

ACT II

SCENE II. A public place.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse

ANT [SYR] The gold I gave to Dromio is laid up
Safe at the Centaur; and the heedful slave
Is wander'd forth, in care to seek me out
By computation and mine host's report.
I could not speak with Dromio since at first
I sent him from the mart. See, here he comes.

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse

How now sir! is your merry humour alter'd?
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? Wast thou mad,
That thus so madly thou didst answer me?

DRO [SYR] What answer, sir? when spake I such a word?

ANT [SYR] Even now, even here, not half an hour since.

DRO [SYR] I did not see you since you sent me hence,
Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave me.

ANT [SYR] Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt,
And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner;
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeas'd.

DRO [SYR] I am glad to see you in this merry vein:
What means this jest? I pray you, master, tell me.

ANT [SYR] Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in the teeth?
Think'st thou I jest? Hold, take thou that, and that.

Beating him

DRO [SYR] Hold, sir, for God's sake! now your jest is earnest:
Upon what bargain do you give it me?

ANT [SYR] Because that I familiarly sometimes
Do use you for my fool and chat with you,
Your sauciness will jest upon my love
And make a common of my serious hours.
When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport,
But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.
If you will jest with me, know my aspect,
And fashion your demeanor to my looks,
Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

DRO [SYR] Sconce call you it? so you would leave battering, I had rather have it a head: an you use these blows 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?

ANT [SYR] Dost thou not know?

DRO [SYR] Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.

ANT [SYR] Shall I tell you why?

DRO [SYR] Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say every why hath a wherefore.

ANT [SYR] Why, first,--for flouting me; and then, wherefore--
For urging it the second time to me.

DRO [SYR] Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season,
When in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme nor reason?
Well, sir, I thank you.

ANT [SYR] Thank me, sir, for what?

DRO [SYR] Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.

ANT [SYR] I'll make you amends next, to give you nothing for
something. But say, sir, is it dinner-time?

DRO [SYR] No, sir; I think the meat wants that I have.

ANT [SYR] In good time, sir; what's that?

DRO [SYR] Basting.

ANT [SYR] Well, sir, then 'twill be dry.

DRO [SYR] If it be, sir, I pray you, eat none of it.

ANT [SYR] Your reason?

DRO [SYR] Lest it make you choleric and purchase me another dry basting.

ANT [SYR] Well, sir, learn to jest in good time: there's a time for all things.

DRO [SYR] I durst have denied that, before you were so choleric.

ANT [SYR] By what rule, sir?

DRO [SYR] Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of father Time himself.

ANT [SYR] I knew 'twould be a bald conclusion:
But, soft! who wafts us yonder?

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA

ADRIANA Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown:
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects;
I am not Adriana nor thy wife.
The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow
That never words were music to thine ear,
That never object pleasing in thine eye,
That never touch well welcome to thy hand,
That never meat sweet-savor'd in thy taste,
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carved to thee.
How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,
That thou art thus estranged from thyself?
Thyself I call it, being strange to me,
That, undividable, incorporate,
Am better than thy dear self's better part.
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!
For know, my love, as easy mayest thou fall
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,
And take unmingled that same drop again,
Without addition or diminishing,
As take from me thyself and not me too.
How dearly would it touch me to the quick,
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious
And that this body, consecrate to thee,

By ruffian lust should be contaminate!
Wouldst thou not spit at me and spurn at me
And hurl the name of husband in my face
And tear the stain'd skin off my harlot-brow
And from my false hand cut the wedding-ring
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow?
I know thou canst; and therefore see thou do it.
I am possess'd with an adulterate blot;
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust:
For if we too be one and thou play false,
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,
Being strumpeted by thy contagion.
Keep then far league and truce with thy true bed;
I live unstain'd, thou undishonoured.

ANT [SYR] 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;
Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,
Want wit in all one word to understand.

LUCIANA Fie, brother! how the world is changed with you!
When were you wont to use my sister thus?
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

ANT [SYR] By Dromio?

DRO [SYR] By me?

ADRIANA By thee; and this thou didst return from him,
That he did buffet thee, and, in his blows,
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

ANT [SYR] Did you converse, sir, with this gentlewoman?
What is the course and drift of your compact?

DRO [SYR] I, sir? I never saw her till this time.

ANT [SYR] Villain, thou liest; for even her very words
Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

DRO [SYR] I never spake with her in all my life.

ANT [SYR] How can she thus then call us by our names,
Unless it be by inspiration.

ADRIANA 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 to communicate:
If aught possess thee from me, it is dross,
Usurping ivy, brier, or idle moss;
Who, all for want of pruning, with intrusion
Infect thy sap and live on thy confusion.

ANT [SYR] To me she speaks; she moves me for her theme:
What, was I married to her in my dream?
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 offer'd fallacy.

LUCIANA Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner.

DRO [SYR] O, for my beads! I cross me for a sinner.
This is the fairy land: O spite of spites!
We talk with goblins, owls and sprites:
If we obey them not, this will ensue,
They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

LUCIANA Why pratest thou to thyself and answer'st not?
Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou sot!

DRO [SYR] I am transformed, master, am I not?

ANT [SYR] I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

DRO [SYR] Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.

ANT [SYR] Thou hast thine own form.

DRO [SYR] No, I am an ape.

LUCIANA If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass.

DRO [SYR] 'Tis true; she rides me and I long for grass.
'Tis so, I am an ass; else it could never be
But I should know her as well as she knows me.

ADRIANA Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,
To put the finger in the eye and weep,
Whilst man and master laugh my woes to scorn.
Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.
Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks.
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,
Say he dines forth, and let no creature enter.
Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well.

ANT [SYR] Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking? mad or well-advised?
Known unto these, and to myself disguised!
I'll say as they say and persevere so,
And in this mist at all adventures go.

DRO [SYR] Master, shall I be porter at the gate?

ADRIANA Ay; and let none enter, lest I break your pate.

LUCIANA Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.
Exeunt