

The Comedy of Errors

SYNOPSIS

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There is trouble between the cities of Ephesus and Syracuse. Any Syracusan found in Ephesus will be executed unless he can pay a ransom of a thousand marks. Egeon, an old Syracusan merchant, has been arrested. He explains how he has come to Ephesus: he and his wife Emilia had identical twin sons and identical twin slaves, bought for the purpose of serving the sons. In a shipwreck many years ago he was separated from his wife, one son and one slave. The survivors have been given new names in memory of the lost ones: Antipholus for the son and Dromio for the slave. Antipholus of Syracuse, with his Dromio, have set out to look for their brothers, and Egeon is now searching for them. The Duke of Ephesus gives Egeon until evening to find the thousand marks.

By chance, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse have also just arrived in Ephesus. The other Antipholus and Dromio have been living there since the wreck. Inevitably, everyone mistakes everyone for everyone else. Even Antipholus of Ephesus' wife Adriana and her sister Luciana are fooled. The confusions result in Antipholus of Ephesus being arrested for debt and declared mad, while Antipholus of Syracuse takes refuge from his brother's angry wife in a priory — where the abbess turns out to be Egeon's long-lost wife. In the end everything is resolved and Egeon is freed.

Media:**DVD:**

The Comedy of Errors (1978), dir. Trevor Nunn, RSC musical with Judi Dench, Michael Williams

The Comedy of Errors (BBC TV Shakespeare 1979), dir. James Cellan Jones, with Michael Kitchen, Roger Daltry

Not yet commercially available

The Comedy of Errors (National Theatre 2012) with Lenny Henry

CD Audio:

The Comedy of Errors (Arkangel Complete Shakespeare)

[Michael Mitchell]