The Taming of the Shrew Induction, Scene 1 Summary

- The Induction begins in front of a bar in the English countryside, where the Hostess and the belligerent (and completely drunk) Christopher Sly argue about Sly trashing the tavern.
- When Sly threatens to beat the Hostess, she replies that Sly belongs in the "stocks" (a wooden restraining device used to publicly punish and humiliate criminals).
- Sly is indignant; he calls her a whore, claims he is the descendant of "Richard the Conqueror" (whoops – he's probably thinking of a William the Conqueror), and refuses to pay for some broken beer mugs. He also misquotes lines from Thomas Kyd's famous play, *The Spanish Tragedy* (we're not sure which offense is worse).
- When the Hostess runs off to fetch the law, Sly continues to talk trash to nobody in particular until he passes out cold.
- Along come the Lord and his posse, looking to kick back a few cold beers after a long day of hunting. The Lord and the Huntsmen talk about how awesome their hunting dogs are when they notice Sly asleep on the ground.
- The Lord, who basically owns the entire countryside, is totally disgusted. He calls Sly a "monstrous beast" and a "swine" and says he's going to play an elaborate prank to teach Sly a lesson.
- The Lord gives his crew orders to take Sly to his fancy country estate, clean him up, and surround him with delicious food, great music, and obedient servants. The plan, he says, is to trick Sly into believing he is a nobleman instead of a drunken beggar.
- While walking over to his place, the Lord continues to play director. He tells his crew to pretend Sly is a great lord whose recent illness has his wife super-upset. Everyone agrees that this is an awesome idea – if they play their roles right, Sly will have no choice but to believe he's the person they say he is.
- Sly is carried up to a bedroom. Meanwhile, a bunch of actors just happen to show up at the estate. Being a big theater buff, the Lord offers to let them crash for the night in exchange for some entertainment. He tells them he'd like them to put on a play for a fellow "Lord" but there's one small thing: the actors can't laugh at this guy when he acts like a hillbilly who has never seen a play before.
- This is no problem for the theater troupe – they *are* actors after all. Acting, however, is thirsty work, so they wander off to the pantry to get some drinks and to maybe grab a little snack before the private performance.
- This is nice for the actors, but the Lord's work isn't quite done – since he still needs someone to pretend to be Sly's wife, he tells one of his lackeys to fetch his best boy servant, Bartholomew, and to dress up Bart like a trophy wife.
- The Lord gives all sorts of pointers on how the role of an obedient nobleman's wife should be played – what she should wear, how she should speak and act, and what to do if Bart can't make himself cry on cue (use an onion, of course).
- The Lord is psyched about his practical joke and can't wait to see what will happen when Sly sees Bart dressed like a woman. Not wanting his servants to screw things up, the Lord runs off to the bedroom to supervise.

The Taming of the Shrew Induction, Scene 2 Summary

- In a plush bedroom in the Lord's house, Sly demands a pot of "small ale." (Historical tidbit: "small ale" is the Elizabethan equivalent of cheap, light beer.)
- Sly is surrounded by servants who offer tasty snacks, expensive booze, and the coolest clothes, all of which Sly rejects on the grounds that he is *Christopher Sly*, the guy who eats discounted beef, drinks cheap beer, owns only one outfit, and often goes barefoot.
- When the Lord insists that Sly act like a nobleman, Sly objects again and identifies himself as "Old Sly's son," the guy who can barely hold down a series of low-level trade jobs (peddler,
card maker, bear keeper, tinker). If they don't believe him they can go ask "Marian Hacket, the fat ale wife," who will confirm that Sly isn't some rich guy.

- Undaunted, the Lord and his servants apply even more pressure, insisting that this behavior is upsetting Sly's wife, his servants, and all his rich friends. They offer him more luxuries and tell him he can have anything he wants – music, mid-day naps, riding, hawking, hunting, pornography – all the things that the average Elizabethan nobleman adores. The final enticement is news that Sly has the hottest wife in town, and she really misses her man.

- Sly wonders if he's dreaming and decides that no, he is awake and therefore he must be a nobleman. His first command as a "nobleman" is something like this: "Bring me my woman... and another pitcher of Coors light!"

- Bartholomew enters the room dressed like a woman and says all the things an obedient and loving noblewoman would say – "I'm obedient to you," and "not sleeping with you for the past fifteen years has been a real bummer." Sly orders everybody out of the room and tells Bart to take off her clothes and hop in the sack.

- Bart is in quite a fix, so he says Sly's doctor has put the kibosh on sex for at least 24 hours, because it might cause Sly to relapse. Sly responds with a lame pun on his erection and says he'll just have to wait a little longer.

- A messenger enters the room and announces that some actors want to perform for Sly as a "welcome back from your coma" gift. The messenger says that, according to the doctor, a play is just the right kind of medicine for a guy recovering from a fifteen-year-long nap.

- Sly tells his wife to slide her bootylicious self on over next to him so they can watch the play together.