



American Players Theatre  
Presents



William Shakespeare's  
**THE COMEDY OF  
ERRORS**  
2016 STUDY GUIDE

American Players Theatre / PO Box 819 / Spring Green, WI 53588  
[www.americanplayers.org](http://www.americanplayers.org)

***THE COMEDY OF ERRORS* BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

**2016 STUDY GUIDE**

Cover photo by Liz Lauren.

All photos by Carissa Dixon & Liz Lauren.

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**If you have any questions or comments regarding the exercises or the information within this study guide, please contact Emily Beck, Education Coordinator, at 608-588-9207, or [ebeck@americanplayers.org](mailto:ebeck@americanplayers.org).**

**SHAKESPEARE**  
IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES



# Who's Who in *The Comedy of Errors*

Character descriptions from *The Essential Shakespeare Handbook*



## **Solinus, Duke of Ephesus**

**(Nate Burger)**

He is required by law to fine Egeon 1,000 marks on pain of death, although he is moved by Egeon's story to grant the merchant one day to raise the sum.

## **Egeon (Brian Mani)**

An unlucky merchant of Syracuse, he manages to find words to relate "griefs unspeakable."



## **Antipholus of Ephesus**

**(Christopher Sheard)**

Son to Egeon and Æmelia, and the twin brother of Antipholus of Syracuse, he commissioned a gold chain for his wife, Adriana, but when she locks him out of their home he plans to give it to the Courtesan instead.

## **Antipholus of Syracuse**

**(Casey Hoekstra)**

Other son of Egeon and Æmelia, who went to Ephesus in search of his family, and (of course) twin to Antipholus of Ephesus. He asks "Am I on earth, in Heaven, or in hell?" When the people of the town mistake him for his twin.



## **Dromio of Ephesus**

**(Kelsey Brennan)**

Attendant on Antipholus of Ephesus, and twin brother to Dromio of Syracuse, he remembers being beaten by his master since birth.

## **Dromio of Syracuse**

**(Cristina Panfilio)**

Attendant on Antipholus of Syracuse, and twin brother of Dromio of Ephesus, he is terrified when Nell, the wife of his twin brother, makes advances on him at Adriana's house.



## **Adriana (Melisa Pereyra)**

Wife to Antipholus of Ephesus, she is sure she is "being strumpeted" when her husband behaves oddly.

## **Luciana (Laura Rook)**

Sister to Adriana, she is a single woman for now, but would marry if she were able to "learn love."



# Who's Who in *The Comedy of Errors*



**Luce (Colleen Madden)**  
Servant to Adriana

**A Courtesan (Rebecca Hurd)**  
She entertains Antipholus of Ephesus when he is locked out of his house, and later accuses him of stealing her diamond ring to compensate for the gold chain he promised her.



**Balthazar (Eric Schabla)**  
A merchant, he advises Antipholus not to break down the door when he is locked out of his own home by Adriana.

**Angelo (Danny Martinez)**  
A goldsmith, he is shocked when Antipholus refuses to pay for the gold chain he just delivered to him.



**First Merchant (James Ridge)**  
He reminds his friend Antipholus of Syracuse that Syracusians are not allowed to do business in Ephesus.

**Second Merchant (William Bolz)**  
He urgently needs the money Angelo owes him and thus helps the goldsmith recover the sum Antipholus is to pay for the gold chain.



**Pinch (James Ridge)**  
A schoolmaster, he performs a ludicrous exorcism on the abused Antipholus of Ephesus, noting that "The fiend is strong within him."

**Abbess/Æmelia (Colleen Madden)**  
Abbess of Ephesus and wife to Egeon, she is eventually reunited with her family.





# About the Play

*The Comedy of Errors* was inspired by Plautus' *Menaechmi*. The story is very much the same except in Plautus' version one of the boys is kidnapped, rather than lost in a wreck.

At the top of the play, Egeon, a merchant of Syracuse, is arrested in Ephesus. The cities have a long-standing feud, and he's been caught trespassing, a crime punishable by death. But before he can be led off to his untimely demise, he tells Solinus, the Duke of Ephesus that he has come to Ephesus in search of his wife and one of his twin sons, who were separated from him 25 years ago in a shipwreck. The other twin, who grew up with Egeon, is also traveling the world in search of the missing half of their family. He proceeds to tell the story of how his wife and one son, along with another child he has taken on to be his son's servant, were lost in a shipwreck. He saved the other of his twin sons, and the twin to the servant boy, by

lashing them to the mast. He has been searching for his lost family ever since. (Spoiler alert: Both sets of twins are identical, and Egeon's sons are both named Antipholus, while both of the twin servants are named Dromio. Confusion will most definitely ensue.) After hearing the sad story, Solinus takes pity on Egeon, and gives him one day to raise a thousand-mark ransom that could save his life.

The story has been adapted multiple times and was even adapted into a musical called *The Boys from Syracuse*, written by Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart. A film version was released in 1940.

Meanwhile, unknown to Egeon, his son Antipholus of Syracuse and Antipholus' servant Dromio of Syracuse (hereafter referred to as A of S and D of S) are also in Ephesus. What they don't know is that their missing twins live in Ephesus, and, Antipholus of Ephesus (A of E), is a prosperous citizen of the city.

*The Comedy of Errors* is one of only two Shakespearean plays that follow the classical unities (that is, Aristotle's rule that a play should follow one action, with minimal subplots). *The Tempest* is the other play.

At A of E's house, his wife Adriana is fuming because her husband is late for dinner. She laments to her sister about the troubles of her marriage, and worries that he is being unfaithful to her. Her sister, Luciana, who is unmarried, tells Adriana that she has to be obedient and forgive her husband for his insensitivities in order to be a good wife. This does nothing to improve Adriana's mood.

A of S and D of S stumble across Adriana and Luciana, who mistake them for their twins. Adriana drags them home for dinner, leaving D of S to stand guard at the door and admit no one. Shortly thereafter, A of E (with his servant Dromio of Ephesus – D of E) returns home and is refused entry to his house. Antipholus of Syracuse immediately falls in love with Luciana, who is horrified by the behavior of the man she thinks is her brother-in-law.

Ephesus and Syracuse were Ancient Greek cities. Though APT's production has hints of Brazil, Ephesus is located in the country of Turkey.

To further confuse the situation, a gold chain ordered by A of E is given to A of S by mistake. When Angelo, the goldsmith who made the chain approaches A of E for payment, he refuses and claims that he never received the chain (and he hasn't because it was given to his twin). But Angelo doesn't believe him (also understandable) and has A of E arrested. Seeing her husband's strange behavior, Adriana comes to the conclusion that he must be crazy and has him tied up and detained in a cellar.

The strange events have all been too much for A of S and D of S, who think the town is full of magic and witches. So they decide their best plan is to flee the city. But they run into Adriana and the authorities first, who still believe them to be their twins. They escape them and hide in a nearby abbey.

Shakespearean comedies usually end with the promise of a wedding. While *The Comedy of Errors* ends with happy couples, and an assumption of marriage between Antipholus of Syracuse and Luciana, there's no promise that a wedding will occur.

Adriana now begs the Duke to intervene and remove her "husband" from the abbey into her custody. Her real husband, meanwhile, has broken loose and now comes to the Duke and levels charges against his wife. The situation is finally resolved by the Abbess, Æmilia, who brings out the set of twins and reveals herself to be Egeon's long-lost wife. Antipholus of Ephesus reconciles with Adriana; Egeon is pardoned by the Duke and reunited with his wife; Antipholus of Syracuse resumes his romantic pursuit of Luciana, and all ends happily with the two Dromios embracing.

# American Players Theatre's *The Comedy of Errors*



Poor Egeon's (Brian Mani, center) arrest sets the tone for a dark underbelly to a play that is widely considered a farce.

*The Comedy of Errors* is one of Shakespeare's earliest plays (1593-1594), and also his shortest at 1,786 lines (compare that to *King Lear*, also playing at APT this summer, at nearly twice that - 3,499 lines). Besides *The Tempest*, it is the only one of his plays set in a single city over the span of a single day. Taken together, these elements could add up to a simplistic play. And to some extent, they do. The play is largely considered a farce (which the Oxford-English Dictionary defines as "A comic dramatic work using buffoonery and horseplay and typically including crude characterization and ludicrously improbable situations.") In other words, it's slapstick comedy, usually deemed to have no deeper meaning. But Director David Frank begs to differ. Just because a play is funny, doesn't mean it's meaningless.

"I cannot entirely rid myself of that English schoolboy," David (who is, as you may have guessed, British) recently said. "I love farce. And indeed *The Comedy of Errors* is probably the most farcical thing Shakespeare ever wrote. It's great, but, to be great farce, it has to ring true, while always remembering the commitment that farce requires: an energy that is always logical even though it takes you to absurd places and makes you wild. I do think there's more to this farce than perhaps is often credited to it. There are so many ways to tackle an interesting play. And *The Comedy of Errors*, it's my favorite early Shakespeare."

That depth David refers to is evident if you look for it. The themes of the play seem simple - loss and love; jealousy and forgiveness. But there's more below the surface. Sure, two sets of identical twins make for plenty of opportunities for mistaken identity, and that leads to many ridiculous and funny moments. But appearances can be deceiving (a theme Shakespeare explored often), and just because people look alike doesn't mean they are alike.

## Women Playing Men

Kelsey Brennan and Cristina Panfilio play Dromio of Ephesus and Dromio of Syracuse, respectively. And before we dive into the challenges of playing twins when you look nothing alike, there's this challenge first: the Dromios in *The Comedy of Errors* are men. And Kelsey and Cristina are not. Gender bending is not at all unusual in Shakespearean plays. He dresses women as men in no less than seven plays. Not to mention that back in Shakespeare's day, women weren't allowed on the stage, so all of the female roles were played by men. So, precedent has been set, but what is it like for these women to play men?

Kelsey said, "So we're playing these roles as men. Physically, vocally, in the costumes, in the makeup, in the design, we are going to be seen as two men. Now inevitably, Cristina and I don't have the bodies of men. So we're going to look different from the actual men we're next to. But the story that we're telling is that we are male, and that's part of our jobs, to access that the best way we can in our storytelling. It's not necessarily going to change the story. But more than anything else it's an opportunity for Cristina and I to play roles we normally wouldn't get to play. Playing those queens and lovers are wonderful opportunities. But getting to play the Dromios is something that's rare."

"There is a lot of focus on this idea that we have two women playing men," Cristina continued. "And that is absolutely special, and I think Kelsey hit the nail on the head when she mentioned the opportunity to play

roles women wouldn't ordinarily be cast in. But it's not that much different than, well, I'm American and I'm playing a Brit. I am not British. I am playing a countess in that play. I am not a countess. Sometimes you play a queen, sometimes you play someone outside of your circumstances. And I see this thing as two actors who are playing some roles that have characteristics that are like us, and some characteristics that are unlike us. And this happens to be that they're male."

Cristina said, "It's no secret that there are very few roles for women in classical theater. And this company is growing and changing, and I think the female voice is growing and changing. And we see a lot of classical theater where men play all of the roles – male and female – and that's been going on since the beginning. And I think we have this opportunity to say well, what if we cast two women in these roles?"



Cristina Panfilio as Dromio of Syracuse (left) and Kelsey Brennan as Dromio of Ephesus (right).

### Identity and Relationships

It's relatively easy to conclude that two such talented female actors can play men in Shakespeare, who so often flips gender on his characters. And especially in a play that asks so many questions about how people see identity, and how we see ourselves. How people who are related can grow into very different adults based on their circumstances. And how we treat the people who are closest to us.

Christopher Sheard, who plays Antipholus of Ephesus, master of Dromio of Ephesus, said "I think in both cases we grew up together. Dromio runs all of my errands. So there must be some kind of kinship, friendship between them. But it's definitely a master/servant relationship. And sometimes I take it out on him in ways that may not be very nice."

Kelsey continued, "I think of the two sets of twins, Dromio and Antipholus of Syracuse have a much more clearly defined friendship. Even though it's a master/servant relationship they treat each other much more like comrades. Whereas with us, the twins from Ephesus, we never really developed that friendship. It's more of a working relationship. And that leads to some conflict. But throughout the course of the play we see that change."

### The Chain, the Courtesan and Some Other Confusing Things

There are a few sub-plots that can be a little confusing in *The Comedy of Errors*, particularly with respect to the gold chain, the Courtesan, the Merchants and Angelo the Goldsmith. So here's the gist: Dromio of Ephesus special ordered a gold chain for his wife, Adriana, from Angelo. At the beginning of the play, the chain isn't yet finished, but Adriana knows that it's coming, and the fact that she doesn't have it yet feeds into her fear that her husband is having an affair. Then, when Antipholus of Ephesus comes home to find himself locked out of his house (because Antipholus of Syracuse is inside, and Adriana has mistaken him for her



The Courtesan attempts to sweet talk Antipholus of Syracuse out of the chain, thinking he's his twin brother.





Angelo (Danny Martinez) and Antipholus of Ephesus (Christopher Sheard) argue about who owes who.

husband), he becomes angry and takes his friends to the Courtesan's house. There, he offers the chain to the Courtesan (though he doesn't yet have it) in return for her ring, which he takes with him.

Shortly thereafter, the second Merchant becomes angry because Angelo owes him money. He tells Angelo he needs the money immediately, but Angelo can't pay him until he received payment for the chain (which he has at this point accidentally given to Antipholus of Syracuse instead of Antipholus of Ephesus). So when he approaches Antipholus of Ephesus, he of course tells Angelo that he never received the chain, and that is why he's arrested. The Courtesan then encounters Antipholus of Syracuse on the street and asks him for the chain, to which

he replies no way. She then asks him to return her ring, which, of course, he doesn't have. He declares that she's a witch. The Courtesan is understandably angry, and says that she's going to report him for stealing her ring. All of these loose ends are tied up at the end of the play, but the number of characters and plot points involved can make it a little hard to follow. We hope this helped clear it up.

### What Does it All Mean?

We've talked a lot about what went into making this play what it is. But what is it all about? Christopher says his favorite thing about this play is the progression the mistaken identity takes, which builds until it hits a boiling point. He says, "I love the steps Shakespeare is taking us through. That the character's mind walks through the steps, 'Ok, what are you talking about? Ok. You're joking with me. Ok, you're not joking with me. Ok, you're crazy. Ok, you're actually being a jerk and you're trying to get out of something.' Until, by the end of the play, my character is actually questioning his own sanity. 'Am I the one who's crazy? Everyone keeps telling me I've done these things that I don't remember.'"

"It's a comedy of discovery," Kelsey continued. "My character is written as an 'other.' Someone who sits outside the societal norm and knows that about himself. I'm certainly not the only one in this play who's looking for something in their lives. And the great thing is Shakespeare gives us each a little gift at the end, whether that's finding a partner, or in finding someone who is like us. Also an 'other,' but who illuminates our own experience. And I think it's a beautiful message of acceptance and self-acceptance that, if you can get that and comedy in one night? I think you got your moneys' worth."

The layers and subtleties you take away from a deep reading of the text seems to show at the very least that farce can be meaningful. As David concludes: "Shakespeare never offers answers. But whenever you're digging into something, even if it's meant to be pure farce, you keep finding richness to it. There is a whole fascinating discussion about women and women's roles. It's so full of different colors. And then it ends of course with wonderful symmetry and generosity, and it also has some precursors to some glorious poetry. The whole piece is really, wonderfully complex."





A costume rendering of Dromio of Ephesus by Fabio Toblini.

## The Production Process and Designing for the Outdoors

At APT, the productions begin more than a year in advance with directors discussing the plays with APT staff and designers. Ideas evolve during collaborative meetings where the people involved balance what they want to do with what is possible.

Nathan Stuber, APT's Assistant Technical Director, says designing and building for an outdoor stage can be complicated. "The biggest challenge is obviously the weather, as far as keeping things waterproof (water makes wood expand and contract and makes metal rust), so sometimes you have to overbuild. A lot of the time, the designs might not balance because at the matinees you have to consider the bright light coming down on the set, so anything white or light-colored can blind the audience or the actors. At the same time, you don't want a lot of black things up there that absorb heat. So, it's a delicate process."

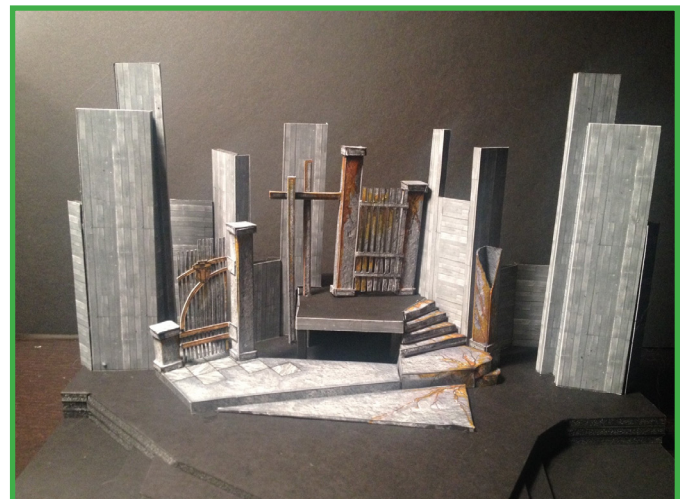
Weather plays a role in costume design, too. APT has heat and cold plans that include pockets for ice and heat packs built into the costumes, as well as layers that can be shed or added depending on the weather. But for all the thought that goes into how everything functions, it's incredibly important that the costumes are also visually appealing, and serve their purpose within the story.

## Scenic and Costume Design

All of these ideas and technical realities come together to influence the design. But how does it all work?

"This is a play that's full of opposites," said David. "It's funny how ideas come from all over the place. One of the things you see in this play deals with money - Antipholus of Ephesus has got a lot of money, and his opposite, the other Antipholus, his identical twin, is not from much money. That's an idea that's reflected in the costume design. Fabio Toblini, our Costume Designer, was drawing. We had originally decided to set this production in some invented South American militaristic mid-19th century city. But suddenly I saw Fabio's costumes and he had drawn a little urchin with a western top hat and trousers that were rags. And I thought oh, we've got to have that. And the design evolved from there."

"I believe it was, Fabio and David and Scenic Designer Nayna Ramey who collaborated and wanted to explore the cultural influence of 1890 Brazil." Kelsey said. "But we're still setting the play for all intents and purposes in Ephesus, and there are certain elements that kind of pay homage to that culture. There's a beautiful song in Portuguese. There are some really beautiful color palettes that explore that dynamic culture. And Nayna has designed our set to include three very different places: the house of Dromio and Antipholus of Ephesus, with a huge door that is a character all its own. There's an area of the set that's kind of considered the seedy part of town. And there's part of the set that's an abbey where people can seek sanctuary. All on our APT stage. So that's really fun, too."



A model of the set by Scenic Designer Nayna Ramey.



Cristina continued, “We’re changing locations constantly. So sometimes it’s internal, sometimes it’s external. Sometimes we’re in the house, sometimes we’re in the street, and again it’s all over the course of one day. So there was also pressure on Nayna to create a set that is interesting and also versatile. And also simple. So that we can sort of imagine these cross fades and these quick cuts and change location without spending a bunch of time moving things. Because we don’t have time to do that.”

With *The Comedy of Errors*, the biggest challenge was to make the twins look like, well, twins. It has to be believable that the townspeople truly can’t tell them apart, or else the story makes no sense. APT’s designers and actors had to think around a lot of corners. Because while Christopher and Casey Hoekstra (who plays Antipholus of Syracuse) have some features that are somewhat similar, Kelsey and Cristina look absolutely nothing alike. So in addition to similar costumes, everyone was set up with wigs. And everyone was fitted for prosthetic noses, which is more challenging than you may think. Here’s how it works.

“They do a full-face cast,” said Christopher. “And they put this thick putty on your face. And they leave your airways open, obviously. And then they throw plaster on top and you sit there for 15 minutes and you can’t move, you can’t smile. And it’s just such a bizarre feeling, because you feel like it’s never going to come off your face. And then you just lean forward and you wiggle your face and it just pops right off.”

The costume shop uses the face casts to make a mold of the nose, which they then use to build the latex noses that are matched and then attached to the actors’ faces.

Kelsey continued, “And then we went into the costume shop and there were the molds of our four faces in front of us, with four very pronounced latex noses on them. It’s really weird.”

But even with costuming and special effects, the characters have to behave in similar ways in order to make believable twins. So that took some special effort from the actors, the Dromios in particular.

“The twin thing. That’s harder than playing a man, in a way,” said Cristina. “Because all of a sudden you go ok, my responsibility is to play this character truthfully. And I have a responsibility to live inside of a body that moves in a way that is similar to this other person, and speak in a way that is similar to this other person. Because the play demands that. Because everyone else in the play is required to believe that we are the same person; to mistake us for one another.”





# The Comedy of Errors Photo Summary

1. The story begins as the unlucky Egeon is arrested for being a Syracusan in Ephesus, the punishment for which is death. But as he spins the tale of losing his wife, one of his twin sons and another twin baby he'd taken on to raise as a servant during a long-ago storm at sea, Duke Solinus of Ephesus takes pity on him, tells the old man he can buy his life back for 1,000 marks.



Duke: Hapless Egeon, whom the fates have marked to bear the extremity of dire mishap! Now trust me, were it not against our laws, against my crown, my oath, my dignity, which princes, would they, may to disannul, my soul would sue as advocate for thee.

Act I scene 1

3. Antipholus of Ephesus' wife, Adriana, is waiting for her husband to come home for dinner. He's late, and she's angry, discussing marriage with her unwed sister, Luciana, who argues that wives should be obedient.



2. Meanwhile, the boys that Egeon saved from the shipwreck and raised - Antipholus of Syracuse (A of S) and his servant Dromio of Syracuse (D of S) are grown and in Ephesus in search of their long-lost brothers. A of S sends D of S back to the inn, but things quickly get confused when Dromio of Ephesus (D of E) shows up, and A of S mistakes him for his twin, asking him about the 1,000 marks he sent him away with. D of E runs away, confused, as A of S ponders the trickery of Ephesus.



Antipholus of Syracuse: Upon my life, by some device or other the villain is o'er-raught of all my money. They say this town is full of cozenage, as nimble jugglers that deceive the eye, dark-working sorcerers that change the mind, soul-killing witches that deform the body, disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks and may suchlike liberties of sin.

Act I scene 2

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.

Act II scene 1

4. D of E shows up at home and tells Adriana that his master has gone mad. She sends D of E back to bring his master home, believing A of E is having an affair because of his behavior, and because he never gave her the gold chain he promised her.



Adriana: Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,  
I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.  
Luciana: How many fond fools serve mad jealousy!  
Act II scene 1

5. D of S is reunited with his real master, who is furious with him for “pretending” not to know about the 1,000 marks he gave him. The duo then stumbles upon Adriana, who believes A of S to be her husband. Adriana eventually convinces him to come in to eat.



A of S: Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?  
Sleeping or waking? Mad or well advised?  
Known unto these, and to myself disguised?  
I'll say, as they say, and persevere so,  
and in this mist at all adventures go.  
Act II scene 2



6. A of E returns home with Angelo the goldsmith, and Balthazar, a merchant, and is surprised to find his door locked. D of S has been charged with guarding the door, and mocks the men outside and refuses to let them in (including, unbeknownst to him, his twin brother). A of E is livid, and tells his friends he will give Adriana's gold chain to a Courtesan instead.

A of E: What art thou that keep'st me from the house I owe?  
D of S: The porter for this time, sir, and my name is Dromio.  
D of E: O villain, thou hast stolen both mine office and my name. The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame. If thou hadst been Dromio today in my place; thou wouldst have changed thy office for a name, or they named for an ass.  
Act III scene 1





7. A of S has fallen immediately in love with Luciana, who believes him to be her brother-in-law, and is appropriately horrified.

Luciana: Why call you me 'love,' call my sister so.

A of S: Thy sister's sister.

Luciana: That's my sister.

A of S: No. It is thyself, my own self's better part  
Act III scene 2

8. D of S discovers that a woman named Nell believes that she is his wife, and he mocks to cheer A of S up.

D of S: Marry, sir, she's the kitchen wench, and all grease;  
and I know not what use to put her to but to make a  
lamp of her and run from her by her own light. I warrant  
her rags and the tallow in them will burn a Poland  
winter. If she lives till doomsday she'll burn a week lon-  
ger than the whole world.

Act III scene 2



9. Angelo the goldsmith mistakenly gives the gold chain meant for Adriana (or the Courtesan) to A of S. While pleased with his new gift, A of S and D of S make plans to flee Ephesus.



A of S: What I should think of this  
I cannot tell. But this I think, there's  
no man is so vain that would refuse  
so fair an offered chain. I see a man  
here needs not live by shifts, when in  
the streets he meets such golden gifts.  
I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio  
stay; if any ship put out, then straight  
away.

Act III scene 2



10. After giving away the chain, Angelo approaches A of E for payment, or the chain's return. Having never received the chain (because it went to his twin) A of E refuses and Angelo has him arrested.



Angelo: This touches me in reputation.  
Either consent to pay this sum for me, or I  
attach you by this officer.

A of E: consent to pay thee that I never  
had? Arrest me, foolish fellow,  
if thou dar'st.

Angelo: Here is thy fee. Arrest him, officer.  
Act IV scene 1

11. Luciana tells Adriana that her husband has been flirting with her. Adriana is understandably upset. Even so, when D of E arrives asking for bail money for his master, Adriana agrees, and they go to bail him out.



Adriana: Go, Dromio. There's the  
money. Bear it straight. And bring  
thy master home immediately.  
Come, sister, I am pressed down  
with conceit - Conceit, my  
comfort and my injury.  
Act IV scene 2

12. A of S is still pondering why he seems so familiar to all the denizens of Ephesus when he is approached by the Courtesan A of E dined with when he was locked out of his house. The Courtesan wants him to either give her the gold chain she's been promised, or return the ring A of E took from her at her house. Once again disturbed by the sorcery of Ephesus the Syracuse flee, and the Courtesan decides to accuse A of E of theft.

Courtesan: I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the chain. I  
hope you do not mean to cheat me so.

A of S: A vaunt, thou witch, come Dromio, let us go.

D of S: 'Fly pride,' says the peacock.

Mistress, that you know.

Act IV scene 3





13. A of E is happy to see D of E appear, and asks him for the bail money. But D of E said the money was spent on the rope that he had sent him for earlier to whip the people that locked him out of his house. He is not pleased to see it now, and calls D of E an ass.

D of E: I am an ass indeed. You may prove it by my long ears. I have served him from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands for my service but blows. When I am cold, he heats me with beating; when I am warm, he cools me with beating; I am waked with it when I sleep, raised with it when I sit, driven out of doors with it when I go from home, welcomed home with it when I return.

Act IV scene 4

14. Adriana and Luciana arrive with the Courtesan and Pinch (a "putative ecclesiastic"), who confirms that A of E is possessed by the devil, and begins to try to exercise him. This, coupled with Adriana's insistence that she dined with him the prior night when he knows he was locked out, drives A of E into a frenzy, and he and D of E are bound together (with the rope), and sent to house arrest.

Adriana: O, bind him, bind him, let him not come near me!

Pinch: More company! The fiend is strong within him.

Luciana: Ay me, poor man, how pale and wan he looks.

A of E: What, will you murder me? Thou, jailer, thou, I am thy prisoner; wilt thou suffer them to make a rescue?

Act IV scene 4



15. Just after the Ephesian twins are sent away, A of S and D of S appear with swords. Of course the assembled party believes them to be their twins, who must have somehow escaped confinement. They all flee, and the Syracusians once again plan to leave Ephesus.

Luciana: God, for they mercy, they are loose again!  
Adriana: And come with naked swords. Let's call more help to have them bound again.

Officer: Away, they'll kill us!

A of S: I see these witches are afraid of swords.

Act IV scene 4







16. Angelo spots A of S wearing the chain and accuses him again of stealing. Then Adriana shows up, and the Syracusians flee to a nearby convent. When Adriana calls for them to be bound and brought back to her house, the Abbess who lives there refuses to let them in.

Adriana: Good people, enter, and lay hold on him.

Abbess: No. Not a creature enters my house.

❖ Adriana: Then let your servants bring my husband forth.

Abbess: Neither. He took this place for sanctuary, and it shall privilege him from your hands till I have brought him to his wits again, or lose my labour in assaying it.

Act V scene 1

17. Duke Solinus arrives on the scene with Egeon and the executioner. Adriana tries to explain the situation, and asks the Duke to force the Abbess to turn “her husband” and his man over. The Duke, doubtful of the Abbess’ role in all this, calls for the Abbess to come out and explain.



Duke (to Adriana): Long since thy husband served me in my wars and I to thee engaged a prince’s word, when thou didst make him master of they bed, to do him all the grace and good I could. Go, some of you, knock at the abbey gate, and bid the Lady Abbess come to me. I will determine this before I stir.

Act V scene 1



18. A messenger arrives and says the Ephesian twins have escaped, and the two quickly arrive, demanding justice for their captivity. Adriana is confused, since she believed they were locked in the abbey. As everyone tries to explain what happened. The Duke believes everybody to be crazy.

Duke: (To Adriana): You say he dined at home. The goldsmith here denies that saying. (To D of E) Sirrah, what say you?

❖ D of E: He dined with her there (gesturing to the Courtesan) at the Porpentine.

Courtesan: He did, and from my finger snatch’d that ring.

A of E: ‘Tis true, my liege, this ring I had of her.

Duke: Saw’st thou him enter at the abbey here?

Courtesan: As sure, my liege, as I do see your grace.

Duke: Why this is strange. Go call the Abbess hither. I think you are all mated or stark mad.

Act V scene 1





19. Egeon, meanwhile, doesn't understand why his son and Dromio don't recognize him, and thinks they're just pretending not to know him due to his imprisonment and impending execution.

A of E: I never saw my father in my life.

Egeon: But seven years since, in Syracuse, boy, thou know'st we parted. But perhaps, my son, thou sham'st to acknowledge me in misery.

Act V scene 1

20. When the Abbess appears with the Syracusan twins, she recognizes Egeon as her husband and reveals that she is Æmelia, who was swept overboard with the Ephesian twins long ago. She explains that the boys were stolen from her by fishermen and she became an Abbess.

Abbess: by men of Epidamnum he and I and the twin Dromio all were taken up; but by and by rude fishermen of Corinth by force took Dromio and my son from them, and me they left with those of Epidamnum. What then became of the I cannot tell; I to this fortune that you see me in.

Act V scene 1



21. Finally, Egeon's ransom is paid, Angelo gets the chain, the Courtesan gets her ring, the couples are united and the family is whole again. The play ends with the Dromios getting reacquainted.

D of E: Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother. I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth. Will you walk in to see their gossiping?

D of S: Not I, sir. You are my elder.

D of E: That's a question. How shall we try it?

D of S: We'll draw cuts for the senior. Till then, lead thou first.

D of E: Nay then, thus: we came into the world like brother and brother. And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.

Act V scene 1



# Exercises & Activities

APT education exercises are designed as follow-ups and introductions to the themes and ideas of the play. Character introductions and plot summaries can be found easily on sites such as The Folger Theatre, The RSC, The Restored Globe, The Utah and Oregon Shakespeare Festivals, and dozens of others. Rather than teaching the play specifically (characters and plot), APT Education looks to craft experiences (physical and verbal) that help facilitate a classroom's exploration of the ideas within the play. We welcome your feedback as we continue to explore what APT has to offer and how we can best support our educators.

## Double Take

That's impossible. No one saw the difference? They even have different hats!

You'd think people would realize when the man they've been talking to is switched with a completely different person - but you'd think wrong. Take a look at this clip from National Geographic's Brain Games: <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/brain-games/videos/the-switcheroo/>.

Do we really see the people in front of us? Or, do we have an idea of them and refer to that?

## A False Burden Withal

The Innocence Project helps legally exonerate people who have been wrongfully convicted. The average time served for the 1,625 exonerated individuals in the registry is more than nine years. Last year, three innocent murder defendants in Cleveland were exonerated 39 years after they were convicted — they spent their entire adult lives in prison. If a system of checks and double checks, with lawyers, judges, and official observers can make such serious mistakes, how often does it happen at school?

-my wife,  
That hath abused and dishonour'd me  
Even in the strength and height of injury!  
Beyond imagination is the wrong  
That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.  
I never came within these abbey-walls,  
Nor ever didst thou draw thy sword on me:  
I never saw the chain, so help me Heaven!  
And this is false you burden me withal.

People do dumb things all the time. People get in trouble all the time. But what happens when the trouble you're in doesn't stem from you? When it really wasn't your fault?

What happens when someone's reputation has been manipulated? A comment, a picture, a post- all could be made in your name. How much control do people have over their reputations? In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare calls reputation a bubble. Do you find this to be true with your peers? Is it true of professional athletes, TV and movie stars, singers?



## Like A Drop Of Water

In a nutshell, this exercise “stepladders” the importance and effectiveness of similes. Beginning with an idea we, step by step, explore different and more complex ways of communicating. After, we compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of each rung along the way.

1. Break into small groups.
2. Give the class a simple idea. Express this idea as simply as possible- the barest essential. (Example of a simple idea: “Where?”). This can be merely spoken and remembered or written on scrap or written more formally on a page.
3. Next, expand the idea as simply as possible. (Example of a simple sentence, “I can’t find my brother.”)
4. Record or remember this rung. Now expand the simple sentence into lengthy prose- avoid “purpling” the prose. (Example of substantial prose, “This is impossible. I’ve looked everywhere I can think of. I feel like giving up. This is impossible.”)
5. Again, record or remember the rung. Next model a simile (or metaphor) and apply it to the idea. (Example simile, “I feel like a blade of grass on a soccer field looking for another blade of grass. The more I twist and turn to look around the more impossible it seems. The field’s too big and I just keep getting trampled.” Or “I’m like a striped M&M in a swimming pool of brown M&Ms looking for the one M&M that was misprinted W&W.”)
6. Stress key words (i.e. impossible) to help flesh out the simile.
7. Once each group is satisfied with their creation, have them share theirs with another group in the class. Ask for one or two fun similes from the class. Now go back and look at the information and understanding that can be found on each “rung” of the ladder they just created. What are the benefits and drawbacks of each rung? In what situation is a particular rung more desirable than another and why?

## The Pitfalls of Miscommunication

Most tragedies in western literature could be avoided with just a little more effective communication. Using the “Most Common Barriers to Effective Communication” list in the articles below, explore *The Comedy of Errors* and identify the scene- the line- where confusion could have been avoided or even the play ended if only the characters had listened and spoken more effectively. Once you’ve identified the problem, rewrite the dialogue so that the characters are listening and speaking effectively. How does effective communication change the comedy of the play? How many comedies or tragedies (in film, television, or literature) depend upon miscommunication to drive their story? Which films or stories can you completely ruin by adding more effective communication?

How the Fall of the Berlin Wall Really Happened

By MARY ELISE SAROTTE

NOV. 6, 2014

“...Mikhail S. Gorbachev who had opened the door to these events. In his four years in power, he had introduced a series of social and political reforms across Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe — but to enhance his Communist Party’s control, not end it.

These reforms put the hard-line dictators in East Germany in a bind. They felt they had to make some sort of concession, too. Politburo members in East Berlin decided to make minor changes to the state’s draconian travel rules — but to retain their power to deny travel permission on a whim.

The announcement of this pseudo-reform, at an international news conference televised on the night of Nov. 9, was botched. The bumbling Politburo member running the conference, Günter Schabowski, read the news release for the first time on air. Much of his reading was garbled, but a few phrases popped out: that trips abroad

would be “possible for every citizen,” starting “right away, immediately.” Shorn of their context, these phrases mistakenly gave journalists and TV viewers the impression that the wall was open. But his error need not have been fatal. Politburo members making mistakes was nothing new, and the bottom line had not changed: The regime’s armed sentries still stood at the wall, with orders to keep the gates closed.

What had changed was the self-assurance of the people. By autumn 1989, the protest movement had gained sufficient confidence to take advantage of this incompetence...As dissident, Marianne Birthler, puts it, Westerners believe that “it was the opening of the wall that brought us our freedom.” Rather, “it was the other way around. First we fought for our freedom; and then, because of that, the wall fell.”...when tens of thousands of Berliners headed toward the wall in the minutes after the news conference, the entire system cracked.

When one of the regime’s most loyal subordinates, a Stasi officer named Harald Jäger who was working the Nov. 9 night shift at a crucial checkpoint in the Berlin Wall, repeatedly phoned his superiors with accurate reports of swelling crowds, they did not trust or believe him. They called him a delusional coward. Insulted, furious and frightened, he decided to let the crowds out, starting a chain reaction that swept across all of the checkpoints that night.”

### **Miscommunication is a major theme in literature.**

From EffectiveCommunicationAdvice.com

“Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens we have to keep going back and beginning all over again.” – André Gide (French author and winner of the Nobel Prize in literature in 1947).

Sometimes, somewhere between the moment someone speaks and another responds, communication becomes broken. We’ve all been there. A conversation, or even an online chat or string of mobile texts, leads to a terrible misunderstanding and all of a sudden all hopes for reaching an agreement go right out the window. What happened?

### **Most Common Barriers to Effective Communication:**

1. Physical Barriers: this has to do with poor or outdated equipment used during communications, background noise, poor lighting, temperatures that are too hot or too cold.
2. Attitudes: emotions like anger or sadness can taint objectivity. Also being extremely nervous, having a personal agenda or “needing to be right no matter what” can make communications less than effective. This is also known as “Emotional Noise”.
3. Language: this can seem like an easy one, but even people speaking the same language can have difficulty understanding each other if they are from different generations or from different regions of the same country. Slang, professional jargon and regional colloquialisms can even hurt communicators with the best intentions.
4. Physiological Barriers: ill health, poor eyesight or hearing difficulties, pain.
5. Problems with Structure Design: companies or institutions can have organization structures that are not clear, which can make communications difficult. Also to blame for faulty communications are bad information systems, and lack of supervision or training of the people involved.
6. Cultural Noise: people sometimes make stereotypical assumptions about others based on their cultural background.
7. Lack of Common Experience: it’s a great idea to use examples or stories to explain a point that is being discussed. However, if the speaker and the audience cannot relate to these examples because they do not have the same knowledge or have not shared the same experiences then this tool will be ineffective.
8. Ambiguity and Abstractions Overuse: leaving things half-said, using too many generalizations, proverbs or sayings, can all lead to communications that are not clear and that can lend themselves to misinterpretations.
9. Information Overload: it takes time to process a lot of information and too many details can overwhelm and



distract the audience from the important topics. Keep it Simple, Sweetie.

10. Assumptions and Jumping to Conclusions: This can make someone reach a decision about something before listening to all the facts.