

The Comedy of Errors

4.2

Enter [from the Phoenix] Adriana and Luciana

ADRIANA

Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so?
Mightst thou perceive austerely in his eye
That he did plead in earnest, yea or no?
Looked he or red or pale, or sad or merrily?
What observation mad'st thou in this case
Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face?

5

LUCIANA

First he denied you had in him no right.

ADRIANA

He meant he did me none, the more my spite.

LUCIANA

Then swore he that he was a stranger here.

ADRIANA

And true he swore, though yet forsworn he were.

10

LUCIANA

Then pleaded I for you.

ADRIANA

And what said he?

LUCIANA

That love I begged for you, he begged of me.

ADRIANA

With what persuasion did he tempt thy love?

LUCIANA

With words that in an honest suit might move.

First he did praise my beauty, then my speech.

15

ADRIANA

Didst speak him fair?

LUCIANA

Have patience, I beseech.

ADRIANA

I cannot, nor I will not, hold me still.

My tongue, though not my heart, shall have his will.

He is deformed, crooked, old, and sere,

Ill-faced, worse-bodied, shapeless everywhere,

20

Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind,

Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.

LUCIANA

Who would be jealous, then, of such a one?
No evil lost is wailed when it is gone.

ADRIANA

Ah, but I think him better than I say, 25
And yet would herein others' eyes were worse.
Far from her nest the lapwing cries away.
My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.

Enter Dromio of Syracuse running

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Here, go to the desk, the purse! Sweet now, make haste!

LUCIANA

How? Hast thou lost thy breath?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

By running fast. 30

ADRIANA

Where is thy master, Dromio? Is he well?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No, he's in Tartar limbo, worse than hell.
A devil in an everlasting garment hath him,
One whose hard heart is buttoned up with steel;
A fiend, a fairy, pitiless and rough; 35
A wolf, nay worse, a fellow all in buff;
A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper, one that
countermands
The passages of alleys, creeks, and narrow launds;
A hound that runs counter, and yet draws dryfoot
well;
One that before the Judgement carries poor souls to
hell. 40

ADRIANA Why, man, what is the matter?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I do not know the matter, he is 'rested on the case.

ADRIANA

What, is he arrested? Tell me at whose suit.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I know not at whose suit he is arrested well,
But is in a suit of buff which 'rested him, that can I
tell. 45

Will you send him, mistress, redemption to the money
in his desk?

ADRIANA

Go fetch it, sister.

Exit Luciana [into the Phoenix]

This I wonder at,

That he unknown to me should be in debt.

Tell me, was he arrested on a bond?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Not on a bond but on a stronger thing:

50

A chain, a chain±±do you not hear it ring?

ADRIANA

What, the chain?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE No, no, the bell. 'Tis time that I were gone:

It was two ere I left him, and now the clock strikes

one.

ADRIANA

The hours come back! That did I never hear.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

O yes, if any hour meet a sergeant, a turns back for

very fear.

55

ADRIANA

As if time were in debt. How fondly dost thou reason!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Time is a very bankrupt, and owes more than he's worth to season.

Nay, he's a thief too. Have you not heard men say

That time comes stealing on by night and day?

If a be in debt and theft, and a sergeant in the way, 60

Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a day?

Enter Luciana [from the Phoenix] with the money

ADRIANA

Go, Dromio, there's the money. Bear it straight,

And bring thy master home immediately.

[Exit Dromio]

Come, sister, I am pressed down with conceit:

Conceit, my comfort and my injury.

65

Exeunt [into the Phoenix]