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ABOUT THIS PACK

This pack supports the RSC's 2021 production of *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*, directed by Phillip Breen.

The activities provided in this pack can be used either as stand-alone practical approaches to this play or as supporting activities for students seeing the production. They have been designed with KS3 students in mind but can be adapted for other age groups. Some are best suited to an open space such as a hall, but many can be used in a classroom.

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These symbols are used throughout the pack:



READ

Notes from the production, background info or extracts



ACTIVITY

A practical or open space activity



WRITE

A classroom writing or discussion activity

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

"The madness in the play comes from the characters' isolation. In the final act, peace and sanity is restored ultimately because... we only know who we are because of other people... I know that bit of myself through my girlfriend, that bit of myself through my old schoolfriend, that bit through my uncle and so on... and it's only when all of these characters see each other in the flesh and they can share their own bit of the story, that they start to feel whole again..."

Phillip Breen, director, *The Comedy of Errors*.



Photo by Pete Le May. © RSC

The Comedy of Errors was due to open in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon in Spring 2020. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, our production was moved to a purpose-built outdoor theatre on the banks of the River Avon and we started welcoming back audiences to it in July 2021. It was impossible not to see the links between the world of the play and our post-pandemic world.

Phillip Breen, our director, says: "It's a play about the fragility of the self, how quickly and profoundly we can lose ourselves when we lose touch with people... It's about what happens when the world stops behaving like it used to, and everything feels indefinably strange."

Find out about the experience of putting together the show with [this filmed conversation between actors and creatives from the production](#).

EXPLORING THE STORY



SYNOPSIS

The Comedy of Errors begins with the story of a shipwreck. Egeon is the father of twin boys, both named Antipholus. He has bought another pair of twins, both named Dromio, to be their servants. When Egeon and his wife are shipwrecked in a violent storm, he manages to save only one Antipholus and one Dromio and hasn't seen the rest of his family since.

Antipholus and Dromio arrive in Ephesus in search of their long-lost twin brothers, unaware that Egeon has also arrived there on the same quest. Unknown to all of them, the lost Antipholus and Dromio have been living in Ephesus for many years. A 'comedy of errors' begins as the twins are constantly mistaken for each other: Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse think Ephesus is bewitched and their twin brothers get arrested. Everything builds to the big reunion and Shakespeare saves the biggest surprise for last when Egeon is reunited with his lost wife.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The Comedy of Errors is one of Shakespeare's shortest plays and packs a lot of plot into that short time. For our production, the director and design team thought a lot about *where* to set the production in order to make sense of the story and make it visually exciting for an audience.

"We wanted something that was going to liberate the play rather than straitjacket it. We began with some of the basic facts of the play." - Phillip Breen (director, *The Comedy of Errors* 2021).

It is important for any production to highlight these important plot points or 'facts' of the story, to keep it clear and engaging for the audience.



ACTIVITY 1: EGEON'S TRAGEDY

The following activity will help students examine the opening of our production and understand how a story takes shape.

You will need the 'Egeon's Tragedy' resource from the end of this pack, and **the activity takes approximately 15-20 minutes.**

- Organise students into 7 groups and give each group one of the seven parts from the 'Egeon's Tragedy' resource.
- Explain to the group that they will have 10 minutes to create three tableaux (still images) to illustrate their story as they tell it out loud, using every member of the group.
- Invite them to add lines of their own or additional text to the extract they have to help make their tableaux clear.

- Ask them to think about how they can link the images together in an exciting way, using movement to transition from one tableau to the next.
- Invite each group to perform their tableaux in order, one after the other, to build up Egeon's Tragedy.
- Once all groups have performed, reflect about which images and words stuck out the most. Think about how this sets up the action of the rest of the play. If an audience watched this, what kind of play might they expect *The Comedy of Errors* to be?

PRODUCTION NOTES

When planning our production of *The Comedy of Errors*, we thought very carefully about which time period to set it in. "Most of the characters in this play are young and three of the main characters are actively searching for people, so we pushed it back in time to the last plausible moment before mass worldwide mobile communication. Which was the 1980s."
(Phillip Breen, director)

Setting our production in the 1980s meant that characters can't just call each other on their mobile phones whenever they are lost or confused.

We also use a lot of colourful 1980s influences, from the choice of music to the hair scrunchies and shoulder pads in the costumes.



ACTIVITY 2: THE STORY IN 20 MINUTES

The following activity will help students piece the plot together and feel the shape of the entire play. You will need 'The Comedy of Errors in 20 Minutes' resource from the end of the pack and should plan about **45 minutes** for the activity.

- Divide the students into 10 smaller groups. Hand each group one scene from 'The Comedy of Errors in 20 Minutes'.
- Explain that they will have 10 minutes to decide how to tell the story of their scene in whichever way they choose: they might use tableaux (frozen images), mime, adding additional description, etc. Encourage them to narrate their scenes with the dialogue provided.
- Give the groups 10 minutes to rehearse their 'scene', making it ready to perform to the group.
- Invite each group to perform their scene, in order of the story.
- After the whole story has been told, discuss as a group what elements worked best, and what we learned about the play: *Any memorable moments or turning points in the story? Did any particular character's story stand out and why? How did the groups cope with the confusion of twins?*

INTRODUCING THE CHARACTERS



ACTIVITY 3: CHARACTER CATWALK

In rehearsal, actors create fully rounded characters by thinking about how they act in private and in public. This activity explores the public face of the characters. It will take **20-30 minutes**, and you will need the Character Catwalk resource from the end of the pack.

- Invite the students to create a 'Catwalk' for their characters. This can be across the room, giving them a nice long walk including a turn in the middle.
- Divide the group into pairs and give each pair two character profiles from the Character Catwalk list. Explain that they will be reading each other's profile out loud while the other walks the catwalk in character, delivers their line to the audience, then walks back.
- Give the pairs a few minutes to practise reading each other's character profiles and practise their walks, exploring how they might move in public: *Are they low or high status? Do they walk differently with an audience? Move extra quickly to get it over? Enjoy their moment? Stop and chat to the front row?*
- Invite the pairs up onto the catwalk to announce each other's grand entrance. It doesn't matter if some characters are repeated - each student will have a different interpretation.
- Encourage the rest of the group to applaud each appearance. When all are finished, discuss what we have discovered about the characters: *Were any of the servants surprisingly confident? Which of their characters found the attention difficult and why?*
- Now ask the students to come up with an adjective for each character that they think sums them up or tells something important about them. *What does this tell us about each of the characters? How hard or easy was it to sum up a character in one word?*



Photo by Pete Le May. © RSC

PRODUCTION NOTES

In our production, some strong choices have been made for some of the characters, to heighten their worries or increase the comedy. For example:

- Dromio of Ephesus uses a microphone to interrupt the sound system and voice his grievances.
- Adriana's name changes slightly to Adrianna, and she is heavily pregnant.
- Angelo owes money to a mafia boss with a big burly bodyguard.

Giving characters these strong choices helps to create both drama and humour for an audience and there is a huge impact when we see the characters interact.

"In our production, Adrianna is pregnant and vulnerable and her husband's behaviour is weird, like he has a piece missing. But we always, always, always had two things at the forefront - one, that she was going to be strong and bold and challenging but two, that underneath it all, they both really love each other and that this is all a bit of a cry for help."

- Hal Chambers, assistant director, *The Comedy of Errors* 2021



ACTIVITY 4: STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

The following activity will help students to think like actors in the rehearsal room, and explore the setting of Ephesus and its rules. It should take **about 15-20 minutes**.

- Invite the students to walk around the room, giving each other plenty of space. For a large number, divide into smaller groups and let each group have their turn.
- As they walk, explain that they are citizens of Ephesus and must follow the city rules. When they hear the following words: STOP - GO - CLAP - JUMP, they must obey the instruction to please the Duke.
- You, as the Duke, call out the words at random. After a couple of minutes of obeying these words, ask them to STOP.
- Now explain that they are no longer citizens of Ephesus; they are strangers who have just arrived in the city and do not know the rules. This time, when you call out the words, they must do the opposite (eg. When you say STOP, they must GO and when you say CLAP, they must JUMP, and vice versa).
- Add that if you get the action wrong, you as the Duke will point to them and say "If any Syracusan born come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies!"
- Explain that the whole group can save their classmate by learning the line: "Unless a thousand marks be levied to quit the penalty and to ransom him!" They need to learn this response and say it together.

- Invite your group of strangers to walk around Ephesus until the whole group knows the response and can save anyone who gets the rules wrong.
- Afterwards, get the students to think about what this exercise tells us about Ephesus. *How does it help us understand what has happened to Egeon at the start of the play? What problems might the rules cause for the other characters from Syracuse?*

PRODUCTION NOTES

The Comedy of Errors is full of chance meetings involving doubles and people who ought not to be together - all in the same city, Ephesus. In shaping our Ephesus, we looked at Gulf states such as the UAE and Qatar with their multicultural societies and thriving world ports where money can be made and lost quickly.

Each character in *The Comedy of Errors* has a different status - servant or master, husband or wife, rich or poor - and this changes how they behave.

Actors need to know everything possible about their character, including their status, their position in the world. The script will give them certain information; the rest they must explore in rehearsal. These details help them become even more 'real' for the audience.



ACTIVITY 5: STATUS PLAY

In this **15-minute** activity, students will develop their thinking about the characters further through improvisation and by using their imagination.

- Discuss the meaning of the word 'status' with the group: *Who do they know who has high status in the world? Who do they think has low status?*
- Invite the group to find a space in the room and imagine they are a very high status person. Ask them to think about what they are wearing, how they travelled here, how they feel about everyone else.
- Invite the group to walk around the city as their high status person, exploring how they walk: *How might they run for a bus? Do they get out of the way for anyone else? Did they change gender or age?*
- Ask them to now do the same but from the perspective of a low status person. Get them to think about how they might move their bodies through the space differently.
- Ask the group to stop and teach them four lines of a short conversation:

A - Hello.

B - How are you?

A - You're late.

B - I know.

- Divide the group into two halves and explain that one half will stay low status, the other will be high. Ask them to walk around the city again and when they see somebody, have this short conversation. Give them time to try both part A and B with different people.
- Ask the groups to swap over so they get a chance to experience the conversation from the perspective of the other status.
- Invite them to discuss their experience: *Could you tell from the person's tone of voice or posture whether they were high or low status? What was it like being told 'You're late' by a low status person if you are high status? How easy is it to say 'I know' if you are low status?*
- As a group, consider which characters in *The Comedy of Errors* might be high and low status: *How might this affect their behaviour when they meet others? How could it affect their physicality or how they move and speak?*

PRODUCTION NOTES

Reputation and 'public face' are very important in Ephesus. In our production, we set a lot of scenes in a more public place to make their situation challenging and funny.

- Antipholus of Ephesus is arrested at a public event, surrounded by cameras.
- Antipholus of Syracuse is greeted as a regular in a posh restaurant.
- Adrianna confronts Antipholus of Syracuse in the restaurant in front of the other diners.



ACTIVITY 6: RELATIONSHIPS IN THREE STAGES

For this activity, you can use the Character Catwalk resource from Activity 3 to ensure you have a good variety of relationships for the group.

Much of rehearsal time is spent exploring the different relationships between characters. This activity will encourage students to examine how different characters interact in the play and how their particular relationships develop. It will take **about 30 minutes**.

- Group the students into pairs and give each pair two characters to work with. Explain that they are going to explore the differences between these characters.
- Ask the pairs to decide on three moments that best describe the relationship between their two characters. There should be a moment at the beginning, middle and end of their story. Explain that if the moments don't exist in the story, they can make them up.
- Invite the pairs to create three tableaux to best illustrate these moments. Give them up to ten minutes to do this. For example, for Adriana & Antipholus of Ephesus, you could have:
 1. He's late for dinner.
 2. She shuts him out of the house.
 3. She visits him in prison.

- Ask the pairs to make up one line to go with each tableau. This can be a line of dialogue or a line of narration, said by both or either character.
- Invite each pair to share their Three Stage Relationship to the whole group.
- Reflect on these relationships as a group: *What did we learn about the way these relationships developed? Were there any surprises? Did acting out these tableaux change where your sympathies lie with any of the characters?*



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EXPLORING THE THEMES

THEME ONE - IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

PRODUCTION NOTES

We made our master/servant relationships between each Antipholus and their Dromio very different in our production to bring even more comedy out of the mistaken identities and highlight the differences between the two worlds of Syracuse and Ephesus.

“Master/servant exercises in rehearsal are based on ‘set modes’ so we discussed what ours would be. The Ephesians’ set mode is beating and violence and Dromio of Ephesus is a servant who has had enough. The other relationship, between Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse, is one of harmony and only gets messed up when Antipholus meets the wrong servant.” - Hal Chambers (Assistant Director, *The Comedy of Errors* 2021)



ACTIVITY 7: MASTERS AND SERVANTS

This activity will help students explore the power relationship of master and servant and what happens when this changes or gets blurred. It will take **about ten minutes**, and each pair of students will need a copy of Act 1 Scene 2, a conversation between Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Ephesus, which can be found in the Resources section.

- Split the group into pairs.
- Give each pair a copy of Act 1 Scene 2 and read the scene together. Remind them of the master/servant relationship between the men and that these two characters do not really

know each other – this is the first case of mistaken identity in the play, which is why their conversation is so confused.

- Invite them to read the scene again, out loud, but Dromio is not allowed to move at all - they must sit down or stand completely still. The student playing Antipholus is allowed to move however they want, but without any physical contact.
- When all pairs have read the scene, ask them to repeat the activity but this time it is Antipholus who cannot move.
- Discuss as a group, how it made each character feel: *Did the feeling of power change in the two readings? Could Dromio express his feelings more when free? Was it frustrating to be restricted, and did it add to the frustration of the conversation?*



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PRODUCTION NOTES

Antipholus of Ephesus is a good example of one character who, little by little, starts to believe his world is turning upside down. From being locked out of his own house to begging for justice from the Duke in Act 5, he almost goes mad with conspiracy theories about the people who are out to get him.

In our production, he is arrested at a very public event and captured on camera by a film crew. It is a clever way of showing how much reputation he has to lose and how the stress of this might lead him to jump to conclusions and blame the wrong person - namely, his loving wife.

ACTIVITY 8: IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD, MAN!

Phillip Breen introduced the idea of the storm at the start of the play being “all in your head” in rehearsals. This is a great way of describing chaos coming from nothing, like it does often in *The Comedy of Errors*. It is also exactly what actors do all the time - they create different characters, different identities for themselves with their imagination.

This short activity will help students to think about the loss of identity that some of the characters feel in the play.

- Ask the students to close their eyes and imagine they are in a public place, like a shop or a park, somewhere they feel safe and comfortable.
- Encourage them to use all of their senses and think about what they can smell and hear as well as what they can see. *Are they alone or with others? Is it loud or quiet?*

- Tell them to imagine turning around and seeing someone else who looks exactly like them. *How would they react? Would they talk to the person or want to move away? Does it interest them or make them feel uncomfortable? How do they imagine other people around them reacting?*
- Get the students to open their eyes and write down some words to describe how they felt. Ask if any students are willing to share what they imagined and how it made them feel. Think about how this relates to the way the characters in the play feel before and after they discover their twins.



ACTIVITY 9: SOAP BOX

“In our production in Act 4 Scene 4, Dromio (of Ephesus) grabs one of the stand up mics on stage and gives a kind of protest speech, taking over the sound system and corrupting the rules of what we’ve set up in the world. It’s a big moment.” - Hal Chambers (Assistant Director, *The Comedy of Errors* 2021)

Actors think a lot about how best to reveal the characters’ inner feelings to the audience. Sometimes Shakespeare gives some characters long speeches to do this. However, there are key moments where characters remain silent and we have to guess how they feel.

In the following activity, students will learn to ‘give a voice’ to this inner world of their characters so that an audience can share them. Allow for **45 minutes** for this activity.

- As a group, discuss what is meant by a ‘soliloquy’ (a speech that a character delivers straight to the audience that reveals their private thoughts and feelings). Can they think of any famous soliloquies? What about other times when characters are alone onstage? Some examples might be:
 - “To be or not to be” speech from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.
 - Bottom’s Dream in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.
 - The Courtesan’s speech in *Comedy of Errors*.
- Provide the students with pens and paper and ask them to imagine they are in Ephesus when Egeon is arrested. This is the moment where the Duke asks him to tell his story.
- Ask each student to jot down some details about their character. For example:
 - ▶ Are you working for Duke Solinus or part of his family?
 - ▶ Are you an Ephesian guard, responsible for Egeon’s arrest?
 - ▶ Are you a fellow Syracuse merchant who travelled with Egeon and did not know his story?
 - ▶ Are you an enemy of Syracuse who thinks Egeon should be punished?

- Explain that their choice will dramatically affect their experience of the moment when Egeon tells his story. Ask them to imagine the moment when they hear it and write a paragraph about their individual experience. Encourage them to pay attention to their senses.
 - ▶ How did they feel? Emotionally? Physically?
 - ▶ What could they hear? Crying? Children? The waves? The storm?
 - ▶ What could they see? The shipwreck, the expressions on people's faces?
 - ▶ Could they remember any specific details? How cold it was, how the weather changed, were they aware of anyone in particular?
- Ask the students to imagine the story has just finished and they are all sharing their experience. Invite them to read out their account of what happened.
- Reflect as a group on whether the moment seems different now they have heard it from so many angles. *Is it clearer? Were there any surprising accounts? What new details are now in your mind? Has your feeling about Egeon changed?*
- Ask the students how they might go about dramatising one or several of these accounts.



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THEME TWO - RELATIONSHIPS

PRODUCTION NOTES

You will see lots of funny moments in our production of *The Comedy of Errors* but the story is an emotional rollercoaster and there are many unhappy characters along the way.

Adrianna is a character who is far from happy. She feels neglected by her husband and misunderstood by her unmarried sister, Luciana. In our production, Adrianna is heavily pregnant which emphasises her vulnerability and need for Antipholus to be there for her.



ACTIVITY 10: AN UNHAPPY WIFE

“Antipholus of Ephesus’ mid-life crisis has been rumbling for a while and this is where it explodes. Is he freaking out about being a father?” (Hal Chambers, Assistant Director, *The Comedy of Errors* 2021)

This activity will encourage students to think about why a character chooses certain language and words to affect another person. You will need Adriana’s speech from Act 2 Scene 2 in the Resources at the end of this pack and should allow **about 30 minutes** for the exercise.

- Have the students read the speech together in small groups and discuss what they think Adriana is saying. Give them the chance to look up words they don't understand and ask questions about the speech. Encourage them to paraphrase any sections they find particularly difficult.
- Once they have got to grips with the speech, ask them to read it through again individually and highlight any positive words (like 'love' or 'dearly') in one colour and the negative words (like 'never' or 'strange') in a different colour. *What balance of positive and negative do they find? What does that make them think about the marriage?*
- Ask them to look again at the early part of the speech, where Adriana talks about how in love they once were. *What is the effect of the repeated use of the word “never”? Why would she be using a negative word to talk about a positive experience?*
- Read them the lines about the drop of water and ask them to think about why she uses this metaphor. *Does it suggest that she wants the marriage to succeed or fail? Does she still love Antipholus? Do the students think the marriage will survive?*
- Finally, ask the groups to consider the speech with Adriana expecting a baby, as she is in this production. *Does that change any of their feelings about what she says, or about whether the relationship will succeed or fail?*



ACTIVITY 11: SISTERS

Dialogue can uncover a lot about relationships and themes. In rehearsal, our actors play a scene in many different ways to explore this. In the following 2-part activity, students will explore the relationship between Adriana and Luciana and listen carefully to what is being said. You will need Act 2 Scene 1 in our Resources at the end of this pack, and should allow **about 30 minutes** for the exercise.

Part 1: Steps

- Group your students into pairs and give each pair a copy of the scene. Ask them to find a space in the room, then stand back to back and read the scene out loud to each other.

- As a group, briefly discuss any unfamiliar words. Then create two lines out of your pairs across the room facing each other: one row of Adrianas facing one row of Lucianas.
- Explain that they are going to read the scene out loud again. When each sister makes a point that they feel is important, they are to take a step forward (towards the other sister). If they feel the other sister is making an important point, they are to take a step backwards.
- Remind them that there are no right or wrong steps; they should move when they feel the impulse to move.



Photo by Pete Le May. © RSC

- When all the pairs have finished reading, ask them to hold their final positions and discuss the results: *What does their position say about the sisters' relationship? Who took the most steps? Did they get closer or further apart? What does it reveal about their opinions on marriage and each other? Were there any lines of text that created strong movements from every pair - forwards or backwards?*

Part 2: Location, location, location

- Explain that the 2021 production put this scene in a yoga studio, a public space. *How might that change the way the sisters interact with each other?*
- As a group, discuss other places where this scene could be set and how this might affect the sisters' behaviour: *a hair salon, a bedroom, a cinema or theatre auditorium during a show?*
- Ask each pair to choose one location and give them 5 minutes to read the scene, as if they were in this setting: *what physical activity could it add to the text? How could this help the meaning, add humour, reveal more about their relationship?*
- Invite the pairs to show their scene to the group. Discuss the results: *which locations worked best and why? Did the choice of location show how close the sisters were, or how far apart their views were?*
- Discuss as a group what both parts of the activity have suggested to them about the sisters: *Who is older? Why is Luciana not married? Who is the dominant sister?*



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RESOURCES

Egeon's Tragedy

GROUP 1

In Syracuse was I born; and wed
Unto a woman, happy but for me.
With her I lived in joy; our wealth increased
By prosperous voyages I often made
To Epidamnum.

GROUP 2

My spouse had not been long but she became
A joyful mother of two goodly sons;
And, which was strange, the one so like the other
As could not be distinguished but by names.

GROUP 3

That very hour, and in the self-same inn,
A mean woman was delivered
Of such a burden, male twins, both alike:
Those bought, and brought up to attend my sons.

GROUP 4

A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd,
Before the always wind-obeying deep
Gave any tragic instance of our harm:
But longer did we not retain much hope;
For what obscured light the heavens did grant
Did but convey unto our fearful minds
A doubtful warrant of immediate death;

GROUP 5

The sailors sought for safety by our boat,
And left the ship, then sinking-ripe, to us:
My wife, more careful for the latter-born,
Had fasten'd him unto a small spare mast,
To him one of the other twins was bound,
Whilst I had been like heedful of the other:
The children thus disposed, my wife and I,
Fixing our eyes on whom our care was fix'd,
Fasten'd ourselves at either end the mast;

GROUP 6

At length the sun, gazing upon the earth,
Dispersed those vapours that offended us;
And, by the benefit of his wished light,
We were encountered by a mighty rock,
Which being violently borne upon,
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.

GROUP 7

My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,
At eighteen years became inquisitive
After his brother -
- and importuned me
That his attendant,--so his case was like,
Reft of his brother, but retained his name,--
Might bear him company in the quest of him.

The Comedy of Errors in 20 minutes

1. Egeon is a merchant from Syracuse, searching for his lost family. He arrives illegally in Ephesus and is sentenced to death, gaining a short reprieve after telling the story of how he lost his family.
 - *'O, let me say no more! Gather the sequel by that went before.'*
 - *'Whilst I laboured of a love to see, I hazarded the loss of whom I loved.'*
 - *'Beg thou or borrow to make up the sum, / And live. If no, then thou art doomed to die.'*
2. Antipholus of Syracuse arrives in Ephesus, looking for his lost twin brother and mother. He mistakes his brother's servant, Dromio, for his own servant Dromio.
 - *'I to the world am like a drop of water / That in the ocean seeks another drop'*
 - *'To me, sir? Why, you gave no gold to me!*
 - *'They say this town is full of cozenage'* (meaning trickery or deception)
3. Adriana scolds Antipholus of Syracuse, mistaking him for her neglectful husband.
 - *'Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown'*
 - *O, how comes it, / That thou art thus estrangèd from thyself?*
 - *'Plead you to me, fair dame? I know you not'*
4. Antipholus of Ephesus is locked out of his own house. He decides to punish his wife Adriana by making her jealous.
 - *'O, villain, thou hast stol'n both mine office and my name'*
 - *'Go fetch me something; I'll break ope the gate.'*
 - *'That chain will I bestow — Be it for nothing but to spite my wife'*

5. Adriana's sister, Luciana, tells Antipholus of Syracuse to treat Adriana better. He is not Adriana's husband but falls in love with Luciana!
- *'And may it be that you have quite forgot / A husband's office?'*
 - *'Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote.'*
 - *'Why call you me love? Call my sister so.'*
6. Angelo, a goldsmith, gives a gold chain to Antipholus of Syracuse by mistake, who refuses to pay for it. Angelo has Antipholus of Ephesus arrested instead.
- *'You gave me none. You wrong me much to say so.'*
 - *'Well, officer, arrest him at my suit.'*
 - *'I shall have law in Ephesus, / To your notorious shame'*
7. Adriana is told her husband is mad and takes a conjurer to visit him in jail and bring him back to his senses.
- *'Mistress, both man and master is possessed'*
 - *'Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all'*
 - *'O, bind him, bind him! Let him not come near me.'*
8. Angelo sees Antipholus of Syracuse with the chain and accuses him. Antipholus and Dromio draw swords in the street!
- *'This chain you had of me; can you deny it?'*
 - *'Thou art a villain to impeach me thus!'*
 - *'Run, master, run; for God's sake, take a house!'*

9. Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse take shelter in the priory. Adriana, who thinks Antipholus is her escaped husband, tries to get in but is refused entry by the Abbess.

- *'The venom clamours of a jealous woman / Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.'*
- *'She did betray me to my own reproof.'*
- *'Be quiet and depart: thou shalt not have him.'*

10. Egeon recognises Antipholus of Ephesus as his lost son. The Abbess Emilia recognises Egeon as her lost husband. Everyone is reunited and Egeon allowed to live.

- *'I never saw my father in my life.'*
- *'I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me.'*
- *'And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.'*

Character Catwalk

Solinus, Duke of Ephesus:

He is ruler of Ephesus and must enforce its laws. When Egeon arrives illegally from Syracuse at the start of the play, the Duke condemns him to death. However, when he hears Egeon's story, he is moved to pity and grants him a stay of execution.

“I am not partial to infringe our laws.”

Egeon, an unlucky merchant of Syracuse:

A shipwreck split up his family in the distant past and he is travelling to find them. Egeon's deepest despair at the loss of his family, and possibly his own life, reverses itself in the last moments of the play.

“Hopeless and helpless doth Egeon wend.”

Antipholus of Ephesus:

The first "lost" son of Egeon; this Antipholus witnesses his sense of identity dissolve around him when, unbeknownst to him, his twin brother arrives in Ephesus. Even his wife seems part of a conspiracy to drive him mad.

“This day great Duke she shut the doors upon me.”

Antipholus of Syracuse:

The second twin, the "lost" son; he arrives in Ephesus in his quest to recover his scattered family only to find himself spellbound, as he sees it, in a city of witchcraft and trickery.

**“The fellow is distract, and so am I:
And here we wander in illusions.”**

The two Dromios:

Exact lookalikes and slaves to the respective twin Antipholuses; the Dromios parallel exactly their masters' dilemmas and take regular beatings.

Dromio of Ephesus: “Methinks you are my glass and not my brother.”

Dromio of Syracuse: “We’ll draw cuts for the senior: till then lead thou first.”

Adriana:

The attractive, rich wife of Antipholus of Ephesus; she mistakenly welcomes his twin brother as her husband, much to her husband's dismay and the visitor's amazement.

“I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me.”

Emilia:

The long-lost wife of Egeon; she has become an Abbess at Ephesus. She offers refuge to her Syracusan son without knowing who he is, then at the end of the play, she invites the entire cast of characters to feast and discuss the day's events.

“Most mighty Duke, behold a man much wrong'd.”

Angelo:

An Ephesian goldsmith; he is drawn into the complications when he delivers a gold chain — ordered by one of the twins — to the other twin, and when he tries to collect payment from the wrong one.

**“Arrest him officer
I would not spare my brother in this case.”**

Doctor Pinch:

A quack employed by Adriana to ‘cure’ Antipholus of Ephesus. He visits him in jail and suggests he and his servant be bound and laid in some dark room to exorcise the "fiend" within them.

**“I charge thee Satan, housed within this man
To yield possession to my holy prayers.”**

Luciana:

Adriana's unmarried sister. She tries her best to calm Adriana at points of stress in the plot, but she too gets caught up in the enveloping madness. Shakespeare neatly pairs her off with Antipholus of Syracuse at the end of the play.

“Why call you me love? Call my sister so.”

Act 1 Scene 2 (edited)

Enter DROMIO of Ephesus

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

What now? how chance thou art return'd so soon?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Return'd so soon! rather approach'd too late:
The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit,
The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell;
My mistress made it one upon my cheek:
She is so hot because the meat is cold;

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Stop in your wind, sir: tell me this, I pray:
Where have you left the money that I gave you?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

O,--sixpence, that I had o' Wednesday last
To pay the saddler sir; I kept it not.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Tell me, and dally not, where is the money?
We being strangers here, how darest thou!

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

I pray you, sir, as you sit at dinner:
I from my mistress come to you in post;
If I return, I shall be post indeed,
For she will score your fault upon my pate.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of season;
Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

To me, sir? why, you gave no gold to me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Come on, sir knave, have done your foolishness,
And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

My charge was but to fetch you from the mart
Home to your house, the Phoenix, sir, to dinner:

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Now as I am a Christian, answer me
In what safe place you have bestow'd my marks,
Or I shall break that merry sconce of yours?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

I have some marks of yours upon my pate,
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders,

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Thy mistress' marks? what mistress, slave, hast thou?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Your worship's wife, my mistress at the Phoenix;
Who prays that you will hie you home to dinner.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face,
Being forbid? There, take you that, sir knave. *(He beats him)*

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

What mean you, sir? for God's sake, hold your hands!
Nay, and you will not, sir, I'll take my heels. *(He exits.)*

Act 2 Scene 2

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!

Act 2 Scene 1

Enter Adriana & 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.