

Audition Sides for *The Comedy of Errors*

SERVANT

O mistress, mistress, shift and save yourself!
My master and his man are both broke loose,
Beaten the maids a-row and bound the doctor
Whose beard they have singed off with brands of fire;
And ever, as it blazed, they threw on him
Great pails of puddled mire to quench the hair:
My master preaches patience to him and the while
His man with scissors nicks him like a fool,
And sure, unless you send some present help,
Between them they will kill the conjurer.

BALTHAZAR

Have patience, sir; O, let it not be so!
Herein you war against your reputation
And draw within the compass of suspect
The unviolated honour of your wife.
Once this,--your long experience of her wisdom,
Her sober virtue, years and modesty,
Plead on her part some cause to you unknown:
And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse
Why at this time the doors are made against you.
Be ruled by me: depart in patience,
And let us to the Tiger all to dinner,
And about evening come yourself alone
To know the reason of this strange restraint.
If by strong hand you offer to break in
Now in the stirring passage of the day,
A vulgar comment will be made of it,
And that supposed by the common rout
Against your yet ungalled estimation
That may with foul intrusion enter in
And dwell upon your grave when you are dead;
For slander lives upon succession,
For ever housed where it gets possession.

ADRIANA

Ah, do not tear away thy self 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 thy self and not me too.
How dearly would it touch thee 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.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Sweet mistress--what your name is else, I know not,
Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine,--
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not
Than our earth's wonder, more than earth divine.
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak;
Lay open to my earthy-gross conceit,
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.
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 new?
Transform me then, and to your power I'll yield.
But if that I am I, then well I know
Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe
Far more, far more to you do I decline.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad.
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?' 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!'
'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.

COURTEZAN

Now, out of doubt 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 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 rush'd into my house and took perforce
My ring away. This course I fittest choose;
For forty ducats is too much to lose.

LUCIANA

And may it be that you have quite forgot
A husband's office? shall, Antipholus.
Even in the spring of love, 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;
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator;
Look sweet, be fair, become 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 secret-false: what need she be acquainted?
Then, gentle brother, get you in again;
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife:
'Tis holy sport to be a little vain,
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.

DR 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!

Dialogue Side for *The Comedy of Errors*

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

But I pray sir, why am I beaten?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Dost thou not know?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Nothing sir, but that I am beaten.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Shall I tell you why?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Ay sir, and wherefore; for they say, every why hath a wherefore.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Why first for flouting me, and then wherefore, for urging it the second time to me.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

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.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Thank me sir, for what?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

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

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No sir, I think the meat wants that I have.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

In good time sir: what's that?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Basting.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Well sir, then 'twill be dry.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

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

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Your reason?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Lest it make you choleric, and purchase me another dry basting.