scene 4 – The Competition**

34. In how far does Pete like to 'control things', as Kate says?

35. Why has Kate decided to change the song?

### **Scene 5 – Pete's Café**

36. Kate mentions Romeo and Juliet again. Why?

37. Identify how Kate uses stage 3 in this scene.

38. Which line(s) indicate(s) the turning point when Pete is finally polite to Kate?

39. When Kate says, “Good – because I like you”, is she being honest or is she still play-acting? Why do you think this?

40. At which point do we see that Kate is actually winning the bet?

### **Scene 6 – The Final**

41. Kate compares their group to ABBA. Why?
42. How does Bianca explain to Kate that Pete has changed? To what extent does Kate believe this?
43. To what extent do you think Kate enjoys hurting Pete?
44. Find a passage in the text that indicates the change that is taking place with Pete.
45. In how far has Pete changed or not? Quote from the text.
46. How is Pete now treating Luke?
47. Find the lines where Kate accuses Pete of a romantic cliché. (KATE: Pete – you’re sounding like one of those stupid love songs, this is life. It’s been two days – nothing has changed just because ... we kissed.)
48. What has been the one ‘weakness’ in Kate’s four-stage strategy?
49. How does Kate now feel at the end of this scene, now that she has ‘squashed Pete flat’?
50. Why does Pete change the song at the last minute?

### Scene 7 – Pete’s Café

51. How does Kate feel when she learns that Pete and Luke have not won the competition?
52. Describe Kate’s emotional reaction to the song Pete has performed in the finals.
53. Explain how roles have been reversed in this final scene.
54. In which ways have both Kate and Pete won the bet?

### Post-reading activities

1. Clive Duncan’s play *Pretty Shrewd* alludes indirectly to the title of Shakespeare’s play, namely *The Taming of the Shrew*. **Check the meanings** of both *shrewd* and *shrew* in a monolingual dictionary. How do the two words relate?

According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary:

**shrew:** 1) any small, usually insect-eating, mouse-like mammal, with long pointed snout.

2) a bad-tempered or scolding woman

**shrewd:** 1) showing astute (=insightful, skilful) powers of judgement; clever and judicious (e.g. a shrewd observer)

2) (archaic) sharp, biting; severe, hard

2. **Fill in the chart below**, putting each of the adjectives from the list in the spaces provided next to the appropriate character. Some adjectives may apply to more than one character. Add any other appropriate adjectives you can think of.

Character	Corresponding adjectives
<b>Pete</b>	
<b>Kate</b>	
<b>Luke</b>	
<b>Bianca</b>	

egoistic  
 self-assured  
 clever  
 manipulative  
 chauvinist  
 kind  
 unreasonable  
 sharp  
 good-looking  
 accommodating  
 old-fashioned  
 tactical  
 uncompromising  
 emancipated

self-absorbed  
 provocative  
 loving  
 ambitious  
 romantic  
 patronising  
 strategic  
 unreasonable  
 naïve  
 controlling  
 in love  
 challenging  
 self-confident  
 playful

resourceful  
 strict  
 offensive  
 intelligent  
 outspoken  
 sexy  
 scarcely reflective  
 arrogant  
 stubborn  
 shrewish  
 joyful  
 fresh  
 forthright  
 conservative

selfish  
(over-)protective

economical  
insulting

Possible key

**Kate:** good-looking, sexy, clever, self-assured, self-confident, self-assertive, emancipated, sharp, intelligent, provocative, challenging, forthright, strategic, tactical, resourceful, shrewish, manipulative

**Pete:** (over-) protective, strict, old-fashioned, conservative, ambitious, economical, patronising, offensive, chauvinist, stubborn, unreasonable, outspoken, scarcely reflective, controlling, kind, selfish, insulting, arrogant, uncompromising, self-absorbed

**Bianca:** joyful, in love, romantic, naïve, fresh, playful

**Luke:** accommodating, kind, loving

3. **Word thermometer**

When Kate speaks to Pete, she uses different tones of voice in a critical way. Label the thermometer from least critical to most critical. The first one (0) is given and serves as an example.



- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 0. playful

**cynical – playful – ironic – humorous – sarcastic**

*Key: 0. playful – 1. humorous – 2. ironic – 3. sarcastic – 4. cynical*

4. **Summarise Kate's tactics.**

Which of these might be the most successful tactics when provoking Pete?

*(PETE: Yes, you made us late, almost got us disqualified, dressed like a maniac and changed the song without telling me)*



## A Contextualising

### Who said this, to whom, and when?

- a) If you're not prepared to pay the price – your values are worthless...
- b) Oh, such a sharp wit. Don't cut yourself with it...
- c) You're driving and you blame me. That proves my point entirely!
- d) Can a leopard change its spots?
- e) Women have been equal with men for years.
- f) She should be allowed to make her own mistakes in life, not have someone do it for her.
- g) Behind my back? You've betrayed me!
- h) That wasn't supposed to happen...
- i) Yeah, but you've got to admit – she's a bit of all right...
- j) You don't know anything about fuses.
- k) But are values worth it if they cost too much?
- l) Shouldn't we be going to bed?
- m) One kiss doth not a couple make!

Key

- a) Pete, at the end of scene 1
- b) Kate, Scene 2
- e) Pete, Scene 2
- f) Kate, Scene 1
- g) Pete, Scene 1
- h) Kate, Scene 6
- i) Luke, Scene 1
- c) Kate, Scene 2
- d) Bianca, Scene 1
- j) Pete, Scene 1
- k) Kate, at the end of Scene 1
- l) Pete, Scene 5
- m) Kate, Scene 6

## B Characterizing

1. Review critically your **sociogram** that shows the interrelationships between the various characters.
2. **Personality profile** of Pete
  - a) In which ways does Pete's personality change? Find specific examples.
  - b) Draw a graph that represents the change that Pete undergoes. The horizontal axis documents the scene-by-scene development, while the vertical axis can show the key turning points.
3. **Past habits – present state**

Compare what Pete *used to be* like before with what Pete *has become now*.

Pete before	Pete now
selfish	considerate and supportive
strict and conservative	flexible and liberal
insulting	respectful
only interested in his own advantage / benefit	caring of others
...	...

*Example: Pete used to be selfish, but now he has become considerate and supportive.*

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## C Analysing drama

### 1. Drama terms

Choose the correct definition from the list (A–K) for each drama term (1-9). There is one extra definition that you should not use. Write the letter of the definition next to the corresponding drama term. The first one (0) is given and serves as an example.

0	Climax	A
1	Conflict	
2	Dénouement	
3	Dramatic irony	
4	Exposition	
5	Falling action	
6	Foreshadowing	
7	Motif	
8	Rising action	
9	Turning point	



A	Highest point of tension of play
B	A character does not perceive what his fate holds in store, but the audience knows better
C	Point when an important change takes place (crisis)
D	Action following the climax
E	Struggle between opposing forces or characters
F	Action after the exposition, leading to the climax
G	Introduction, setting the action going, suggesting the theme, introducing the main characters, sketching the setting, arousing suspense
H	Last part after climax, in which the conflict is resolved (resolution)
I	Verbal and dramatic hints suggesting what is to come later
J	A single element (phrase, image, device, incident) frequently repeated to emphasize some aspect of the theme
K	an appendix (usually a concluding address) to a play

Key

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	E	H	B	G	D	I	J	F	C

2. The play reflects a classic structure: rising action – turning point – falling action. Draw a graph showing the rise/fall movement. Mark the various turning points.

### 3. Drama activities

According to Scrivener (*Learning Teaching*, 2011), there are different types of drama activity commonly found in English language teaching classrooms. You might like to try and adapt some of these activities in working with *Pretty Shrewd*.

Among these are such activities as:

**Role-play:** Students act out small scenes using role cards they have produced based on a close reading of the text.

**Acting a play script, with the following phases:** presentation, discussion and interpretation, rehearsal, performance, evaluation

**Making a tableau:** students take up different positions in a chosen scene. They then unfreeze the tableau and bring it to life by continuing the scene with improvised dialogue. After trying this out, they then compare their improvisation with the original playscript.

## D Writing

1. Write a newspaper article reporting on the semi-final of the folk festival.
2. Write a review of the performance of the play by Vienna's English Theatre.

## E Discussing

1. Discuss critically the main themes and ideas behind the play.  
(e.g. trust, betrayal, moral principles, awareness of gender issues and stereotyping, female emancipation, etc.)
  - a. Now, working in pairs, produce a structured mind-map that shows how the main themes and ideas behind the play inter-relate. Wherever possible, offer examples for the themes and ideas (e.g. betrayal: Pete feels let down by Luke and Bianca).
2. Humour: examples of irony, sarcasm, cynicism and understatement. Discuss where the humour lies in each of these examples.
  - i. BIANCA: This is 2013!  
LUKE: Not in Pete's Café – we're back in the 'sixties – the fifteen sixties!

- ii. PETE: I've got a fridge to fix – then we'll talk.  
KATE: Who needs a fridge when you're around?
- iii. PETE: And I shall call you... dumb!  
KATE: Oh, such a sharp wit. Don't cut yourself with it...
- iv. PETE: It's a long drive to Birmingham – can we not talk...  
*They drive. Pete looks at Kate's legs – she catches him out.*  
KATE: Can we have some music on?  
*She fiddles with the car radio.*  
PETE: It doesn't work.  
*They drive.*  
KATE: Brrr! Can we have the heating on?  
*She fiddles with the heating controls.*  
PETE: It doesn't work.  
*They drive. Pete looks at Kate's legs – she catches him out.*  
KATE: How about some intelligent conversation? Don't tell me – it doesn't work!
- v. KATE: But I need to pee.  
PETE: What?  
KATE: Urinate. It's a biological function. Most people do it, don't you?
- vi. PETE: Shouldn't we be going to bed?  
KATE: We hardly know each other! I don't even kiss on a first date...

3. In which ways can the story be seen as a reworking of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*?

Petruchio: This is a way to kill a wife with kindness,  
 And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humour.  
 He that knows better how to tame a shrew,  
 Not let him speak

(Act IV, Scene 2, 194-196)

In *Pretty Shrewd*, who 'kills' whom with what?

4. 'One kiss doth not a couple make'. Brainstorm on superficial and deep relationships.

## G The Author Speaking

Study carefully Clive Duncan's 'Author's Note'.

- a. Which differences from *The Taming of the Shrew* does Clive refer to?
- b. Which point is Clive making about his mobile phone?
- c. Which deeper issues does Clive touch on?
- d. Clive argues that we perhaps need the difference between men and women. How does he justify this?

## H Background

### a. Profile Angela Merkel

PETE: The most powerful person in Europe is a woman!

KATE: And she wears trousers and short hair – like a man. Because she knows that if she dressed like a woman, men would treat her like an idiot. Where's the equality in that?



### Reference to Angela Merkel: Forbes magazine elected her the most powerful woman in the world

The world's most powerful woman is the backbone of the 27-member European Union and carries the fate of the euro on her shoulders. Merkel's hard-line austerity prescription for easing the European debt crisis has been challenged by both hard-hit southern countries and the more affluent north, most particularly French President François Hollande. Merkel has served as Chancellor since 2005, the first woman in the position, but her biggest challenge may still lie ahead: she is running for a third term this fall's general elections.

2013 SPOTLIGHT: Merkel has earned the top spot on the FORBES list of Most Powerful Women In The World for seven of the past 10 years.

<http://www.forbes.com/profile/angela-merkel/>

**Discussion:** To what extent is Angela Merkel representative of women in powerful positions?

## I Songs used in *Pretty Shrewd*

**Simon & Garfunkel**

### **Wednesday Morning, 3 A. M.**

I can hear the soft breathing  
Of the girl that I love,  
As she lies here beside me  
Asleep with the night,  
And her hair, in a fine mist  
Floats on my pillow,  
Reflecting the glow  
Of the winter moonlight.

She is soft, she is warm,  
But my heart remains heavy,  
And I watch as her breasts  
Gently rise, gently fall,  
For I know with the first light of dawn  
I'll be leaving,  
And tonight will be  
All I have left to recall.

Oh, what have I done,  
Why have I done it,  
I've committed a crime,  
I've broken the law.  
For twenty-five dollars  
And pieces of silver,  
I held up and robbed  
A hard liquor store.

My life seems unreal,  
My crime an illusion,  
A scene badly written  
In which I must play.  
Yet I know as I gaze  
At my young love beside me,  
The morning is just a few hours away.

- Time (past – present – future) plays a key role in this song.

Identify examples of present simple, future simple, future progressive, present perfect, and past / imperfect tenses.

Now draw a time chart illustrating the singer's life.

**Laura Marling**

## **Goodbye England (Covered In Snow)**

You were so smart then  
in your jacket and coat.  
My softest red scarf was warming your throat.  
Winter was on us,  
at the end of my nose,  
but I never love England more than when covered in snow.

And a friend of mine says it's good to hear you believe in love  
even if set in fear  
well I'll hold you there brother and set you straight  
I won't make believe that love is frail and willing to break.

I will come back here,  
bring me back when I'm old.  
I want to lay here forever in the cold.  
I might be cold but I'm just skin and bones  
and I never love England more than when covered in snow.

I wrote my name in your book,  
only God knows why,  
and I bet you that he cracked a smile,  
and I'm clearing all the stuff out of my room,  
trying desperately to figure out what it is that makes me blue,  
and I wrote an epic letter to you,  
but it's 22 pages front and back and it's too good to be used  
and I tried to be a girl who likes to be used  
I'm too good for that.  
There's a mind under this hat,  
and I called them all and told them I've got to move.

Feel like running  
Feel like running,  
running off.  
And we will keep you  
we will keep you little one,  
safe from harm,  
like an extra arm you are part of us.

You were so smart then  
in your jacket and coat  
and my softest red scarf was warming your  
throat.  
Winter will leave us,  
left the end of my nose,  
so goodbye old England 'till next year's  
snow.

- What has happened in this love story?
- Why is the song called 'Goodbye England'?

## Rolling Stones

### Ruby Tuesday

She would never say where she came from  
Yesterday don't matter if it's gone  
While the sun is bright  
Or in the darkest night  
No one knows  
She comes and goes

Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday  
Who could hang a name on you?  
When you change with every new day  
Still I'm gonna miss you...

Don't question why she needs to be so free  
She'll tell you it's the only way to be  
She just can't be chained  
To a life where nothing's gained  
And nothing's lost  
At such a cost

There's no time to lose, I heard her say  
Catch your dreams before they slip away  
Dying all the time  
Lose your dreams  
And you will lose your mind.  
Ain't life unkind?

Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday  
Who could hang a name on you?  
When you change with every new day  
Still I'm gonna miss you...

- Offer a character profile of Ruby Tuesday. Use adjectives to describe her character. This song, coupled with 'Let's spend the night together', was a big hit for the Rolling Stones in the 'Summer of Love' of 1967.
- In which ways does the song reflect the 'Zeitgeist' of the 1960s?

## Bob Dylan

### All Along The Watchtower

"There must be some way out of here" said the joker to the thief  
"There's too much confusion", I can't get no relief  
Businessmen, they drink my wine, plowmen dig my earth  
None of them along the line know what any of it is worth.

"No reason to get excited", the thief he kindly spoke  
"There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke  
But you and I, we've been through that, and this is not our fate  
So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late".

All along the watchtower, princes kept the view  
While all the women came and went, barefoot servants, too.

Outside in the distance a wildcat did growl  
Two riders were approaching, the wind began to howl.

- What sort of world and historical period seem to be present in this song?
- Have a close look at the lyrics below. There are some mistakes in them. While listening, spot the errors and write down what Dylan actually sings. Then compare and contrast the original text with the one below. Which differences in the impressions of the lyrics on the reader can you find?

"There must be some way out of here" said the jockey to the theme	_____
"There's too much confusion", I can't get no release	_____
Businessmen, they drink my wine, plowmen dig my oath	_____
None of them along the line know what any of it is worth.	_____
"No reason to get excited", the theme he kindly spoke	_____
"There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke	_____
But you and I, we've been through that, and this is not our fate	_____
So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late".	_____
I long for the watchtower, princes kept in view	_____
While all the women came and went, bear food servants, too.	_____
Outside in the distance a sly cat did growl	_____
Two riders were approaching, the wind began to haul.	_____

(with due acknowledgement to Ramona Häfele)



## Regina Spektor

### How

How can I forget your love?  
How can I never see you again?  
There's a time and place  
For one more sweet embrace  
And is time, ooh  
when it all, ooh  
Went wrong  
I guess you know by now  
That we will meet again somehow

Oh baby  
How can I begin again?  
How can I try to love someone new?  
Someone who isn't you  
How can our love be true?  
When I'm not, ooh  
I'm not over you

I guess you know by now  
That we will meet again somehow

Time can come and take away the pain  
But I just want my memories to remain  
To hear your voice  
To see your face

There's not one moment I'd erase  
You are a guest here now

So baby  
How can I forget your love?  
How can I never see you again?  
How can I ever know why some stay and  
others go?  
When I don't, ooh  
I don't want you to go

I guess I know by now  
That we will meet again somehow

Time can come and wash away the pain  
But I just want my mind to stay the same  
To hear your voice  
To see your face  
There's not one moment I'd erase  
You are a guest here now

So baby  
How can I forget your love?  
How can I never see you again?

- Why do you think has Clive Duncan chosen this song for the end of Scene 6?  
Which song would you have chosen?
- Which different feelings does the singer go through in the course of the song?
- Listen to the rhythm and the lyrics of the song. While you listen, draw a picture that expresses what you hear and feel. Compare and contrast your picture with 2-3 colleagues. (with due acknowledgement to Cornelia Schnarf)
- Listen to a karaoke version of the song (available at:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cPRvEAQPVg>).

While listening, take notes on the following points:

- What mood does the music create?
- Are there changes of mood during the song?
- Imagine a story that could fit the song.

Now turn to a partner and write a story, a poem or lyrics that fit(s) the music.  
(The music keeps playing in the background).

Compare and contrast your version with the original lyrics by Regina Spektor. (with due acknowledgement to Ramona Häfele)

## **The Beatles**

### **Love me do**

Love love me do you know I love you  
I'll always be true so please love me do oh oh love me do

love love me do you know I love you  
I'll always be true so please love me do oh oh love me do

Someone to love somebody new  
someone to love someone like you

Love love me do you know I love you  
I'll always be true so please love me do oh oh love me do

Love love me do you know I love you  
I'll always be true so please love me do  
oh oh love me do yeah love me do oh oh love me do

- How does the 'I' in the Beatles' song 'Love me do' explain and justify his strong request, even pleading, to love him (or her)?