

“The Comedy of Errors”
by William Shakespeare

Antipholus, being also a merchant of Syracuse, would have been in the same danger that his father was. By good fortune he met a friend who told him the peril an old merchant of Syracuse was in and advised him to pass for a merchant of Epidamnum. This Antipholus agreed to do, and he was sorry to hear one of his own countrymen was in danger. He little thought this old man was his own father.

Aegeon’s eldest son, called Antipholus of Ephesus to distinguish him from his brother Antipholus of Syracuse, had lived at Ephesus twenty years. Being a rich man, he was well able to have paid the ransom of his father’s life. Antipholus knew nothing of him, being so young

when he was taken out of the sea with his mother by the fishermen that he only remembered he had been so preserved. He had no recollection of his father or mother. The fishermen who took up this Antipholus and his mother and the young slave Dromio carried the two children away from her (to the great grief of that unhappy lady), intending to sell them.

Antipholus and Dromio were sold by them to Duke Menaphon, a famous warrior, who was uncle to the Duke of Ephesus. He carried the boys to Ephesus when he visited the duke, his nephew.

The Duke of Ephesus, taking a liking to young Antipholus, made him an officer in his army, in which he distinguished himself by his great bravery in the wars, where he saved the life of his patron. The

duke rewarded his merit by marrying him to Adriana, a rich lady of Ephesus, with whom he was living (his slave Dromio still attending him) at the time his father came there.

Antipholus of Syracuse, when he parted with his friend, advised him to say he came from Epidamnum and gave his slave Dromio money to carry to the inn where he intended to dine. In the mean time, he would walk and view the city and observe the manners of the people.

Dromio was a pleasant fellow. When Antipholus was dull and melancholy, he used to divert himself with the odd humors and merry jests of his slave. The freedoms of speech he allowed in Dromio were greater than is usual between masters and their servants.

When Antipholus of Syracuse had sent Dromio away, he stood, thinking over his solitary wanderings in search of his mother and brother, of whom in no place where he landed could he hear the least tidings. He said with sorrow, “I am like a drop of water in the ocean, which, seeking to find its fellow drop, loses itself in the wide sea. I, unhappily, to find a mother and a brother, do lose myself.”

While he was thus meditating on his weary travels, which had hitherto been so useless, Dromio (as he thought) returned. Antipholus, wondering that he came back so soon, asked him where he had left the money. Now, it was not his own Dromio, but the twin-brother that lived with Antipholus of Ephesus, that he spoke to.