

The Comedy of Errors

3.1

*Enter Antipholus of Ephesus, his man Dromio,
Angelo the goldsmith, and Balthasar the merchant*

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

Good Signor Angelo, you must excuse us all.
My wife is shrewish when I keep not hours.
Say that I lingered with you at your shop
To see the making of her carcanet,
And that tomorrow you will bring it home.±± 5
But here's a villain that would face me down
He met me on the mart, and that I beat him,
And charged him with a thousand marks in gold,
And that I did deny my wife and house.
Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean by this? 10

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Say what you will, sir, but I know what I know±±
That you beat me at the mart I have your hand to
show.
If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave
were ink,
Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

I think thou art an ass.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Marry, so it doth appear 15
By the wrongs I suffer and the blows I bear.
I should kick being kicked, and, being at that pass,
You would keep from my heels, and beware of an ass.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

You're sad, Signor Balthasar. Pray God our cheer
May answer my good will, and your good welcome
here. 20

BALTHASAR

I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your welcome dear.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

O, Signor Balthasar, either at flesh or fish
A table full of welcome makes scarce one dainty dish.

BALTHASAR

Good meat, sir, is common; that every churl affords.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

And welcome more common, for that's nothing but
words. 25

BALTHASAR

Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Ay, to a niggardly host and more sparing guest.
But though my cates be mean, take them in good part.
Better cheer may you have, but not with better heart.
But soft, my door is locked. (*To Dromio*) Go bid them
let us in. 30

DROMIO OF EPHESUS (*calling*)

Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicely, Gillian, Ginn!
[*Enter Dromio of Syracuse within the Phoenix*]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*within the Phoenix*)

Mome, malt-horse, capon, coxcomb, idiot, patch!
Either get thee from the door or sit down at the hatch.
Dost thou conjure for wenches, that thou call'st for
such store
When one is one too many? Go, get thee from the
door. 35

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

What patch is made our porter? My master stays in
the street.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*within*)

Let him walk from whence he came, lest he catch
cold on's feet.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Who talks within there? Ho, open the door!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*within the Phoenix*)

Right, sir, I'll tell you when, an you'll tell me wherefore.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Wherefore? For my dinner±±I have not dined today. 40

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*within the Phoenix*)

Nor today here you must not. Come again when you
may.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

What art thou that keep'st me out from the house I
owe?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*within the Phoenix*)

The porter for this time, sir, and my name is Dromio.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

O villain, thou hast stol'n both mine office and my
name.

The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame. 45
If thou hadst been Dromio today in my place,
Thou wouldst have changed thy pate for an aim, or
thy name for an ass.

Enter Nell within the Phoenix

NELL *(within the Phoenix)*

What a coil is there, Dromio? Who are those at the
gate?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Let my master in, Nell.

NELL *(within the Phoenix)* Faith no, he comes too late;
And so tell your master.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS O Lord, I must laugh. 50

Have at you with a proverb: 'Shall I set in my staff?'

NELL *(within the Phoenix)*

Have at you with another±±that's 'When? Can you
tell?'

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE *(within the Phoenix)*

If thy name be called Nell, Nell, thou hast answered
him well.

□

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS *(to Nell)*

Do you hear, you minion? You'll let us in, I hope? 55

NELL *(within the Phoenix)*

I thought to have asked you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE *(within)* And you said no.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

So, come help.

[He and Antipholus beat the door]

Well struck! There was blow for blow.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS *(to Nell)*

Thou baggage, let me in.

NELL *(within the Phoenix)* Can you tell for whose sake?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Master, knock the door hard.

NELL *(within the Phoenix)* Let him knock till it ache.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

You'll cry for this, minion, if I beat the door down. 60
NELL (*within the Phoenix*)

What needs all that, and a pair of stocks in the town?

Enter Adriana within the Phoenix

ADRIANA (*within the Phoenix*)

Who is that at the door that keeps all this noise?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*within the Phoenix*)

By my troth, your town is troubled with unruly boys.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS (*to Adriana*)

Are you there, wife? You might have come before.

ADRIANA (*within the Phoenix*)

Your wife, sir knave? Go, get you from the door. 65

Exit with Nell

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS (*to Antipholus*)

If you went in pain, master, this knave would go sore.

ANGELO (*to Antipholus*)

Here is neither cheer, sir, nor welcome; we would
fain have either.

BALTHASAR

In debating which was best, we shall part with neither.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS (*to Antipholus*)

They stand at the door, master. Bid them welcome
hither.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

There is something in the wind, that we cannot get in. 70

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

You would say so, master, if your garments were thin.
Your cake here is warm within: you stand here in the
cold.

It would make a man mad as a buck to be so bought
and sold.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

Go fetch me something. I'll break ope the gate.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*within the Phoenix*)

Break any breaking here, and I'll break your knave's
pate. 75

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

A man may break a word with you, sir, and words
are but wind;

Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not

behind.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*within the Phoenix*)

It seems thou want'st breaking. Out upon thee, hind!

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Here's too much `Out upon thee!' I pray thee, let me in.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE (*within the Phoenix*)

Ay, when fowls have no feathers, and fish have no fin.

80

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Well, I'll break in.±±Go borrow me a crow.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

A crow without feather? Master, mean you so?

For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather.

(*To Dromio of Syracuse*)

If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow together.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Go, get thee gone. Fetch me an iron crow.

85

BALTHASAR

Have patience, sir. O, let it not be so!

Herein you war against your reputation,

And draw within the compass of suspect

Th'unviolated honour of your wife.

Once this: your long experience of her wisdom,

90

Her sober virtue, years, and modesty,

Plead on her part some cause to you unknown;

And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse

Why at this time the doors are made against you.

Be ruled by me. Depart in patience,

95

And let us to the Tiger all to dinner,

And about evening come yourself alone

To know the reason of this strange restraint.

If by strong hand you offer to break in

Now in the stirring passage of the day,

100

A vulgar comment will be made of it,

And that supposeÁd by the common rout

Against your yet ungalléÁd estimation,

That may with foul intrusion enter in

And dwell upon your grave when you are dead.

105

For slander lives upon succession,

For ever housed where once it gets possession.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

You have prevailed. I will depart in quiet,
And in despite of mirth mean to be merry.
I know a wench of excellent discourse, 110
Pretty and witty; wild, and yet, too, gentle.
There will we dine. This woman that I mean,
My wife±±but, I protest, without desert±±
Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal.
To her will we to dinner. (*To Angelo*) Get you home 115
And fetch the chain. By this, I know, 'tis made.
Bring it, I pray you, to the Porcupine,
For there's the house. That chain will I bestow±±
Be it for nothing but to spite my wife±±
Upon mine hostess there. Good sir, make haste: 120
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.

ANGELO

I'll meet you at that place some hour hence.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

Do so.

[Exit Angelo]

This jest shall cost me some expense.

*Exeunt [Dromio of Syracuse within the
Phoenix, and the others into the Porcupine]*