

The Comedy of Errors

2.2

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 wandered 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.

5

Enter Dromio of Syracuse

How now, sir, is your merry humour altered?
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?

10

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.

15

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 displeased.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

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

20

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

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

He beats Dromio

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

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

25

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, 30
But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.
If you will jest with me, know my aspect,
And fashion your demeanour to my looks,
Or I will beat this method in your scone.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE `Sconce' call you it? So you would 35
leave battering, I had rather have it a head. An you
use these blows long, I must get a scone 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? 40

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': 45
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 50
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 55
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. 60

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. 65

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. 70

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? 75

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 80
bestows on beasts, and what he hath scantied 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 85
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. 90

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. 95

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE Certain ones, then.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Name them.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE The one, to save the money that he
spends in tiring; the other, that at dinner they should
not drop in his porridge. 100

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, e'en no time to recover hair lost by nature.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE But your reason was not substantial, why there is no time to recover. 105

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. 110

Enter [from the Phoenix] Adriana and Luciana

But soft±±who wafts us yonder?

ADRIANA

Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown:
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects.

I am not Adriana, nor thy wife. 115

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-savoured in thy taste, 120

Unless I spake, or looked, or touched, or carved to thee.

How comes it now, my husband, O how comes it

That thou art then estrangeÁd from thyself?±±

Thy `self' I call it, being strange to me

That, undividable, incorporate, 125

Am better than thy dear self's better part.

Ah, do not tear away thyself from me;

For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall

A drop of water in the breaking gulf,

And take unmingled thence that drop again 130

Without addition or diminishing,

As take from me thyself, and not me too.

How dearly would it touch thee to the quick

Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious,

And that this body, consecrate to thee, 135

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 stained skin off my harlot brow,
And from my false hand cut the wedding ring, 140
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow?
I know thou canst, and therefore see thou do it!
I am possessed with an adulterate blot;
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust.
For if we two be one, and thou play false, 145
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,
Being strumpeted by thy contagion.
Keep then fair league and truce with thy true bed,
I live unstained, thou undishonour'ed.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Plead you to *me*, fair dame? I know you not. 150
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 scanned,
Wants wit in all one word to understand.

LUCIANA

Fie, brother, how the world is changed with you! 155
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±± 160
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. 165

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. 170

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. 175
 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, 180
 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 (*aside*)
 To me she speaks, she moves me for her theme.
 What, was I married to her in my dream? 185
 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 offered fallacy.

LUCIANA
 Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner. 190

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*aside*)
 O, for my beads! I cross me for a sinner.
 This is the fairy land. O spite of spites,
 We talk with goblins, oafs, and sprites.
 If we obey them not, this will ensue:
 They'll suck our breath or pinch us black and blue. 195

LUCIANA
 Why prat'st thou to thyself, and answer'st not?
 Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou sot.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*to Antipholus*)
 I am transforme'd, master, am not I?

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. 200

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 *[to Antipholus]*

'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.

205

ADRIANA

Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,

To put the finger in the eye and weep

Whilst man and master laughs my woes to scorn.

(To Antipholus) Come, sir, to dinner.±±Dromio, keep
the gate.±±

Husband, I'll dine above with you today, 210

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 *(aside)*

Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell? 215

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? 220

ADRIANA

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

LUCIANA

Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.

Exeunt [into the Phoenix]