

The Comedy of Errors

3.2

Enter [from the Phoenix] Luciana with Antipholus of Syracuse

LUCIANA

And may it be that you have quite forgot
A husband's office? Shall, Antipholus,
Even in the spring of love thy love-springs rot?
Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous?
If you did wed my sister for her wealth, 5
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more
kindness;
Or if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth:
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness.
Let not my sister read it in your eye.
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator. 10
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty;
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger.
Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted:
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint.
Be secret-false. What need she be acquainted? 15
What simple thief brags of his own attainment?
'Tis double wrong to truant with your bed,
And let her read it in thy looks at board.
Shame hath a bastard fame, well manage'd;
Ill deeds is doubled with an evil word. 20
Alas, poor women, make us but believe±±
Being compact of credit±±that you love us.
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve.
We in your motion turn, and you may move us.
Then, gentle brother, get you in again. 25
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife:
'Tis holy sport to be a little vain
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Sweet mistress±±what your name is else I know not,
Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine. 30
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not

Than our earth's wonder, more than earth divine.
 Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak.
 Lay open to my earthy gross conceit,
 Smothered in errors, feeble, shallow, weak, 35
 The folded meaning of your words' deceit.
 Against my soul's pure truth why labour you
 To make it wander in an unknown field?
 Are you a god? Would you create me new?
 Transform me, then, and to your power I'll yield. 40
 But if that I am I, then well I know
 Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,
 Nor to her bed no homage do I owe.
 Far more, far more, to you do I decline.
 O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note 45
 To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears.
 Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote.
 Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,
 And as a bed I'll take them, and there lie,
 And in that glorious supposition think 50
 He gains by death that hath such means to die.
 Let love, being light, be drowneÁd if she sink.

LUCIANA

What, are you mad, that you do reason so?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Not mad, but mated±±how, I do not know.

LUCIANA

It is a fault that springeth from your eye. 55

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

For gazing on your beams, fair sun, being by.

LUCIANA

Gaze where you should, and that will clear your
sight.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

As good to wink, sweet love, as look on night.

LUCIANA

Why call you me `love'? Call my sister so.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Thy sister's sister.

LUCIANA

That's my sister.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

No,

60

It is thyself, mine own self's better part,

Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,
My food, my fortune, and my sweet hope's aim,
My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim.

LUCIANA

All this my sister is, or else should be. 65

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Call thyself sister, sweet, for I am thee.
Thee will I love, and with thee lead my life.
Thou hast no husband yet, nor I no wife.
Give me thy hand.

LUCIANA O soft, sir, hold you still;

I'll fetch my sister to get her good will. 70

Exit [into the Phoenix]

Enter [from the Phoenix] Dromio of Syracuse

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Why, how now, Dromio! Where
runn'st thou so fast?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE Do you know me, sir? Am I Dromio?
Am I your man? Am I myself?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Thou art Dromio, thou art my 75
man, thou art thyself.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE I am an ass, I am a woman's man,
and besides myself.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE What woman's man? And how
besides thyself? 80

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE Marry, sir, besides myself I am due
to a woman: one that claims me, one that haunts me,
one that will have me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE What claim lays she to thee?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE Marry, sir, such claim as you would 85
lay to your horse; and she would have me as a beast±±
not that, I being a beast, she would have me, but that
she, being a very beastly creature, lays claim to me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE What is she?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE A very reverend body; ay, such a 90
one as a man may not speak of without he say `sir-
reverence'. I have but lean luck in the match, and yet
is she a wondrous fat marriage.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE How dost thou mean, a fat
marriage? 95

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE Marry, sir, she's the kitchen wench,

and all grease; and I know not what use to put her to
but to make a lamp of her, and run from her by her
own light. I warrant her rags and the tallow in them
will burn a Poland winter. If she lives till doomsday, 100
she'll burn a week longer than the whole world.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE What complexion is she of?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE Swart like my shoe, but her face
nothing like so clean kept. For why?±±She sweats a
man may go overshoes in the grime of it. 105

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE That's a fault that water will
mend.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE No, sir, 'tis in grain. Noah's flood
could not do it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE What's her name? 110

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE Nell, sir. But her name and three-
quarters±±that's an ell and three-quarters±±will not
measure her from hip to hip.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Then she bears some breadth?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE No longer from head to foot than 115
from hip to hip. She is spherical, like a globe. I could
find out countries in her.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE In what part of her body stands
Ireland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE Marry, sir, in her buttocks. I found 120
it out by the bogs.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Where Scotland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE I found it by the barrenness, hard
in the palm of her hand.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Where France? 125

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE In her forehead, armed and reverted,
making war against her heir.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Where England?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I
could find no whiteness in them. But I guess it stood 130
in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France
and it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Where Spain?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE Faith, I saw it not, but I felt it hot
in her breath. 135

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Where America, the Indies?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE O, sir, upon her nose, all o'er
embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires,
declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain,
who sent whole armadas of carracks to be ballast at 140
her nose.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Where stood Belgia, the
Netherlands?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE O, sir, I did not look so low. To
conclude, this drudge or diviner laid claim to me, called 145
me Dromio, swore I was assured to her, told me what
privy marks I had about me±±as the mark of my
shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great wart on my
left arm±±that I, amazed, ran from her as a witch. And
I think if my breast had not been made of faith, and 150
my heart of steel, she had transformed me to a curtal
dog, and made me turn i'th' wheel.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE
Go, hie thee presently. Post to the road.
An if the wind blow any way from shore,
I will not harbour in this town tonight. 155
If any barque put forth, come to the mart,
Where I will walk till thou return to me.
If everyone knows us, and we know none,
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack, and be gone.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE
As from a bear a man would run for life, 160
So fly I from her that would be my wife.

Exit [to the bay]

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE
There's none but witches do inhabit here,
And therefore 'tis high time that I were hence.
She that doth call me husband, even my soul
Doth for a wife abhor. But her fair sister, 165
Possessed with such a gentle sovereign grace,
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,
Hath almost made me traitor to myself.
But lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song. 170

Enter Angelo with the chain

ANGELO

Master Antipholus.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE Ay, that's my name.

ANGELO

I know it well, sir. Lo, here's the chain.

I thought to have ta'en you at the Porcupine.

The chain unfinished made me stay thus long.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE (*taking the chain*)

What is your will that I shall do with this? 175

ANGELO

What please yourself, sir. I have made it for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Made it for me, sir? I bespoke it not.

ANGELO

Not once, nor twice, but twenty times you have.

Go home with it, and please your wife withal,

And soon at supper-time I'll visit you, 180

And then receive my money for the chain.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

I pray you, sir, receive the money now,

For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

ANGELO

You are a merry man, sir. Fare you well.

Exit

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

What I should think of this I cannot tell. 185

But this I think: there's no man is so vain

That would refuse so fair an offered chain.

I see a man here needs not live by shifts,

When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.

I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay. 190

If any ship put out, then straight away!

Exit