THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

A Humorous Reading

by

William Shakespeare

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The scene is a hall in Petruchio’s country house.

GRUMIO: (Enters) Fie, fie on all mad masters! Was ever man so weary? I am sent before to make a fire, and they are coming after to warm them. Now, were not I soon hot, my very lips might freeze to my teeth. Holla, ho! Curtis!

CURTIS: (Enters) Who is that calls so coldly?

GRUMIO: A piece of ice--A fire, good Curtis.

CURTIS: Is my master and his wife coming, Grumio?

G: O, ay, Curtis, ay: and therefore fire, fire.

CURT: Is she so hot a shrew as she’s reported?

G: Wilt thou make a fire, or shall I complain on thee to our mistress, whose hand,—she being now at hand,—thou shalt soon feel, to thy cold comfort. Where’s the cook? Is supper ready, the house trimmed, rushes strewn, cobwebs swept; the serving-men in their new fustian, their white stockings, and every officer his wedding-garment on?

CURT: All ready.

G: Call them forth.

Enter Petruchio and Katharina.

PETRUCHIO: Where be these knaves? What, no man at door To hold my stirrup nor to take my horse! Where is the foolish knave I sent before?

G: Here, sir; as foolish as I was before.

PET: Go, rascals, go, and fetch my supper in.— Good sweet Kate, be merry. Off with my boots, you rogues! Out, you rogue! you pluck my foot awry: Take that, and mend the plucking off the other.—(Strikes him)

KATHARINA: Patience, I pray you; It was a fault unwilling.

PET: Come, Kate, sit down; I know you have a stomach. What’s this? Mutton? ’Tis burnt; and so is all the meat. ---Where is the rascal cook?

There, take it to you, trenchers, cups, and all:

(Throws the meat, etc. about the stage)