

The Comedy of Errors

4.4

Enter Antipholus of Ephesus with the Officer

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

Fear me not, man, I will not break away.
I'll give thee ere I leave thee so much money
To warrant thee as I am 'rested for.
My wife is in a wayward mood today,
And will not lightly trust the messenger 5
That I should be attached in Ephesus.
I tell you 'twill sound harshly in her ears.

Enter Dromio of Ephesus with a rope's end

Here comes my man. I think he brings the money.±±
How now, sir? Have you that I sent you for?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Here's that, I warrant you, will pay them all. 10

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS But where's the money?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

To what end did I bid thee hie thee home? 15

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS To a rope's end, sir, and to that end
am I returned.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

And to that end, sir, I will welcome you.

He beats Dromio

OFFICER Good sir, be patient.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS Nay, 'tis for me to be patient: I am 20
in adversity.

OFFICER Good now, hold thy tongue.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS Nay, rather persuade *him* to hold his
hands.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS Thou whoreson, senseless villain! 25

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS I would I were senseless, sir, that I
might not feel your blows.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS Thou art sensible in nothing but
blows, and so is an ass.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS I am an ass indeed. You may prove 30
it by my long ears.±±I have served him from the hour
of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his
hands for my service but blows. When I am cold, he
heats me with beating. When I am warm, he cools me
with beating. I am waked with it when I sleep, raised 35
with it when I sit, driven out of doors with it when I
go from home, welcomed home with it when I return.
Nay, I bear it on my shoulders, as a beggar wont her
brat, and I think when he hath lamed me I shall beg
with it from door to door. 40

*Enter Adriana, Luciana, Courtesan, and a
schoolmaster called Pinch*

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Come, go along: my wife is coming yonder.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS *(to Adriana)* Mistress, *respice finem*±±
respect your end±±or rather, to prophesy like the parrot,
`Beware the rope's end'.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS Wilt thou still talk? 45

He beats Dromio

COURTESAN *(to Adriana)*

How say you now? Is not your husband mad?

ADRIANA

His incivility confirms no less.±±

Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer.

Establish him in his true sense again,

And I will please you what you will demand. 50

LUCIANA

Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks!

COURTESAN

Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy.

PINCH *(to Antipholus)*

Give me your hand, and let me feel your pulse.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

There is my hand, and let it feel your ear.

He strikes Pinch

PINCH

I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man, 55
To yield possession to my holy prayers,

And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight:
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
Peace, doting wizard, peace! I am not mad.

ADRIANA
O that thou wert not, poor distresseÁd soul. 60

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
You minion, you, are these your customers?
Did this companion with the saffron face
Revel and feast it at my house today,
Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut,
And I denied to enter in my house? 65

ADRIANA
O husband, God doth know you dined at home,
Where would you had remained until this time,
Free from these slanders and this open shame.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
Dined at home?
(To Dromio) Thou villain, what sayst thou?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
Sir, sooth to say, you did not dine at home. 70

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
Were not my doors locked up, and I shut out?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
Pardie, your doors were locked, and you shut out.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
And did not she herself revile me there?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
Sans fable, she herself reviled you there.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt, and scorn me? 75

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
Certes she did. The kitchen vestal scorned you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
And did not I in rage depart from thence?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
In verity you did. My bones bears witness,
That since have felt the vigour of his rage.

ADRIANA *(aside to Pinch)*
Is't good to soothe him in these contraries? 80

PINCH *(aside to Adriana)*
It is no shame. The fellow finds his vein,

And, yielding to him, humours well his frenzy.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS *(to Adriana)*
 Thou hast suborned the goldsmith to arrest me.

ADRIANA
 Alas, I sent you money to redeem you,
 By Dromio here, who came in haste for it. 85

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
 Money by me? Heart and good will you might,
 But surely, master, not a rag of money.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
 Went'st not thou to her for a purse of ducats?

ADRIANA
 He came to me, and I delivered it.

LUCIANA
 And I am witness with her that she did. 90

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
 God and the ropemaker bear me witness
 That I was sent for nothing but a rope.

PINCH *(aside to Adriana)*
 Mistress, both man and master is possessed.
 I know it by their pale and deadly looks.
 They must be bound and laid in some dark room. 95

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS *(to Adriana)*
 Say wherefore didst thou lock me forth today,
(To Dromio) And why dost thou deny the bag of gold?

ADRIANA
 I did not, gentle husband, lock thee forth.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
 And, gentle master, I received no gold.
 But I confess, sir, that we were locked out. 100

ADRIANA
 Dissembling villain, thou speak'st false in both.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
 Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all,
 And art confederate with a damneÁd pack
 To make a loathsome abject scorn of me.
 But with these nails I'll pluck out those false eyes, 105
 That would behold in me this shameful sport.
[He reaches for Adriana; she shrieks.]
Enter three or four, and offer to bind him. He strives

ADRIANA

O, bind him, bind him. Let him not come near me.

PINCH
 More company! The fiend is strong within him.

LUCIANA
 Ay me, poor man, how pale and wan he looks.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
 What, will you murder me?±±Thou, jailer, thou, 110
 I am thy prisoner. Wilt thou suffer them
 To make a rescue?

OFFICER Masters, let him go.
 He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him.

PINCH
 Go, bind his man, for he is frantic too.
They bind Dromio

ADRIANA
 What wilt thou do, thou peevish officer? 115
 Hast thou delight to see a wretched man
 Do outrage and displeasure to himself?

OFFICER
 He is my prisoner. If I let him go,
 The debt he owes will be required of me.

ADRIANA
 I will discharge thee ere I go from thee. 120
 Bear me forthwith unto his creditor,
 And, knowing how the debt grows, I will pay it.±±
 Good Master Doctor, see him safe conveyed
 Home to my house. O most unhappy day!

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS O most unhappy strumpet! 125

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
 Master, I am here entered in bond for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS
 Out on thee, villain! Wherefore dost thou mad me?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS
 Will you be bound for nothing? Be mad, good master±±
 Cry, 'The devil!'

LUCIANA
 God help, poor souls, how idly do they talk! 130

ADRIANA
 Go bear him hence. Sister, go you with me.
Exeunt [into the Phoenix], Pinch and others
carrying off Antipholus of Ephesus and Dromio of

Ephesus. The Officer, Adriana, Luciana, and the Courtesan remain

(To the Officer) Say now, whose suit is he arrested at?

OFFICER

One Angelo, a goldsmith. Do you know him?

ADRIANA

I know the man. What is the sum he owes?

OFFICER

Two hundred ducats.

ADRIANA

Say, how grows it due? 135

OFFICER

Due for a chain your husband had of him.

ADRIANA

He did bespeak a chain for me, but had it not.

COURTESAN

Whenas your husband all in rage today
Came to my house, and took away my ring±±
The ring I saw upon his finger now±±
Straight after did I meet him with a chain. 140

ADRIANA

It may be so, but I did never see it.
Come, jailer, bring me where the goldsmith is.
I long to know the truth hereof at large.

*Enter Antipholus of Syracuse (wearing the chain)
and Dromio of Syracuse with their rapiers drawn*

LUCIANA

God, for thy mercy, they are loose again! 145

ADRIANA

And come with naked swords. Let's call more help
To have them bound again.

OFFICER

Away, they'll kill us!

*All but Antipholus and Dromio run out, as fast as
may be, frightened*

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

I see these witches are afraid of swords.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

She that would be your wife now ran from you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Come to the Centaur. Fetch our stuff from thence. 150

I long that we were safe and sound aboard.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Faith, stay here this night. They will

surely do us no harm. You saw they speak us fair, give
us gold. Methinks they are such a gentle nation that,
but for the mountain of mad flesh that claims marriage
of me, I could find in my heart to stay here still, and
turn witch.

155

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

I will not stay tonight for all the town.
Therefore away, to get our stuff aboard.

Exeunt