

The Comedy of Errors

1.2

*Enter [from the bay] Antipholus of Syracuse,
Merchant [of Ephesus], and Dromio of Syracuse*

MERCHANT [OF EPHEBUS]

Therefore give out you are of Epidamnum,
Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate.
This very day a Syracusian merchant
Is apprehended for arrival here,
And, not being able to buy out his life, 5
According to the statute of the town
Dies ere the weary sun set in the west.
There is your money that I had to keep.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE *(to Dromio)*

Go bear it to the Centaur, where we host,
And stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee. 10
Within this hour it will be dinner-time.
Till that I'll view the manners of the town,
Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,
And then return and sleep within mine inn;
For with long travel I am stiff and weary. 15
Get thee away.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Many a man would take you at your word,
And go indeed, having so good a mean.
Exit

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

A trusty villain, sir, that very oft,
When I am dull with care and melancholy, 20
Lightens my humour with his merry jests.
What, will you walk with me about the town,
And then go to my inn and dine with me?

MERCHANT [OF EPHEBUS]

I am invited, sir, to certain merchants
Of whom I hope to make much benefit. 25
I crave your pardon. Soon at five o'clock,
Please you, I'll meet with you upon the mart,
And afterward consort you till bedtime.

My present business calls me from you now.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE
 Farewell till then. I will go lose myself, 30
 And wander up and down to view the city.

MERCHANT [OF EPHESUS]
 Sir, I commend you to your own content.
Exit

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE
 He that commends me to mine own content
 Commends me to the thing I cannot get.
 I to the world am like a drop of water 35
 That in the ocean seeks another drop,
 Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
 Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself.
 So I, to find a mother and a brother,
 In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself. 40
Enter Dromio of Ephesus
 Here comes the almanac of my true date.
 What now? How chance thou art returned so soon?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
 Returned so soon? Rather approached too late.
 The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit.
 The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell; 45
 My mistress made it one upon my cheek.
 She is so hot because the meat is cold.
 The meat is cold because you come not home.
 You come not home because you have no stomach.
 You have no stomach, having broke your fast; 50
 But we that know what 'tis to fast and pray
 Are penitent for your default today.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE
 Stop in your wind, sir. Tell me this, I pray:
 Where have you left the money that I gave you?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
 O±sixpence that I had o' Wednesday last 55
 To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper?
 The saddler had it, sir; I kept it not.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE
 I am not in a sportive humour now.
 Tell me, and dally not: where is the money?
 We being strangers here, how dar'st thou trust 60

So great a charge from thine own custody?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

I pray you, jest, sir, as you sit at dinner.

I from my mistress come to you in post.

If I return I shall be post indeed,

For she will scour your fault upon my pate. 65

Methinks your maw, like mine, should be your clock,

And strike you home without a messenger.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of season.

Reserve them till a merrier hour than this.

Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee? 70

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

To me, sir? Why, you gave no gold to me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Come on, sir knave, have done your foolishness,

And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

My charge was but to fetch you from the mart

Home to your house, the Phoenix, sir, to dinner. 75

My mistress and her sister stays for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Now, as I am a Christian, answer me

In what safe place you have bestowed my money,

Or I shall break that merry scone of yours

That stands on tricks when I am undisposed. 80

Where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

I have some marks of yours upon my pate,

Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders,

But not a thousand marks between you both.

If I should pay your worship those again, 85

Perchance you will not bear them patiently.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Thy mistress' marks? What mistress, slave, hast thou?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Your worship's wife, my mistress, at the Phoenix:

She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,

And prays that you will hie you home to dinner. 90

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face,

Being forbid? There, take you that, sir knave!

He beats Dromio

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

What mean you, sir? For God's sake, hold your hands!

Nay, an you will not, sir, I'll take my heels.

Exit

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Upon my life, by some device or other 95

The villain is o'er-raught of all my money.

They say this town is full of cozenage,

As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,

Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,

Soul-killing witches that deform the body, 100

DisguiseÁd cheaters, prating mountebanks,

And many suchlike libertines of sin.

If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.

I'll to the Centaur to go seek this slave.

I greatly fear my money is not safe. 105

Exit