

The
SHAKESPEARE
Theatre of
New Jersey

Shakespeare LIVE! 2013
presents

The Comedy of Errors

By William Shakespeare

**Student-Teacher
Study Guide**

compiled and arranged by
the Education Department of
The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

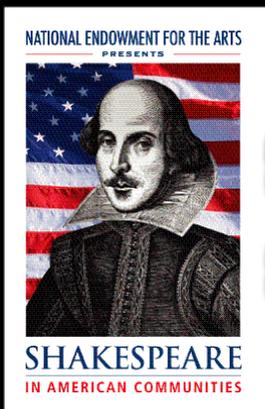
In This Guide:

Classroom Activities for Teachers and Students	p2
Shakespeare: Helpful Tips For Exploring & Seeing His Works	p3
About the Playwright.....	p4
Shakespeare’s London	p5
Shakespeare’s Verse	p6
“Are you SURE this is English?”	p7
<i>The Comedy of Errors</i> : A Short Synopsis.....	p8
Who’s Who in <i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	p9
Sources and History of <i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	p10
Commentary and Criticism.....	p11
<i>The Comedy of Errors</i> : Further Food for Thought.....	p12
Shakespeare’s Common Tongue	p14
Terms and Phrases Found in <i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	p14
What Did He Say/Who Said That - Quizzes.....	p15
Topics for Discussion	p16
Test Your Understanding Quiz	p17
Follow-Up Activities.....	p18
Sources Used for this Study Guide	p19
Answers to Quizzes.....	p19
Meeting the Common Core Standards.....	p20
Additional Opportunities for Students and Teachers	p21
About The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey	back cover

COVER: Craig Bazan (Doctor Pinch) in the 2013 Shakespeare LIVE! production of THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THIS SPREAD: The 2013 Shakespeare LIVE! production of THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

ALL PHOTOS used in this Study Guide are from the 2013 Shakespeare LIVE! touring production of THE COMEDY OF ERRORS. All photos: © Meredith Keffer and The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey.



Shakespeare LIVE! is part of Shakespeare for a New Generation, a national program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

Funding for Shakespeare LIVE! is provided, in part, by The MetLife Foundation, The Turrell Fund, The John & Margaret Post Foundation, Provident Bank Foundation, and Investors Bank.





CLASSROOM

FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

What we hear most from educators is that there is a great deal of anxiety when it comes to Shakespeare; seeing it, reading it and especially teaching it. One of the principal goals of The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's education programs is to demystify Shakespeare, take him "off the shelf" and re-energize his work for students and teachers alike. Toward these goals, this Study Guide provides educators with tools to both allay their own concerns and to expand the theatre-going experience for their students beyond simply seeing a *Shakespeare LIVE!* performance.

The information included in this guide will help you expand your students' understanding of Shakespeare in performance, as well as help you meet many of the Common Core Curriculum Standards. We encourage you to impart as much of the information included in this Study Guide to your students as is possible. The following are some **suggestions from teachers** on how you can utilize elements of the guide given limited classroom time.

- Many teachers have found that distributing or reading the Short Synopsis and Who's Who pages has greatly increased students' understanding and enjoyment of the production. It provides the students with a general understanding of what they will be seeing and what they can expect. Some teachers have simply taken the last five minutes of a class period to do this with very positive results.
- When more class time is available prior to our visit, we recommend incorporating the background information on William Shakespeare and the play itself. One teacher divided her class into groups and assigned each group research topics based on the divisions found in the study guide. Using a copy of the corresponding study guide page as a launch pad, the students had one week to research the topics. The students then presented their information to the class in three- to five-minute oral reports. Including the questions that evolved from the presentations, the entire project took only one class period. I am told that the reading of Old English and Middle English texts was "quite entertaining and very informative."
- Using the questions found in the "TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION," many teachers will opt to take a class period after *Shakespeare LIVE!* has visited the school to discuss the play with their students. The questions help keep the comments focused on the production, while incorporating various thematic and social issues that are found in the play.
- One school spent two days working through performance-based activities (a few of which are suggested in the "FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES" section) with a particularly "difficult and rowdy" class. They were astounded with the results. Their students took the opportunity to "ham it up," and discovered a great joy and understanding from performing Shakespeare.

"What's My Line?" Promoting Active Listening

Teacher-tested, student-approved! Try this exercise with your students:

Before attending the production, give each student one line from the play to listen for. Discuss the meaning of the line and encourage their input in deciphering what Shakespeare meant by the line. How would the student perform the line? Why is the line important to the play? Does it advance the plot, or give the audience particular insight into a character or relationship?

Following the production, discuss the line again. Did the actor present the line in the way your student expected? If not, how was it different?

Again, we hope you will incorporate as many portions of this study guide as you are able into your classroom experience. If you have any suggestions for activities or topics not already found in the Study Guide, please contact our education department. We are always interested in hearing new ways to excite young people (and teachers) about Shakespeare and live theatre.

Happy Teaching,



Brian B. Crowe,
Director of Education



The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's
Main Stage

ACTIVITIES

Shakespeare: Helpful Tips For Exploring & Seeing His Works

“Just plunge right in

(to Shakespeare). See a play, read it aloud, rent a video, listen to a tape. It's up to you. When you look at Shakespeare close up, he's not as intimidating as when he's seen from afar.”

Norrie Epstein
The Friendly Shakespeare

Tragedy can have humor, and
great comedy always has
elements of the tragic.

18th-century critics complained that Shakespeare's tragedies weren't consistently serious enough. According to the classic rules, tragedy should be uniformly somber. Shakespeare's use of humor in his tragedies prevents us from becoming washed away in a dense fog of emotion. Rather, it forces us out of the “tragic” long enough to appreciate the level to which the play's passions have taken us.

“Some of the plays have taken on mythic proportions. By myths, I mean we grow up knowing certain things about [Shakespeare's] characters but we don't know how we know them.

There are lots of
SHAKESPEAREAN MICROCHIPS
lodged in our brains.”

Charles Marowitz, director

“IT WAS OLIVIER'S *HENRY V*
THAT MADE ME REALIZE THAT
SHAKESPEARE
IS ABOUT REAL
PEOPLE

AND THAT HIS LANGUAGE WASN'T
SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL POETRY.”

ROBERT BRUSTEIN, DIRECTOR

Don't be afraid to
LISTEN,
WATCH
AND REACT;
laugh, cry, and be moved.
Shakespeare wrote for
a live and active audience.
Both audience and actor
must be involved to create
a truly winning performance.

“My advice to anyone seeing Shakespeare:

Don't worry so much!

Just make sure your ears are clean and your eyes are sharp. Listen and look and watch. Look at the distance people stand from each other; look at the relationships being developed.

Stay with it.

Don't negate the move that
Shakespeare will make toward your gut,
toward your soul—
because he will touch you there,
if you allow yourself to be touched.”

-David Suchet, actor

“There are some
parts of the plays
you'll never under-
stand. But excuse me,
I thought that's what
great art was sup-
posed to be about.

DON'T FREAK OUT OVER IT!”

Peter Sellars,
Director

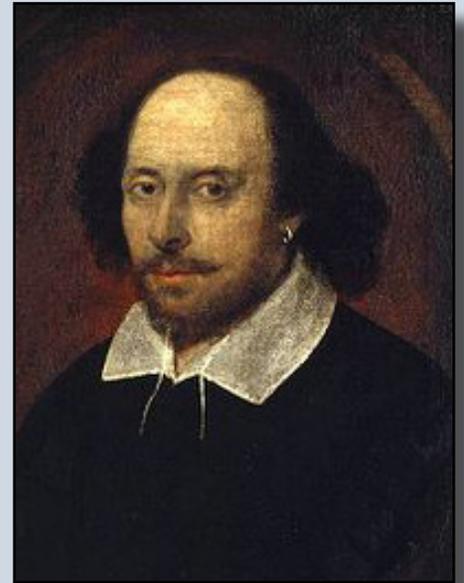
About the Playwright

William Shakespeare, widely recognized as the greatest English dramatist, was born on April 23, 1564. He was the third of eight children born to John Shakespeare and Mary Arden of Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire, England. Shakespeare's father was a prominent local merchant, and Shakespeare's childhood, though little is known about it for certain, appears to have been quite normal. In fact, it seems that the young Shakespeare was allowed considerable leisure time because his writing contains extensive knowledge of hunting and hawking. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a farmer. She was eight years his senior, and the match was considered unconventional.

It is believed that Shakespeare left Stratford-on-Avon and went to London around 1588. By 1592 he was a successful actor and playwright. He wrote approximately 38 plays, two epic poems, and over 150 sonnets. His work was immensely popular, appealing to members of all social spheres including Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. While they were well-liked, Shakespeare's plays were not considered by his educated contemporaries to be exceptional. By 1608, Shakespeare's

involvement with theatre began to dwindle, and he spent more time at his country home in Stratford. He died in 1616.

Most of Shakespeare's plays found their first major publication in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, when two of his fellow actors put the plays together in the *First Folio*. Other early printings of Shakespeare's plays were called *quartos*, a printer's term referring to the format in which the publication was laid out. These quartos and the *First Folio* texts are the sources of all modern printings of Shakespeare's plays.



A MAN OF MANY WORDS

Shakespeare used over **20,000 different words** in his plays and poems. Of these, 8.5% (1,700 words) had never been seen in print before Shakespeare used them.

To give you a sense of just how extraordinary this is, consider that the King James Bible uses only 8,000 different words. Homer is credited with using approximately 9,000 different words in his works. Milton is estimated at using 10,000 different words in his works.

THE SONNETS

You might have thought that Shakespeare wrote the sonnets earlier in his career, as a type of "stepping stone" to his plays. However, Shakespeare actually penned most of his sonnets during the various outbreaks of the plague in London, when the theatres were closed.

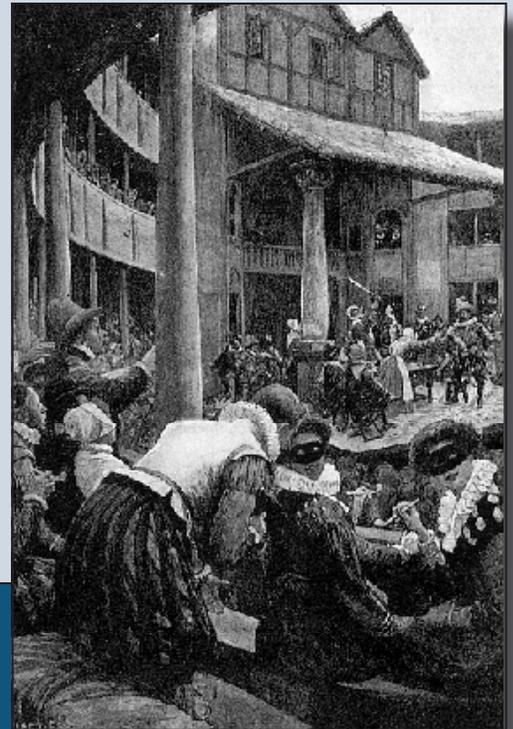
Shakespeare's London

London, in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, was a bustling urban center filled with a wide variety of people and cultures. Although most life centered around making a living or going to church, the main source of diversion for Londoners was the theatre. It was a form of entertainment accessible to people of all classes. The rich and the poor, the aristocrats and the beggars all met at the theatre. Though often appeasing the church or the monarchy, theatre at this time did experience a freedom that was unknown in previous generations. Evidence of this can be found in the numerous bawdy and pagan references found in Shakespeare's plays. This relative artistic license and freedom of expression made theatre extremely unpopular among certain members of society, and it was later banned entirely by the Puritans. Not until the reign of Charles II (1660-1685) was the theatre restored to the status it held in Shakespeare's day.

The Globe Theatre, the resident playhouse for Shakespeare's company of actors, was easily accessible to Londoners and an active social center. Actors and performers were also regularly brought to court or to private homes to entertain. Despite their social popularity, actors maintained a relatively low status, sometimes no better than a common beggar or rogue. Most performers were forced to earn a living doing trade work. The aristocracy's desire for entertainment, however, did spur the development of numerous new theatre pieces. Often a nobleman would become a patron to an artist or company of actors, providing for their financial needs and sheltering them

to some degree from official sanctions. In return, the company would adopt the name of the patron. Shakespeare's acting company was originally named "Lord Chamberlain's Men" after their patron, Henry Carey, Lord Chamberlain. Later, under the patronage of King James I, they were known as "The King's Men," an unprecedented honor at the time.

Despite the flourishing of the arts at this time, London was sometimes a desolate place. Outbreaks of the Black Plague (the bubonic plague) frequently erupted, killing thousands of citizens. Theatres, shops, and the government were all shut down during these times in hopes of preventing the spread of the disease. Elizabethans were unaware that the disease was being spread by the flea and rat populations, which well outnumbered the human population of London at that time.



HEARING A PLAY

The Elizabethans were an audience of listeners. They would say, "I'm going to hear a play," not "I'm going to see a play." The Elizabethan audience would pick up on words and their various meanings that we wouldn't.

Marjorie Garber

Speaking in rhyme is not natural to us, but it was to the Elizabethans, so we have to understand what language meant to them, and what language does not mean to us today. If I were an Elizabethan and I wanted to impress you as a lover, I wouldn't send you flowers. I would come and woo you at your feet and recite to you a sonnet I had written just for you— no matter how bad it was. Elizabethan England was a world where people sang, talked and breathed language.

Shakespeare's Verse

Shakespeare's plays are written predominantly in "blank verse," a poetic form preferred by English dramatists in the 16th and early 17th centuries. It is a very flexible medium, which, like the human speech pattern, is capable of a wide range of tones and inflections. The lines, which are usually unrhymed, are divided into five "feet," each of which is a two-syllable unit known as an "iamb." Each iamb is made up of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Blank verse is technically defined as unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Here is a selection of blank verse from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with the stressed syllables in bold type:

Theseus: To you, your father should be as a god;
 One that compos'd your beauties, yea, and one
 To whom you are but as a form in wax
 By him imprinted, and within his pow'r
 To leave the figure, or disfigure it.
 Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

Hermia: So is Lysander.

Theseus: In himself he is;
 But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
 The other must be held the worthier.

In this short selection, you can see a variety of speech tones indicated by the verse. The regularity of the rhythmic pattern and the use of full lines to complete his thoughts give Theseus a sense of calm and authority. Hermia's brief response, which breaks the iambic pattern, is only a fraction of a line, suggesting that she is impassioned and saying only a portion of what she is thinking. Theseus, however, completes her line and restores the iambic pattern, indicating his authority and the fact that he is, at this point in the play, literally overbearing her will.

Notice that while the blank verse pattern is generally iambic, even in this short passage there are instances where the pattern of stress is broken. The play would quickly become monotonous if the characters truly spoke in nothing but perfect iambic pentameter—fortunately for audiences, Shakespeare's

rhythms often become jagged and jarring to reflect the tension and conflict among his characters. Trying to determine where the rhythm of a line is regular or irregular provides important clues for the actor trying to understand what the character is thinking or feeling. As in real life, choosing to change the stress-bearing syllable may radically alter the meaning of what is being said.

Other clues are provided by word order and punctuation. There were few established rules for either in Shakespeare's time, so he was free to experiment with unusual syntax. As in our daily speech, the sentence structure (as indicated by both word order and punctuation) helps the reader or listener understand both the literal meaning of the sentence and the emphasis. A comma may indicate a new portion of the same idea, while a dash breaks into the sentence to insert a new idea, and a period suggests the completion of one idea and the start of another. Editors of Shakespeare over the years have quarreled bitterly about what punctuation the Bard "meant" to use or "should" have used. As an actor or reader of Shakespeare, it is up to you to decide if a comma, dash, or period makes the meaning of the line most clear.

THE HEART OF THE POETRY

The alternating unstressed-stressed pattern of blank verse has often been compared to the rhythm of the human heartbeat. When a character in Shakespeare is agitated, confused or upset, the rhythm of their verse often alters, much in the same way a heartbeat alters under similar conditions.

BOY, OH BOY

In Shakespeare's England, it was against the law for women to perform on the public stage. For this reason, the female roles in plays were always performed by males, usually teenage boys who were of slighter build than the other actors, had higher voices and no facial hair.

In *Macbeth*, however, the unique appearance of the witches ("you should be women, yet your beards forbid me to interpret that you are so") probably indicates that they, at least, were played by adult actors in the company.

Are You SURE This Is English?

Contrary to popular belief, Shakespeare and his contemporaries did not write in Old English, or even Middle English. **PLAYWRIGHTS OF THE 16TH AND EARLY 17TH CENTURIES WROTE IN MODERN ENGLISH.** Shakespeare spoke (and wrote in) the same language which we speak today. It is possible to be thrown a bit by grammatical “carry-overs” from earlier English [“thee” and “thou” instead of “you”] and the poetic liberties that Shakespeare took, but there is no doubt that the words and syntax used in his plays can be understood today without any “translation.” To help clarify this point, here are some examples of Old, Middle and Modern English.

Old English (500 - 1150 CE)

When Julius Caesar invaded Britain in BCE 55-4, the Celtic (pronounced KEL-tic) tribes lived in the British Isles. Their languages survive today in the forms of Gaelic (Scotland and Ireland), Welsh (Wales) and Manx (Isle of Man). The Romans brought Latin to Britain. However, early English developed primarily from the language of tribes which invaded and settled England from what is now Germany. This language, known as Old English, was also influenced by the Latin spoken by Catholic missionaries from Rome as well as the Scandinavian dialects of Viking raiders and settlers.

[LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AT: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4L7VTH8ii_8]

selection from *Beowulf*

author unknown, ca 800 CE

Oft Scyld Scëfing sceaðena prëstum,
monegum mægðum meodo-setla oftëah,
egsode eorlas. Syððan ærert wearð
fëasceaft funden, hë þæs frofre gebàd,
wëox under wolcnum, weorð-myndum þàh,
oð-þæt him aeghwylc ymb-sittendra
ofer hron-ràde hýran scolde,
gomban gylðan. þæt wæs god cyning!

IN MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

*Often Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,
from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,
awing the earls. Since first he lay
friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:
for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve,
till before him the folk, both far and near,
who lived by the whale-path, heard his mandate,
gave him gift: a good king he!*

WHAT DID SHAKESPEARE SOUND LIKE?

While we may associate Shakespeare with the “refined” British accent of an Ian McKellen or Judi Dench, linguistic scholars suggest that the closest approximation to the London accent of Shakespeare’s day is the accent heard nowadays in the Appalachian region of the United States.

Middle English (1150 - 1450 CE)

The conquest of England by the Norman army in 1066 brought great changes to English life and the English language. The Old French spoken by the Normans became for many years the language of the Royal Court and of English literature. Over time, the spoken English still used by the lower classes borrowed about 10,000 words from French, as well as certain grammatical structures. By the time English reappeared as a written, literary language in the 14th century, it only distantly resembled Old English. This German-French hybrid language is known as Middle English.

[LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AT: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QE0MtENfOMU>]

selection from *The Canterbury Tales*
by Geoffrey Chaucer, ca 1390 CE

1: Whan that aprill with his shoures soote
2: The droghte of march hath perced to the roote,
3: And bathed every veyne in swich licour
4: Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
5: Whan zepirus eek with his sweete breeth
6: Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
7: Tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
8: Hath in the ram his halve cours yronne,
9: And smale foweles maken melodye,
10: That slepen al the nyght with open ye
11: (so priketh hem nature in hir corages);
12: Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages...
13: And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
14: To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;

IN MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

*When April with his showers sweet with fruit
The drought of March has pierced unto the root
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower;
When Zephyr also has, with his sweet breath,
Quickened again, in every holt and heath,
The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun
Into the Ram one half his course has run,
And many little birds make melody
That sleep through all the night with open eye
(So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage)-
Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage...*

Modern English (1450 - present day)

With the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, the English language began to develop and mutate at an unprecedented rate. Books, previously a precious and expensive commodity, were now widely available to anyone with basic literacy. Works in Latin, Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese were being translated by the hundreds, and the translators found it necessary to borrow and invent thousands of new words. English trade and exploration fueled even more cultural and linguistic exchange. The early Modern English of Shakespeare and his contemporaries has been referred to as “English in its adolescence”: daring, experimental, innovative and irreverent.

selection from *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, ca 1595 CE

Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how to choose a man: Romeo! No, not he; though his face be better than any man’s, yet his leg excels all men’s; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body, though they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare...

The Comedy of Errors: A Short Synopsis

The play begins with the arrest of Egeon, a merchant from the city of Syracuse who has unknowingly illegally entered the city of Ephesus. Due to past conflicts between the cities, a law prescribes death for any Syracusian found in Ephesus, unless a fine of one thousand marks can be paid.

Egeon explains to Duke Solinus, the ruler of Ephesus, that he has only arrived in the town after a five-year search for his son. We discover through Egeon's tale that 25 years ago, his wife gave birth to identical twin sons while the family was away on business in Epidamnum. At the same time, a peasant woman coincidentally also gave birth to identical twin boys. Unable to care for the children, the woman sold her sons to Egeon, who intended to raise them to be servants to his own sons. As Egeon, his wife Aemilia, and the two sets of twins journeyed home, their ship was destroyed in a shipwreck. Egeon managed to save one of his sons (Antipholus of Syracuse) and one of the other twins (Dromio of Syracuse). Aemilia saved the other twins. He saw them taken up by another ship, and never saw them again. When his son came of age, he and his servant insisted on seeking out their long-lost twins. Moved to despair, Egeon eventually set out after them, but in his five-year journey, he has been unable to locate them.

The Duke is moved by Egeon's story, and though he will not free him from his sentence, he allows Egeon the day to procure the money needed to pay his fine in Ephesus. If he does not, the law states that he will be executed at the end of the day.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Egeon, his son, Antipholus of Syracuse has arrived in Ephesus with his servant, Dromio of Syracuse. They are warned by a friendly merchant of the deadly law for citizens of Syracuse found in Ephesus, and plan to claim they are from Epidamnum if asked. Antipholus sends Dromio off to their lodgings to lock up their money, but is surprised when his servant returns almost immediately with no knowledge of the money. He is unaware that he is actually speaking with Dromio of Ephesus, who lives in town and serves his master, Antipholus of Ephesus, a well-reputed gentleman of the city. Likewise, Dromio of Ephesus is perplexed that his master denies being married to Adriana

(Antipholus of Ephesus' wife). This is just the first in a series of mistaken identities that are at the heart of the play.

Adriana, Antipholus of Ephesus' long-suffering wife, encounters Antipholus of Syracuse and, believing him to be her absent husband, drags him home to dinner (along with the Syracusian Dromio). There, Antipholus of Syracuse finds himself more interested in his supposed sister-in-law, Luciana, while Dromio of Syracuse is horrified to learn he is engaged to a grotesque kitchen wench named Nell. When the Ephesian Antipholus and Dromio arrive home for dinner, they find themselves barred from admission into their own house, since it is believed that the real master and servant are already inside.

Furious, Antipholus of Ephesus plans to revenge himself on his wife by giving her anticipated gift of a gold chain to a courtesan instead. Meanwhile, Antipholus of Syracuse plans a speedy escape from a city that seems to be inhabited by witches and conjurers. Both their plans are thwarted, however, by the fact that each time one man sends his Dromio on an errand, he encounters the other man's Dromio coming back.

Further confusion is created when Antipholus of Syracuse accidentally receives an expensive gold chain ordered by Antipholus of Ephesus. When the goldsmith Angelo bills Antipholus of Ephesus for it, he refuses to pay, claiming (justly) that he never received the item. For this, the goldsmith has Antipholus of Ephesus arrested for non-payment of debt, and Antipholus sends Dromio home for bail money.

Adriana, increasingly dismayed by her husband's odd behavior, is still more alarmed to learn that he has been arrested, and, with Luciana, goes to seek him out. Meanwhile Antipholus of Syracuse encounters the courtesan to whom Antipholus of Ephesus promised the gold chain (in exchange for a diamond ring of hers). When Antipholus of Syracuse refuses to give her the chain, believing her to be another witch, the courtesan decides to report the misconduct to Adriana.

The courtesan's story only confirms Adriana's fears that her husband has



Dan Bound-Black (Dromio of Syracuse) and Brandon Pierce (Antipholus of Syracuse) in THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

Who's Who in *The Comedy of Errors*

gone mad, so she enlists the services of an exorcist, Doctor Pinch. Meanwhile, when Dromio of Ephesus returns without the bail money (which Dromio of Syracuse was sent for), an exasperated Antipholus of Ephesus begins beating his hapless and bewildered servant. They are discovered by Pinch and the women in this violent outburst, which is only intensified when Pinch begins performing an absurd exorcism on him.

Just as Pinch and his associates succeed in binding and removing the Ephesian twins (who will be taken home to be "treated" for madness by being bound and locked in the cellar), the Syracusan twins appear with swords drawn. The women and the police officer are terrified, believing that madmen have escaped and found weapons. As the one group scatters, Angelo appears and is enraged to see Antipholus of Syracuse wearing the gold chain which he had claimed he did not have. When Adriana reappears, the Syracusians flee into an abbey for sanctuary. Although Adriana demands that the holy-women release her husband into her custody, the abbess refuses to hand him over. Adriana decides that she will ask the Duke to intervene as he passes by on his way to the impending public execution of Egeon, who has been unable to raise the necessary funds to save his life.

When Duke Solinus appears with Egeon and the executioner, however, the confusion deepens. As Adriana tells her story and everyone's attention is focused on the abbey, a dishevelled Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus appear from the opposite direction. Having overpowered Doctor Pinch, they have returned so that Antipholus (now truly on the verge of madness) can plead his case to the Duke as well. Egeon is at first thrilled to see his son and servant, then bewildered and saddened when they claim not to know him. Duke Solinus decides that all of them must be bewitched, and resolves to ask the abbess to help unravel the mystery.

The abbess emerges with the Syracusan twins, and everyone is astounded to see the pairs of twins side by side at last. The abbess then reveals herself as Aemilia, Egeon's long-lost wife. After the shipwreck, she informs her husband, she too was separated from the Ephesian Antipholus and Dromio, and went into a life of religious seclusion, believing her whole family to be lost. There is general rejoicing as the family is reunited and all the "errors" are explained. Antipholus of Ephesus offers to pay Egeon's ransom, everyone is reconciled, and Aemilia invites the entire group to a "gossip's feast" where they can begin to relate the events of their lives since being separated so many years ago.

EGEON - a merchant of Syracuse arrested for arriving in Ephesus; father to the twin Antipholi.

DUKE SOLINUS - ruler of Ephesus; he takes pity on Egeon upon hearing his tale of loss.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE - son raised by Egeon; he seeks his long-lost identical twin brother.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE - loyal servant to Antipholus of Syracuse.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS - son of Egeon and Aemilia lost as an infant, he has since been raised in Ephesus.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS - servant to Antipholus of Ephesus.

ADRIANA - wife to Antipholus of Ephesus.

LUCIANA - sister to Adriana.

ANGELO - a goldsmith.

BALTHASAR - a merchant whom Antipholus of Ephesus invites to dinner.

NELL - the kitchen servant; engaged to Dromio of Ephesus.

FIRST MERCHANT - a merchant who warns the Syracusan to be cautious in Ephesus.

SECOND MERCHANT - a merchant who demands money for a debt owed to him by Angelo.

COURTESAN - a woman of Ephesus to whom Antipholus of Ephesus promises a gold necklace.

ABBESS - the keeper of the priory in town, she shelters the Syracusan twins; later revealed to be Aemilia, mother of the Antipholi.

DOCTOR PINCH - a "conjurer" summoned by Adriana to exorcise the madness out of her husband.

Sources and History of *The Comedy of Errors*

The Comedy of Errors was one of Shakespeare's earliest plays, and probably his first comedy. It was performed in 1594 at Gray's Inn to conclude a night of revels for London's lawyers. Apparently it was a memorable evening, as the records of Gray's Inn note that "Night was begun, and continued to the end, in nothing but confusion and Errors; whereupon, it was ever afterward called *The Night of Errors*." Some argue, however, that it may have been written as early as 1589, which would make it among the first, if not the first, of Shakespeare's surviving plays. It was performed at court in 1604, and has been revived and adapted continuously throughout the subsequent centuries.

The Comedy of Errors is the shortest of Shakespeare's plays, measuring only 1,777 lines, and is mostly written in verse. For the key plot elements, Shakespeare drew from two plays that he may well have studied as a schoolboy, the ancient Latin *Menaechmi* and *Amphitruo* of Titus Maccius Plautus.

Plautus was born in the Umbria region of Italy around 254 BCE and died in 184 BCE. Somewhat like Shakespeare, he rose from humble origins (he was believed to have started as a scenic carpenter or stagehand) to become a celebrated actor and the leading dramatist of his day. Plautus took the Greek "New Comedy" of Menander and other authors and adapted it for a more diverse Latin-speaking audience.

Plautus' witty, polished verse was considered a model of Latin rhetoric and was widely studied in Elizabethan grammar schools, where boys were required to copy, recite, and imitate the "Plautine" style. It is more than likely that Shakespeare's own grammar school in Stratford required him to learn passages from Plautus, perhaps even from the very plays on which he based *The Comedy of Errors*. While Shakespeare was probably a fairly proficient reader of Latin, despite Ben Jonson's famously dismissive assessment of his friend's abilities, it is also possible that Shakespeare had access to the manuscript of William Warner's English translation of *Menaechmi*, which was published in 1595.

Menaechmi includes the search for a long-lost twin son, one twin being mistaken for another, the comic exorcism, the courtesan and the jealous wife, and the quarrel over a piece of jewelry. The idea of two sets of twins, master and servant, and the episode in which a husband is locked out of his house at dinnertime occur in *Amphitruo*. Indeed, one of the popular Renaissance editions of Plautus, published in 1576, notes all the comic "errors" on stage in

both plays. If Shakespeare was also working from this Latin text, it may have directly inspired the title of his play.

One of Shakespeare's major alterations from his source material was in shifting the action of the play from Epidamnum to Ephesus, a city made notorious in the New Testament as a city of magic and witchcraft.

Although *The Comedy of Errors* has always been regarded as something of a journeyman effort, a waystation on the road to Shakespeare's mature plays, it has received its share of critical acclaim. To Samuel Taylor Coleridge, it was the epitome of farce, a literary term that derives from the short, slapstick interludes (*farce* literally means "stuffing") in medieval morality plays. Fast pace, broad physical humor, mistaken identities and absurd, exaggerated situations are the hallmarks of farce, which continues to flourish as a genre on stage as well as in movies and on television.

Its broad, farcical nature has made the play well-suited to whimsical and creative approaches. In 1938, Fyodor Komisarjevsky directed it for the Royal Shakespeare Company in a "hallucinogenic," surrealist style that seemed drawn from Alice in Wonderland. In the same year, Lorenz and Hart turned it into the first-ever Broadway musical adaptation of a Shakespeare play, *The Boys from Syracuse*, which married classical Greek costumes and contemporary swing music. More recently, the Mansaku Company explored its similarities to the classical Japanese farce style known as *Kyogen* in a 2001 performance at Shakespeare's Globe entitled *The Kyogen of Errors*, entirely in Japanese with English supertitles.



Dan Bound-Black (Dromio of Ephesus), Erica Knight (Angelo), Brandon Pierce (Antipholus of Ephesus), and Anthony Martinez (Balthasar) in *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*.

Commentary & Criticism

In *The Comedy of Errors*, there are only a few passages of a poetical vein, yet such perhaps as no other living dramatist could have written; but the story is well invented and managed— the confusion of persons does not cease to amuse— the dialogue is easy and gay beyond what had been hitherto heard on the stage— there is little buffoonery in the wit, and no absurdity in the circumstances.

Paul Dean
Introduction to the Literature of Europe, 1838

The Comedy of Errors [is] remarkable as being the only specimen of poetical farce in our language, that is, intentionally such.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Notes and Lectures Upon Shakespeare, 1849

The Comedy of Errors is not only very good theatre, it is also very good reading. It is a finely-balanced mixture of pathos and suspense, illusion and delusion, love turned bitter and love that is sweet, farce and fun.

T.S. Dorsch
Introduction to the Cambridge edition of *The Comedy of Errors*

If, psychologically, a certain threat is inherent in self-mirroring, it may be because the self is naturally prone to division. In *The Comedy of Errors* there is no mistaking the fearful implications of the loss of self-possession, the idea of confounding, the suggestion of drowning implicit in the simile used by the twin to explain that he is “like a drop of water.”

Brian Gibbons
“Doubles and Likenesses-with-Difference”
Connotations, Vol. 6, no. 1

The shortest and most unified of all Shakespeare’s plays, *The Comedy of Errors* is regarded by many scholars as his very first, which I tend to doubt. It shows such skill, indeed mastery— in action, incipient character, and stagecraft— that it far outshines the three *Henry VI* plays and the rather lame comedy *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. It is true that in comedy Shakespeare was free to be himself from the start, whereas the shadow of Marlowe darkens the early histories (*Richard III* included) and *Titus Andronicus*. Yet, even granted Shakespeare’s comic genius, *The Comedy of Errors* does not read or play like apprentice work.

Harold Bloom
Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human

This is a play that celebrates its unities. Every syllable of *The Comedy of Errors* is spoken in one place, Ephesus, and in one day’s time. Not until the end of his career would Shakespeare again lock himself so ruthlessly in the here and now.

John R. Ford, “Methinks You Are My Glass”
Shakespeare Bulletin, March 22, 2006

Shakespearean scholars nevertheless find a seriousness and depth even to the farcical elements of this play. Several scholars have drawn attention to the assault on identity that both sets of twins face as their world becomes unknowable and unpredictable. Dromio of Syracuse best expresses this identity crisis when he exclaims to his (real) master: “Do you know me sir? Am I Dromio? Am I your man? *Am I myself?*”

The loss of community and family, the search for the self and in the case of the twins, the other self, and the challenge to the identity that occurs when one twin is mistaken for the other bear looking into. What is the effect, other than comic, when a person is so thoroughly mistaken for someone else? When a father believes he has lost both sons and a wife? When years are spent searching for completeness?

Kay K. Cook
“In All Seriousness: *The Comedy of Errors*”



FAMOUS PLAYERS

JUDI DENCH (Adriana): Before she was an acclaimed film actress (*Chocolat*, *Shakespeare in Love*), Judi Dench began her performance career at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), where she appeared in numerous productions, including

The Comedy of Errors as Adriana in 1976 and 1977. The RSC’s rendition of the witty play was so popular it was made into a film in 1978, with many of the original cast members, including Dench.

DAVID TENNANT (Antipholus of Syracuse): The RSC produced *The Comedy of Errors* once again in 2000, and David Tennant played Antipholus of Syracuse opposite Anthony Howell. Tennant is also a classical actor who, like Judi Dench, has delved into film work. Besides tackling various other Shakespearean characters such as Hamlet, he is known for his roles as Barty Crouch Jr. in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* and the Tenth Doctor in BBC’s *Doctor Who*.



The Comedy of Errors: Further Food For Thought

SIN CITY?

Shakespeare followed his source, Plautus, very closely in constructing much of *The Comedy of Errors*. Perhaps the most significant change is in the setting: where Plautus uses Epidamnum, a Greek colony on the shores of modern-day Albania, Shakespeare shifts the action to Ephesus, a much better-known port city located on the western coast of what is today Turkey.

Because of its harbor, Ephesus was one of the major mercantile centers of the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine eras. It was especially famous for being the site of a massive temple dedicated to an ancient fertility goddess, whom the area's Greek conquerors later identified with Artemis. Built over a period of 120 years, the original Temple of Artemis was identified as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Tourists from around the Greek and Roman world flocked to cosmopolitan Ephesus, vastly enriching the temple, which was perhaps three times the size of the Parthenon and filled with priceless works of art.

In early Christian times, apostles and missionaries butted heads with the wealthy and powerful cult of Artemis. St. Paul was famously associated with the church there, which he helped found after having persuaded many Jewish and Greek residents to convert to the fledgling Christian faith. Like all cities that thrive on tourism, Ephesus was rife with ways for out-of-towners (and locals) to spend money on cheap thrills. In the New Testament, Paul takes Ephesus to task for its fortune-tellers, conjurers, thieves, prostitutes, and loose women, all believed to derive from its pagan "idol-worship."

In one account, Paul entered the famous temple and ordered its "demons" to leave, at which point the altar of Artemis cracked and half of the building collapsed. Historically, with the conversion of the Byzantine emperors to Christianity, the temple was closed, and in 401 CE a mob led by St. John Chrysostom demolished what was left of the temple, carrying off heaps of marble to be used in new buildings.

Ephesus, in the minds of Shakespeare's audience, would have probably seemed something like Las Vegas seems to us now— a byword for excessive indulgence and pleasure-seeking, at once alluring and alarming. In the presence of the Abbess, as well, there may be a Christianized echo of the lost Wonder of the World and its virgin priestesses.

WHO ARE YOU CALLING A COURTESAN?

For an Elizabethan audience, a "courtesan" might refer to anyone from an ordinary street prostitute to a king's mistress. Strictly speaking, however, a courtesan (from the Italian *cortigiana*) was associated with nobility and the court. In an era in which most marriages, especially in society's higher echelons, were determined solely by money and politics, spouses frequently sought companionship outside their marriage.

A courtesan was expected to be physically attractive, but more particularly to have an excellent personality, as Antipholus of Ephesus explains, "a wench of excellent discourse, pretty and witty." Often, courtesans came from fairly prominent families themselves, as they were expected to be able to socialize among the elites. Courtesans did not necessarily have a roster of "clients," but were more likely to be the kept mistress of a single wealthy individual.

In many cases, a career as a courtesan allowed women to attain far more economic and intellectual freedom than they could in any other way during Shakespeare's lifetime. It was accepted that a courtesan could speak freely in a way that would be entirely scandalous for a married woman. Without the responsibility of being obedient to a husband, courtesans were often free to pursue artistic and intellectual accomplishments, and to buy and sell property.

Given her diamond ring, Antipholus' description of her, and how easily she enters into conversation (and even an alliance) with Adriana and Luciana, it is likely that the Courtesan in *The Comedy of Errors* is meant to belong to this world of high-class "professional mistresses."



Portrait of Veronica Franco (attributed to Jacopo Tintoretto) painted around 1575, when Franco was 29. In her life, Franco was Venice's most celebrated courtesan as well as an accomplished poet and a social reformer who administered a government-financed home for indigent women.

GEOGRAPHY LESSON

Many other Greek cities of the Hellenistic period are mentioned in *The Comedy of Errors*. Egeon and Aemilia's native **Syracuse** (or Syracuse, as it's sometimes called in the play) is in modern Sicily, a colony of Corinth founded around 734 BCE. The city grew to become an independent nation, one of the political, military and cultural powerhouses of the Mediterranean. Perhaps its most famous son was the brilliant mathematician and engineer Archimedes, whose innovations in weapons technology helped hold the Romans at bay for decades.

Corinth itself, in southern Greece, is mentioned as the home of the "rude fishermen" who kidnapped the children who were rescued with Aemilia in the shipwreck (Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus).

Epidamnum, where the four children were born, was a Greek colony on the coast of what is now Albania. Interestingly, Shakespeare would return to this region for his next play about a shipwreck and separated twins, *Twelfth Night*.

A MATTER OF TIME

...The play itself really won't let the audience forget the brief amount of time allotted to Egeon. Even during the episode in which the baffled Antipholus of Syracuse is bade by the Ephesian servant Dromio to come home to lunch we hear "The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell" (1.2.45). At the very beginning of Act 2, Adriana frets that her husband, Antipholus of Syracuse, has not returned for lunch; by now, "Sure . . . it is two o'clock" (2.1.3). After Antipholus of Ephesus is arrested, claiming not to have the chain for which he owes Angelo money (he doesn't have it, of course; Angelo mistakenly gave it to the twin from Syracuse), Dromio (it's not important which one) implores Adriana to hasten to post her husband's bond: "time comes stealing on by night and day" (4.2.59). As the comedy moves toward the final scene, we are well aware of the hour as the second merchant announces the pending arrival of the Duke for the execution, since "the dial points at five" (5.1.18). Amidst all the confusion, chaos, and laughter, then, time, the thief has been moving surely toward the hour of execution for Egeon.

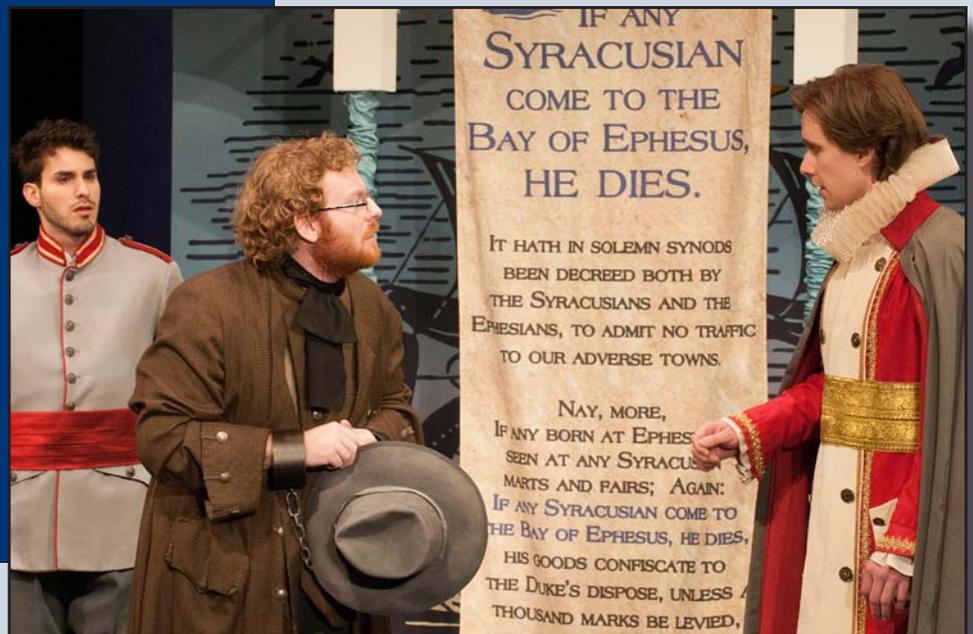
from "In All Seriousness: *The Comedy of Errors*"
by Kay K. Cook

A sign of things to come

The hint of tragedy... and the tonality of romance give way to a more physical comedy of substitutions and misrecognitions, and it is easy to underestimate the sophistication of the play's devices....

The Comedy of Errors maps in clear and recognizable terms a pattern that we will find throughout Shakespeare: losing is finding, confusion the path to sanity; the stern edicts of the law may give way to mercy; and madness and dream offer a path to transformation.

Marjorie Garber
Shakespeare After All



Anthony Martinez (Officer), Adam Keen (Egeon) and Cameron Berner (Duke of Ephesus) in THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

Shakespeare's Common Tongue

alack — expression of dismay or shock
anon — soon, right away
aught — nothing
avaunt — go away
ere — before
hath — has
hence — away (from here)
henceforth — from now on
hither — here
lest — or else
naught — nothing
oft — often
perchance — by chance, perhaps, maybe
sirrah — [pronounced SEER-uh] “hey, you” as to someone of lower status
thee — you
thence — away, over there
thine — yours
thither — there
thou — you
thy — your
whence — where
wherefore — why [literally: “where is the ‘for’ or ‘reason?’ ”]
whither — where

... and the “thys” have it

Often Shakespeare will alternate his usage of “thou” for “you”, or “thy” for “your”, or “thine” for “yours”. Though the words are synonymous, there is a great deal of information that can be obtained by looking closely at these choices.

The different uses of these pronouns have to do with status, relationship, degrees of intimacy and shifting attitudes. “You” is used in formal situations and conveys respect from the speaker. It is used when addressing royalty and parents. “Thou,” used in more informal settings, also can suggest contempt or aggression from the speaker. The use of “thou” places the speaker above the status of the person to whom s/he is speaking. Children are addressed using “thou,” “thee” or “thy.” In a conversation between two people of equal status, the use of “you” suggests that everything is going along smoothly, whereas “thou” would suggest that there is some kind of upset or unrest in the relationship.

Terms and Phrases Found in *The Comedy of Errors*

ACT I

Synods - assemblies.
 Hap - luck.
 Crupper - a strap passed under a horse's tail to prevent the saddle from slipping forward.
 “(If I return) I shall be post indeed” - beaten, like a wooden doorpost on which tavern charges were tallied.
 “I'll take my heels” - run away.

ACT II

“Know he is the bridle of your will” - he is meant to restrain your desires.
 “He's at two hands with me, and that my two ears can witness” - he boxed my ears with both of his hands.
 “(His company) must do his minions grace” - must grace his paramours.
 “Now your jest is earnest” - serious, with a play on “earnest” as a deposit to secure a business transaction.
 “Your sauciness will jest upon my love” - you impertinently assume the right to joke because of my benevolence.
 “Keep then fair league” - if you keep faithful alliance.

ACT III

Carcenet - jeweled necklace.
 “Mome, malt-horse, capon, coxcomb, idiot, patch” - dolt, plodding oaf, eunuch, fool, idiot, clown.
 “The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle name” - my reputation (name) has never brought me credit, but in the course of my duties I have received much reproof (mickle).

“Become disloyalty” - put an attractive face on your disloyalty.
 “Being compact of credit” - being made of credulity, gullible.
 “She sweats a man may go overshoes in the grime of it” - she sweats so much a man may be up to his ankles.

ACT IV

Pentecost - Christian festival observed on the seventh Sunday after Easter, in commemoration of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the disciples on the day of the Jewish harvest holiday of Shavuoth.
 “Or send me by some token” - with some sign of yours (so that Adriana will know to pay me).
 “Here is thy fee” - public officers were entitled to private payment.
 “You shall buy this sport as dear” - you shall pay as dearly for this amusement.

ACT V

“He took this place for sanctuary” - churches and other sacred buildings provided refuge from legal prosecution until the 17th century.
 “And with no face, as 'twere, outfacing me” - and with his thin face staring me down.
 “One of these men is genius to the other” - attendant spirit. It was classical belief that each person had such a spirit, identical in appearance, allotted to him at birth.
 Gossips' feast - a feast attended by the godparents (“gossips”) to celebrate the christening of a child.
 “That kitchened me for you” - who entertained me in the kitchen in mistake for you.

What Did He Say?

This is an opportunity to test your comprehension of Shakespeare's language. Below you will find passages from *The Comedy of Errors*. Answer the questions for each passage as specifically as possible.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

He that commends me to mine own content
Commends me to the thing I cannot get.
I to the world am like a drop of water
That in the ocean seeks another drop.
So I, to find a mother and a brother,
In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.

1. To whom is Antipholus speaking?
2. What are the circumstances that led up to this speech?
3. What is the mood or tone of the language used? Is this a happy speech? Is it contemplative? Is it sad?
4. What does Antipholus mean when he compares himself to a drop of water? How difficult would it be to find one specific drop of water in an ocean?
5. Do you think Antipholus has given up all hope of finding his mother and brother? Why?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

Good Signior Angelo, you must excuse us all;
My wife is shrewish when I keep not hours.
Say that I linger'd with you at your shop
To see the making of her carcanet,
And that to-morrow you will bring it home.
But here's a villain that would face me down
He met me on the mart, and that I beat him
And charged him with a thousand marks in gold,
And that I did deny my wife and house.
Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean by this?

1. To whom is Antipholus speaking?
2. How is the use of language in this speech different than the speech above spoken by Antipholus' twin?
3. Why does Antipholus find it necessary to lie about why he is coming home late to dinner? Who does he pull in to aid him in this deception?
4. What language does Antipholus use to address his servant, Dromio? Is this a friendly relationship? Is he kind to his servant to cruel?

Who Said That?

Match the spoken line to the character who speaks it. Three characters have none of the quotes listed below.

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| A. "A heavier task could not have been imposed
Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable." | ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE |
| B. "Neither my husband nor the slave return'd..." | DROMIO OF SYRACUSE |
| C. "You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither.
If I last in this service, you must case me in leather." | ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS |
| D. "Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me." | DROMIO OF EPHESUS |
| E. "Then, gentle brother, get you in again.
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife." | ADRIANA |
| F. "I am due to a woman; one that claims me, one that haunts
me, one that will have me." | LUCIANA |
| G. "Come, come. You know I gave it you even now.
Either send the chain, or send me by some token." | ANGELO |
| H. "Give me the ring of mine you had a dinner
Or, for my diamond, the chain you promised." | BALTHASAR |
| I. "Mistress, both man and master is possess'd.
I know it by their pale and deadly looks." | THE COURTESAN |
| J. "He took this place for sanctuary,
Therefore depart and leave him here with me." | EGEON |
| | AEMILIA, THE ABBESS |
| | DR. PINCH |
| | DUKE SOLINUS |

Topics for Discussion

ABOUT THE PLAY

1. *The Comedy of Errors* is believed to be Shakespeare's first comedy, and possibly even his first play according to some scholars. Considering the complexity of the story, how do you think this play ranks as an early attempt at writing a play? What are your favorite points in the the story? What characters do you find the most entertaining and colorful? Which are the most interesting?

2. The theme of self-transformation appears again and again in this play. Both Antipholus and Dromio are mistaken for their twins. Luciana is transformed by the affections she receives from Antipholus of Ephesus. What other transformations occur in the play? Be specific and support your answers.

3. Ephesian law prohibits any one from Syracuse to enter the town of Ephesus. If a Syracusan enters Ephesus, they will be put to death. Syracuse has a similar law regarding Ephesians in their own town. What do these laws say about these towns? Why do Egeon, Antipholus, and Dromio seem to be unaware of this law when they arrive at Ephesus? Who acts to aid the doomed Syracusians? Why?

4. The play requires the audience to suspend their disbelief regarding the extraordinary events of the story; the idea that two sets of identical twins were born on the exact same night in the exact same place alone seems seems simply unfathomable.



What other highly improbable events take place in the play? Why do we as an audience “go along for the ride” the playwright has set forth for us? Can you think of other plays, movies or books that require an equally profound suspension of disbelief? Be specific.

ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION

1. The artwork that inspired the scenic design for this production is by M. C. Escher, an artist famous for his tessellations, or the careful juxtaposition of shapes in a pattern. Many of his tessellations depict a series of objects seeming to transform from one image to another, such as birds becoming fish, or (as in the design for this production) fish becoming ships. Why do you think this artwork was chosen for the design of this production? What does it say about the world of the play and the characters in it?

2. Often in productions of *The Comedy of Errors*, four similar looking actors are cast to portray the two sets of identical twins. In this production, however, each pair of identical twins is portrayed by a single actor (until the final scene). Why do you think the director chose to take this approach? How do you think this aided the story of mistaken identities? Was it clear which twin was which? How would the production have been different if each pair of twins was played by two different actors?

3. Discuss the costumes for this production. How did the choices of color and style help create the wealthy citizenry of Ephesus? How did the design help to distinguish the difference between the nobles and the servant classes? Did you have a favorite costume?

4. Music is used extensively throughout this production to help set the tone and mood of the play. Consider the use of music as a device to transition between scenes as well as internally to highlight key story moments (falling in love, the chase sequences, etc.). If you were to change the music, how would it change the tone and effect of the production?

Katie Van Rensalier (Luciana) and Brandon Price (Antipholus of Syracuse) in *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*.

“Test Your Understanding” Quiz

- Shakespeare wrote his plays in what language?
 - Old English
 - Middle English
 - early modern English
 - Latin
- Egeon has spent five years wandering in search of _____.
 - his son Antipholus and servant, Dromio
 - the Courtesan
 - revenge
 - great wealth
- According to the law of Ephesus, what will happen to anyone born in Syracuse who enters the town?
 - They will be given the key to the city.
 - They will be sent out to sea.
 - They will be fined 1,000 ducats.
 - They will be executed and their possessions will be confiscated.
- Antipholus of Syracuse compares himself to _____.
 - a weary wanderer
 - a drop of water in an ocean, seeking another drop
 - a sea monster lacking half of his sight
 - a knight on a holy quest
- Antipholus of Ephesus has promised an expensive gift to his wife. What gift has he promised?
 - a diamond ring
 - a new mansion
 - a gold chain or necklace
 - a vacation to Syracuse
- When he is locked out of his home, Antipholus of Ephesus decides to dine with whom?
 - The Courtesan
 - Duke Solinus
 - his sister-in-law, Luciana
 - Dr. Pinch
- Dromio of Syracuse, mistaken for his twin, is accosted by _____, who claims to be his wife.
 - Luciana
 - The Courtesan
 - Adriana
 - Nell, the Kitchen Wench
- The Courtesan gives Antipholus of Ephesus a _____ in exchange for a promised _____.
 - lavish feast / audience with the Duke
 - diamond ring / golden necklace
 - violin / music lessons
 - golden necklace / diamond ring
- Antipholus of Syracuse falls in love with whom?
 - Adriana, his twin's wife
 - Nell, the kitchen wench
 - The Courtesan
 - Luciana, his twin's sister-in-law
- Believing that her husband has gone mad, Adriana calls on the aid of _____ to bring him back to his senses.
 - Feste, the fool
 - Doctor Pinch
 - her sister, Luciana
 - Duke Solinus
- Unable to leave Ephesus, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse find sanctuary in _____.
 - the Duke's castle
 - the Courtesan's home
 - an abbey
 - Luciana's home
- At the end of the play, the Abbess is revealed to be _____.
 - Emilia, mother to the Dromio twins
 - The Duke's lost mother
 - Emilia, wife to Egeon and mother to the Antipholi
 - the woman who stole Antipholus and Dromio from Egeon
- Antipholus of Syracuse has spent seven years in search of _____.
 - his father
 - revenge
 - his mother and twin brother
 - great personal wealth
- Shakespeare's plays are most often written in _____.
 - rhyiming couplets
 - Old English
 - blank verse
 - prose

Follow-up Activities

1. **“Critics’ Corner”** Write a review of this production of *The Comedy of Errors*. Be sure to include specific information and your own reactions to both the acting and the design elements (lights, set, costumes and sound). Explain what you liked and disliked, and support your opinions. Then submit your review to The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s Education Department, or see if it can be published in your school newspaper.
2. **“Alert the media!”** If Ephesus had a cable news network, it would have featured 24-hour coverage of the events in this play: riots in the streets, unwelcome foreigners, a scheduled afternoon execution, not to mention a gossip column full of intrigue centered around one of the town’s most notable citizens, Antipholus. He is seen galavanting with a courtesan, in a rage outside his home, arrested for refusing to pay a debt, and eventually taken in to the care of Dr. Pinch when he is believed to be possessed. Then of course there is the uniting of a long-lost family, and the revelation about the mysterious Abbess. Assign these and other big events of the play to members of the class and create appropriate television or newspaper coverage.
3. **“I learn by this letter...”** Write a letter or diary entry from the point of view of one of the characters, discussing an event or situation in the play. For example, a letter home from Antipholus of Syracuse, a letter written by Egeon or Emilia to their lost sons, a love letter from Antipholus to Luciana, a diary entry describing Luciana’s feelings after having been seduced by her brother-in-law (she thinks), or a journal entry from Dromio of Syracuse describing his seven-year search for his twin.
4. **“15-minute Shakespeare”** Divide into five groups, and have each group take one act of the play. Your task is to create a three-minute version of your act, using only Shakespeare’s words. Choose carefully the lines from your act that carry the most important information and advance the story. When each group is done, you will have a 15-minute version of *The Comedy of Errors* which you can perform for one another. Afterwards, discuss both the process of adaptation and how your “abridgement” compared to the more modest cuts which the director made for this touring production.
5. **“A Director Prepares”** *The Comedy of Errors* has captured the imaginations of directors and designers for stage and screen. Individually or in small groups, come up with your own scenic or costume designs for the play. Where would you set the play? Find a line or image expressed in the play as your “launch pad.” You can use drawings and collage as well as writing to explain and justify your design to the class.
6. **“Speak the Speech...”** In small groups, work to present a small piece of the text to the class. Each group should come up with its own unique presentation: different rhythms, echoing or underscoring key words or phrases, simple props, movement, etc. After each group has presented its interpretation of the text, discuss what was successful about each one. From this, you can develop a rubric for what makes a good performance.
7. **“Dynamic Duos”** Break the class into groups of two. Have each pair become either the Dromio twins or the Antipholus twins. This can be established by mirroring the other’s actions, or even by creating costumes or interesting mannerisms that the characters can share.

Teachers:

Do you have activities or exercises to suggest for this play? We are always looking for new ideas to inspire students (and teachers). Send your suggestions to info@ShakespeareNJ.org and we will share them with other teachers, and maybe even include them in future study guides.

Meeting the NJ Curriculum & Common Core Standards

In 1996, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted Common Core Standards that set out to clearly define what every New Jersey student should know and be able to do at the end of his/her schooling. The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is committed to supporting teachers by ensuring that our educational programs are relevant to standards-based teaching and learning.

Viewing a performance at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and participating in the post-performance discussion can serve as a powerful springboard for discussion, writing, and other outlets for higher-order thinking. Below are just some of the Standards that can be addressed by seeing a performance at The Shakespeare Theatre or at your school, and by applying the activities found in this study guide.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY STANDARDS

As a theatre dedicated to the classics, we are continually engaged in exploring some of the world's greatest literature, and the relationship between the written text and performance. Our philosophy and practice follow the four underlying assumptions of the Language Arts Literacy Common Core Standards: that "language is an *active process* for constructing meaning," that "language develops in a *social context*," that language ability increases as learners "engage in texts that are *rich in ideas and increasingly complex in language*," and that learners achieve mastery not by practicing isolated skills but by "*using and exploring language* in its many dimensions." In the practice of theatre, we merge all areas of the language arts, as the standards suggest, "in an integrated act of rehearsal, reflection, and learning." Below, you will find just a few of the possibilities for aligning your study of our productions to each of these standards.

STANDARD 3.1:

All students will apply the knowledge of sounds, letters and words in written English to become independent and fluent readers, and will read a variety of materials and texts with fluency and comprehension.

Read a scene from the play as a class and use context clues to interpret new words and expand vocabulary (3.1.C/F); demonstrate understanding by performing a scene from the play (3.1.G); compare and contrast literary elements in the play with another text being studied (3.1.H).

STANDARD 3.2:

All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.

Write a new ending for the play in blank verse or in modern prose (3.2.D), write a critique of the play which will be workshopped and published in a classroom setting (3.2.A/B/D).

STANDARD 3.3:

All students will speak in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.

Participate in a post-show discussion (3.3.A/B), memorize and perform a monologue or scene from the play (3.3.D).

STANDARD 3.4:

All students will listen actively to information from a variety of sources in a variety of situations.

Select one speech or line from the play and compare how it was performed in the stage and film version (3.4.A/B).

STANDARD 3.5:

All students will access, view, evaluate and respond to print, nonprint, and electronic texts and resources.

Discuss how the play expresses cultural values of the playwright's time (3.5.A); compare and contrast the printed text with its staged version (3.5.B).

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS STANDARDS

According to both No Child Left Behind and the New Jersey CCCS, the arts (including theatre) are a core subject and "experience with and knowledge of the arts is a vital part of a complete education." In the area of performing arts, performances, workshops and study guide exercises developed by The Shakespeare Theatre address all four state standards. Below, you will find just a few of the possibilities for aligning your study of our productions to each of these standards.

STANDARD 1.1: THE CREATIVE PROCESS

All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Engage in a discussion of the technical elements of our production (1.1.2.C.4); work to identify and explore the elements of narrative structure as they occurred in the play (1.1.5.C.1); discuss the differences and similarities between the traditions and values expressed in the play with those currently expressed in our society (1.1.8.C.1); discuss how the play or the playwright might have had an impact on human history or culture (1.1.12.C.1).

STANDARD 1.2: HISTORY OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE

All students will understand the role, development, and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

Identify and explore the ways in which the playwright has contributed to our culture (1.2.5.A.3); have the students research how some of the cultural mores and personal aesthetics presented in the production differ from our own. (1.2.8.A.3); discuss how exposure to the arts and study of this piece of art in particular might have a positive impact on an individual's lifelong learning, personal expression and contributions to their communities (1.2.12.A.2).

STANDARD 1.3: PERFORMANCE

All students will synthesize those skills, media, methods, and technologies appropriate to creating, performing, and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Retell their favorite portions of the story by acting them out in their own words (1.3.2.C.2, 1.3.2.C.3); have your students memorize and present a monologue from the play (1.3.2.C.2 & 1.3.2.C.3); Prepare, rehearse and present a scene from the play as a group (1.3.5.C.2); challenge them to identify what might be motivating certain characters or what a character's intention may be (1.3.8.C.1); have them explore how different physical, or vocal choices can enhance the clarity of their motivations, intentions and actions (1.3.12.C.2).

STANDARD 1.4: AESTHETIC RESPONSES & CRITIQUE METHODOLOGIES

All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment, and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Write a review of our production using the appropriate terminology; develop a class rubric for effective theatrical presentations; compare and contrast the play with work by other artists or other arts disciplines (1.4.2.A.1); compare and contrast this production with other productions they have seen or heard of (1.4.5.A.3); discuss the use of metaphor in both the text and the design of the production (1.4.8.A.5).

Additional Opportunities for Students and Teachers

NEW FOR 2013



THE SHAKESPEARE THEATRE ACADEMY

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is proud to announce the launch of The Shakespeare Theatre Academy. Beginning in March of 2013, the Theatre will offer youth and adult classes in a wide range of disciplines connected with classic theatre. Each series of classes meets once a week in one of the Theatre's beautiful facilities, and gives participants the opportunity to work under the instruction of The Shakespeare Theatre's renowned artistic and educational staff as well as guest teaching artists. **Spring and Fall Classes Available.**



THE STUDENT MATINEE SERIES

Student Matinee performances of the productions in our Main Stage season provide students and teachers with an opportunity to view theatre classics brought to life by some of the nation's most skilled professional actors in the intimate setting of the F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre. Each includes a comprehensive study guide and a lively talkback with the cast.



SHAKESPEARE LIVE! TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

This acclaimed touring program brings dynamic and visually engaging one-hour productions of Shakespeare's classics directly into the schools. Each performance includes a comprehensive study guide and a post-performance discussion with the actors. Fun and interactive workshops give students a chance to explore the actor's approach to bringing Shakespeare's language to life.



PAGES TO PLAYERS: IN-SCHOOL RESIDENCIES

Residencies provide an opportunity for classroom English teachers in grades 5-8 to partner with the Theatre's skilled teaching artists to explore Shakespeare's text in-depth in an exciting, performance-based way that evokes collaboration, self-confidence and creativity while reinforcing language arts skills.



SHAKESPERIENCE: NJ STUDENT SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

This annual spring festival, developed in partnership with the Folger Shakespeare Library and Rider University, gives middle and high school classes the opportunity to spend a day at the Theatre experiencing Shakespeare as both actors and audience. The *Shakespeare: NJ* Festival celebrates the power of performance as a teaching tool on a statewide scale.



THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR SHAKESPEARE CORPS

Young actors are given the opportunity to participate in the excitement of the Theatre's summer season through this program, which offers classes, a final presentation, as well as behind-the-scenes and front-of-house experience. Geared for students in grades 6 through 12, admission to this program is through an audition and/or an interview.

For more information on these and other opportunities,

please visit

www.ShakespeareNJ.org

and press the "Education" button

About The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

The acclaimed Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is one of the leading Shakespeare theatres in the nation. Serving approximately 100,000 adults and young people annually, it is New Jersey's largest professional theatre company dedicated to Shakespeare's canon and other classic masterworks. With its distinguished productions and education programs, the company strives to illuminate the universal and lasting relevance of the classics for contemporary audiences. The longest-running Shakespeare theatre on the East Coast and the seventh largest in the nation, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2012, and is proud to be launching into its second half-century with a brand new support facility housing all its administrative and technical shops, as well as a new rehearsal hall, classroom spaces, and extensive costume, property and scenic inventory.



The company's 2013 Main Stage Season will feature six productions presented in its 308-seat F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre from June through December. In the summer, an Outdoor Stage production is also presented at the Greek Theatre, an open-air amphitheatre nestled in a hillside on the campus of the College of Saint Elizabeth in nearby Morristown.

In addition to being a celebrated producer of classic plays and operating *Shakespeare LIVE!* (one of the largest educational Shakespeare touring programs in the New York/New Jersey region), The Shakespeare Theatre is also deeply committed to nurturing new talent for the American stage. By providing an outstanding training ground for students of the theatre, and cultivating audiences for the future by providing extensive outreach opportunities for students across New Jersey and beyond, The Shakespeare Theatre is a leader in arts education. For additional information, visit our web site at www.ShakespeareNJ.org.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is one of 23 professional theatres in the state of New Jersey. The company's dedication to the classics and commitment to excellence sets critical standards for the field. Nationwide, the Theatre has emerged as one of the nation's most exciting theatres under the leadership of Artistic Director, Bonnie J. Monte since 1990. It is one of only a handful of Shakespeare Theatres on the east coast, and in recent years has drawn larger and larger audiences and unprecedented critical acclaim. The opening of the intimate, 308-seat F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre in 1998, provided the Theatre with a state-of-the-art venue with excellent sightlines, and increased access for patrons and artists with disabilities.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is a member of ArtPride, The Shakespeare Theatre Association, and is a founding member of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's programs are made possible, in part, by funding from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional major support is received from The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the F.M. Kirby Foundation, The Edward T. Cone Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, The CTW Foundation, The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation and Drew University, as well as contributions from numerous corporations, foundations, government agencies and individuals. The Shakespeare Theatre is an independent, professional theatre company located on the Drew University campus.

