

ACT II

SCENE I. The house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA

- ADRIANA** Neither my husband nor the slave return'd,
That in such haste I sent to seek his master!
Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.
- LUCIANA** Perhaps some merchant hath invited him,
And from the mart he's somewhere gone to dinner.
Good sister, let us dine and never fret:
A man is master of his liberty:
Time is their master, and, when they see time,
They'll go or come: if so, be patient, sister.
- ADRIANA** Why should their liberty than ours be more?
- LUCIANA** Because their business still lies out o' door.
- ADRIANA** Look, when I serve him so, he takes it ill.
- LUCIANA** O, know he is the bridle of your will.
- ADRIANA** There's none but asses will be bridled so.
- LUCIANA** Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe.
There's nothing situate under heaven's eye
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky:
The beasts, the fishes, and the winged fowls,
Are their males' subjects and at their controls:
Men, more divine, the masters of all these,
Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas,
Indued with intellectual sense and souls,
Of more preeminence than fish and fowls,
Are masters to their females, and their lords:
Then let your will attend on their accords.
- ADRIANA** This servitude makes you to keep unwed.
- LUCIANA** Not this, but troubles of the marriage-bed.
- ADRIANA** But, were you wedded, you would bear some sway.
- LUCIANA** Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey.
- ADRIANA** How if your husband start some other where?
- LUCIANA** Till he come home again, I would forbear.
- ADRIANA** Patience unmoved! no marvel though she pause;
They can be meek that have no other cause.
A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,
We bid be quiet 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,
With urging helpless patience wouldst relieve me,
But, if thou live to see like right bereft,
This fool-begg'd patience in thee will be left.
- LUCIANA** Well, I will marry one day, but to try.
Here comes your man; now is your husband nigh.

Enter DROMIO of Ephesus

ADRIANA Say, is your tardy master now at hand?

DRO [EPH] Nay, he's at two hands with me, and that my two ears can witness.

ADRIANA Say, didst thou speak with him? know'st thou his mind?

DRO [EPH] Ay, ay, he told his mind upon mine ear:
Beshrew his hand, I scarce could understand it.

LUCIANA Spake he so doubtfully, thou couldst not feel his meaning?

DRO [EPH] Nay, he struck so plainly, I could too well feel his blows; and withal so doubtfully that I could scarce understand them.

ADRIANA But say, I prithee, is he coming home? It seems he hath great care to please his wife.

DRO [EPH] Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad.

ADRIANA Horn-mad, thou villain!

DRO [EPH] I mean not cuckold-mad;
But, sure, he is stark mad.
When I desired him to come home to dinner,
He ask'd 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 burn'd;' 'My gold!' quoth he:
'My mistress, sir' quoth I; 'Hang up thy mistress!
I know not thy mistress; out on thy mistress!'

LUCIANA Quoth who?

DRO [EPH] Quoth my master:
'I know,' quoth he, 'no house, no wife, no mistress.'
So that my errand, due unto my tongue,
I thank him, I bare home upon my shoulders;
For, in conclusion, he did beat me there.

ADRIANA Go back again, thou slave, and fetch him home.

DRO [EPH] Go back again, and be new beaten home?
For God's sake, send some other messenger.

ADRIANA Back, slave, or I will break thy pate across.

DRO [EPH] And he will bless that cross with other beating:
Between you I shall have a holy head.

ADRIANA Hence, prating peasant! fetch thy master home.

DRO [EPH] Am I so round with you as you with me,
That like a football 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.

Exit

LUCIANA Fie, how impatience loureth in your face!

ADRIANA His company must do his minions grace,
Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.
Hath homely age the alluring beauty took
From my poor cheek? then he hath wasted it:
Are my discourses dull? barren my wit?
If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd,
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 are in me that can be found,
By him not ruin'd? then is he the ground
Of my defeatures. My decayed fair
A sunny look of his would soon repair
But, too unruly deer, he breaks the pale
And feeds from home; poor I am but his stale.

LUCIANA Self-harming jealousy! fie, beat it hence!

ADRIANA Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dispense.
I know his eye doth homage elsewhere,
Or else what lets it but he would be here?
Sister, you know he promised me a chain;
Would that alone, alone he would detain,
So he would keep fair quarter with his bed!
I see the jewel best enamelled
Will lose his beauty; yet the gold bides still,
That others touch, and often touching will
Wear gold: and no man that hath a name,
By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.
Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,
I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.

LUCIANA How many fond fools serve mad jealousy!
Exeunt