

# The Comedy of Errors

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## SCENE II. A public place.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse*

ANTIPHOLUS

### OF SYRACUSE

The gold I gave to Dromio is laid up  
Safe at the Centaur; and the heedful slave  
Is wander'd forth, in care to seek me out  
By computation and mine host's report.  
I could not speak with Dromio since at first  
I sent him from the mart. See, here he comes.

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

How now sir! is your merry humour alter'd?  
As you love strokes, so jest with me again.  
You know no Centaur? you received no gold?  
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner?  
My house was at the Phoenix? Wast thou mad,  
That thus so madly thou didst answer me?

### DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

What answer, sir? when spake I such a word?

ANTIPHOLUS

### OF SYRACUSE

Even now, even here, not half an hour since.

### DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I did not see you since you sent me hence,  
Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave me.  
ANTIPHOLUS

### OF SYRACUSE

Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt,  
And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner;  
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeas'd.

### DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I am glad to see you in this merry vein:  
What means this jest? I pray you, master, tell me.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in the teeth?  
Think'st thou I jest? Hold, take thou that, and that.

*Beating him*

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Hold, sir, for God's sake! now your jest is earnest:  
Upon what bargain do you give it me?  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Because that I familiarly sometimes  
Do use you for my fool and chat with you,  
Your sauciness will jest upon my love  
And make a common of my serious hours.  
When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport,  
But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.  
If you will jest with me, know my aspect,  
And fashion your demeanor to my looks,  
Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Sconce call you it? so you would leave battering, I  
had rather have it a head: an you use these blows  
long, I must get a sconce for my head and ensconce  
it too; or else I shall seek my wit in my shoulders.  
But, I pray, sir why am I beaten?  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Dost thou not know?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Shall I tell you why?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say every why hath  
a wherefore.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Why, first,--for flouting me; and then, wherefore--  
For urging it the second time to me.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season,  
When in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme  
nor reason?  
Well, sir, I thank you.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Thank me, sir, for what?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

I'll make you amends next, to give you nothing for  
something. But say, sir, is it dinner-time?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

No, sir; I think the meat wants that I have.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

In good time, sir; what's that?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Basting.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Well, sir, then 'twill be dry.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

If it be, sir, I pray you, eat none of it.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Your reason?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Lest it make you choleric and purchase me another  
dry basting.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Well, sir, learn to jest in good time: there's a  
time for all things.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I durst have denied that, before you were so choleric.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

By what rule, sir?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald  
pate of father Time himself.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Let's hear it.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

There's no time for a man to recover his hair that  
grows bald by nature.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

May he not do it by fine and recovery?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Yes, to pay a fine for a periwig and recover the  
lost hair of another man.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is,

so plentiful an excrement?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts;  
and what he hath scanted men in hair he hath given them in wit.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Why, but there's many a man hath more hair than wit.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Not a man of those but he hath the wit to lose his hair.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Why, thou didst conclude hairy men plain dealers without wit.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

The plainer dealer, the sooner lost: yet he loseth  
it in a kind of jollity.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

For what reason?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

For two; and sound ones too.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Nay, not sound, I pray you.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Sure ones, then.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Nay, not sure, in a thing falsing.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Certain ones then.

ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

Name them.

## DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

The one, to save the money that he spends in  
trimming; the other, that at dinner they should not  
drop in his porridge.

ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

You would all this time have proved there is no  
time for all things.

## DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry, and did, sir; namely, no time to recover hair  
lost by nature.

ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

But your reason was not substantial, why there is no  
time to recover.

## DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Thus I mend it: Time himself is bald and therefore  
to the world's end will have bald followers.

ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

I knew 'twould be a bald conclusion:  
But, soft! who wafts us yonder?

*Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*

## ADRIANA

Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown:  
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects;  
I am not Adriana nor thy wife.  
The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow  
That never words were music to thine ear,  
That never object pleasing in thine eye,  
That never touch well welcome to thy hand,  
That never meat sweet-savor'd in thy taste,  
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carved to thee.  
How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,

That thou art thus estranged from thyself?  
Thyself I call it, being strange to me,  
That, undividable, incorporate,  
Am better than thy dear self's better part.  
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!  
For know, my love, as easy mayest thou fall  
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,  
And take unmingled that same drop again,  
Without addition or diminishing,  
As take from me thyself and not me too.  
How dearly would it touch me to the quick,  
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious  
And that this body, consecrate to thee,  
By ruffian lust should be contaminate!  
Wouldst thou not spit at me and spurn at me  
And hurl the name of husband in my face  
And tear the stain'd skin off my harlot-brow  
And from my false hand cut the wedding-ring  
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow?  
I know thou canst; and therefore see thou do it.  
I am possess'd with an adulterate blot;  
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust:  
For if we too be one and thou play false,  
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,  
Being strumpeted by thy contagion.  
Keep then far league and truce with thy true bed;  
I live unstain'd, thou undishonoured.

ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

Plead you to me, fair dame? I know you not:  
In Ephesus I am but two hours old,  
As strange unto your town as to your talk;  
Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,  
Want wit in all one word to understand.

## LUCIANA

Fie, brother! how the world is changed with you!  
When were you wont to use my sister thus?  
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

By Dromio?

## DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

By me?

## ADRIANA

By thee; and this thou didst return from him,  
That he did buffet thee, and, in his blows,  
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.  
ANTIPHOLUS

#### **OF SYRACUSE**

Did you converse, sir, with this gentlewoman?  
What is the course and drift of your compact?

#### **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I, sir? I never saw her till this time.  
ANTIPHOLUS

#### **OF SYRACUSE**

Villain, thou liest; for even her very words  
Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

#### **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I never spake with her in all my life.  
ANTIPHOLUS

#### **OF SYRACUSE**

How can she thus then call us by our names,  
Unless it be by inspiration.

#### **ADRIANA**

How ill agrees it with your gravity  
To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,  
Abetting him to thwart me in my mood!  
Be it my wrong you are from me exempt,  
But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.  
Come, I will fasten on this sleeve of thine:  
Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine,  
Whose weakness, married to thy stronger state,  
Makes me with thy strength to communicate:  
If aught possess thee from me, it is dross,  
Usurping ivy, brier, or idle moss;  
Who, all for want of pruning, with intrusion  
Infect thy sap and live on thy confusion.  
ANTIPHOLUS

#### **OF SYRACUSE**

To me she speaks; she moves me for her theme:  
What, was I married to her in my dream?  
Or sleep I now and think I hear all this?  
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?



Until I know this sure uncertainty,  
I'll entertain the offer'd fallacy.

**LUCIANA**

Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

O, for my beads! I cross me for a sinner.  
This is the fairy land: O spite of spite!  
We talk with goblins, owls and sprites:  
If we obey them not, this will ensue,  
They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

**LUCIANA**

Why pratest thou to thyself and answer'st not?  
Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou sot!

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I am transformed, master, am I not?  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Thou hast thine own form.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

No, I am an ape.

**LUCIANA**

If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

'Tis true; she rides me and I long for grass.  
'Tis so, I am an ass; else it could never be  
But I should know her as well as she knows me.

**ADRIANA**

Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,  
To put the finger in the eye and weep,  
Whilst man and master laugh my woes to scorn.  
Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.  
Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day  
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks.  
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,  
Say he dines forth, and let no creature enter.  
Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?  
Sleeping or waking? mad or well-advised?  
Known unto these, and to myself disguised!  
I'll say as they say and persevere so,  
And in this mist at all adventures go.

## DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Master, shall I be porter at the gate?

## ADRIANA

Ay; and let none enter, lest I break your pate.

## LUCIANA

Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.

*Exeunt*

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