

The Comedy of Errors by William Shakespeare

M/M UA, Kn, QS, SS, SmS

II, i

IV, iii

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

ANTIPHOLUS S.

Avoid then, fiend! What tell'st thou me of supping?
Thou art, as you are all, a sorceress.
I conjure thee to leave me and be gone.

COURTESAN

Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner,
Or, for my diamond, the chain you promised,
And I'll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

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DROMIO S.

66 Some devils ask but the parings 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; and if you give it her,
The devil will shake her chain and fright us with it.

82

COURTESAN

I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the chain.
I hope you do not mean to cheat me so?

86

ANTIPHOLUS S.

Avaunt, thou witch! Come, Dromio, let us go.

87

88

DROMIO S.

75 Fly pride, says the peacock: mistress, that you know.
Exit [with Antipholus of Syracuse].

COURTESAN

Now, out of doubt, Antipholus is mad,
Else would he never so demean himself.
77 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,
82 Besides this present instance of his rage,

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98

66-71 *Some . . . it* (prose in the folio text; hence irregular lines. The meaning through l. 69 is that, though most witches - cf. l. 74 - demand only a few things belonging to a victim, this woman requires a chain.) 75 *Fly . . . know* i.e. how strange that the courtesan should, like the proud peacock, deny pride (perhaps with play on *pride* in the sense of sexual desire in the female) 77 *demean* behave 82 *rage* wild manner, madness

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

IV, iii

Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,
Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.
Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,
On purpose shut the doors against his way.
My way is now to hie home to his house,
And tell his wife that, being lunatic,
He rushed into my house and took perforce
My ring away. This course I fittest choose,
For forty ducats is too much to lose.

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[Exit.]

Enter Antipholus [of] Ephesus, with a Jailor.

IV, iv

ANTIPHOLUS E.

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

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Enter Dromio of Ephesus, with a rope's end.

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

DROMIO E.

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

ANTIPHOLUS E.

But where's the money?

DROMIO E.

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

ANTIPHOLUS E.

Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope?

DROMIO E.

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

14

89 *perforce* by force

IV, iv A street 3 *To warrant* as security for 6 *attached* arrested 14
I'll . . . *rate* I'll get you five hundred at that price (?)

ANTIPHOLUS E.

To what end did I bid thee hie thee home?

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

ANTIPHOLUS E.

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

[Beats him.]

OFFICER Good sir, be patient.

DROMIO E. Nay, 'tis for me to be patient; I am in adversity.

79

8c

20 OFFICER Good now, hold thy tongue.

DROMIO E. Nay, rather persuade him to hold his hands.

ANTIPHOLUS E. Thou whoreson, senseless villain!

82

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

5 ANTIPHOLUS E. Thou art sensible in nothing but blows, and so is an ass.

28 DROMIO E. I am an ass indeed; you may prove it by my long ears. I have served him from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands for my service but blows. When I am cold, he heats me with beating; when I am warm, he cools me with beating. I am waked with it when I sleep, raised with it when I sit, driven out of doors with it when I go from home, welcomed home with it when I return; nay, I bear it on my shoulders, as a beggar wont her brat; and, I think, when

86

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35 he hath lamed me, I shall beg with it from door to door.

Enter Adriana, Luciana, Courtesan, and a Schoolmaster, called Pinch.

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ANTIPHOLUS E. Come, go along; my wife is coming yonder.

9

20 *Good now* for heaven's sake 22 *whoreson* (a coarse epithet with a variety of intonations; here used to express outraged impatience) 25 *sensible* (1) intelligent, (2) sensitive 28 *ears* (pun on 'years'; Dromio is saying that he is a fool for having served so long) 35 *wont* is accustomed (to bear)

DROMIO E. Mistress, respice finem, respect your end; or rather, the prophecy like the parrot, 'Beware the rope's end.'

ANTIPHOLUS E. Wilt thou still talk?

Beats Dromio.

COURTESAN

How say you now? Is not your husband mad?

ADRIANA

His incivility confirms no less.

Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer;

44

Establish him in his true sense again,

And I will please you what you will demand.

46

LUCIANA

Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks!

47

COURTESAN

Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy!

48

PINCH

Give me your hand and let me feel your pulse.

ANTIPHOLUS E.

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

[Strikes him.]

PINCH

I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,

To yield possession to my holy prayers,

And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight.

I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven.

ANTIPHOLUS E.

Peace, doting wizard, peace! I am not mad.

ADRIANA

O that thou wert not, poor distressed soul!

38 *respice finem* remember (your) end (a pious proverb sometimes taught to parrots; with this was associated the punning expression '*respice finem*, 'remember the rope' – or hangman) 44 *you . . . conjurer* i.e. you can expel evil spirits (as he tried to do, ll. 51–54) 46 *please . . . demand* pay what you ask 47 *sharp* on edge 48 *ecstasy* madness