

The Comedy of Errors

by William Shakespeare

Presented by Paul W. Collins

© Copyright 2011 by Paul W. Collins

The Comedy of Errors

By William Shakespeare

Presented by Paul W. Collins

All rights reserved under the International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Except as permitted under the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this work may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, audio or video recording, or other, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Contact: paul@wsrightnow.com

Note: Spoken lines from Shakespeare's drama are in the public domain, as is the Globe edition (1864) of his plays, which provided the basic text of the speeches in this new version of *The Comedy of Errors*. But *The Comedy of Errors, by William Shakespeare: Presented by Paul W. Collins*, is a copyrighted work, and is made available *for your personal use only*, in reading and study.

Student, beware: This is a *presentation*, not a scholarly work, so you should be sure your teacher, instructor or professor considers it acceptable as a reference before quoting characters' comments or thoughts from it in your report or term paper.

Chapter One Welcome to Ephesus

During an age of splendor in the wide Mediterranean basin of times long past, a white-bearded prisoner—his sallow, furrowed face and sagging demeanor conveying such deep dejection as almost to parody sorrow—stands one morning before the Duke of Ephesus in his grand palace.

“Proceed, Solinus, to procure my fall,” the weary traveler tells the duke sadly, “and by the doom of death, end woes and all.”

This powerful dominion on the Aegean Sea is more than three hundred leagues east of the condemned man’s home in Sicily. Solinus is perturbed: the arrest has put the benevolent ruler in a very unpleasant position. “Merchant of Syracuse, plead no more,” he says. “I am not disposed to dismiss our *laws*.

“The *enmity* and *discord* sprung of late from the rancorous outrage of *your* duke toward merchants—our well-dealing countrymen who, lacking guilders to *redeem* their lives, have sealed his rigorous statutes with their *blood!*—exclude all pity from *our* threatening looks!

“For, since the deep and mortal jarring ’twixt thy strict countrymen and us, it hath in solemn synods been decreed, both by the Syracusans and ourselves, to *admit no traffic* to our adverse towns.

“*Moreover*: if any born at Ephesus be seen at any Syracusan mart or fair; again, if any *Syracusan* born come to the bay of *Ephesus*—he *dies*, his goods confiscate to the duke’s dispose, unless a *thousand marks* be levied to ’quit the penalty, and to ransom him!

“*Thy* substance, valued at the highest rate, cannot amount unto a *hundred* marks; therefore by law thou art condemned to die.”

Signior Egeon nods. “Yet this is my comfort when your words are done: my *woes* end likewise, with the evening sun.”

The duke is a kindly man, and the prisoner’s clothes and bearing bespeak more prosperous days. Solinus is not as ready to kill as the old nobleman is to die. “Well, Syracusan, say in brief the cause why thou departed’st from thy native home, and for what cause thou camest to Ephesus.”

Egeon groans. “A *heavier* task could not have been imposed than for me to speak my *griefs unspeakable!* But so that the world may witness that my end was wrought by *Nature*, not by vile offence, I’ll utter what my sorrow gives me leave.

“In Syracuse was I born, and wed unto a woman—*fortunate*, but for me!—and *beside* me, had not our hap been bad!

“With her I lived in *joy*. Our wealth increased, by prosperous voyages I often made to Epidamnum,” a Greek realm northeast of Sicily on the Adriatic Sea, “till my factor’s death, when the great care of goods left at random drew me from kind embracements of my spouse.

“From whom my absence was not six months old before she, almost at fainting under the pleasing punishment that women bear,”—pregnancy, “had made provision for following me herself, and soon had safe arrivèd where I was. There had she not been long but she became the joyful mother of *two goodly sons!*—the one so like the other they could not be distinguished but by names.

“My wife, proud of two such boys, made daily motions for our return *home*. Unwillingly I agreed.

“What was *unusual*: that very hour, and in the self-same inn, a lowly woman was delivered of such a burden—male *twins*, both alike! Those, for their parents were exceedingly poor, I bought, to be brought up attending my sons.

“Alas, too soon we came aboard! But a league from Epidamnum had we sailed before the always wind-obeying deep gave any hint of our tragic harm; not much longer did we retain

hope—for what obscured light the heavens *did* grant but conveyed unto our fearful minds undoubted warrant of *immediate death!*

“Which, though myself would gladly have embraced,” the stoic tells the duke, “yet the incessant wailings of my *wife*, weeping before for what she saw must come, and piteous ’plainings of the pretty *infants*—that mourned for fashion, ignorant of what to fear—forced me to seek delays for them and me.

“But, as other means was none, the sailors sought for safety *by our boat!*—and left the *ship*, then sinking-ripe, to *us!*

“Thus it was that my wife, more careful for her latter-born, had fastened him unto a small, spare mast, such as seafaring men provide for storms; to him one of the other twins was bound, whilst I had been alike heedful of their brothers.

“The children thus disposed, my wife and I, fixing our eyes on whom our *care* was fixed, fastened ourselves with them at either end of the mast; and, floating obedient to the stream, it was carried straight south—towards Corinth, we thought.

“At length the sun, gazing upon the earth, dispersed those vapours that offended us, and by the benefit of his wished light, the seas waxed calm, and we discovered, from afar, *two ships* making amain to us: of Corinth that, this of Epidaurus.” The northern port is about forty leagues of Epidamnum. “But ere they came—

“*Oh,*” he sobs, “let me say no *more!* Gather the sequel by what went before!”

“Nay, *forward*, old man!” urges the duke, “Do not break off so, for we may *pity*, though not pardon thee.”

“Oh, had the *gods* done so, I had not now worthily termed them *merciless* to us!” says Egeon. “For ere the ships could meet us by half a league, we encountered a *mighty rock!* Being violently borne upon it, our helpful ‘ship’ was splitted in the midst!—so that, in this unjust divorce of us, Fortune had left to both of us alike what to *delight in*, what to *sorrow for!*

“*Her* part, poor soul, seeming as burdened with lesser weight, but not with lesser woe, was carried with more speed before the wind—and in our sight, they three were taken up by fishermen—of Corinth, I thought.

“At length, another ship had seized on *us*, and, knowing whom it was their hap to save, gave healthful *welcome* to their shipwrecked ‘guests’—and would have reft the fishers of *their* prey, had not their own bark been very slow of sail.

“And therefore homeward did they bend their course.

“Thus have you heard me *severed* from my *bliss!*—how by misfortunes was my life prolonged to tell sad stories of my mishaps.”

Duke Solinus regards him. “And for the sake of them thou sorrowest for, do me the favour of relating at full what hath befall’n them and thee till now.”

Egeon pauses for a moment to remember the time after his return to Syracuse. “My younger boy, and yet my eldest *care*, at eighteen years became inquisitive after his brother, and importuned me that his attendant—as his case was alike, bereft of his brother, knowing but his name—might bear him company in a *quest* for them.

“So whilst *I* laboured for love to see *one*, I hazarded the loss of *another* whom I loved!

“*Five summers* I spent, in the farthest holdings of Greece, and roaming to the bounds of Asia; then, coasting homeward, I have come to Ephesus, hopeless of finding, yet loath to leave them *unsought*, in this or *any* place that harbours men!

“But here must end the story of my life. And happy were I in my timely death, could all my travels but warrant me that *they live!*” he says, wiping away tears.

Duke Solinus is moved. “Hapless Egeon, whom the Fates have marked to bear the extremity of dire mishap! Now, trust me, were it not against our laws—against my crown, my oath, my dignity, which princes, even would they, may not disannul—my soul would sue as *advocate* for thee!

“But, though thou art adjudgèd to the death, and passèd sentence may not be recalled but to our honour’s great disparagement, yet I will favour thee in what I can. Therefore, merchant, I’ll permit thee this *day* to seek thy health by beneficial *help*.

“Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus! Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum, and *live*; if no, then thou art doomed to die.

“Jailer, take him away in thy custody.”

The warden bows. “I will, my lord.”

Head hanging, the pathetic prisoner is to seek great charity among strangers. “Hopeless and helpless doth Egeon wend, but to procrastinate his lifeless end!”

Just before noon that same day, in a busy city market not far from the water, a tall man, an Ephesian fleet owner, urges the wealthy young shipper who has just arrived from the grain-rich farming land of Sicily to exercise caution. “Therefore give out that you are from *Epidamnum*, lest *your* goods soon be confiscated, too! This very day a Syracusan merchant is apprehended for arrival here—and, not being able to buy out his life according to the statute of the town, *dies* ere the weary sun sets in the west!”

He offers the handsome traveler a heavy leather pouch. “There is your money that I had in keeping.”

Antipholus does not intend to return to his father’s Sicilian estate until he has searched this place, too, for his lost relatives. He turns to his servant and hands him the bag of gold. “Go, bear it to The Centaur, where we hostel, and stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee.”

He looks around the sunny square. “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.” He smiles as Dromio carefully ties the sack of coins to the leather belt at his waist. “Get thee away.”

The servant, a lifelong companion, is also tired, and he looks forward to a nap. But Dromio grins, noting the heft of the gold. “Many a man would take you at your word, and *go indeed*, having so good a means!” He heads off toward the inn.

Antipholus laughs. “A *trusty* villain, sir,” he tells the magnate, “who very oft, when I am dull with care and melancholy, lightens my mood with his merry jests!

“What now?—will you walk with me about the town, and then go to my inn and dine with me?”

The Ephesian demurs. “I am invited, sir, to certain merchants with whom I hope to make much benefit! I crave your pardon; as soon as *five o’clock*, please it you, I’ll meet you upon the mart, and afterward consort with you till bed-time. My present business calls me from you now.”

“Farewell till then! I will go lose myself, and wander up and down to view the city.”

“Sir, I commend you to your own contentment.” The taller gentleman bows and starts down a long cobblestone street between shops, offices and warehouses, to his luncheon meeting.

He that commends me to mine own satisfaction commends me to the very thing I cannot get! thinks Antipholus wistfully, surveying the wide prospect of the vast, thriving seaport. *I to the world am like a drop of water that in the ocean seeks another drop!—who, falling there to find forth his fellow, as an unseen inquisitive confounds himself!*

So I, to find a mother and a brother, in unhappy quest of them do lose my self!

Here comes the almanac of my true date, thinks Antipholus, as a servant born on the same day as he hurries toward him—obviously agitated. “What, now?—how chance it thou art returned so soon?”

“Returned so soon!” gasps the man, nearly out of breath. “Rather *approach too late!* The capon *burns*, the pig *falls from the spit!* The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell—but 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 *broken your fast*. But we who know what ’tis to fast and pray are *penitent* for *your* default today!”

“Stop-in your *wind*, sir!” says Antipholus, noticing the man’s pouchless belt. “Tell me this, I pray: where have you left the *money* that I gave you?”

The servant shrugs. “Of sixpence that I had o’ Wednesday last to pay the saddler for my mistress’ crupper, the saddler had it all, sir; I kept it not.” This fellow, in his dark, undistinguished garb, looks exactly like Dromio—and is in fact that man’s twin brother, who has grown to young manhood here in Ephesus.

“I am not in a sportive humour now!” says Antipholus. “Tell me, and dally not: where is the money? We being strangers here, how darest thou trust so great a charge out of thine own custody?”

Strangers? Sixpence a *great charge*? But the servant wants to continue this odd talk with his master at home, over the midday meal. “I pray you, sir: ask as you sit at *dinner!* I from my mistress come to you *in post*; if I return alone I shall be *post* indeed, for she will score *your* fault upon *my pate!*”—add to the tally on his scalp. “Methinks *your* maw,”—hunger, “should be your clock like *mine*, and strike you home without a messenger!”

Antipholus frowns. “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?”

His gold is still with Dromio—Dromio of *Syracuse*. In the confusion of the long-ago storm at sea, after their wave-tossed mast was split, *each* of the parents believed the infant boys at hand to be the younger son, Antipholus, and his servant-to-be, Dromio. And although the two Syracusans have searched diligently—asking for men with two other names, those given to their older twins at birth—the sought-for brothers had long ago been settled here.

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

“Come *on*, Sir *Knave*, *have done* with your foolishness, and tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge!”

“My charge was but to fetch you from the mart, home to your house, The Phoenix, sir!—to *dinner!* My mistress and her sister *await* you!”

Antipholus has lost patience. “In *what safe place* have you bestowed my *money*? *Say*, or I shall break that merry sconce of yours, that stands on *tricks* when I am *undisposed!* Where is the *thousand marks* thou hadst of me?”

Dromio is baffled. “I have some marks of yours upon my *pate*, and some of my mistress’ marks upon my *shoulders*, but not a *thousand* marks between you both! If I should pay Your Worship *those* again, perchance you would not bear them *patiently!*”

“Thy *mistress’* marks? What mistress, slave, hast *thou?*” The Sicilians are both bachelors.

“Your Worship’s *wife*—my mistress at *The Phoenix*,” replies Dromio, now quite flustered. “She that doth *fast* till you come home to dinner, and prays that you will *hie you home* to dinner!”

Antipholus is irked. “What, wilt thou *flout* me thus unto my *face*, despite being *forbid?*” He swats at Dromio’s head with his feathered hat. “There, take you *that*, Sir *Knave!*”

Dromio ducks. “What *mean* you, sir? For God’s sake, hold your *hands!*” He backs away as Antipholus swings again. “Nay, if you will not, sir, I’ll take my *heels!*” He runs toward the home of his master, Antipholus of Ephesus.

Antipholus of Syracuse is sorely troubled. *Upon my life, by some device or other the villain is wrought out of all my money! They say this town is full of cozenage—by nimble jugglers that deceive the eye, dark-working sorcerers that alter the mind, soul-killing witches that deform the body, disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks, and many such-like libertines of sin! If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner!*

I’ll go to The Centaur, to seek this slave! I greatly fear my money is not safe!

At the mansion of Antipholus of Ephesus, his wife, Adriana, asks her sister, who is waiting in the kitchen, “Neither has returned?—my husband nor the slave that in such haste I sent to seek his master? Surely, Luciana, it is *two o’clock!*”

It is not quite one, and the blonde lady is calm. “Perhaps some merchant hath invited him, and from the mart he’s somewhere gone to dinner. Good sister, let us dine and never fret. *Men* are masters of their liberty—but *Time* is *their* master, and when they *see* the time, they’ll go or come. And so be patient, sister.”

“Why should *their* liberty than *ours* be more?”

“Because their business lies ever out o’ door.”

“Note when I serve *him* so, he takes it *ill!*”

“Ah, understand: he’s a bridle to your will.”

Adriana scoffs. “There’s none but *asses* will be bridled so!”

But Luciana believes in domestic accommodation. “Well, *headstrong* liberty is lashed with woe!

“There’s nothing situate under heaven’s eye but hath its covenant, on earth, in sea and sky. The beasts, the fishes, and the wingèd fowls are *their* males’ *subjects*, and under their controls.

“Men, the masters of *all* those—more *divine*, lords of the wide world and wild, watery seas, of more preeminence than fish and fowl—endued with intellectual sense and souls, are masters to their females, and their *lords*.” She regards her contentious sibling. “Then let *your* will attend on their accords.”

Adriana is disgusted. “This *servitude* makes to keep you *unwed!*”

“Not *that*,” Luciana counters pointedly, “but troubles of the *marriage bed!*” Adriana and her husband are often at odds.

“But, were you *wedded*, you would bear some *sway*...”

Luciana shakes her head. “Ere I learn *love*, I’ll practise to obey.”

Silent for a moment, Adriana stares down at her wringing hands. “How if your husband start some *other* where?”

“Till he come home again, I would forbear.”

“*Patience*” —the statue—“unmoved! No marvel that *she* pause!” cries Adriana angrily. “They *can* be meek who have no other *cause!*” —motive purpose. “A wretched soul, bruised with adversity, we bid be *quieted* when we hear it cry; but were *we* burdened with *like* weight of pain, as much or *more* would we ourselves complain! So *thou*, that hast no unkind mate to *grieve* thee, by urging *helpless patience* wouldst relieve me!

“But if thou live to see *like* nights *bereft*, this fool-begged patience in thee will be *left!*”

“Well,” says Luciana, “I *will* marry one day, if only to *find out!*” She looks toward the door; the servant has returned. “Here comes your *man*; now is your *husband* nigh?”

“Say: is your tardy master now at hand?” demands Adriana.

Says Dromio, “Nay, he’s at *two* hands with me!—and that my two *ears* can witness!” They’re still red from the cuffing.

“Say: didst thou speak with him? Know’st thou his mind?”

“*Aye, aye*, he *told* his mind—upon mine *ear!* Beshrew his hand, I scarce could understand it!”

She frowns. “Spake he so doubtfully thou couldst not feel his meaning?”

“Nay, he *struck* so plainly I could *too well* feel his blows!—withal so doughty that I could scarce *stand under them!*”

“But say, I prithee: is he coming *home*?” She adds, sourly, “It seems he hath great *care* to please his *wife!*”

Dromio shakes his head. “Why, mistress, surely my master is *gone mad!*”

Adriana’s fear is aroused: “*Horn*-mad, thou villain?”

“I mean not *cuckold*-mad!—but he is surely *stark* mad! When I desired him to come home to dinner, he asked me for *a thousand marks* in *gold!*”

“‘Tis dinner-time,’ quoth I. ‘My gold,’ quoth he. ‘Your meat doth burn,’ quoth I. ‘My gold!’ quoth he. ‘Will you come home?’ quoth I. ‘My *gold!*’ quoth he. ‘Where is the *thousand marks* I gave thee, villain?’ ‘The pig,’ quoth I, ‘is burned!’ ‘*My gold!*’ quoth he! ‘My mistress, sir—’ quoth I. ‘*Hang up* thy mistress! I know not thy *mistress; out* upon thy mistress!’”

Luciana stares. “Quoth *who?*”

“Quoth *my master!* ‘I know,’ quoth he, ‘no *house*, no *wife*, no *mistress!*’

“So that my *errand*, due only from my tongue, thanks to *him* I bear home upon my *shoulders!*—for, in conclusion, he did *beat* me there!”

“Go *back* again, thou slave,” commands Adriana, “and fetch him *home!*”

“Go back again and be newly *beaten* home?” cries Dromio. “For God’s sake, send some other messenger!”

“*Back*, slave, or *I* will break thy pate across!”

“And *he* will *bless* that cross with another beating!” wails Dromio. “*Between* you I shall have a *holy* head!”

“*Hence*, prating peasant! *Fetch thy master home!*”

“Am I as *round* with you as you are with me?—that like a foot-ball you do spurn me thus! *You* spurn me *hence*, and *he* will spurn me *hither!*”

“If I *last* in this service, you must case me in *leather!*” he grumbles, going unwillingly.

Luciana hopes to soothe her sister. “*Fie*, how impatience loureth in your face!”

But Adriana is near tears. “His *company* must do his *minions* grace, whilst *I* at home starve for a merry *look!*”

“Hath homely *age* the alluring beauty taken from my poor cheek? Then *he* hath wasted it!

“Are my discourses dull?—barren my wit? If voluble and sharp discourse be marred, *unkindness* blunts it more than marble hard!

“Do *their* gay vestments his affections bait? That’s not *my* fault: *he’s* master of my state!

“What ruins can be found in *me* that are not by *him* ruined?”

“Then, as *he’s* the ground of my defeat, my decayed *fair* a sunny look of *his* would soon *repair!* But, too-unruly deer, he breaks from the pale and feeds *away from home*—poor *I* am but his stale!”

“Self-harming *jealousy!*” warns Luciana. “*Fie*, beat it *hence!*”

But Adriana is inconsolable. “Unfeeling *fools* can with such wrongs dispense! I know his *eye* doth homage elsewhere!—or else what’s met but that he would be *here?*”

She thinks, trying to answer her own question. “Sister, you know he promised me a chain”—a necklace. “I would that that alone, *alone* him would detain; thus would he keep fair quarter with his *bed!*”

“I see that while the best-enamelled jewelry will lose its beauty, yet the *gold that others touch* abides ever warm.

“And if often-touching will *wear* on gold, yet no man that hath a *name*, by falsehood and corruption doth *it* shame!

“Since that *my* beauty cannot please his eye, I’ll *weep away* what’s left—and weeping die!” Sobbing, she storms from the kitchen.

Luciana shakes her head. “How many fond *fools* serve mad *Jealousy!*”

Antipholus of Syracuse comes out of his lodging onto the avenue. *The gold I gave to Dromio is, by computation, laid up safe here at The Centaur; and the heedful slave is, by mine host’s report, wandered forth in care to seek me out.*

Still, he is annoyed. *I could not reason with Dromio after first I sent him from the mart!* He looks down the busy street. *See, here he comes!*

Walking calmly toward him is Dromio of Syracuse.

Antipholus confronts him: “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!*’” He glares. “Wast thou *mad*, that thus so madly thou didst answer me?”

“*What* answer, sir? When spake I such a word?”

“Even *now*, even *here*, not half an hour since!”

Dromio is puzzled. “I did not see *you* since you sent me hence, home to The Centaur, with the gold you gave me.”

“*Villain*, thou didst *deny* the gold’s receipt,” says Antipholus heatedly, “and told’st me of a *mistress* and a *dinner*—for which, I hope, thou felt’st I was *displeasèd!*”

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

“Yet dost thou jeer, and flout me in the teeth? Think’st thou I *jest*? Take thou *that*,” he cries, boxing the servant’s ear, “and *that!*”

“*Hold*, sir, for God’s sake! Now your jest is *earnest!*”—*sincere*, or a *first payment*. “Upon what *contract* do you give it me?”

Antipholus scowls. “Because I *sometimes* do use you familiarly as my fool, and *chat* with you, will Your Sauciness *graze* upon my love, and make a *village common* of my serious hours?”

“When the sun *shines*, let foolish gnats make sport—but creep in crannies when it *hides* its beams! If you will jest with *me*, know my *aspect*, and fashion your demeanor to my look—or I will *beat* this method into your sconce!”

“‘*Sconce*,’ you call it? So that you would leave off battering, I had rather have it a ‘*head!*’ If you use these blows for long, I must *get* a sconce 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?”

“Dost thou not know?”

“*Nothing*, sir, but that I *am* beaten!”

“Shall I *tell* you why?”

“*Aye*, sir—and *wherefore*; for they say every why hath a wherefore.”

“*Why*, first: for *flouting* me; and then *wherefore*: for urging it the *second* time to me!”

Dromio feels frustration. “Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season?—when in the why and the wherefore is *neither* rhyme nor *reason!*” He shakes his head. “Well, sir, I thank you.”

“*Thank* me, sir? For what?”

“Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for *nothing!*”

“I’ll *correct* that next—by giving you nothing for *something!* But say, sir: is it dinner-time?”

“No, sir; I think the meat lacks what *I* have....”

His anger is abating, but Antipholus’s look advises caution. “*In good time*, sir, what’s that?”

“*Basting!*”—also a wry term for *smiting*.

Antipholus chuckles. “Well, sir, then ’twill be dry.”

“If it *be*, sir, I pray you eat none of it.”

“Your reason?”

“Lest it make you *choleric*, and purchase me *another* dry basting!”

Antipholus has calmed. “Well, sir, learn to jest in good time! There’s a time for all things.”

Dromio eyes him. “I durst have *denied* that, before you were so choleric....”

“By what rule, sir?”

“Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain pate of Father Time himself.”

Antipholus smiles. “Let’s hear it.”

“There’s *no* time for a man who grows bald by nature *to recover his hair!*”

“May he not do it by *fine* and *recovery?*”—by lawsuit for the impalpable, or by pulling it from his comb.

“Yes—for a fine *periwig*—and recover the lost hair of *another* man!”

Antipholus laughs; but then he seems to consider: “Why *is* Time such a niggard of hair, being as it is so plentiful an excretion?”

Dromio shrugs. "Because it is a blessing that he bestows on *beasts*; what he hath scanted men in hair, he hath given them in *wit!*"

"There's *many* a man hath more hair than wit!"

"And not a man among *those* with 'enough wit to lose his hair'!"—*any* good sense.

"Why, dost thou conclude that *hairy* men are plain dealers, without wit?"

Dromio nods. "The sooner it's *lost*, the *plainer* the dealer!"—*plain* can also mean *shaven*. "Yet he loseth it in a kind of *jollity!*"—by contracting syphilis; its treatment causes hair loss.

"For what reason?"

"For *two*—and sound ones, too!"

"Nay, not *sound* I pray you!" A syphilitic's testicles are not healthy.

"Sure ones, then."

"Nay, not *sure*, with a thing *failing!*" *Thing* can mean *penis*.

"*Certain* ones then."

"Name them!" demands Antipholus.

Dromio offers a man's reasons for losing hairs: "The one, to save the money that he spends in *trimming*; the other, that at dinner they should not drop in his *porridge*."

Antipholus is amused, but he challenges his man's initial argument: "You would, all this time, have proven there is not 'a time for *all* things'...."

"Marry, and *did*, sir!—namely, no time to recover hair lost by nature."

Antipholus squints an eye at him. "But your reason was not substantial; *why* is there no time to recover?"

Dromio shrugs. "Thus I'll mend it: Time *herself* is bald—and therefore to the world's end will have bald *followers!*"

Antipholus laughs. "I knew 'twould be a bald conclusion!"

"But, soft! who wafts us yonder?" He has spotted two beautiful ladies approaching—and waving to hail the men.

Cries Adriana angrily, "Aye, *aye*, Antipholus!—look *strange*, and *frown!*" He steps back warily, but she seizes his arm. "Some *other* mistress hath thy *sweet* aspects!"

"Now *I* am not *Adriana*—nor thy *wife!*" she says bitterly. "The time *was*, once, when thou *un-urgèd* wouldst vow that never were *words* music to thine *ear*, that never was *object* pleasing in thine *eye*, that never was *touch* welcome to thy *hand*, that *meat* never savored sweetly to thy *taste*, unless *I* spake or looked or touched or carved for thee!"

"*Then* thou'd call me thy dear self who was *better* than thy self's incorporate, undividable part. How comes it, my husband, *oh* how comes it *now*, that thou art estrangèd from *thyself?*"

The Syracusan—confounded at hearing a stranger call him by name—pulls his arm free.

"*Ah*, do not tear away thyself from me!" she pleads. "For know, my love, as easily mayest thou let fall a drop of water into the breaking gulf and take again that same drop, unmingled, without addition or diminishing, as take *me* from thyself *and not thee too!*"

"How *dearly* would it touch *thee*—*cut to the quick!*—shouldst thou but hear *I* were licentious, and that this body, consecrated to thee, by ruffian *lust* should be *contaminated!* Wouldst thou not *spit* at me and *spurn* me, and hurl the name of '*hussy*' in my face, and tear the stained skein"—veil—"off my *harlot* brow?—and from my false hand pull the wedding ring, and *break it* with a deep, divorcing vow!"

"I know thou *canst*—but therefore *see that thou do it not!* I am possessed of an *adulterate* blot—my blood *is* mingled with the crime of lust!—for if we two be *one* and *thou* play false, I do digest the poison of thy flesh—become *strumpeted* by *thy contagion!*"

Tears well in her eyes. "Keep then fair league and truce with thy *true* bed, and *I* live unstainèd, *thou* undishonoured!"

Antipholus blinks, amazed. "Plead you to *me*, fair dame? *I know you not!* In Ephesus I am but two hours old, as strange unto your *town* as to your *talk!*—one who, having scanned every word with all my wit, lacks wit to *understand* a word of it!"

“*Fie*, brother-in-law!” cries Luciana. “How the world is *changèd* with you! When were you wont to use my sister thus? By Dromio she sent for you, home to dinner—”

“By *Dromio*?” asks Antipholus of Syracuse.

“By *me*?” asks Dromio of Syracuse.

“By *thee*!” Adriana tells him angrily. “And *this* thou didst *return* from him: that he did *buffet thee*—and, with his blows, denied my house for *his*, me for his *wife*!”

Antipholus regards his man. “*Did* you converse, sir, with this gentlewoman? What is the course and drift of your *compact*?”

“*I*, sir? I never *saw* her till this time!”

“Villain, thou *liest*!—for even *her very words* didst thou deliver to me at the mart!”

“I never spake with her in all my *life*!” insists Dromio.

“How can she thus then call us by our *names*?—unless it be by *inspiration*!”—supernatural intervention.

Adriana glares at Antipholus. “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!”

“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 commensurate,” she says gently, trying to sound more agreeable. “If aught recess thee from me, it is *dross*!—usurping ivy, brier, or idle moss; all infect thy sap by intrusion—and for want of *pruning*, live on my confusion!”

Antipholus stares. *To me she speaks! She moves me for her themes! What?—was I married to her in my dreams? 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. He allows himself to be tugged along toward the mansion they call The Phoenix.

Luciana is leading the way. “Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner,” she tells him.

But the man is trembling—and mumbling: “*Oh, for my beads!* I *cross* me for a *sinner*! This is the *fairy land*!—we talk with *goblins, owls* and *elves*! *Oh*, the *spite* of sprites!—if we *obey* them not, this will ensue: they'll suck our breath, or *pinch us black and blue*!”

“Why pratest thou to thyself and answer'st not?” demands Luciana. “Dromio—thou, *Dromio*!—thou *sot*, thou *slug*, thou *snail*!”

Her terms imply—to him—that he's been bewitched so. “I am *transformèd*, master!—am I not?” he asks, wide-eyed.

Antipholus shakes his head. “I think thou art in right mind—and so am I.”

“*Nay*, master—neither in mind nor in my *shape*!”

Says Antipholus, “Thou hast thine own form.”

“No,” says the servant, looking at Luciana, “I am an *ape*!”

Luciana, annoyed, pushes him forward. “If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an *ass*!”

Thinks Dromio: *'Tis true: she rides me, and I long for grass! 'Tis so!—I am an ass!—else it could never be but that I would know her as well as she knows me!*

And so the Syracusans soon enter the tall house of the Ephesian Antipholus and his worried wife.

Adriana, at home again, regains her composure—and annoyance. “Come, come, no longer will I be a fool, to put the fingers over eyes and weep whilst man and master *laugh my woes to scorn*! Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.” She heads toward the front stairs. “Husband, I'll dine above with you today—and shrive you of these thousand idle pranks!”

“Sirrah,” she tells Dromio, left to wait by the door, “if any ask you for your master, say he dines *forth*, and let no creature enter! Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well!”

Antipholus wonders: *Am I on earth, in heaven, or in hell? Sleeping or waking? Mad or well-advisèd? Known unto these, and to myself disguisèd?*

I'll say as they say, and persevere so, and in this mist to all adventures go!
Dromio—hungry—protests: “Master, shall I be porter at the gate?”
Adriana answers. “Aye!—and let none *enter*, lest I break your pate!” She climbs the stairs.
The gentleman observes lovely Luciana closely as she raises the hem of her soft gown a little at the first step.
“Come, come, Antipholus,” she says, smiling, “we dine too late!”
Even when she chides she is charming. He follows her up the stairs—again watching.

Chapter Two Within and Without

Now, at half past one, Antipholus and his man come home for the midday meal. With them are a renowned Ephesian goldsmith and a rotund Epidamian nobleman, whose interests in Mediterranean commerce are varied, and some of them quite remote.

Antipholus tells the slender old jeweler, “Good Signior Angelo, you must provide the excuse for 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,”—the gold necklace, embedded with precious stones, he has promised to Adriana, “and that tomorrow you will *bring* it here!”

He frowns at Dromio. “But *there’s* the villain that would *face me down*—say 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?”

Dromio resents the accusation. “Say what you will, sir, but I know what I *know*!”

“That you beat me at the mart, I’d have your *hand* show: if skin were *parchment* and the blows you gave were *ink*, your hand’s own ‘writing’ would *tell* you what I think!”

Antipholus scoffs: “*I* think thou art an ass!”

“Marry, so it doth *appear*!—by the wrongs I *bear* and the blows I *stand for*! I should *kick* when kicked; and, being at that pass, you’d keep away from my heels—and *beware* of thy *ass*!”

Antipholus dismisses the complaint with a wave, and turns again to his guests. “You’re solemn, Signior Balthazar; pray God our cheer”—dinner fare—“may answer my good will and your good *welcome* here!”

The fat merchant would be just as courteous: “I hold delicacies cheap, sir, but your *welcome* dear!”

“Oh, Signior Balthazar, either at flesh or fish, a *tableful* of welcome makes scarcely one dainty *dish*,” says Antipholus, the modest host.

The guest tries, if ineptly, for the last polite comment: “A good *meal*, sir, is common; that *every* table affords.”

“And welcome *more* common; for that’s nothing but *words*,” says Antipholus.

“Small cheer and great welcome make a *merry* fest!”

“Aye—to a niggardly host, and more sparing guest!” counters Antipholus, as he goes to the entrance. “But though my cakes be plain, take them in good part; better cheer you may have—but not with better *heart*!”

“But, soft—my door is *locked*.” He orders Dromio, snappishly, “Go bid them let us in.” He steps back.

The servant, still peeved, approaches the door and bellows out, “*Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicel, Gillian, Ginn!*”—the female servants.

Inside, Syracusan Dromio, waiting crossly at the porter’s post—usually occupied by his locked-out brother—calls back: “*Minim, malt-horse, capon, coxcomb, idiot, patch!* Either get thee from the door, or sit down at the latch!” The Sicilian rustic is wary of famously corrupt city

people. “Dost thou *conjure* for wenches, that thou call’st for such a store? Then *one* is *one too many!* Go, get thee from the door!”

Outside his house, Dromio is irked. “What *puppet’s* made our *porter*? My *master* stays in the *street!*” he shouts.

“Then let him walk whence he came, lest he catch cold in’s feet!” is the rejoinder.

Antipholus moves closer to the entrance. “Who talks within there? *Ho!*—*open the door!*”

“*Right, sir!*” laughs the new porter. “I’ll tell you *when*, if you tell me *wherefore.*”

“*Wherefore?* For my *dinner!* I have not *dined* today!”

“And *here* today you *must* not,” calls the mocking man. “Come again when you *may.*”

Antipholus is angry now. “Who art thou that keepest me out of *the house I own?*”

“The porter for *this* time, sir; and my name is Dromio.”

Outside, Dromio of Ephesus fumes. “*Oh, villain!*—thou hast stolen both mine *office* and my *name!* The one ne’er got me credit, the other too much blame. If thou hadst been Dromio *today* in my place, thou wouldst have exchanged *again:* thy name for ‘an ass,’ and thy face for a plain!”

Inside, a comely young kitchen-maid has heard the disturbance and has come to the front door. “*What a coil* is there, Dromio! Who *are* those at the gate?”

Dromio, outside, hears her. “Let my master *in, Luce!*” he calls.

But the fair girl, sure her master is dining upstairs, hears the voice of an impostor. “I’ faith, *no!* He’s come too late—and so tell *your* master!” she adds, defiantly.

Dromio of Ephesus has sparred with her before. “Oh, Lord, I must laugh! Have at you with a *proverb:* ‘Shall I *set in my staff?*’”—make *camp* here; also a crude meaning.

“Have at you with another,” replies Luce. “That’s: ‘*When?* Can you not *tell?*’”—clearly, never.

Dromio of Syracuse is impressed with the saucy young woman at his side. “If thy name be called Luce, thou hast *answered* him loose as well!”

But the lord of the mansion is furious. “*Do you hear,* you *minion!* You’ll *let us in,* I hope!”

Luce torments him: “I *thought* to have asked you....” she says mildly, as if considering.

Syracusan Dromio laughs, watching her. He tells those outside. “But *you* said ‘*No!*’”

“So,” mumbles Ephesian Dromio. “*Some help!*” he calls, and strikes the door angrily with a fist; when his brother pounds it in return, he taunts “Well *struck!* *There* was blow for blow!”

Antipholus is now banging on the door. “Thou *baggage,* let me *in!*” he roars.

Luce asks the stranger, “Can you tell for *whose* sake?”

Outside, Ephesian Dromio, vexed, hopes to attract the attention of another householder, Nell, who is affianced to him. “Master, *pound* it *hard!*”

“Let him *beat* it till it *ache,*” says pert Luce. The “porter” laughs at the ribaldry.

Antipholus is livid. “You’ll *cry* for this, minion, if I beat the *door* down!”

“What needs I fear *that?*—we have a pair of *stocks* in the town!” She doubts that the would-be intruder will break into a wealthy man’s home in afternoon sunshine.

Now Adriana, drawn downstairs by the commotion, joins Luce and Dromio. “Who is that at the door that makes all this noise?”

Says the new porter, “By my troth, your town is troubled with *unruly boys!*”

“Are *you* there, wife?” cries Antipholus. “You might have come *before!*”

Adriana, having, in her view, just left her husband at the table, frowns. “Your *wife,* Sir *Knave?* *Go!*—get you from the door!”

“If you took in *pain,* master,” says Ephesian Dromio, “*that* knave would go away *sore!*”

The goldsmith is aware of his foreign business associate’s growing impatience—and he wants to eat lunch. “Here is no cheer, sir, nor welcome; we would fain have either....”

The portly gentleman concurs. “Debating which was *better,* we shall depart with *neither.*”

Urges locked-out Dromio, “They *stand at the door,* master!—bid them welcome *thither.*”

Antipholus turns apologetically to his guests. “There is something in the wind, such that we cannot get in.”

“You would say *that*, master, if your *garments* were thin,” says the servant sourly. “Your cake is warm within; *you* stand here in the *cold*! It makes a man mad as a buck, to be so *bought and sold*!”

“Go fetch me something!” growls Antipholus. “I’ll *break ope this gate*!”

Inside Dromio warns: “Break out any breaking *here* and I’ll break your *knave’s pate*!”

“A man may break his *word* with you, sir,” calls his counterpart, “for *your* words are but wind!” He laughs. “*Aye—aye*, and break it in your *face*, if he break it not *behind*!”—as in *break wind*.

Porter Dromio is defiant. “It seems thou *want’st* breaking! *Out* upon thee, *hind*!”

“There’s *too much* ‘out’ upon thee!—I pray thee let me *in*!”

Behind the strong, barred door, Dromio only laughs. “*Aye*—when fowls have no feather and fishes have no fin!”

Antipholus is irate. “Well, I’ll break in! Go borrow me a crow!”

“A crow *without feathers*!” says his man angrily. “Master, mean you so? For the *fish* there within is *foul* without *fin*!” He warns the new porter: “If a crow help us in, sirrah, we’ll *pluck* a crow!”

Antipholus waves him away. “*Go*, get thee *gone*! Fetch me an iron crow!”

“Have *patience*, sir,” says the portly trader, Balthazar; he has had his fill of this domestic disputation, and he sees that Antipholus fully intends to *assault a door*—in *public*. “Herein you war against your *reputation*!—and draw within the compass of suspicion the unviolated honour of your *wife*! Oh, let it not be so! Once this—”

Balthazar lifts a palm gently to calm red-faced Antipholus. “Your long *experience* of her wisdom, her sober virtue, years and modesty,” he persists, “plead on her part some *cause* to you unknown! And doubt not, sir, but that she will well explain why at this time the doors are made against you.

“Be ruled by me: depart in *patience*, and let us all go to The Tiger for dinner. Then, about evening, come yourself here alone, to know the reason for this strange restraint.

“If by strong hand you offer to *break in* now, in the stirring passage of the day the vulgar’s comment will be made on it!—and something supposed by the common rout against your yet-ungallèd estimation that may with foul intrusion enter it, and dwell upon your grave when you are dead! For slander lives upon succession, forever housed where it gets possession.”

Antipholus nods grudging agreement. “You have prevailed: I will depart in quiet; and, in despite of wrath, I mean to be *merry*!”

Still, he craves retaliation for Adriana’s rude rejection. “I know a wench of excellent discourse, pretty and witty—wild, and yet, too, *gentle*. *There* will we dine.

“This woman that I mean, my wife hath oftentimes upbraided me withal—but, I protest, without my *deserving*. To her will we for dinner!”

He addresses Angelo, the goldsmith. “Get you home and fetch the *chain*; by now, I know, ’tis made. Bring it, I pray you, to The Porpentine, for there’s a *house*. That chain will I bestow—be it for nothing but to *spite my wife*—upon mine *hostess* there!

“Good sir, make haste. Since *mine own* doors refuse to entertain me, I’ll knock *elsewhere*, to see if *they’ll* disdain me!”

The necklace is a very costly piece of custom work, so the hungry jeweler bows. “I’ll meet you at that place an hour hence.”

“Do so.” Looking back at his house as they leave, Antipholus frowns again. “This ‘jest’ shall cost me some expense!”

Within The Phoenix, Luciana has come down the stairs with her brother-in-law—as she believes the fine-looking gentleman to be. Her unhappy sister has been left alone after dining—and once again near tears.

Luciana takes him to task. “May it be that you have quite *forgotten a husband’s office*, Antipholus? Even in the *spring* of love, shall thy love-springs *rot*?—shall love-in-building grow so *ruinous*?

“If you did wed my sister for her *wealth*, 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!

“Look fair, be sweet; in a *becoming* 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 *secretly* false! ’Tis a *double* wrong, being truant from your *bed* and letting her read it in thy looks at *board*!

“Be not *thy* tongue thy shame’s orator! What need *she* be acquainted? What simple thief *brags*, to his own *attaint*? *Shame* hath a bastard: *fame* well *managed*!—for ill *deeds* are doubled by an evil *word*!

“Alas, poor *women*! Make us, being compounded of credit,”—credulous by constitution, “but *believe* that you love us! Though others have the arm, show us the *sleeve*!—we in *your* motion turn, and so you may move us.

“Then, gentle brother, get you in again!—*comfort* my sister, *cheer* her—call her *wife*! ’Tis *holy* sport to offer a little artifice, when the sweet breath of flattery conquers *strife*!”

The Syracusan is enchanted by his lovely new tutor—but not by her argument. “Sweet mistress—what your *name* is else, I know not, nor by what wonder you do know *mine*—in your knowledge and your grace you show not less than our earth’s *wonder*—*more* than earth: *divine*!

“Teach me, dear creature, how to *think* and *speak*,” he says, as he gazes into her blue eyes. “Lay open to *my* earthly, gross perception—smothered in *errors*, feeble, shallow, *weak*—the folded *meaning* in your words—on *deceit*!”

He frowns. “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 anew?”

“*Transform* me, then, and to your power I’ll yield! But if I am *I*, then well know that your weeping sister is *no wife of mine*, nor to her bed do I owe any homage!

“Far more, *far* more, to *you* do I incline! Oh, urge me not, with thy sweet mermaid notes, to drown me in thy *sister’s* flood of tears! Sing, siren, for *thyself*, and I will *dote*! Spread o’er those silver waves thy golden hairs, and as a bed I’ll take them, and *there* lie”—instead of lying to Adriana. “And in that glorious supposition, think he *gains* by death, who hath such means to die!

“Let *Love*, being *light*,”—Cupid, open to suggestion, “be drownèd if *I* sink!”

Luciana is taken aback. “What?—are you *mad*, that you do reason so?”

“Not mad, but *mated*!—how, I do not know.”

“It is a *fault* that springeth from your *eye*!”

“For gazing into *your beams*, fair sun, being by!”

“Gaze where you *should*, and that will clear your sight!”

“As good to *close eyes*, sweet love, as look on *night*.”

“Why call you *me* love?” asks Luciana, more alarmed. “Call my *sister* so!”

“Thy sister’s *sister*.”

“That’s *my* sister.”

“*No*—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 earth’s sole *heaven*, and my heaven’s *claim*!”

“All this my *sister* is—or else *should* be!”

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

Luciana, distraught, frowns at the gentleman—who *is*, she realizes uncomfortably, quite handsome. She tells him, with harsh sarcasm, “Oh, *soft*, sir, hold you still; I’ll fetch my *sister*—to get *her* good will!”—*permission*.

She storms away, to Adriana.

Dromio of Syracuse, abandoning his post at the door, has wandered farther into the house to look for the lithe and lively Miss Luce; he was fed in the kitchen—but soon fled from Ephesian Dromio's corpulent wife-to-be, Nell. He sees his perplexed master coming down the stairs, ruminating on the day's strange happenings.

"Why, how now, Dromio!" says Antipholus. "Where run'st thou so fast?"

"Do you *know* me, sir?—*am* I Dromio? Am I your man? Am I *myself*?"

"Thou *art* Dromio, thou art my man, thou art thyself."

"I am an *ass*!" groans the servant. "I am a *woman's* man!—only *besides* my self."

Antipholus frowns. "*What* woman's man?—and how *besides* thy self?"

"Marry, sir, I am *beside my self* to be due to a woman!—one that *claims* me, one that *haunts* me, one that *will have me*!" he cries fearfully.

"What claim lays she to *thee*?"

"Marry, sir, such claim as *you* would lay to your *horse*!—and she would *have me* as a *beast*!"

He amends: "Not that she would have me *be* a beast, but that *she*, being a very *beastly* creature, lays *claim* to me!"

"What is she?"

Dromio spreads his fingers widely, holding both cupped hands before his chest in awe. "A very *reverent body*!—aye, such a one as a man may not *speak of* without he does it reverence!" He wags his head, though. "I'd have but *lean luck* in the match, even if is she a wondrous fat marriage!"

"How dost thou mean a *fat* marriage?"

"Marry, sir, she's the *kitchen* wench, and *all grease*! 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 that her rags and the tallow in them will burn for a *Poland winter*! If she live till *doomsday*, she'll burn a week longer than *the whole world*!"

"What complexion is she of?"

"*Swart*, like my boot, but her face kept nothing half so *clean*! As for *why*: she *sweats*!—a man may *sink shoes* in the grime of it!"

Antipholus shrugs. "That's a fault that water will mend."

"No, sir, 'tis *ingrained*!—*Noah's flood* could not do it!"

"What's her name?"

"*Nell*, sir. But her name and *three quarters* will measure *her* from hip to hip—that's 'an ell and three quarters!'" He exaggerates, of course: her circumference is not seventy-eight inches.

"Then she bears some *breadth*!"

"And no longer from *head* to *foot* than hip to hip; she is *spherical*, like a globe!—I could find out *countries* on her!"

Antipholus laughs. "In what part of her body stands *Ireland*?"

"Marry, in her *buttocks*—I found it out by the *bogs*!"—by reek.

"Where *Scotland*?"

"I found *it* by the *barrenness*—my hand in the *palm of her hand*!"

"Where *France*?"

"In her forehead—*bristling* and *revolting*, making war against her *hair*!" The French recently opposed a royal heir's ascension.

"Where *England*?"

"I looked at the chalky *cliffs*,"—broken upper teeth, "but could find no *whiteness* in them. From the salt rheum"—effluent—"that ran between her eyes and *chin*, I'd guess it stood in *it*."

"Where *Spain*?"

"I' faith, I saw it not—but I *felt* it—*hot* in her *breath*!"

"Where *America*, the *Indies*?"

Droll Dromio pictures a thin-line, tinted map of new-world lands. “Oh, sir, upon her *nose!*—all o’er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, descending in their rich aspect past the hot breath of Spain,”—it’s a long nose, “and sent to balance before whole *armadoes* of brown boats”—moles—“below!”

Antipholus grins. “Where stood the Netherlands?”

The man laughs. “*Oh, sir!*—I did not *look that low*”—a play on *low lands*; much of the country is below sea level. “To conclude, this drudge, or *diviner*,”—she has inexplicable knowledge of him, “*laid claim* to me!—called me *Dromio*, swore I was *betrothed* to her—told me what privy marks I had about me—as the bruises on my shoulders, a mole on my neck, a great wart on my arm—such that, amazed, I *ran* from her as from a *witch!*”

“And I think if my chest had not been made of *faith* and my heart of *steel*,”—a comical reversal of the customary phrase, “she’d have *transformed* me into a *curtal dog!*—and made me *turn the wheel!*”—walk in a circle, tied so as to revolve a spit on which meat is roasting.

Antipholus has heard enough about weirdness in Ephesus; he finds the city increasingly perilous. “*Go*, hie thee immediately, run to the sea! If the wind blows *any* way from shore, I will not harbour in this town tonight! If any bark is to put forth, come to the mart, where I will walk till thou return to me.

“When everyone knows *us* and we know *none*, ’tis time, I think, to trudge!—*pack* and be *gone!*”

Dromio agrees—and heartily. “As from a *bear* a man would run for life, so fly *I* from her that would be my *wife!*” He hurries away on his mission.

His Syracusan master, too, leaves the house, following the man past the heavy front door, now unlocked. *There’s none but witches do inhabit here, and therefore ’tis high time that I were hence!*

She that doth call me husband, my soul doth not for a wife adore. But her fair sister, possessed with such a gentle, sovereign grace!—of such enchanting presence and discourse!—hath almost made me traitor to my self! But, lest myself be guilty of self-wrong, I’ll stop mine ears against the mermaid’s song!

Just down the street, he encounters a relieved Signior Angelo—whom he does not know.

“*Master Antipholus!*”

“Aye, that’s my name....”

“I know it well, sir! *Lo*, here is the *chain!*” He hands Antipholus a beautiful gold necklace, sparkling with jewels. “I thought to have taken it to you at The Porpentine, but the chain, unfinished, made me stay thus long.”

Antipholus holds the up piece, admiring its quality and excellent workmanship. “What is your will that I shall do with this?”

Angelo smiles. “What please yourself, sir!—I have made it for you.”

“Made it for *me*, sir? I bespoke it not.”

Angelo laughs. “Not once, nor twice, but *twenty* times you have! Go home with it, and please your *wife* withal,” he advises kindly, “and soon at supper-time I’ll visit you, and receive then my money for the chain.” He bows and turns away.

Antipholus admires the necklace, but he certainly wouldn’t steal it; he offers to pay the goldsmith. “I pray you, sir, receive the money *now*, for fear you see neither money nor chain again!”

“You *are* a merry man, sir!” chuckles Angelo. “Fare you well!” His visitor is waiting; he turns and hurries back down the avenue toward his shop.

Antipholus, amazed, examines the still-warm gold. *What I should think of this, I cannot tell! But this I do think: there’s no man so plain he would refuse so fair an offered chain! I see a man here need not live by shifts, when in the streets he meets such golden gifts!*

He lays the elegant piece upon his chest and reaches back to close the clasp; the metal gleams against his black doublet.

I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay; if any ship put out—then straight away!

Chapter Three Charges and Bonds

At the door of his shop, Angelo encounters Balthazar, the Ephesian merchant—who is accompanied by a constable.

The portly trader tells the goldsmith, “You know that since *Pentecost* the sum is *due*, and since then I have not much importuned you—nor would I *now*, but that I am bound for Persia, and need guilders for my voyage. Therefore make immediate satisfaction, or I'll attach you by this officer.”

Angelo smiles and nods. “Even just the sum that I do owe to *you* is owed to *me* by Antipholus,” he assures his supplier, “and in the instant I met with him, he had from me the chain! At five o'clock I shall receive the money for the same. If it pleaseth you to walk with me down to his house, I will discharge my bond—and *thank* you too!”

The officer points. “That labour you may save; see where he comes.”

Two other Ephesians, Antipholus and Dromio, are emerging from The Porpentine, an inn, and the busy abode of a woman of considerable—and widely enjoyed—charms.

Antipholus, still angry, hands Dromio a silver coin. “While I go to the goldsmith's house, go thou and buy a *rope's end*”—used for punishing. “*That* will I bestow among my wife and her confederates for *locking me out of my doors* today!

“But, soft... I see the goldsmith. Get thee gone; buy thou a rope and bring it home to me.”

Dromio goes, thinking, unhappily, *If I buy a penny rope, I buy a thousand marks a year!*

Antipholus shows his annoyance as Angelo approaches him, along with the merchant and the officer. “A man's trust in *you* is well *held up*”—delayed, as opposed to *upheld*, he says sourly. “I promised your presence and the *chain*—but *neither* chain nor goldsmith *came* to me!”

He knows the graybeard disapproves of his acquaintance with the hostess of The Porpentine. “Belike you thought our love would *last* too long if it were *chained* together, and therefore came not!”

Angelo—having delivered the necklace, however late—cheerfully hands him a paper. “Saving your merry humour, here's the note of how much your chain weighs, the fineness of the gold, to the utmost carat, and the charge for fashioning.

“Which doth amount to three-odd ducats more than I stand indebted to *this* gentleman; I pray you, see him presently discharged, for he is bound to sea, and stays but for that.”

“I am not presently furnished with the money,” says Antipholus. “Besides, I have some business in the town. Good signior, take the stranger to my house, and with you take the chain, and bid my wife disburse the sum on the receipt thereof. Perchance I will be there as soon as you.”

“Then you will bring the chain to her yourself?” asks Angelo.

“No, bear it with you, lest I come not in time enough.”

“Well, sir; I will.” He regards the Antipholus expectantly. “Have you the chain about you?”

“If I have not, sir, I hope *you* have!—or else you may return *without* your money!”

“Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me the chain!” pleads Angelo. “Both wind and tide stay for this gentleman, and I, to my blame, have held him here too long!”

Says Antipholus wryly, “Good Lord!—you used *dalliance*”—also a term for *an affair*—“to excuse your breach of the promise to come to The Porpentine! I should have *chid* you for not bringing it but, like a shrew, you *first* begin to brawl!”

Says the foreign merchant testily, “The hour steals on...”

Angelo tells Antipholus, “I pray you, sir, dispatch!—you hear how he importunes me!” He holds out a hand. “The chain.”

Antipholus frowns. "Well, give it to my wife, and fetch your money!"

"Come, come, you know I gave it to *you* even now! Either send the *chain* with me, or send some *token*—"

"*Fie!* Now you run this humour *out of breath!*"—take the prank too far. "Where's the chain?" demands Antipholus. "I pray you, let me *see* it!"

But Angelo's creditor is out of time. "My business cannot brook this *dallying!* Good sir, say whether you'll answer me or no," Balthazar tells Antipholus. "If not, I'll leave him to the officer!"

"I answer you! What should I answer *you?*"

"The money that you owe me for the chain!" cries Angelo.

"I owe you none till I *receive* the chain!"

"You know I gave it to you half an hour since!"

"You gave me *none!*" says Antipholus. "You wrong me much to *say* so!"

"You wrong me *more*, sir, in denying it! Consider how it stands upon my *credit!*"

"Well, officer, *arrest him*, at my suit," says Balthazar.

"I *do*," says the constable, "and charge you in the duke's name to obey me," he tells Angelo, grasping his arm.

The goldsmith is angry. "This touches me in reputation!" he tells Antipholus. "Either consent to pay this sum for me, or I attach *you* by this officer!"

"Consent to *pay* thee for *what I never had?* Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou *darest!*"

From his leather purse, Angelo draws money; he hands it to the constable. "Here is thy fee; *arrest* him, officer! I would not spare my *brother* in this case, if he should scorn me so flagrantly!"

"I do arrest you, sir. You hear the suit."

Antipholus is livid, but he nods to the constable. "I do obey thee, till I give thee bail." He glares at Angelo. "*But, sirrah*, you shall pay for this sport as dear as *all the metal in your shop* will answer!"

"Sir, sir, I will have *law* in Ephesus!—to your notorious *shame*, I doubt it not!" cries the goldsmith.

They are interrupted by Dromio of Syracuse, returning from his visit to the docks in search of passage from Ephesus. He approaches the gentleman he thinks sent him to find a departing vessel.

"Master, there is a bark of Epidamnum that stays but till her owner comes aboard; and then, sir, she bears away!" Dromio is pleased with his accomplishments. "Our luggage, sir, I have conveyed aboard, and I have bought the oil, the balsamum, and *aqua vitae!*"—to soothe a voyager's stomach, freshen a dank cabin, and lift the spirits. Dromio rubs his hands together happily. "The ship is in her trim; a merry wind blows fair from land; they stay for nought at all but for their owner, master, and yourself!"

Antipholus stares at him. "*How now?*—a *madman!* Why, thou bleating *sheep*, what ship of Epidamnum stays for *me?*"

"The ship you *sent* me to to hire *waftage.*"

"Thou *drunken slave*, I sent thee for a *rope!*—and told thee to what purpose and what end!" he adds, with a menacing look.

Cries Dromio, "You'd as soon send me *to a rope's end!*"—to hang. "You sent me to the *bay*, sir, for a *ship!*"

Antipholus has a more immediate concern. "I will debate this matter at more leisure, and teach your *ears* to listen with more *heed!*"

"To *Adriana*, villain, *hie thee straight!* Give her this key, and tell her that, in the desk that's covered o'er with a Turkish tapestry, there is a *purse of ducats*; let her *send* it!"

"Tell her I am *arrested in the street*, and that that shall *bail* me! *Hie* thee, slave—be gone!"

“On, officer, to prison till it come,” says the gentleman. The constable, the merchant and Angelo follow him.

Poor Syracusan Dromio, now totally perplexed, simply gapes as Antipholus of Ephesus strides away angrily.

The servant sees his escape escaping. *To Adriana!—that is where we dined—where ‘Dowsabel’ did claim me for her husband! She is too big, I hope, for me to compass!*

He moans. *Thither I must, although against my will, for servants must their masters’ minds fulfil.*

He trudges back toward The Phoenix—where further mystery and trouble loom.

Adriana’s sister has told her about the conversation with—she thinks—her brother-in-law. “*Oh, Luciana!—did he tempt thee so? Mightst thou perceive plainly in his eye that he did plead in earnest? Yea or no? Looked he flushed, or pale?—serious, or merry? What observation madest thou? Is this a case of his heart—or but meteors’ tilting in his fate!*”—bad astrology.

“First he *denied!*—said you had in him no right.”

“He meant he *did* me none!—the more my spite!”

“Then swore he that he was a *stranger* here.”

“And truly he swore, though yet *forsworn* he were!” says Adriana bitterly.

“Then pleaded I for you.”

“And what said he?”

“That love I begged for *you* he begged of *me!*”

“With what persuasion did he tempt thy love?”

“With words that in an *honest* suit might move,” Luciana admits. “First he did praise my beauty, then my speech.”

“*Didst* speak him fair?” asks Adriana sharply.

Luciana, unoffended, touches her sister’s hand. “Have patience, I beseech....”

“I *cannot*, nor I *will* not hold me still!—my tongue, though not my *heart*, shall have its *will!*” She thinks of her husband. “He is *deformèd*—crooked, old and sere; ill *facèd*, worse *bodied*, shapeless everywhere!—*vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind!*—stigmatical in *making*, worse in *mind!*”

Luciana smiles gently. “Who would be *jealous*, then, of such a one? No *evil* lost is bewailèd when it is gone.”

Despite her fears, Adriana loves her husband. “Oh, I *think* him better than I *say*—and yet would that in *others’* eyes he were worse! Far from her nest away, a wavering lapwing *cries*; my heart *prays* for him, though my tongue do curse.”

Dromio of Syracuse arrives, gasping. “*Here! Go—the desk, the purse!*” He wipes sweat from his face with a sleeve. “Sweet *now!*—make *haste!*”

Luciana’s eyes narrow at his urgent demand for money. “How hast thou lost thy breath?” she asks.

“By running fast!” he wheezes.

“Where is thy master, Dromio?” asks Adriana. “Is he well?”

“No, he’s in *Tartar limbo*—worse than Hell! A *devil* in an everlasting garment hath him!—one whose hard heart is buttoned up with steel!—a *fiend!*—a *Fury*, pitiless and rough!—a *wolf!*

“Nay, worse: a fellow all in *buff!*—a *back-friend*, a *shoulder-clapper!*”—a law officer who feigns good will to make arrests; Dromio despises constables, who are protected by tan-leather coats, as predatory. “One that countermands passage through alleys, creeks and narrow lands!”—skulking. “A hound that runs *counter*, and yet draws Dryfoot well!”—betrays other commoners. “One that *before the Judgment* carries poor souls to *hell!*”—a term for prison.

Wide-eye, Adriana demands, “Why, man, what is the matter?”

Dromio takes that as a legal question: “I do not *know* the *matter*”—the facts. “He is arrested on the *charge!*”—accusation.

“*What?*—is he *arrested?* Tell me at whose suit!”

“At whose suit he is arrested I know not well; but he’s in a *suit of buff* who ’rested him, that I *can* tell!” He peers at the lady. “Will you send him *redemption* mistress?—the money in his desk!”

Adriana nods. “Go fetch it, sister!” Luciana looks for the sack of angels—gold coins, so called because of the image stamped on each. “This I *wonder* at, that he, unknown to *me*, should be *in debt!* Tell me, was he arrested on a *band?*”—for a bond obligation.

“Not a *band* but a *stronger* thing: a *chain, a chain!*” He looks around sharply. “Do you not hear it ring?”

“What, the chain?”

“No, no, the *bell!* ’tis time that I were *gone!* It was two ere I left him, but now the clock strikes one!”

“The hours *come back?*—that did *I* never hear!”

“Oh, *yes!*—if any hour meet a *sergeant*, it turns back for very *fear!*”

The gentlewoman scoffs. “As if *Time* were in debt! How foolishly thou dost reason!”

“Time is a wary *bankrupt*, and owes more than he’s worth to each season! Aye, he’s a *thief*, too!—have you not heard men say that time comes *stealing* on, by night and day? If Time be in debt and theft, and a sergeant is in the way, hath he not *reason* to turn back an hour in a day?”

Luciana returns with a leather purse fat with gold.

Adriana hands it to the man. “*Go*, Dromio! There’s the money; bear it straight!—and bring thy master home immediately!

“Come, sister. I am pressed down by *conceits*”—imaginings. She wonders about the promised gold chain—and for whom it is now intended. “*Conceits* for my comfort, and my *injury!*”

Waiting eagerly on the street for word about his hoped-for voyage to anywhere away from ominous Ephesus, Syracusan Antipholus continues to marvel at how oddly he—a stranger—has been greeted here.

There’s not a man I meet but doth salute me as if I were his well-acquainted friend—and every one doth call me by my name! Some tender money to me; some invite me; some others give me thanks for kindnesses; some offer me commodities to buy!

Even now a tailor called me into his shop and showed me silks that he had bought for me!—and therewithal took measure of my body!

Surely these are but imaginative wiles, and northern sorcerers inhabit here!

He is relieved when Dromio of Syracuse runs up to him, again gasping for breath.

“Master, here’s the gold you sent me for!” He is surprised to find Antipholus free—and wearing a neck chain. “What?—have you appareled anew the picture of old Adam?”

His master, too, is puzzled. “What gold is this?” He stares at the disheveled, sweating servant. “What Adam dost thou mean?”

“Not that Adam that kept the Paradise, but the Adam that keeps the *prison!*—he that goes about in the calf’s skin that was killed for the *Prodigal!*—he that *came up behind you*, sir, like an evil angel, and bid you forsake your *liberty!*”—the deputy who arrested Ephesian Antipholus.

“I understand thee not....”

“No? Why, ’tis a *plain case*: he went like a *bass viol!*”—Dromio pronounces it *base, vile*—“in a case of *leather!*—the man, sir, that, when gentlemen are *tired*, gives them a sop—then *rests* them! He, sir, that takes *pity* on decayed men by giving them suits—of *durance!* He that sets up *his* rest, doing more exploits with the *mace* than a *morris-pole!*”—capturing more men with his club than the festive staff lures dancers, sometimes to their arrest.

“What?—meanest thou an *officer?*”

Dromio nods vigorously. “*Aye*, sir, *sergeant of the band*,”—deputies, not musicians, “but he that brings any man to answer for it who *breaks* his band!”—fails to satisfy his bond. “One that thinks a man is *always going to bed*—and so says, ‘God give you good *’rest!*’”

“Well, sir, *there* arrest your *foolery!*” says Antipholus impatiently. “Is there any ship puts forth tonight? May we be gone?”

Dromio frowns. “Why, sir, I brought you word an hour ago that the bark *Expedition* puts forth tonight!—but then you, tarried for the ship’s delay, were hindered by the sergeant.

“Here are the angels that you sent me for to deliver you”—from the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus.

Antipholus takes the proffered pouch of coins, thinking it his own gold, but he is increasingly uneasy. *The fellow is distracted, and so am I!* He looks around fearfully at the sordid city streets. *Here we wander in illusions! Some blessèd power deliver us from hence!*

At that very moment, a colorfully accoutered courtesan emerges from the nearby Porpentine. Believing she sees acquaintances, she ambles toward the men. Her gown reveals, as intended, buxom bounty. “Well met, well *met*, Master Antipholus!” She looks at his chest; he reciprocates. “I see, sir, you have found the goldsmith now!” She smiles. “Is that the chain you promised me today?”

Her appearance proclaims her profession; Syracusan Antipholus edges away. “*Satan, avoid!* I charge thee, *tempt me not!*”

Dromio asks, “Master, is this *Mistress Satan*?”

“It is the Devil!”

“Nay, she is worse!—she is the Devil’s *dam!*”—his mother. “She comes here *disguised* as a *light wench*—and thereof comes what these wenches say: ‘I’ll be damned!’—as much as to say ‘God *made* me a light wench!’” He chews his lip, pondering the woman’s obvious attractions. “It is *written* that they appear to men like *angels of light*; light is an effect of *fire*, and fire will *burn*; *ergo*, light *wenches* will burn!”—produce a painful symptom of venereal affliction. “Come not near her!”

The hostess laughs at what she takes to be wry gibes. “Your man and you are marvellous *merry*, sir!” She motions toward her house; her earlier repast, with Ephesian Antipholus, was marred by the goldsmith’s failure to appear. “Will you go with me? We’ll mend our *dinner* there!”

“Master, if you do, expect *spoon* meat, and bespeak a *long spoon!*”

“Why, Dromio?”

He cites the proverb: “Marry, ‘He who would dine with the *Devil* must have a long spoon!’”

Antipholus, growing more worried, waves the woman away. “*Avoid*, then, *fiend!* What tell’st thou me of *supping*?” He thinks of the sisters with whom he dined. “Thou art a *sorceress!*—as are you *all!* I conjure thee to *leave* me, and *be gone!*”

She only smiles, reasonably, and holds out a hand. “Give me the ring of mine you took at dinner, or the *chain* you promised *for* that diamond; then I’ll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.”

Dromio is impressed. “*Some* devils ask for but the *paring* of one’s *nail*—a rush, a hair, a drop of blood—a pin, a nut, a cherry-stone—but *she*, more *covetous*, would have a *chain!*”

“Master, *be wise!* If you give it to her, this devil will *shake* her chain,”—rattle it, as do ghosts, “and *fright us with it!*”

The woman is no longer amused. “I pray you, sir, my *ring*, or else the *chain.*” She moves closer. “I hope you do not mean to *cheat* me so!”

“*Avaunt, thou witch!*” cries Antipholus. “*Come*, Dromio, *let us go!*” Wholly convinced, now, that Ephesus is a dangerously unpredictable place, he quickly strides away.

Dromio nods, following. ““*Fly, pride,*” says the peacock!”—its display falling. “Mistress, that you know!”

The courtesan, perturbed, watches the men, both looking around warily as they go, hands at their rapiers’ hilts. *Out of doubt, now, Antipholus is mad, else would he never so demean himself!*

A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats, and for the same he promised me a chain! Both one and other he denies me now!

The reason that I gather he is mad—besides this present instance of his rage—is the mad tale he told today at dinner of his own doors' being shut against his entrance! Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits, so purposèd to shut their doors against his way!

She thinks for a moment.

My way now is to go to hie home to his house and tell his wife that, being lunatic, he rushed into my house and perforce took away my ring!

This course is the fittest I can choose—forty ducats is too much to lose!

Chapter Four Confrontations

Antipholus of Ephesus would reassure the constable, who is well aware of the wealthy citizen's eminence, but weary of waiting. "Fear me not, man; I will not break away! I'll give thee, ere I leave thee, as much money to warrant thee as I am attachèd for.

"My wife is in a wayward mood today," he explains, "and will not lightly trust the messenger's word that *I* should be *arrested in Ephesus!* I tell you, 'twill sound harshly in her ears!"

He sees his own Dromio approaching, and carrying a piece of rope. "Here comes my man!—I think he brings the money! How now, sir! Have you what I sent you for?"

Dromio nods, wagging the length of twined hemp. "Here's that which, I warrant you, will pay them all!"

Antipholus, taking it, frowns. "But where's the *money?*"

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

"*Five hundred ducats, villain, for a bit of rope?*"

"Sir, I'll bring you *five hundred ropes* at *that* rate!"—and keep considerable change.

Antipholus glares. "To what end did I bid thee hie thee home?"

"To bring a rope's end, sir; and with that end am I returnèd."

"And *with* that end, sir, I will *welcome* you!" cries Antipholus, swinging the rope so its stiff, twine-wrapped end strikes Dromio's turned back, as he turns and ducks.

The constable intercedes: "Good sir, be *patient!*"

Cries Dromio, "*Ay!*—'tis for *me* to be patient! *I* am in *adversity!*"

The officer of the peace frowns at the servant. "Good man, now hold thy tongue!"

"Nay, rather persuade *him* to hold his *hands!*"

Antipholus swings the rope again. "Thou *whoreson, senseless villain!*"

"I would I *were* senseless, sir, that I might not feel your *blows!*"

"Thou art sensible in nothing *but* blows—as is an *ass* so!"

"*I am* an ass, indeed!—you may prove it by my *long ears!*"—wrung too often, complains the man, moving away. He tells the constable, "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* with it when I sit, *driven* out of doors with it when I go from home, *welcomed* with it when I *return!* I bear it on my shoulders as a *beggar* is wont to do with her *brat!* Aye, and I think that, when he hath *lamed* me, *I* shall beg with it—beaten from *door to door!*"

Antipholus waves aside the ridiculous exaggerations, and points. "Come, go along," he tells the officer, "my *wife* is coming yonder!" He is eager to be released from custody.

At the courtesan's urging, Adriana and Luciana have left the mansion and gone with her to find the gentleman who, all three have concluded, is alarmingly distraught. Following them are

Master Pinch—a sallow, erstwhile schoolmaster; the women think his knowledge of some Latin may be of help in exorcizing Antipholus’s supposed demons—and several more of The Porpentine’s hard-drinking regulars.

Dromio, remembering having been locked out, warns Adriana: “Mistress, ‘*Respice finem!*’ Respect your *ends!*—or, rather, a prophecy like the *pirate*’s: ‘Beware the *rope*’s end!’”

“Wilt thou *still talk?*” cries Antipholus angrily, twisting Dromio’s ear—to howls.

The hostess looks meaningfully at Adriana. “How say you *now?* Is not your husband *mad?*”

The gentlewoman must concur. “His incivility confirms no less! Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer—establish in him his *true sense* again, and I will please you with what you will demand!”

“Alas, how *fiery* and how *sharp* he looks!” says Luciana, backing away from Antipholus, who, still shaking with anger, straightens to his full height.

“Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy!” says the courtesan.

Pinch approaches Antipholus. “Give me your hand and let me feel your pulse.”

Antipholus is furious. “*There* is my hand—and let it feel your *ear!*” he cries, thwacking the pale scholar’s head.

Pinch, raising his hands in defense, pulls back. He declaims, loudly, “I *charge* thee, *Satan*, housèd within this man, to *yield possession* under my holy prayers—and to thy state of darkness *hie thee straight!* I *conjure* thee by *all the saints in heaven!*”

Antipholus shouts, “*Peace*, doting wizard, *peace!* I am not *mad!*”

“Oh, that thou *wert* not, poor distressèd soul!” moans Adriana, as passersby, stopping to hear the confrontation, gather around them.

“You *minion*, you,” cries her husband, “are these your *customers?* Did this *companion* with a saffron face *revel and feast* it at my house today?—whilst upon *me* the guilty doors were *shut*, and *I* was denied to *enter my own house!*”

“Oh, husband, God doth know you *dined at home!*—where I would you had *remained* until this time, free from these slanders and this open *shame!*”

“*Dined at home!*” cries Antipholus. He grabs Dromio’s shirt-front with a fist. “Thou villain, what sayest *thou?*”

“Sir, sooth to say, you did not dine at home.”

“Were not my doors *locked up*, and I *shut out?*”

“Perdie, your doors were locked, and you shut out.”

“And did not she herself *revile* me there?”

“Sans fable, she herself reviled you there.”

“Did not her kitchen-maid *rail, taunt, and scorn* me?”

“*Certes*, she did—the *kitchen-vestal* scorned you!”

“And did not I in rage *depart from thence?*”

“In verity you *did!*” Dromio regards the others. “My *bones* bear witness, that since have felt the *vigour* of his rage!”

Adriana chides the cowering Dromio. “Is’t good to *soothe* him in these contraries?”

“It is no shame,” says Pinch, eyeing the gentleman. “The fellow finds *his vein*, and, yielding to it, humours well his *frenzy!*”

Antipholus’s face reddens; he tells his wife, “Thou hast *suborned* the goldsmith to *arrest me!*”

“*Alas*, I sent you *money* to *redeem* you!—by Dromio here, who came in haste for it!”

Ephesian Dromio is aghast. “Money sent with *me!* *Heart* and *good will*, you might—but surely, master, not a bag full of *money!*”

Antipholus challenges angrily: “Went’st thou not to her for a *purse of ducats?*”

“He came to me,” Adriana confirms, “and I *delivered* it!”

Luciana nods, “And I am *witness* with her that she did!”

“God and the rope-maker bear *me* witness!” cries Dromio, “that I was sent for *nothing but a rope!*”

Pinch raises a thin hand of slender authority. “Mistress, both man and master are *possessed!*—I know it by their pale and deadly looks. They must be *bound*, then laid in some *dark room!*”—the usual treatment for insanity.

Antipholus is nearly choking with fury. “Say *wherefore* thou didst *lock me forth* today!” he demands of his wife. “And why dost thou *deny* me the *bag of gold?*” he asks his man.

“I did *not*, gentle husband, lock thee forth!”

“And, gentle master, I *received* no gold!” says Dromio—hastily adding, “but I *confess*, sir, that we *were* locked out!”

“*Dissembling villain,*” cries Adriana, “thou speak’st *false* in *both!*”

Antipholus glares at her. “*Dissembling harlot,* thou art false in *all!*—and art confederate with a *damned plot* to make a loathsome, abject *scorn* of me!” He starts toward her. “But with these nails I’ll pluck those false eyes that would behold in me this shameful sport!”

Several bystanders grab his arms.

“Oh, bind him, *bind* him!” cries Adriana. “Let him not come near me!”

Pinch calls for help. “More *company!* *The fiend* is strong *within* him!”

Says Luciana, as Antipholus grinds his teeth, “*Ay, me!*—poor man, how pale and wan he looks!”

“*What,* will you *murder* me?” he growls at his captors. He calls to the constable. “Thou, *jailer!*—*thou!* I am *thy prisoner!*—wilt thou suffer them to make a *rescue?*”

The officer tells the men, “Masters, let him go! He *is* my prisoner, and you shall not have him!”

“Go bind *this* man,” cries Pinch, pointing to Dromio, “for *he* is frantic too!” Two of the passers-by seize the servant; they pinion his arms while he tries to wriggle free.

“What wilt thou *do,* thou peevish officer?” demands Adriana, scolding the constable. “Dost thou delight to see a wretched man in discomposure do *outrage* to *himself?*”

“He is *my prisoner;* if I let him *go,* the debt he owes will be required from *me!*”

The gentlewoman is not concerned about money: “I will *discharge* thee ere I go from thee! Bear me forthwith unto his creditor, and, once knowing how the debt grows, I will *pay* it!” The officer bows.

“Good master doctor,” Adriana tells Pinch, “see him safely conveyed home to my house! Oh, most *unhappy day!*”

“Oh, most unhappy *strumpet!*” calls Antipholus from among those restraining him.

Raising his cord-tied wrists, Dromio says, wryly, “Master, I am here entered in bonds for *you!*”

“*Out on thee, villain!*” yells Antipholus. “Wherefore dost thou *provoke* me?”

Now the wealthy gentleman’s servant is indignant. “*Will* you to be bound for nothing? *Be* mad, good master!—*cry like the devil!*”

Luciana shakes her head. “God help them, poor souls; how idly do they talk!”

“Go, bear him hence,” Adriana tells those holding Antipholus. “Sister, go you with me.”

The citizens move away, hauling the madmen to The Phoenix.

Adriana turns to the officer. “Say now: at whose suit is he arrested?”

“One Angelo, a goldsmith. Do you know him?”

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

“Two hundred ducats.”

“Say how grows it *due.*”

“Due for a chain your husband had of him.”

“He did *bespeak* a chain for me,” says Adriana, “but had it not.”

The courtesan reports, "When your husband, all in a rage, today came to *my* house, and took away my ring—the ring I saw *upon his finger* just now—straight after did I see him with a *chain!*"

"It may be so, but *I* did never see it," says Adriana. "Come, jailer, bring me where the goldsmith is. I long to know the truth hereof enlarged."

And then they are startled to spot two men approaching—slowly, with drawn rapiers.

"*God, lend thy mercy!*—they are *loose again!*" cries Luciana, starting to run.

"And come with *naked swords,*" says Adriana. "Let's call more *help* to have them *bound* again!" She quickly follows Luciana out of the square.

The officer is already scuttling down the street. "*Away! They'll kill us!*"

Watching their fitful flight, the Syracusans—for it is they—are more eager than ever to be at sea.

"I see *these* witches are afraid of *swords!*" says Antipholus with contempt.

"She that would be your *wife* now *ran* from you!" notes Dromio.

Antipholus heads toward the inn. "Come to The Centaur! Fetch our baggage from thence; I long that we were safe and sound *aboard!*"

Dromio goes with him, but now he is less fearful. "I' 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!*"

"I will not stay tonight for all the town!" says devout Antipholus, gripping his weapon even more tightly. "Therefore *away,* to *get our things aboard!*"

Pigeons bob along on wide stone steps of the priory at the square's far side, as Angelo walks past with the Epidamian trader. The purveyor of precious metals and gemstones must wait yet another day to set sail for Persia.

"I am sorry, sir, that I have hindered you," says the goldsmith, "but, I protest, he *had* the chain of me, though most dishonestly he doth deny it!"

"How is the man esteemed here in the city?"

"Of very reverent reputation, sir," says Angelo, "highly beloved, of credit infinite, second to none that lives here in the city! His *word* might bear *my* wealth at any time." He shakes his head, still puzzled.

The heavy man looks up the street. "Speak softly!—yonder, as I think, he walks!"

Their blades now sheathed, Antipholus and Dromio are returning from The Centaur, and heading toward the bay.

The goldsmith points. "'*Tis so*—and with that self-same *chain,* which he most monstrously forswore *having, about his neck!*"

"Good sir, draw near to me," says old Angelo, summoning his courage. "I'll speak to him!"

As the Syracusans approach, he begins. "Signior Antipholus, I wonder *much* that you would put me to this shame and trouble!—and, not without some scandal to *yourself,* so to deny, with circumstance and oath, this chain which now you wear so *openly!* Beside the *charge,* the *shame,* *imprisonment*—you have done wrong to this my honest *friend,* who, but for staying on our controversy, had hoisted sail and put to sea today!

"*This chain* you had from *me!*" he says, pointing. "Can you *deny* it?"

Antipholus frowns at the man who refused to accept payment. "I think I *had!*" he says, facing yet another irrational Ephesian. "I never did deny it."

"Yes, that you *did,* sir!" protests the trader, "and *forswore* it, too!"

Antipholus has lost patience. "Who heard me to deny it or forswear it?"

"These ears of *mine* thou *know'st* did hear thee!" says Balthazar. "*Fie* on thee, *wretch!* 'Tis pity that thou livest to walk where any *honest* men resort!"

“Thou art a *villain* to *impeach* me thus!” Antipholus touches the hilt of his sword. “I’ll *prove* mine honour and mine honesty against thee *immediately*, if thou darest stand!”

“I *dare!*—and do *defy* thee for a *villain!*”

The gentlemen draw their rapiers and square off—just as Adriana and Luciana, with the constable and four servants, round a corner, coming to find the goldsmith.

“*Hold!*—*hurt him not*, for God’s sake!” cries Adriana, “he is *mad!*” She motions to the servants. “Some get between them!—*take his sword away!* Bind Dromio, too, and bear them to my house!”

“*Run*, master, *run*,” cries Dromio, “for God’s sake, *take a-house!*” He starts toward the church’s open doors. “This is some *priory*—*in*, or we are spoiled!”

As the Syracusans dash into the house of worship, they pass the abbess, who is emerging to learn what the hubbub is about. She comes forward to stop those starting up the broad stone steps. “Be *quiet*, people,” she says calmly. “Wherefore throng you hither?”

Adriana steps forward. “To fetch my poor distracted husband hence! Let us come in, that we may bind him fast, and bear him home for his recovery!”

“I *knew* he was not in his perfect wits!” says Angelo.

Balthazar sheathes his sword. “I am sorry now that I did draw on him.”

“How long hath this possession held the man?” asks the abbess, who knows, or has heard about, most inhabitants of the parish.

The wife replies. “This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad, and much different from the man he was; but till this afternoon his passion ne’er did break into extremity of *rage*.”

The abbess, Lady Emilia, asks, “Hath he lost much *wealth* by wreck at sea? Buried some dear *friend*? Or hath his eye strayed his affection in *unlawful* love?—a sin prevailing much in youthful men, who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.

“Which of these sorrows is he subject to?”

“To none of these,” says Adriana, flushing, “except it be the *last*—namely, some love that drew him oft from *home!*” she adds angrily.

“You should for that have reprehended him,” says the abbess quietly.

“Why, so I *did!*”

“Aye... but not roughly enough.”

“As roughly as my *modesty* would *let* me!”

“Perhaps in private—”

“And in *assemblies*, too!” says Adriana.

“Aye, but said not enough...”

“It was the topic of *all our conference!*” insists Adriana. “In bed he *slept* not for my urging it! At board he *fed* not for my urging it! *Alone* with him, it was the *subject* of my theme; in *company* I often *glanced* it!—ever did I tell him it was *vile*, and *bad!*”

The abbess’s point has been made. “And thereof came it that the man was mad: the venomous clamours of a *jealous woman*—poisons more deadly than a mad dog’s tooth!

“It seems his... *sleeps* were hindered by thy *railing*, and therefore comes it that his head is light”—*light* as in *libidinous*.

“Thou say’st his meat was sauced with thy upbraidings; unquiet meals make ill digestions. Thereof the raging fire of *fever* bred—and what’s a fever but a fit of madness?”

“Thou say’st his *sports* were hindered by thy brawls; sweet recreation barred, what doth ensue but moody and dull *melancholy*?—kinsman to grim and comfortless *despair!* And at its heels, a huge, infectious troop of pale distemperatures and *foes to life!*

“To be disturbed in food, in sport and life-preserving rest would make man or *beast* mad! The consequence, then, is that *thy jealous fits* have scared thy husband from the use of *wits!*”

Luciana defends her sister: “She never reprehended him but *mildly*, even when he demeaned himself rough, rude and wildly!” She turns to Adriana. “Why *bear* you these rebukes, and answer not?”

Adriana blushes. "She did betray me to my own reproof." Still, she tells her servants. "Good people, enter and lay hold of him."

The abbess lifts a palm to bar them. "*No!*—not a creature enter in my house!"

"Then let *your* servants bring my husband forth."

"Neither! He took this place for *sanctuary*, and it shall privilege him from your hands till I have brought him to his wits again, or lost my labour in assaying it."

"I will attend my husband, be his *nurse*, *diet* his sickness—for it is my office!" insists Adriana. "I will have no attorney but *myself!* And therefore let me have him *home* with me!"

Lady Emilia shakes her head. "Be *patient*, for I will not let him stir till I have used the approvèd means I have, with wholesome syrups, drugs and holy *prayers*, to make of him a normal man again. It is a branch and parcel of mine oath, a charitable duty of my order," says the nun. "Therefore depart, and leave him here with me."

"I will *not* hence and leave my *husband* here!" cries Adriana hotly. "And ill it doth beseem your *holiness* to separate the husband and the wife!"

"Be quiet and depart," says the abbess. "Thou shalt not have him." She goes into the priory, and pulls the doors closed after her.

"Complain unto the *duke* of this indignity!" says Luciana.

Adriana nods agreement. "Come," she says, looking toward the palace, "I will fall prostrate at his feet, and never rise until my tears and prayers have won his grace to come in person hither and take, *perforce*, my husband from the abbess!"

Luciana starts to go with her, but Balthazar approaches them. "By now, I think, the dial points at *five*; anon I'm sure the duke comes this way himself—to the melancholy vale, the place of death in sorry *execution*, behind the ditches of the abbey, here."

"Upon what cause?" asks Angelo.

"To see a reverend Syracusan merchant, who put unluckily into this bay against the laws and statutes of this town, beheaded publicly for his offence." Commoners are hanged; nobles are privileged to lose their heads.

Angelo points. "See where they come. We will behold his death."

Luciana urges her sister, "*Kneel* to the duke before he passes the abbey!"

A procession of stern-faced men enters the square: Duke Solinus, with his retinue of liveried attendants; old Signior Egeon, bareheaded, lugubrious as ever—and, behind the prisoner's guards, the stolid headsman; on the ax he carries is a gleaming, newly sharpened blade.

But the crowd following them, drawn to the anticipated event, is quite jolly. Among them are several garish women from The Porpentine, and, alive to opportunity, two pickpockets.

Solinus pauses in the square as they near the church. "Yet once again I proclaim it publicly: if any friend will pay the sum for him, he shall not die," he says hopefully. "So much we tender him."

Adriana approaches the duke and kneels. "*Justice*, most sacred duke, against the *abbess!*"

Solinus frowns. "She is a *virtuous* and a *reverend lady!*—it cannot be that *she* hath done thee wrong!"

"May it please Your Grace," says Adriana, rising. "Antipholus, my husband—whom I made lord of me and all I had at *your importuning letters*—this ill day a most outrageous *fit of madness* took him, such that desperately he hurried through the street!—with him his bondman, all as *mad* as *he!*—doing displeasure to the citizens by rushing into their houses, and bearing from thence rings, jewels, anything his rage did like!

"I did get him *bound*, and sent him *home*, whilst at once, to *make order* for the *wrongs*, I went here and there where his fury had committed them.

"Anon, I wot not by what strong escape, he *broke* from those that had the guard of him! Then his mad attendant and himself, each one in *ireful passion*, met us *again*, with *drawn swords!*—and, madly bent on us, *chased us away!*—till, after raising more aid, we came again to *bind* them.

"Then they fled into this *abbey*, whither we pursued them!"

“And here the abbess *shuts the gates on us*, and will not suffer us to fetch him out, nor send him forth so that we may bear him hence!

“Therefore, most gracious duke, with thy command let him be brought forth, and borne hence for *help!*”

Duke Solinus knows the gentleman well. “Long since, thy husband served me in my wars; and I to thee engaged a *prince’s* word, to do him all the grace and good I could, when thou didst make him master of thy bed.

“Go, some of you,” he tells his attendants, “knock at the abbey gate, and bid the Lady Emilia come to me. I will determine this before I stir.”

Now a frantic servant, pushing through the crowd, and glancing back over his shoulder, reaches Adriana. “Oh, mistress, *mistress*, shift and *save yourself!* My master and his man are both *broke loose!*—beat the maids away with a *rope*, and *bound the doctor!*—whose beard they have *singed off* with brands of fire!—and when it *blazed*, they threw on him great pails of puddled *mire*”—street slime—“to *quench* the whiskers!

“My master preaches *patience* to him!—while his man with scissors *hacks off his hair* like a *fool’s!* And surely, unless you send some present *help*, between them they will *kill* the exorcist!”

Adriana scowls. “*Peace*, fool! Thy master and his man are *here!*—and that is *false* thou dost report to us!”

“Mistress, upon my *life*, I tell you *true*,” insists the wide-eyed youth. “I have not *breathed*, almost, since I did *see* it! He *calls* for you—and vows, if he can *take* you, to scorch your face, and to disfigure you!”

An angry yell announces a man’s approach; the servant points. “*Hark, hark!* I hear him, mistress! *Fly!*—*be gone!*” He backs away, trembling.

Solinus tells Adriana, “Come, stand by *me*; fear nothing. Guard with halberds!” he orders his soldiers.

“*Ay*, me, it *is* my husband!” gasps Adriana, from behind the troops’ tall row of raised weapons. “*Witness* you that he is *borne about invisible!* Even now we housed him in the abbey *here!*—and now he’s *there!*—past human thought or reason!”

The two Ephesians, having reproved the officious Doctor Pinch, now seek wider retribution. Antipholus kneels before Solinus. “*Justice*, most gracious duke, *oh*, grant me *justice!* Even for the service that long since I did thee, when I bestrid thee in the wars and took deep *scars* to *save thy life!*—even for the blood that then I lost for thee!—now grant me *justice!*”

Behind the duke, the Syracusan prisoner, Egeon, has looked up from his sorrowful musings—and been startled. *Unless the fear of death doth make me dote, I see my son Antipholus!*—and *Dromio!*

Antipholus of Ephesus, facing the duke, rises. “*Justice*, sweet prince, against *that woman there!*—she whom *thou* gavest to me to be my *wife!*—who hath *abusèd* and *dishonoured* me, even to the strength and height of *injury!* Beyond *imagination* is the wrong that she this day hath shamelessly thrown upon me!”

Solinus is doubtful. “Reveal *how*, and thou shalt find me just. . . .”

“This day, great duke, she *shut the doors upon me*, while she, with *harlots*, *feasted in my house!*” He is sure the scheme against him was devised over lunch.

The duke knows The Porpentine’s reputation; its denizens are unlikely companions for the gentlewoman—even if one is a friend of her husband’s. “A grievous fault.” Solinus looks at Adriana. “Say, woman: didst thou so?”

“*No*, my good lord!” she protests. “*Myself*, he and my *sister* today did *dine* together! As I *speak* let to my *soul* befall! This is *false* he burdens me withal!”

Says Luciana, “Ne’er may I look on day nor sleep at night but that she tells Your Highness simple *truth!*”

“*Oh*, *perjured women!*” cries Angelo. “They are *both* forsworn!” he tells the duke. “In this the madman *justly* chargeth them!”

“My liege,” says Antipholus gravely, barely suppressing his anger, “I am *advised* in what I say, neither disturbed with the effect of heady wine, nor rash or provoked with raging ire—albeit my wrongs might make one *wiser* mad!

“This woman locked me out this day from dinner. That goldsmith there, were he not *compact*ed with her, could witness it, for he was *with me* then!—and parted from me to go fetch a chain, promising to bring it to The Porpentine, where Balthazar and I did dine together.

“Our dinner done, but he not coming thither, I went to seek him; in the street I *met* him, and in his company that gentleman. There did this perjured goldsmith *swear me down*, that I this day from him *received a chain*—which, by God, he *knows I saw not*!

“For the which he did *arrest* me by an officer! I did obey, and sent my peasant home for certain ducats. He with *none* returned!” he says, glaring at Dromio. “Then fairly I bespoke the officer to go in person with me to my house.

“Along the way we met my wife, her sister, and *more—a rabble of vile confederates*! With them they brought one *Pinch*—a hungry *lean-faced villain*, a mere *anatomy*, a *mountebank*, a threadbare *juggler* and *fortune-teller*, a seedy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking *wretch*, a *dead-looking* man! That pernicious slave, forsooth, took it upon him to be a *conjurer*, and, gazing into mine eyes, feeling my pulse—and with *no face*, as ’twere, *outfacing* me, cried out I was *possessed*!

“Then all together they fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence, and in a dark and dankish vault at home, there *left* me and my man, both *bound together*!—till, gnawing with my *teeth* my bonds in sunder, I gained my freedom, and immediately ran hither to Your Grace—whom I beseech to give me ample *satisfaction* for these deep shames and great indignities!”

Angelo steps forward. “My lord, in truth I witness thus far *with him*: that he dined not at *home*, but was *locked out*.”

“But had he such a chain of thee, or no?” asks Duke Solinus.

“He *had*, my lord!” Angelo points to the abbey. “And when he ran in there, these people *saw* the chain *about his neck*!”

Adds Balthazar, facing Antipholus, “Besides, *I* will be sworn these ears of mine *heard you confess* you had the chain from him, after you first *forsook* it on the mart! And thereupon I drew my sword on you; and then you fled into this abbey, here—from whence, I think, you are come by *miracle*!”

Antipholus stares at him, astonished. “I *never* came within these abbey walls!—nor ever didst thou *draw thy sword* on me! I never *saw* the chain, so help me *Heaven*! All this is *false* you burden me withal!”

Solinus frowns and shakes his head. “Why, what an intricate impeaching is *this*! I think you *all* have drunk of *Circe’s cup*!” The goddess could turn people into beasts, as she did the men of Odysseus.

The duke considers. Looking at Adriana, he points to the abbey. “If here you *housed* him, here he would have *been*! If he were *mad*, he would not plead so *coldly*. You say he dined at home; the goldsmith here *denies* that saying!”

Solinus turns to Dromio. “Sirrah, what say *you*?”

Dromio looks at the courtesan. “Sir, he dined with *her*, there, at The Porpentine.”

“He did,” she confirms, “and from my finger snatched *that ring*!” She points to Antipholus’s right hand.

“’Tis true, my liege, that this ring I *had* from her,” says the gentleman.

The duke asks the woman, “Saw’st *thou* him enter at the abbey here?”

“As surely, my liege, as I do see Your Grace!”

Duke Solinus is very puzzled. “Why, this is *strange*!”

“Go, call the *abbess* hither,” he tells an attendant, more firmly this time. He regards his petitioners and witnesses, suspecting some sort of conspiracy. “I think you are all *mated*—or stark *mad*!”

Egeon, facing his own imminent execution, steps away from his guards and calls out. “Most mighty duke, vouchsafe me speak a word! Perhaps I see a friend who will save my life, and pay the sum that may deliver me!”

“Speak freely, Syracusan, what thou wilt,” says Solinus, eager for some sensible distraction.

Egeon—his thin hands bound before him, wispy white hair wavering in the soft breeze—comes forward. “Is not your name, sir, called *Antipholus*? And is not that your bondman *Dromio*?”

“Within this hour I *was* his *bonds* man, sir,” Dromio replies, “but he, I thank him, gnawed my cords in twain!—now am I Dromio and his man *un-bound*!”

Egeon smiles at the travelers. “I am sure you, both of you, remember me!”

“*Ourselves* we do remember, sir, *by* you,” Dromio tells him, “for lately we were *bound* as you are now.” He squints, suspicious. “You are not *Pinch*’s patient,”—a lunatic, “are you, sir?”

“Why look you strangely on me?” demands the father. “You *know me well*!”

Antipholus is exasperated even further. “I never saw you in my *life* till now!”

Egeon moans. “Oh, *grief* hath *changed* me since you saw me last, and with Time’s hand, care-filled hours have written strangely formèd features on my face! But yet tell me, dost thou not know my *voice*?”

Antipholus is certain. “Neither.”

“Dromio, nor thou?”

“No; trust me, sir, nor I.”

“I am *sure* thou dost!”

“Aye, sir—but *I* am sure I do *not*!” says Dromio. He quips: “And *whatever* a man may deny, you are now *bound* to believe him!”

Egeon persists. “Not know *my* voice? O time’s extremity, hast thou so cracked and splitted my poor tongue in seven short years, that here my only *son* knows not my feeble, untuned key of cares?”

“Though now this grainèd face of mine be hid in sap-consuming winter’s drizzled snow,”—his white beard, “and all the conduits of my blood frozen up, yet hath my night of life some *memory*!—my wasting lamps”—eyes—“some fading *glimmer* left; my dull, deaf ears a *little* yet to hear!

“*All* these old witnesses tell me thou art *my son Antipholus*! I cannot *err*!”

Says Ephesian Antipholus sadly, “I never saw my father in my life.”

“Only *seven years* since, boy, thou *know’st* we parted in Syracuse!” Egeon glances at the guards, aware of his wretchedness. “But perhaps, my son, thou shamest to acknowledge me in misery....”

Antipholus is firm. “The duke and all that know me in the city can witness with me that it is not so. I ne’er saw *Syracuse* in my life.”

Duke Solinus addresses the prisoner. “I tell thee, Syracusan, *twenty years* have I been patron to Antipholus, during which time he ne’er saw Syracuse.

“I see thine age and dangers make thee dote,” he says, not unkindly.

And then *all* are startled: the abbess emerges from the church with Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse. She approaches Egeon and cries, “Most mighty duke, behold a man *much wronged*!”

Chapter Five Rejoin and Rejoice

The stunned observers press closer to gape at both pairs of twins.
“I see *two* husbands,” cries Adriana, “or mine eyes deceive me!”

Duke Solinus looks back and forth between the Antipholuses and the Dromios. “One of these men is essence to the *other*—and so of *these!* Which is the natural man, and which the *spirit?* Who deciphers them?”

“I, sir, *am* Dromio!” the man from Syracuse tells his master. “Command *him* away!”

“I, sir, *am* Dromio,” his twin tells his gentleman. “Pray, let *me* stay!”

But then the Syracusans move past the abbess to stare, amazed, at the condemned prisoner. “*Egeon!*—art thou not?” asks Antipholus, staring. “Or else his *ghost!*”

“Oh, my old master!” cries Dromio tearfully, kneeling before him. “Who hath *bound* him here?” he demands angrily.

“Whoever bound him, I will *loose* his bonds,” cries the abbess, “and gain a *husband* by his liberty!

“*Speak*, old Egeon, if thou be’st the man that hadst a wife once called *Emilia*, who bore thee, at one burden, *two fair sons!* Oh, if thou be’st the same Egeon, *speak!*—and speak unto *the same Emilia!*”

Duke Solinus smiles. “Why, except that she tells of *her* wreck at sea, here begins his *morning* story’s *night!* These two Antipholuses, these two so like, and these two Dromios, as one in semblance—

“These *are* the parents to these children who together are accidentally *met!*”

Tears of joy fill Egeon’s eyes. “If I *dream* not, thou art *Emilia!* If thou *art* she, tell me: where is that *son* that floated with thee on the fatal raft?”

The abbess explains: “He and I, and the twin Dromio, all were *taken up* by men of Epidaurus. By and by, though, rude fishermen of Corinth *took* Dromio and my son *from* them—*by force!* But *me* they left with those of Epidaurus.

“What then became of *them* I cannot tell,” says the abbess. “*I* came to this fortune that you see me in.”

Says Solinus, “Antipholus, *thou* first camest from Corinth!”

“No, sir, not I,” says the visitor. “I came from *Syracuse!*”

“*Stay!*—stand *apart,*” the duke directs. “I know not which is which!”

The Ephesian pair goes to stand beside the abbess.

Says the local Antipholus, “*I* came from *Corinth*, my most gracious lord,—”

“And *I with* him!” his Dromio interjects.

“—brought to this town by that most famous warrior, Duke Menaphon, your most renowned uncle.”

Adriana is beginning to understand. “Which of you two did *dine* with me today?”

“*I*, gentle mistress,” says the Syracusan.

“And are not you my husband?” she asks.

“*No!*—*I* say nay to *that!*” cries her husband.

“And so do *I*,” says the visitor, “yet did she *call* me so!

“And *this* fair gentlewoman, her sister here, did call me *brother-in-law.*” He smiles warmly at Luciana—who blushes happily. “What I told you then, I hope I shall have leisure to *make good*, if this be not a dream I see and hear!”

Angelo goes to the Syracusan Antipholus. “That is the *chain*, sir, which you had of me!”

The gentleman nods, still ready to pay. “I think it *be*, sir! I deny it not.”

Antipholus of Ephesus now understands too. “And *you*, sir, for that chain *arrested* me!”

“I think I did, sir,” says Angelo sheepishly. “I deny it not.”

Adriana looks at her husband. “I sent you money, sir, to be your bail, by Dromio; but I think he brought it not.”

Dromio of Ephesus again insists, “No, none by *me!*”

Antipholus of Syracuse, untying a pouch at his waist, tells Adriana, “This purse of ducats *I* received from you; and Dromio—*my* man—did bring them to me.” He hands the gold to his

brother. "I see that we kept meeting each the other's man," he tells the duke, "and I was ta'en for *him*, and he for *me!*—and thereupon these errors arose!"

Antipholus of Ephesus offers the gold to the duke. "These ducats I pawn for my *father*, here!"

Duke Solinus beams, delighted. "It shall not be *needed!*" The family of an Ephesian are exempt from the proscription. "Thy father hath his life!"

The courtesan approaches her neighbor. "Sir, I must have that diamond from you."

Antipholus returns the ring gladly. "There, take it!—and much thanks for my good cheer!"

"Renowned duke," says Lady Emilia, now happy on her husband's arm, "vouchsafe to take the pains to go with us into the abbey, and hear at large discoursèd *all* our fortunes!"

"And all that are assembled in this place who, sympathizèd in this one day's errors, have suffered wrongs, go keep us *company*, and we shall make full *satisfaction!*"

The abbess grins up at the tall twin gentlemen. "*Thirty-three* years have I gone in travail for you, my sons, but till this present hour my heavy burden was ne'er *deliverèd!*"—a prolonged pregnancy indeed.

"The duke, my husband, and my children both—and you, the calendars of their nativity," she tells the Dromio brothers, "come to a *gossips'* feast!—and after so long a *grief*, in such *festivity* go with me!"

Duke Solinus bows to her. "With all my heart, I'll gossip at *this* feast!"

The people eagerly follow the duke, Lord Egeon and Lady Emilia up the steps and into the church.

As the twin pairs come together, Dromio of Syracuse is thinking fondly of Miss Luce. "Master, shall I fetch your trunks from shipboard?"

But he has asked the local Antipholus—who replies, "Dromio, what of *mine* hast thou embarked?"

"Your goods that lay at host, sir—in *The Centaur*."

Antipholus of Syracuse laughs. "He speaks to *me!* I am your master, Dromio!"

"Come, go with us," he says, clapping an arm around his own brother's shoulders. "We'll look to that anon!"

"Embrace *thy* brother there," he tells his Dromio, "*rejoice* with him!"

The Antipholuses walk together into the church, already deep in conversation.

Syracusan Dromio eyes the other. "There is a fat friend at your master's house who *kitchened* me for *you* today at dinner; she now shall be my *sister-in-law*, not my wife!" He is much relieved—and very eager to meet again with the wry wit of pert and pretty Luce.

"Methinks you are my *mirror* and not my brother!" says his companion. He grins. "I see by *you* I am a *sweet-faced youth!*"

"Will you walk in to see their gossiping?" He gestures politely, indicating that the other should lead the way.

The newcomer demurs. "Not I, sir: you are my *elder*."

"That's a *question!*—how shall we try it?"

Dromio thinks. "We'll draw cuts"—from a pack of cards—"for the senior! Till then, lead thou first."

The Ephesian laughs, and clasps the other man's hand heartily in his. "Nay, then!—*thus* we came into the world like brother and brother—and *now* let's go hand in hand, not one before another!"

And so they, too, enter the sanctuary—together again at last.