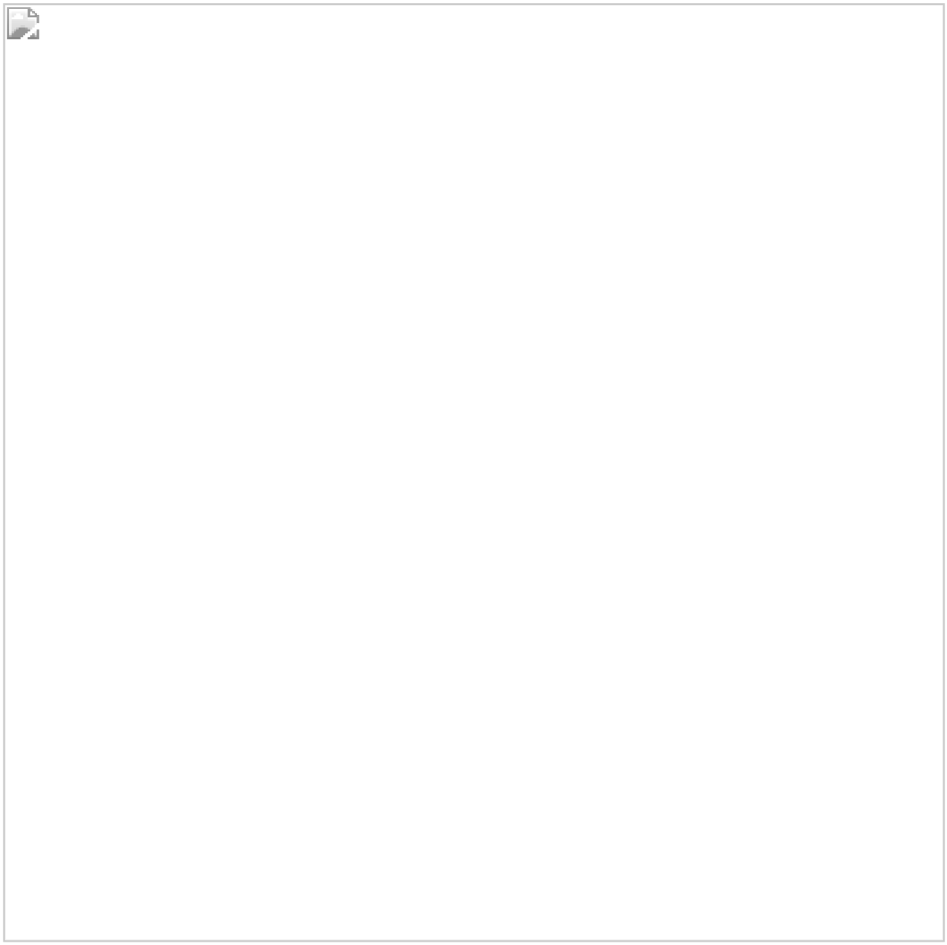
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Comedy of Errors

A Play by Shakespeare



In the old city of Ephesus, an old man named Egeon has been told that by the law of the city he will be put to death at sunset, unless someone pays a very large fine for him.

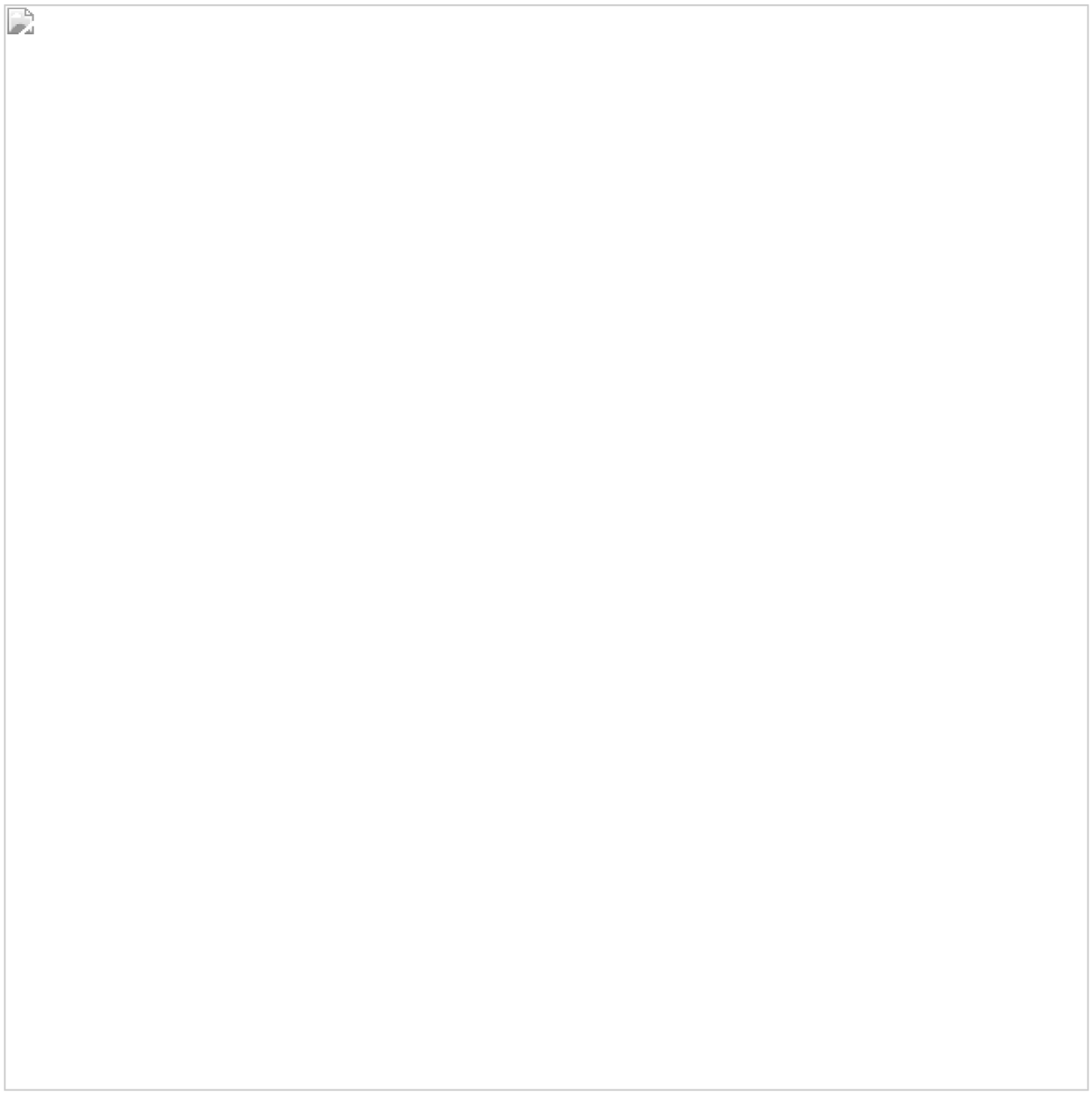
That is how the story starts. But on this one day, two pairs of twins who have never met are about to be mixed up all over town.

TALK ABOUT IT

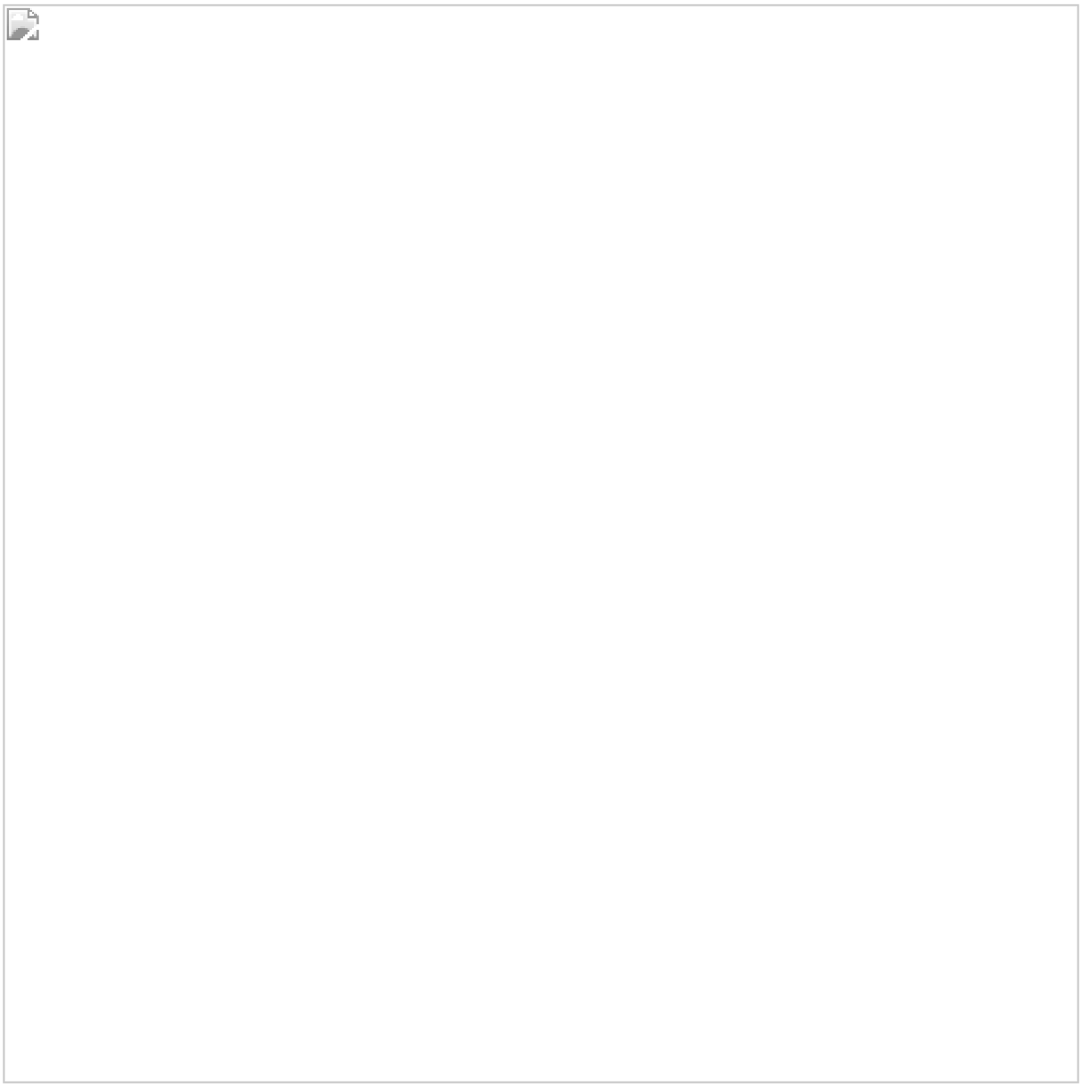
The sun is already moving toward sunset. What do you think could go wrong when two people who look exactly alike are in the same town?

This book belongs to _____

The Comedy of Errors · another picture



Egeon and the Duke



The play begins with Solinus, the Duke of Ephesus. Before him stands Egeon, an old merchant from Syracuse.

Ephesus and Syracuse were enemies. In each city, anyone from the other who came into its harbor would be put to death, unless he paid a fine of a thousand marks.

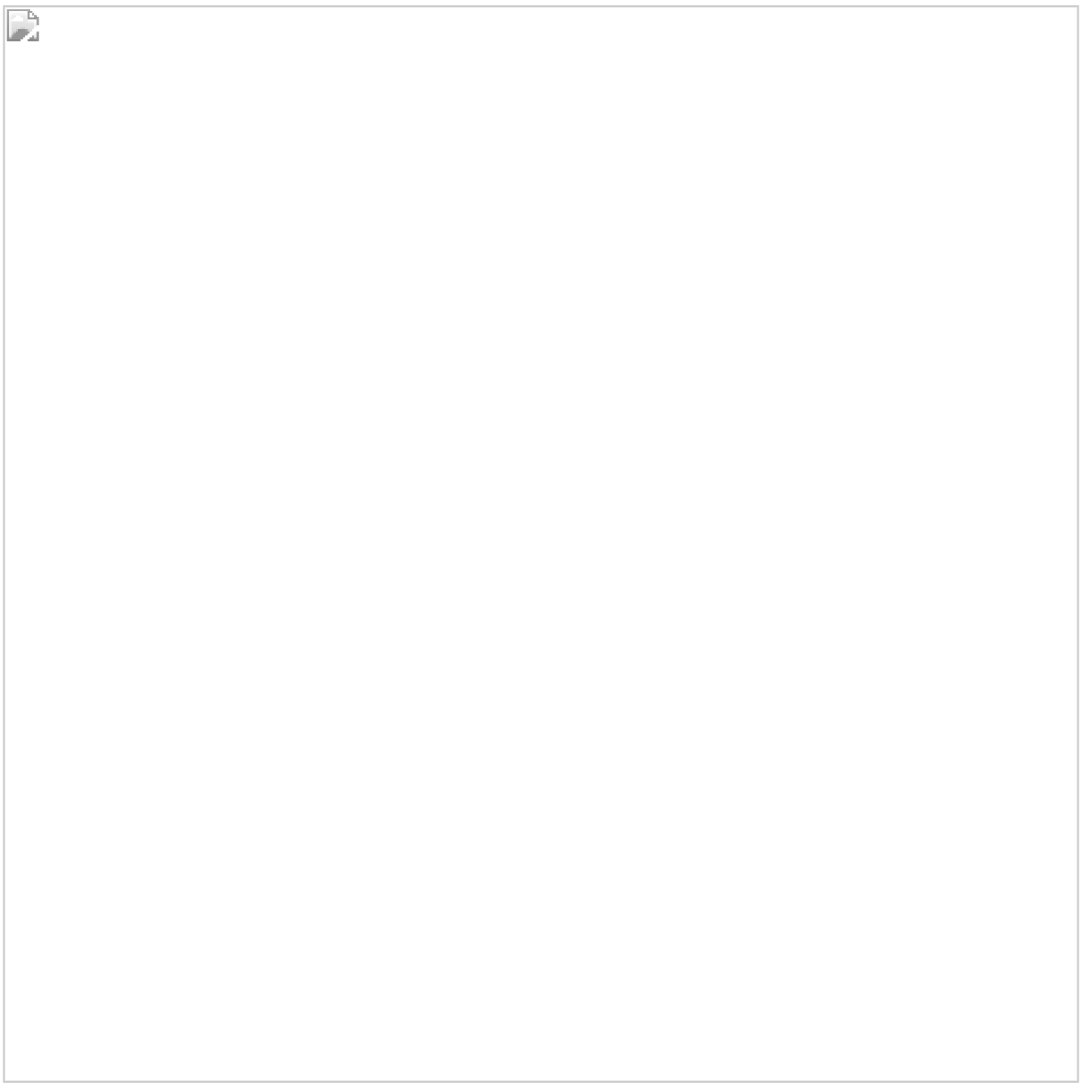
Everything Egeon owned was worth less than a hundred marks. “When your words are done, my woes end likewise with the evening sun,” he said.

The Duke did not want to be harsh, but he could not break the law. So he gave Egeon until sunset: “Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The Duke could not break the law, but he gave Egeon a day. What would you do with one day if you were Egeon?

Egeon and the Duke · another picture

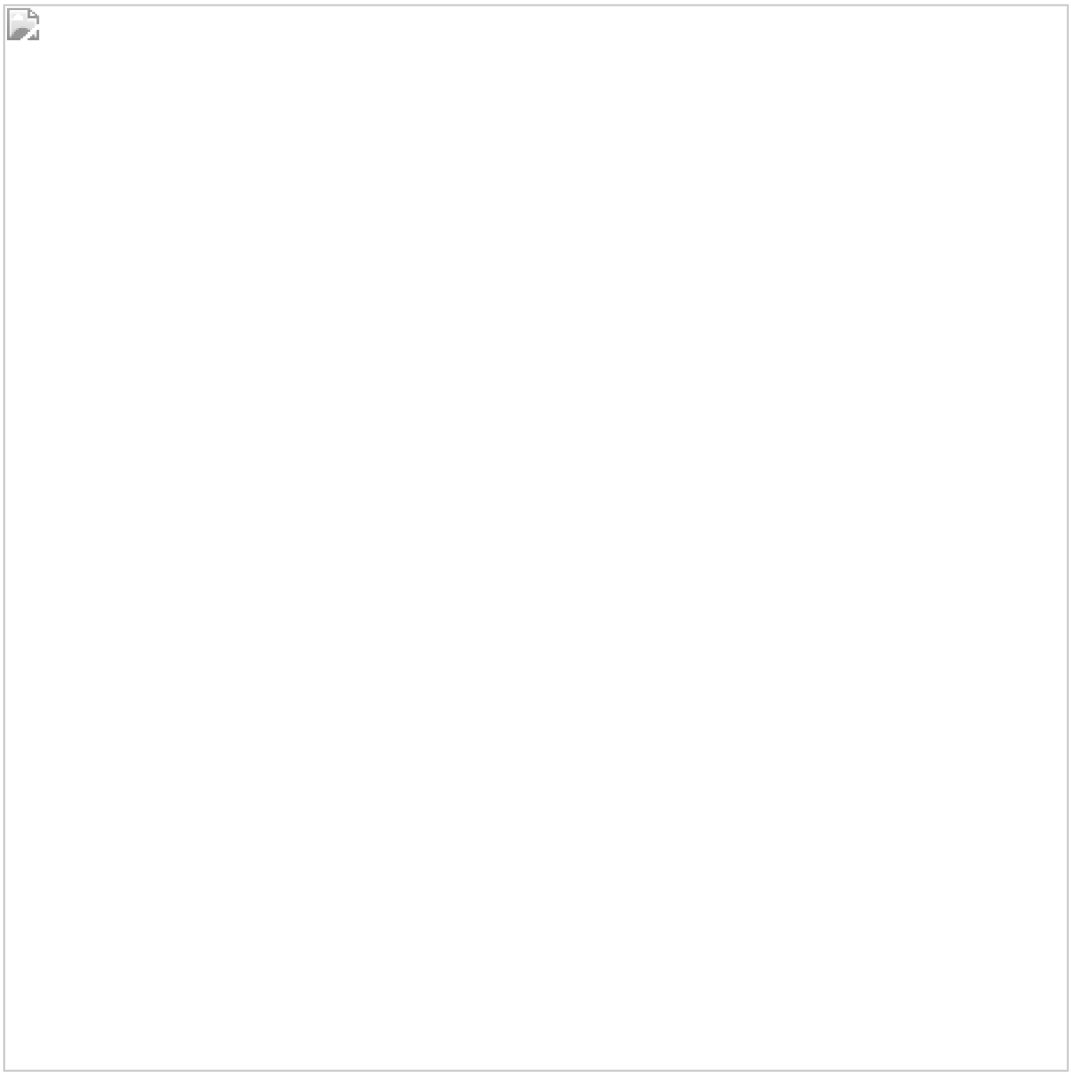


Think about it

1. How long did the Duke give Egeon to find the money?

- ○ Until sunset that day
- ○ A whole year
- ○ Until the next market day

Egeon's Story



Egeon told his story.

Long ago, his wife had twin boys, "the one so like the other as could not be distinguish'd but by names." Both were called Antipholus. Egeon also took in a poor woman's twin boys, born at the same inn, to serve his sons. Both were called Dromio.

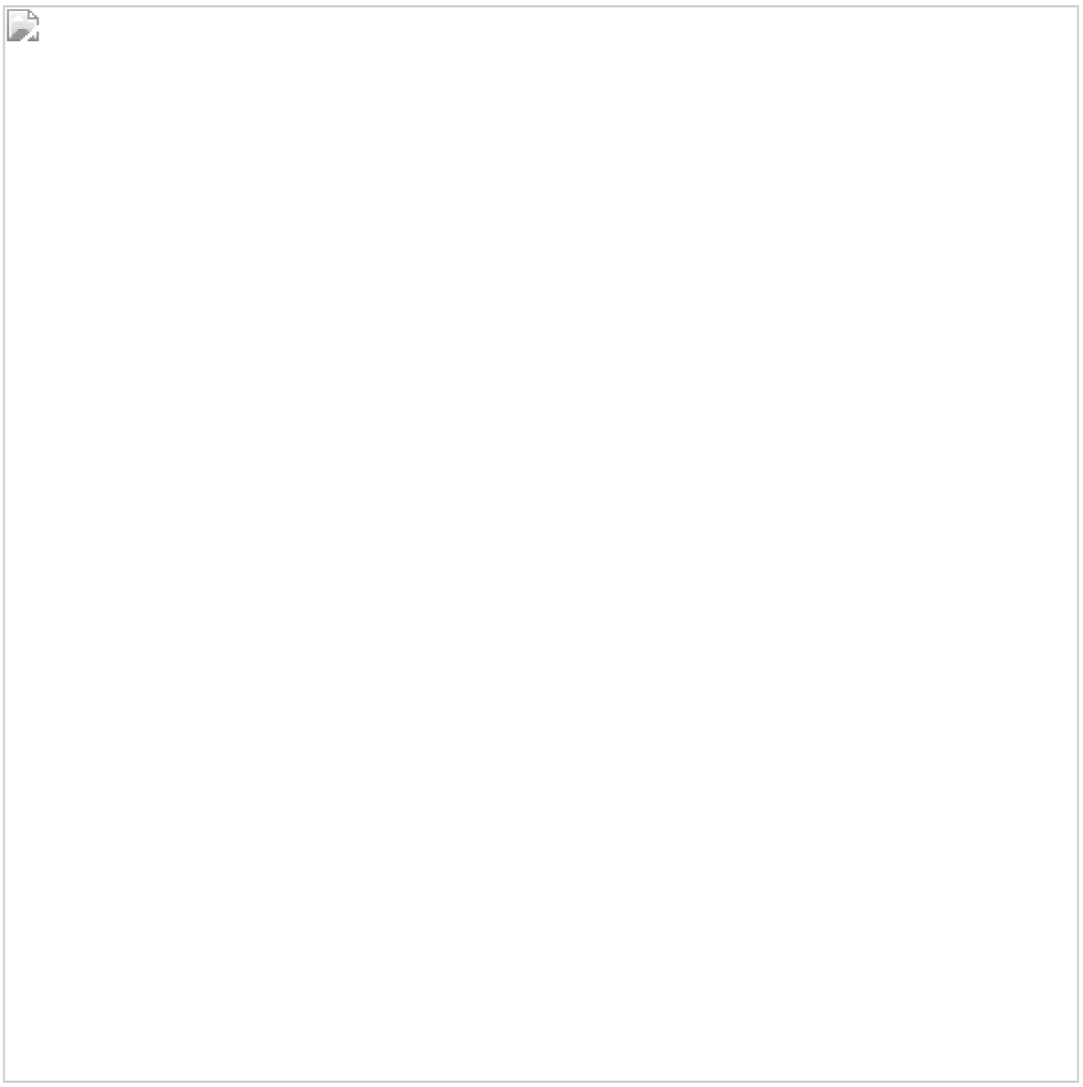
Sailing home in a storm, the ship hit "a mighty rock" and split in two. Egeon was carried off with one son and one Dromio, his wife with the others. They never met again.

Grown up, his youngest son set out with his Dromio to find his brother. Egeon searched for him five summers, and so came to Ephesus.

TALK ABOUT IT

Egeon looked for five summers. Why do you think someone keeps looking for so long?

Egeon's Story · another picture



Think about it

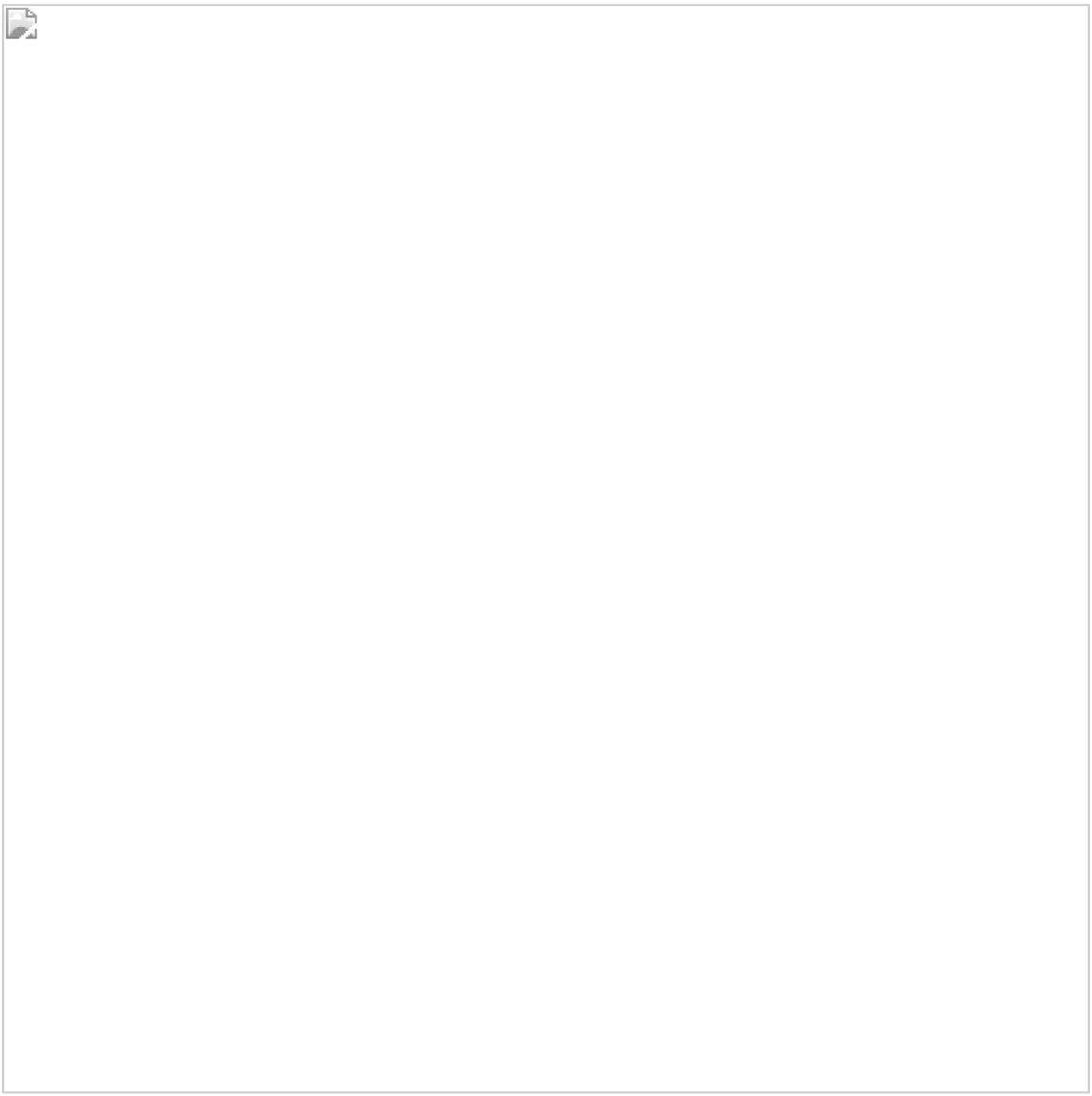
1. What happened to the ship?

- ○ It hit a mighty rock and split in two
- ○ It sailed home safely
- ○ It was taken by pirates

2. What were the two pairs of twins named?

- ○ Both boys Antipholus, both servants Dromio
- ○ Egeon and Emilia
- ○ Adriana and Luciana

Two Dromios



That morning, Egeon's son Antipholus of Syracuse walked into Ephesus with his servant, Dromio of Syracuse. He did not know his father was there.

He sent Dromio to the inn with their money. He was searching for a mother and a brother, he said, like "a drop of water that in the ocean seeks another drop."

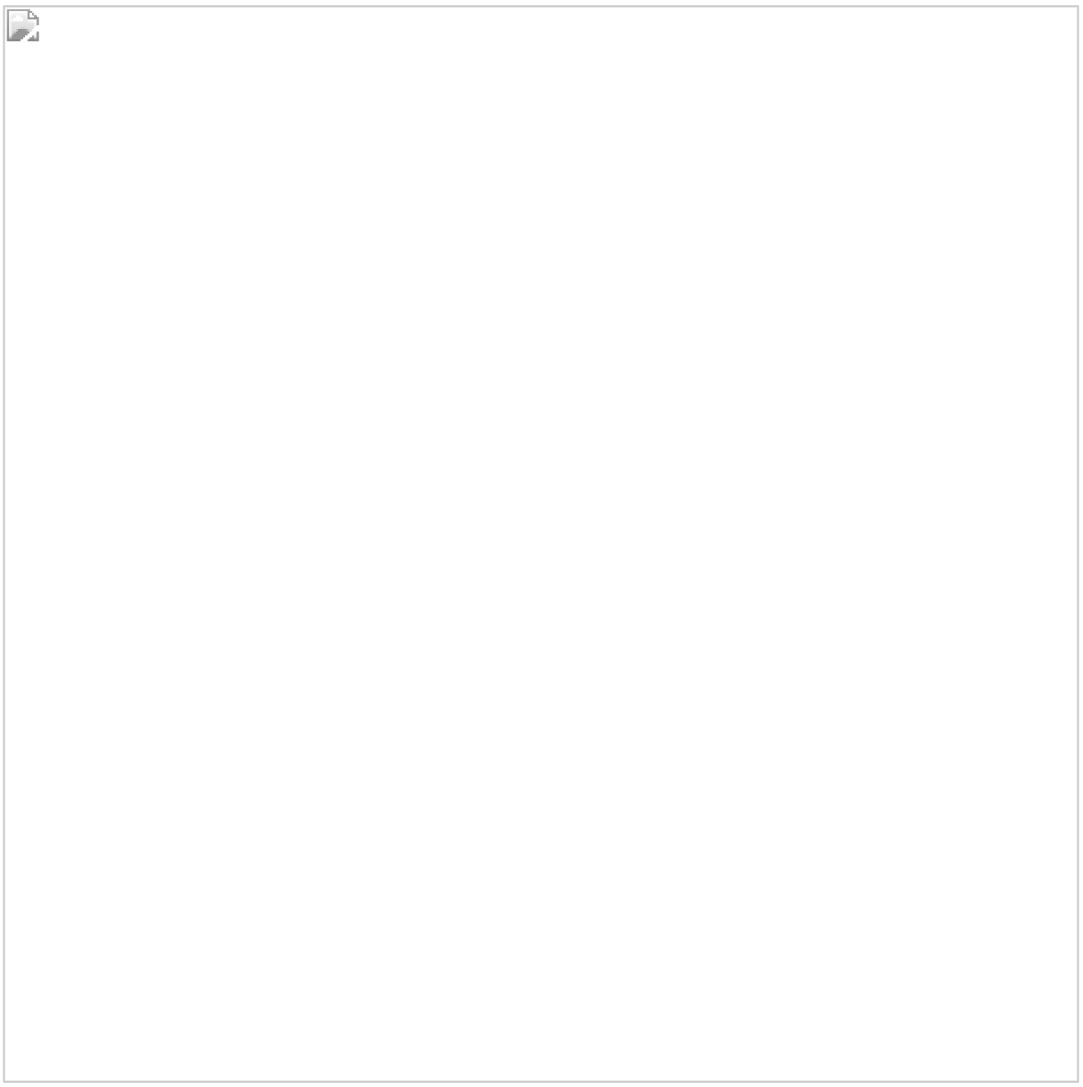
Soon a servant ran up, and Antipholus took him for his own Dromio. But it was Dromio of Ephesus, the other twin, calling his master home to dinner!

"Where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me?" asked Antipholus. Dromio knew of no gold, so Antipholus boxed his ears, and Dromio ran away.

TALK ABOUT IT

Antipholus thought he was talking to his own servant. What would you do if someone you knew seemed not to know what you meant?

Two Dromios · another picture

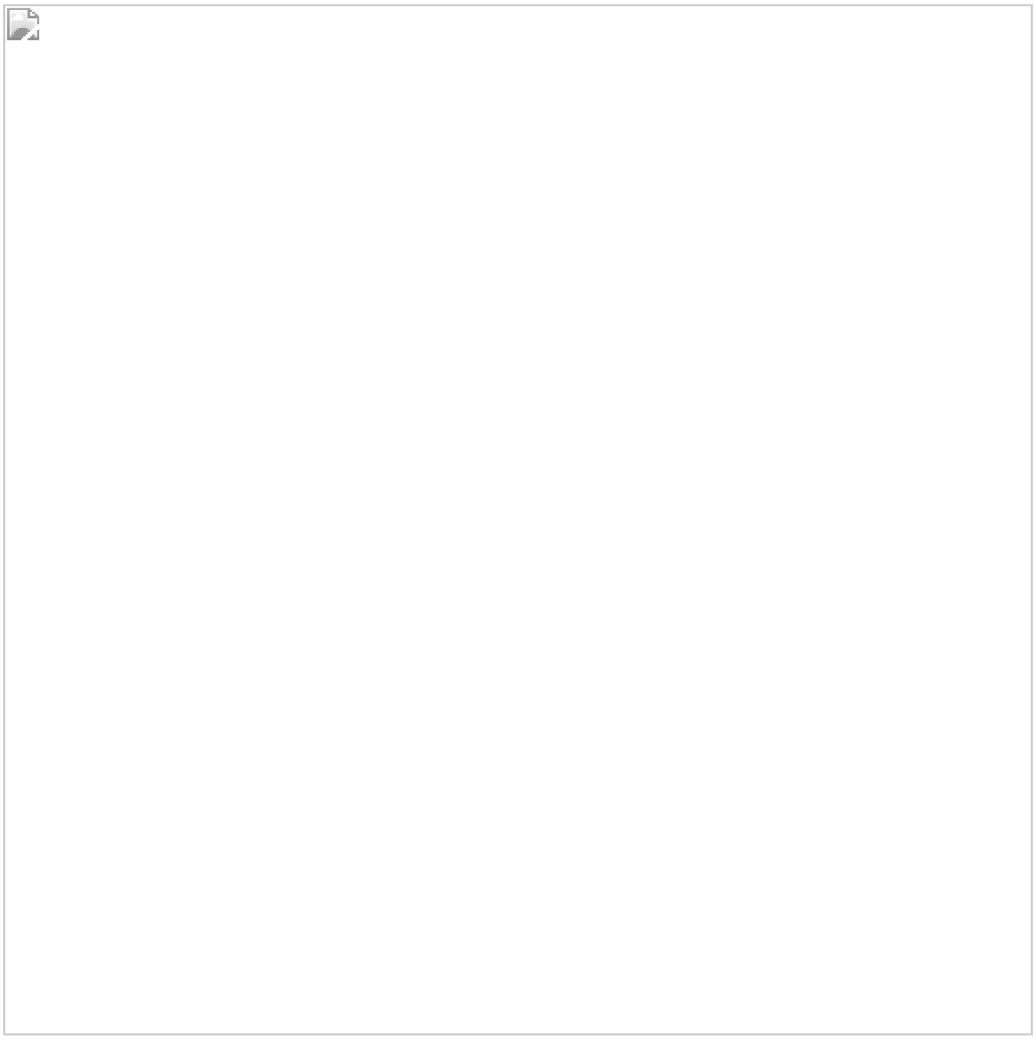


Think about it

1. Who did Antipholus of Syracuse think he was talking to?

- ○ His own servant, Dromio of Syracuse
- ○ The Duke
- ○ A merchant

Adriana Waits



Dromio of Ephesus hurried home to the Phoenix, the house of his master, Antipholus of Ephesus. There his mistress Adriana and her sister Luciana waited with dinner. Where was the husband?

“Nay, he’s at two hands with me, and that my two ears can witness,” said Dromio, rubbing his ears. His master had asked for a thousand marks, and said he knew “no house, no wife, no mistress.”

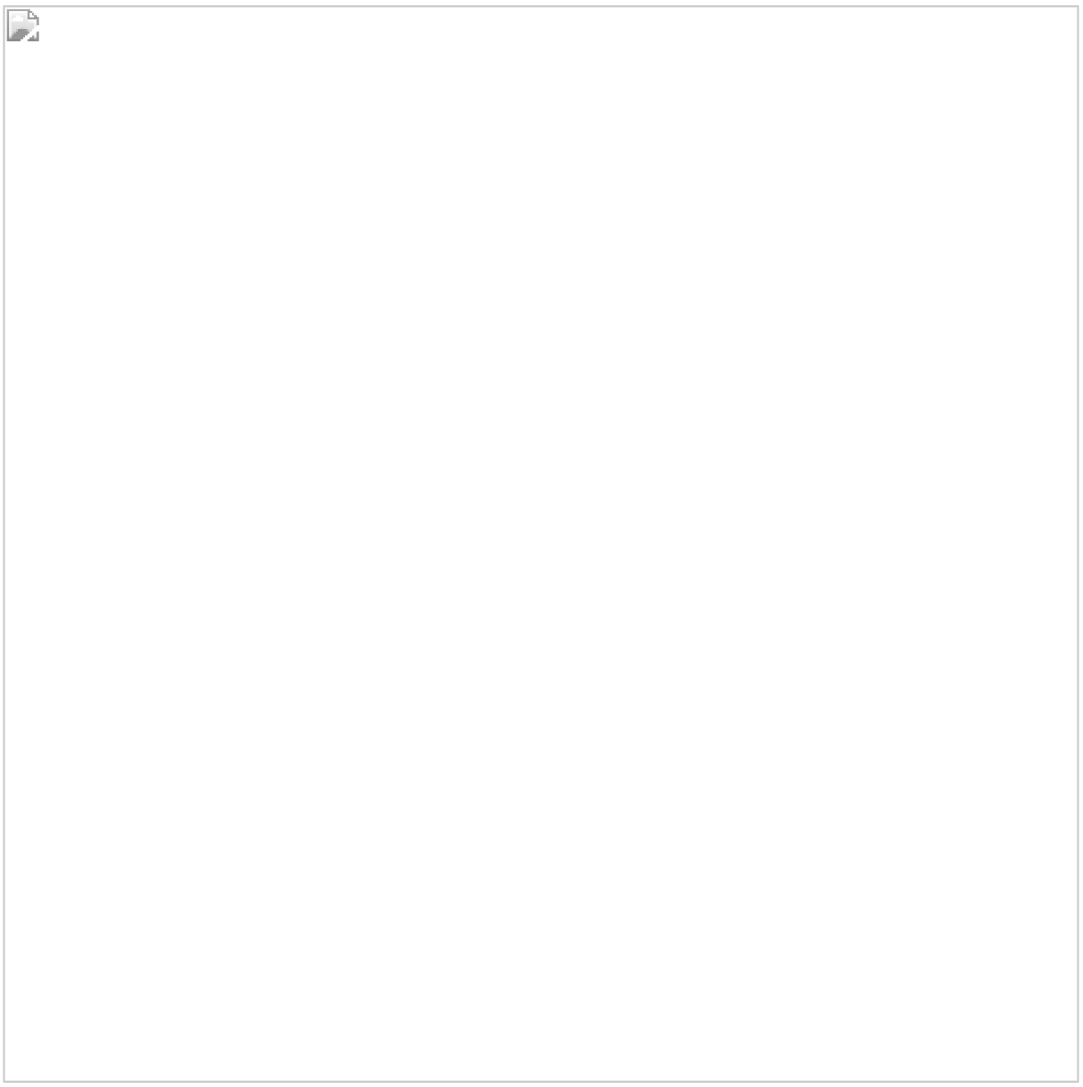
Her husband was often late. Luciana told her to be patient, and Adriana sent Dromio back to fetch him.

Dromio grumbled that they were batting him back and forth “like a football.” But he went.

TALK ABOUT IT

Adriana wanted her husband to come home. What could she say to him that would help him come?

Adriana Waits · another picture

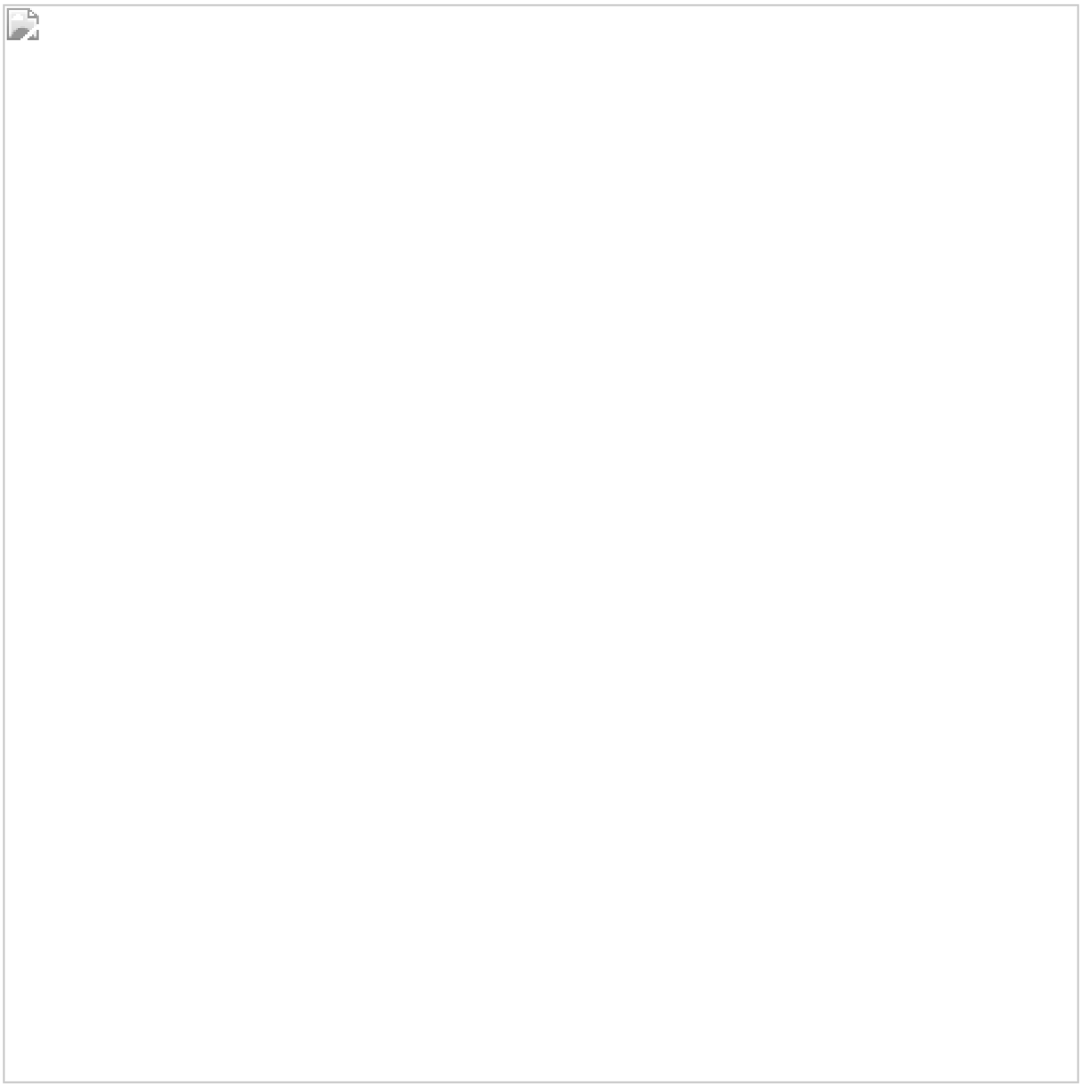


Think about it

1. Where were Adriana and Luciana waiting?

- ○ At the Phoenix, with dinner
- ○ At the Duke's palace
- ○ At the harbor

Dinner with the Wrong Husband



Along came Antipholus of Syracuse, and there were Adriana and Luciana. Adriana called him her husband and took him by the sleeve.

He had never seen her. “In Ephesus I am but two hours old,” he said. But she knew his name, Luciana called him brother, and they said his Dromio had called him to dinner. He had not!

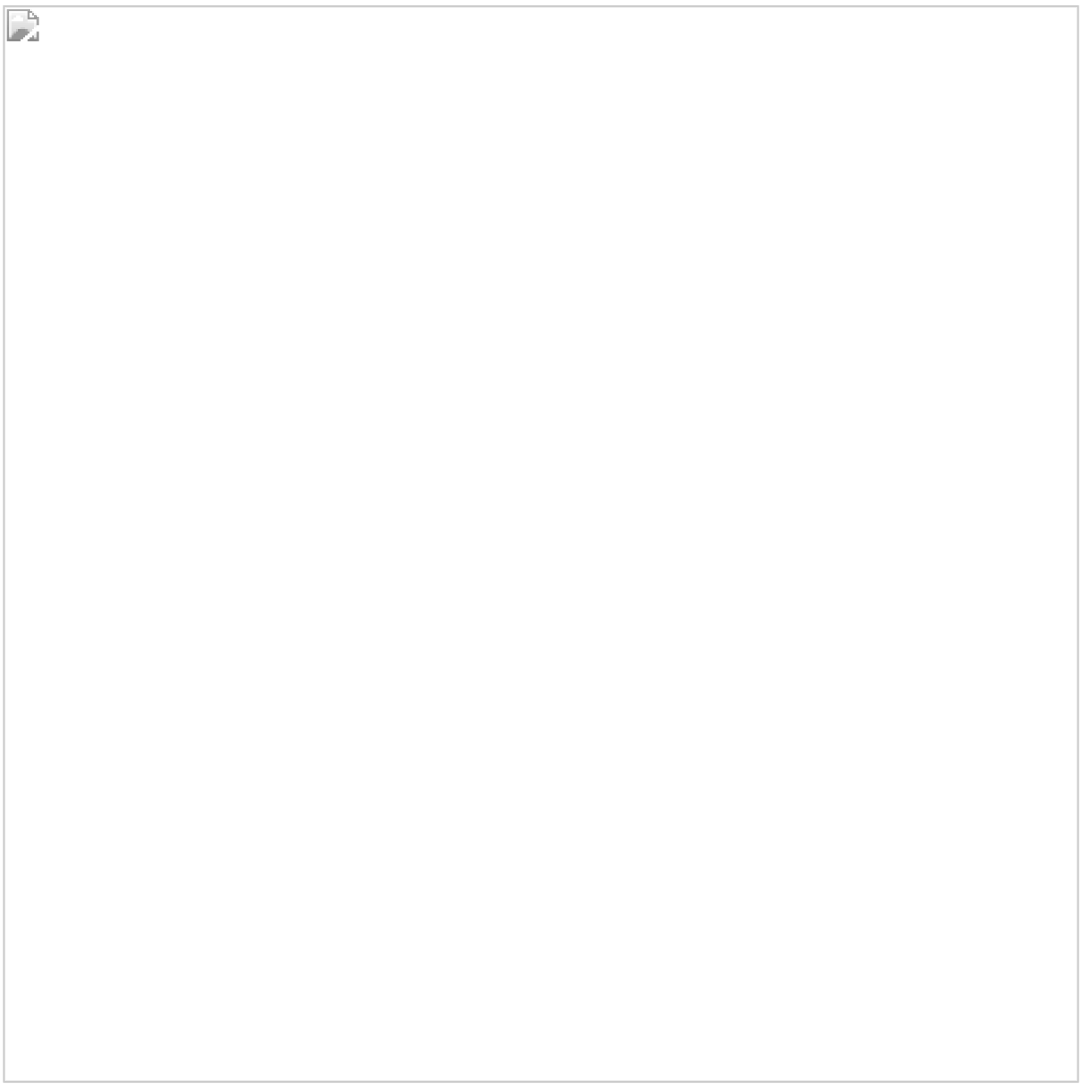
“What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?” he wondered. He went along. Dromio of Syracuse was sure: “This is the fairy land.”

Adriana took Antipholus in to dine, and told Dromio to guard the gate: “Dromio, play the porter well.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Antipholus did not understand, but he went along. What might you do if everyone called you by a name you knew was not yours?

Dinner with the Wrong Husband · another picture

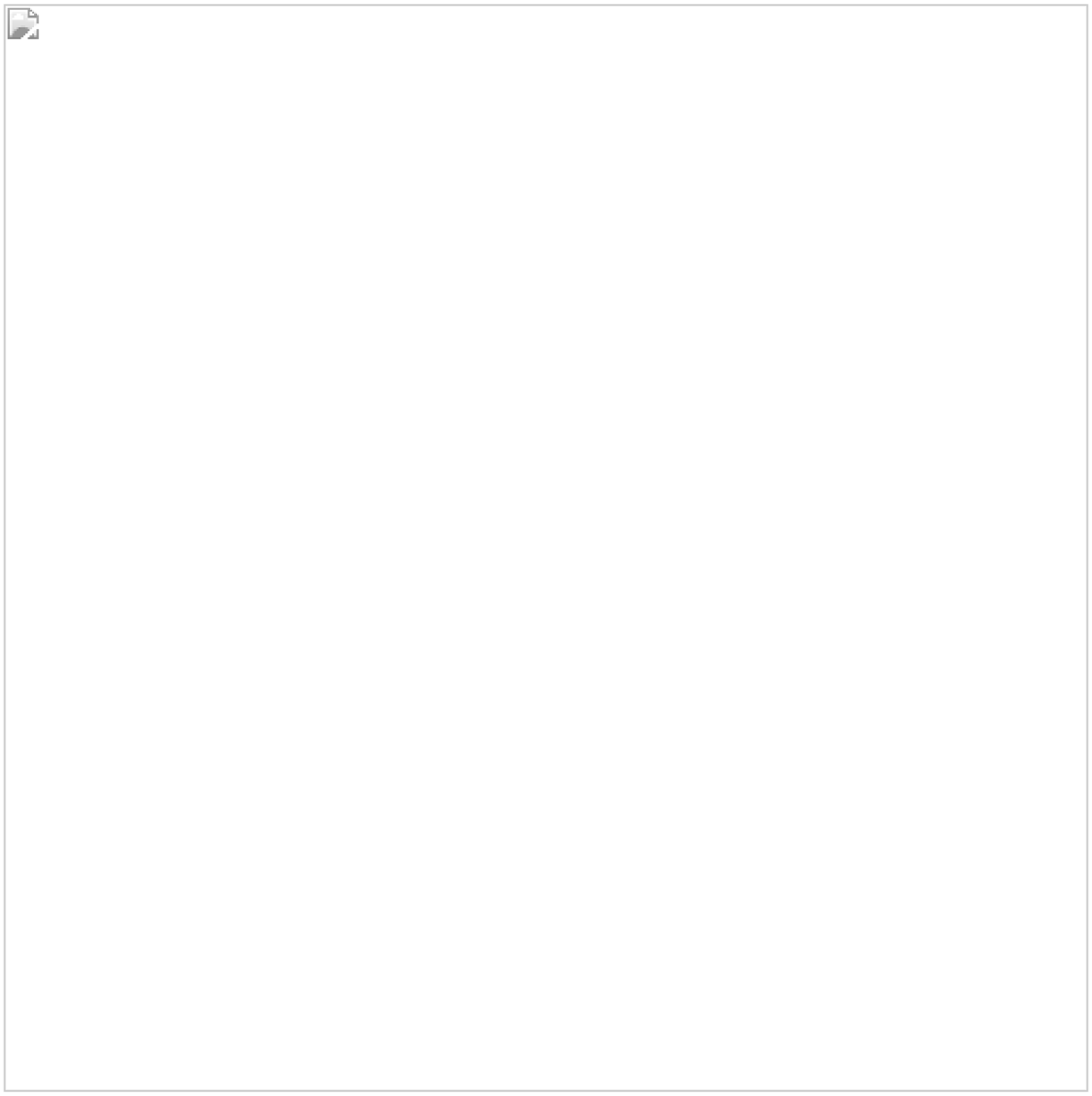


Think about it

1. What job did Adriana give Dromio of Syracuse?

- ○ To guard the gate
- ○ To cook dinner
- ○ To fetch the Duke

Locked Out



Now the real husband, Antipholus of Ephesus, came home with two friends, Angelo the goldsmith and Balthasar. The door was locked!

“Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicely, Gillian, Ginn!” called Dromio of Ephesus. But from inside, Dromio of Syracuse answered, guarding the gate. A Dromio on each side of the door, and neither knew it!

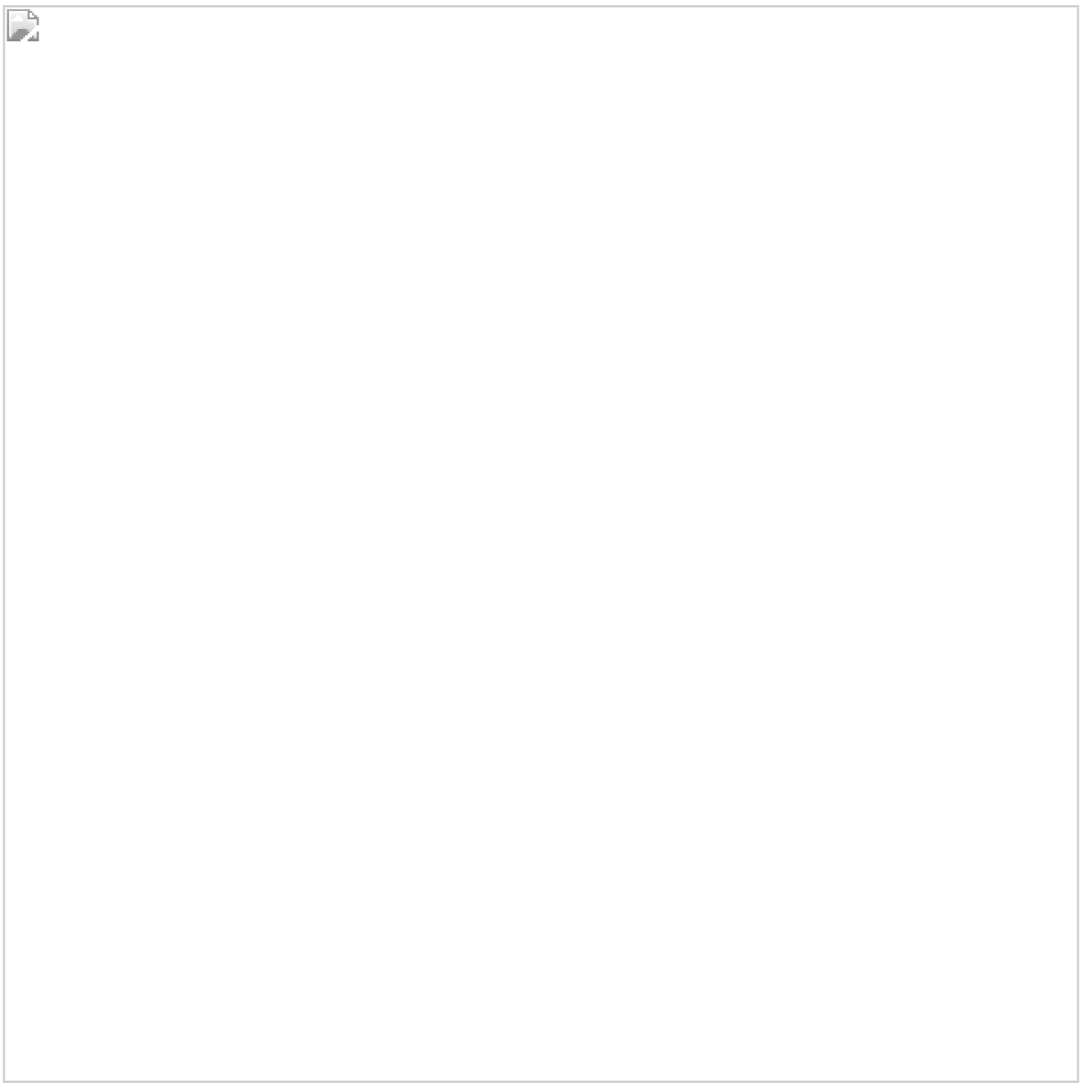
Even Adriana called that no one could come in. Antipholus wanted a crowbar to break the door down, but Balthasar said, “Have patience, sir.”

So he told Angelo to bring the gold chain he had ordered to another house, the Porpentine. He would give it to the lady there, to show how cross he was.

TALK ABOUT IT

There was a Dromio on each side of the door. Who was right, and who was wrong?

Locked Out · another picture

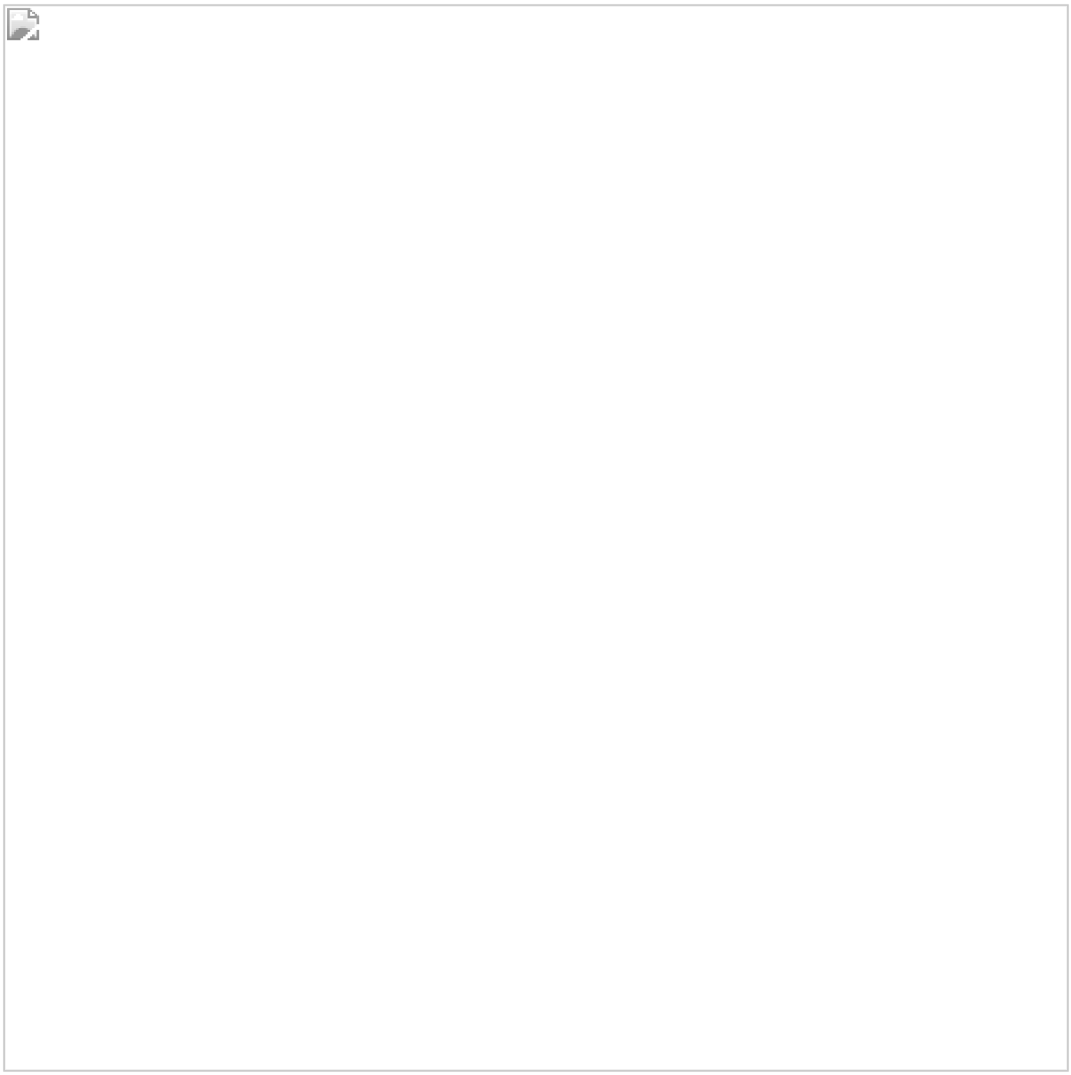


Think about it

1. Why would nobody let Antipholus of Ephesus in?

- The Dromio inside had been told to let no one in
- The house was empty
- The door was stuck

Am I Myself?



Inside, Luciana took Antipholus of Syracuse aside. “Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife,” she begged.

But he had never met Adriana. “Not mad, but mated; how, I do not know,” he said. He thought Luciana was wonderful, and told her so. Luciana hurried away, for she thought he was her sister’s husband.

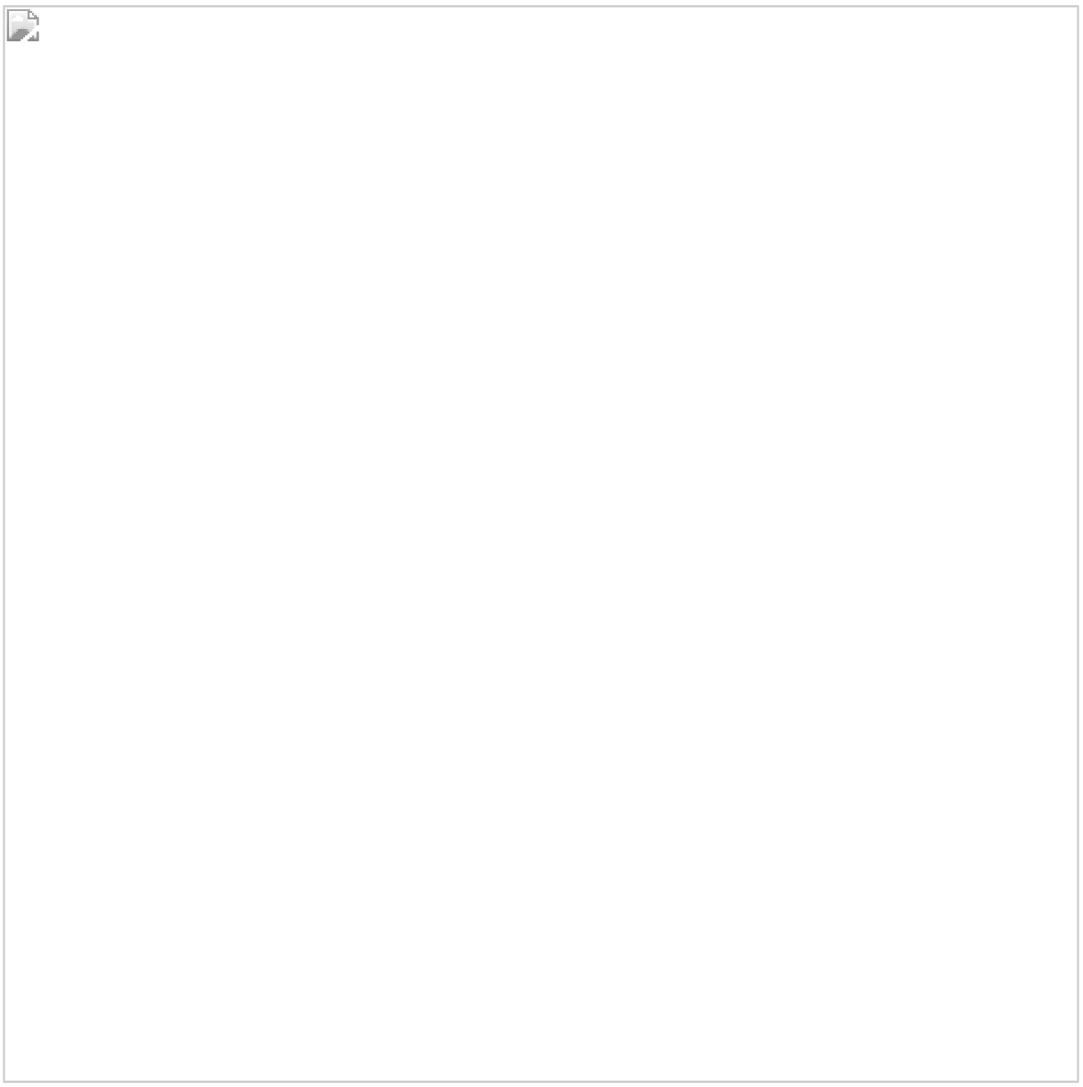
Then his Dromio ran in. “Do you know me, sir? Am I Dromio? Am I your man? Am I myself?” Nell the kitchen maid said he was her husband and chased him all round the house!

“I will not harbour in this town tonight,” said Antipholus, and sent Dromio to the harbor to find a ship.

TALK ABOUT IT

Dromio asked, “Am I myself?” What would help someone know who they are?

Am I Myself? · another picture

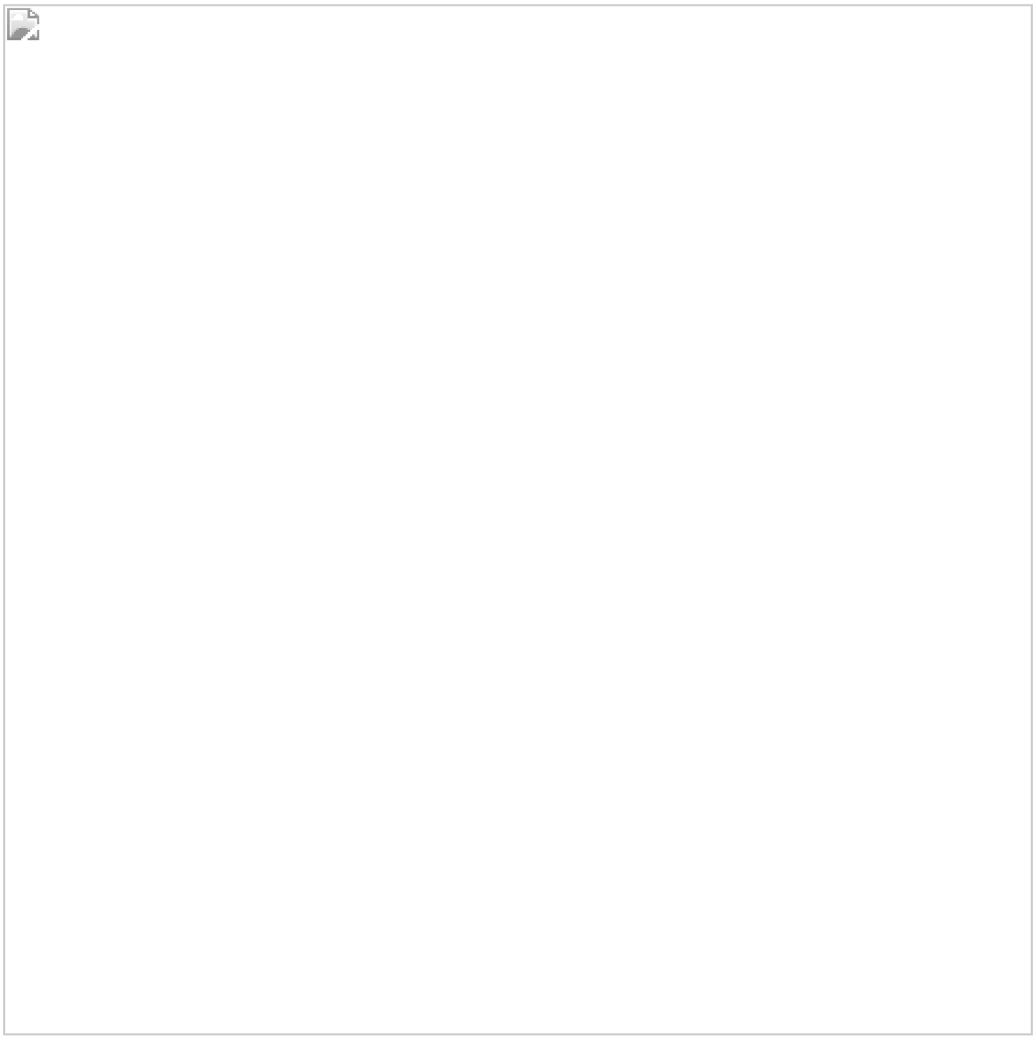


Think about it

1. What did Antipholus of Syracuse tell Dromio to do?

- ○ Find a ship to leave on
- ○ Go back to the dinner
- ○ Buy a gold chain

The Gold Chain



While Antipholus of Syracuse waited, Angelo put a gold chain in his hands. “I bespoke it not,” said Antipholus, but Angelo said he would come for payment at supper-time.

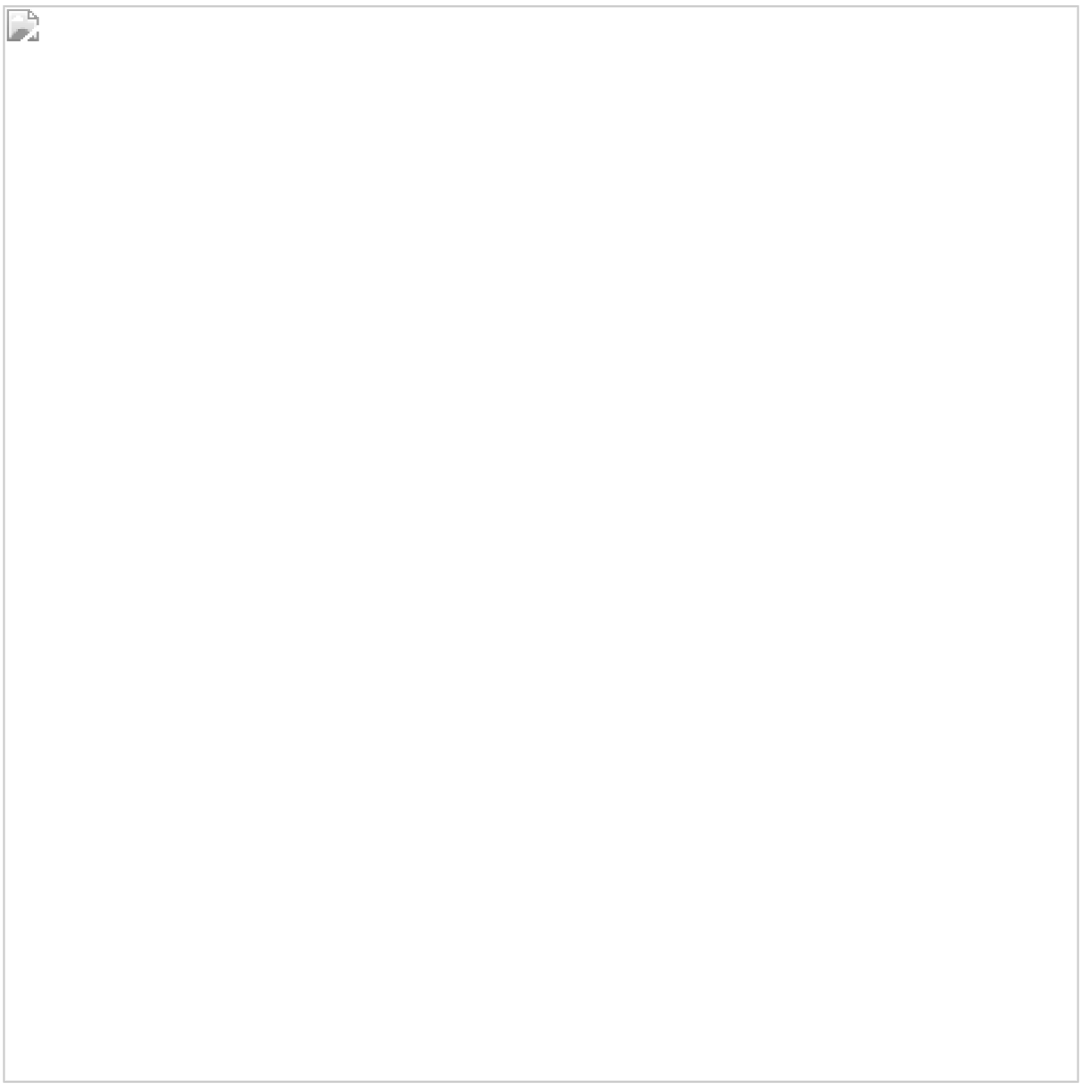
Later Angelo met the other Antipholus and asked to be paid. But that one had never been given any chain! Angelo needed the money, so he had Antipholus of Ephesus arrested.

Then Dromio of Syracuse came to say he had found a ship. “I sent thee for a rope,” said Antipholus of Ephesus. He had sent his own Dromio for one, to give his household a scare.

He sent Dromio to Adriana for the purse of gold in his desk.

TALK ABOUT IT

Angelo gave the chain to one Antipholus, and asked the other to pay. How did the mix-up make the trouble?

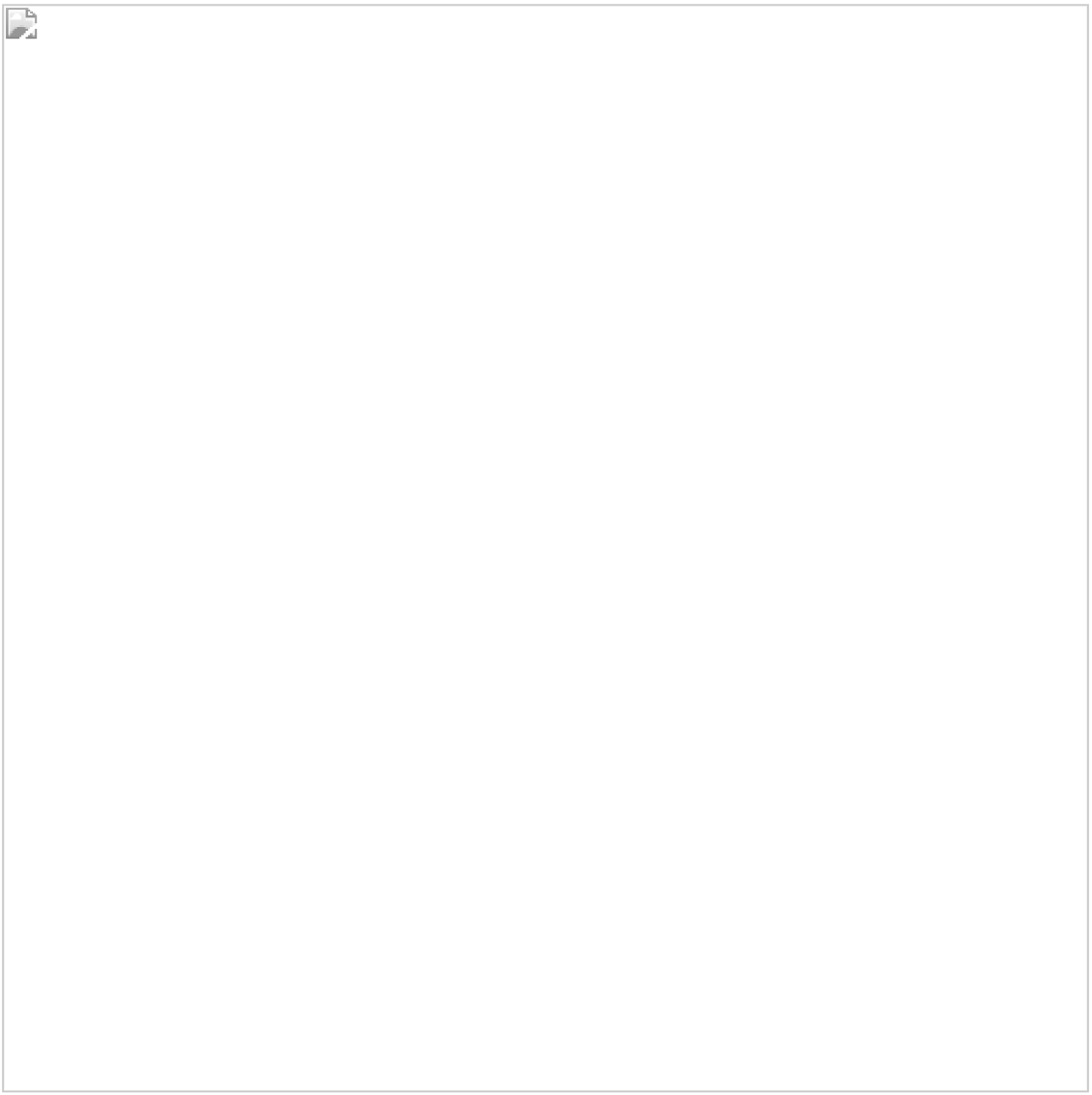


Think about it

1. Why was Antipholus of Ephesus arrested?

- ○ Angelo said he had not paid for the chain, but he never got it
- ○ He broke the door
- ○ He was late for dinner

A Rope and a Purse



Dromio of Syracuse ran to Adriana's, and Luciana fetched the purse. His master was arrested for a chain, he said. "A chain, a chain. Do you not hear it ring?"

But he gave it to the wrong master! He found Antipholus of Syracuse: "Master, here's the gold you sent me for." But this master had sent him for a ship. "Here we wander in illusions."

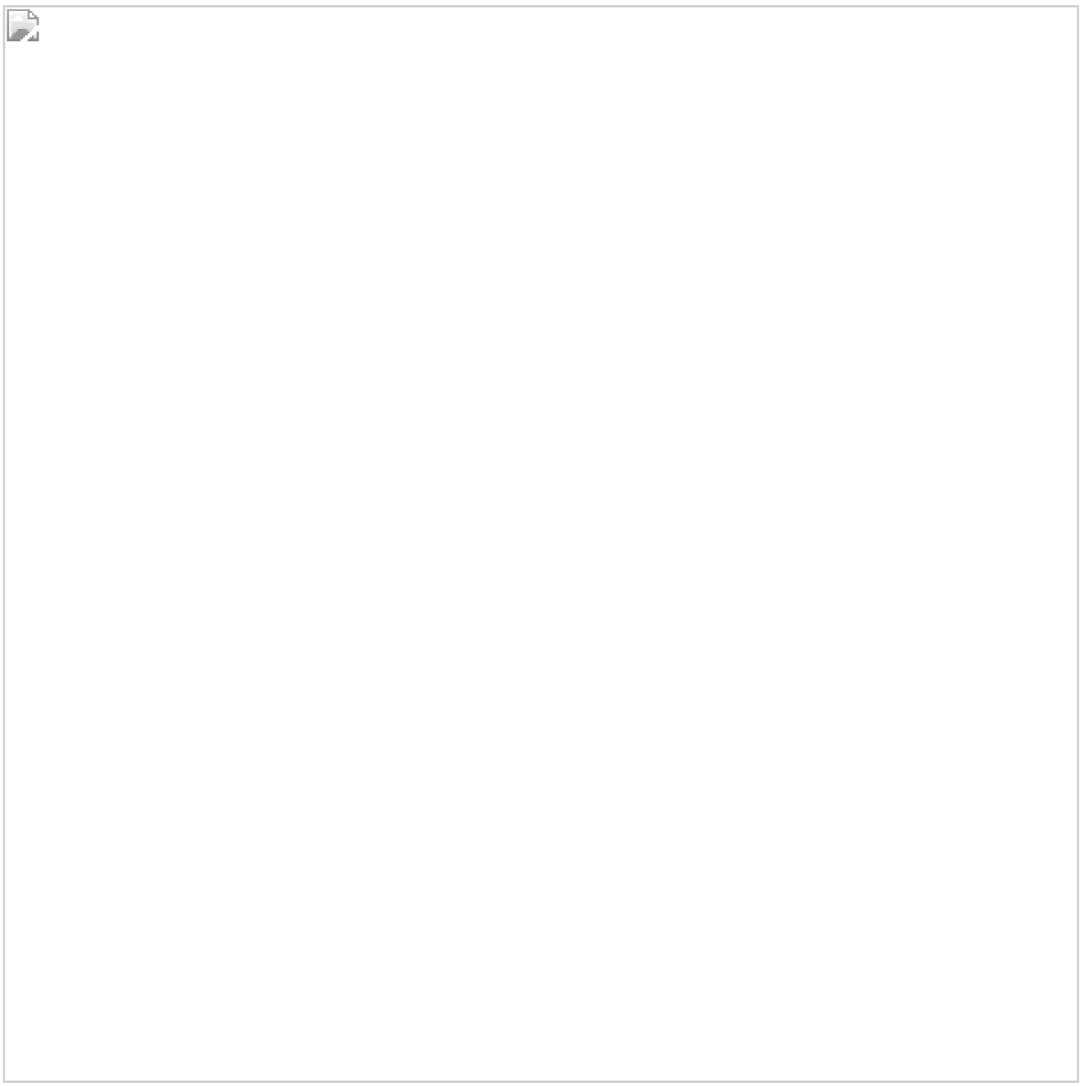
Meanwhile Dromio of Ephesus brought his master the rope, but no money: he had spent it on the rope! Antipholus of Ephesus boxed his ears all over again.

"I am an ass indeed; you may prove it by my long ears," said Dromio.

TALK ABOUT IT

The gold went to one Antipholus and the rope to the other. If you could stop the story here, what would you tell them?

A Rope and a Purse · another picture

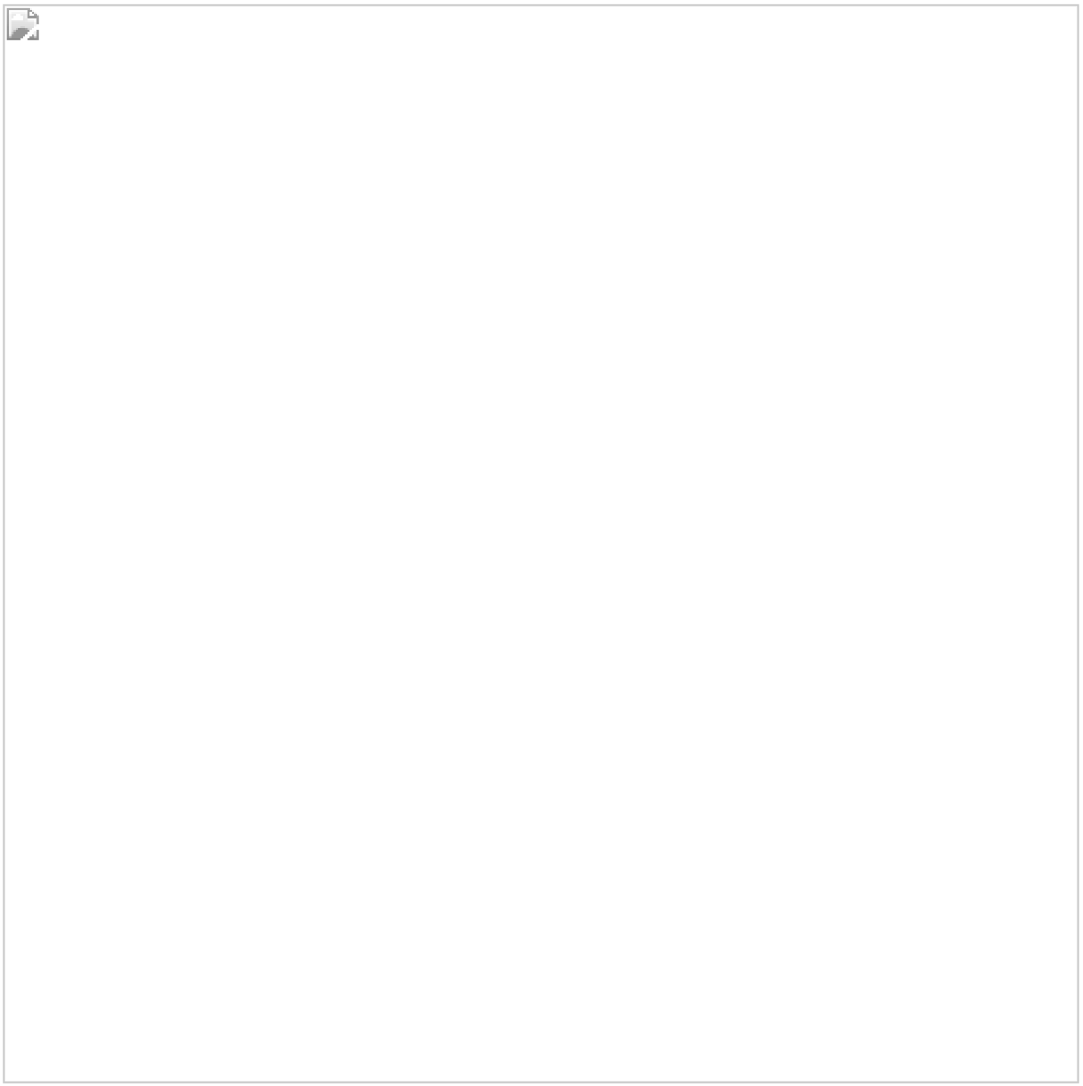


Think about it

1. Who got the purse of gold by mistake?

- ○ Antipholus of Syracuse
- ○ Antipholus of Ephesus
- ○ The Duke

Doctor Pinch and the Abbey



Then Adriana came with Doctor Pinch, a schoolmaster who said he could cure madness. Her husband was shouting about doors and chains, and they thought he had lost his wits.

“Peace, doting wizard, peace; I am not mad,” said Antipholus. But he and his Dromio were led off and shut in a dark room.

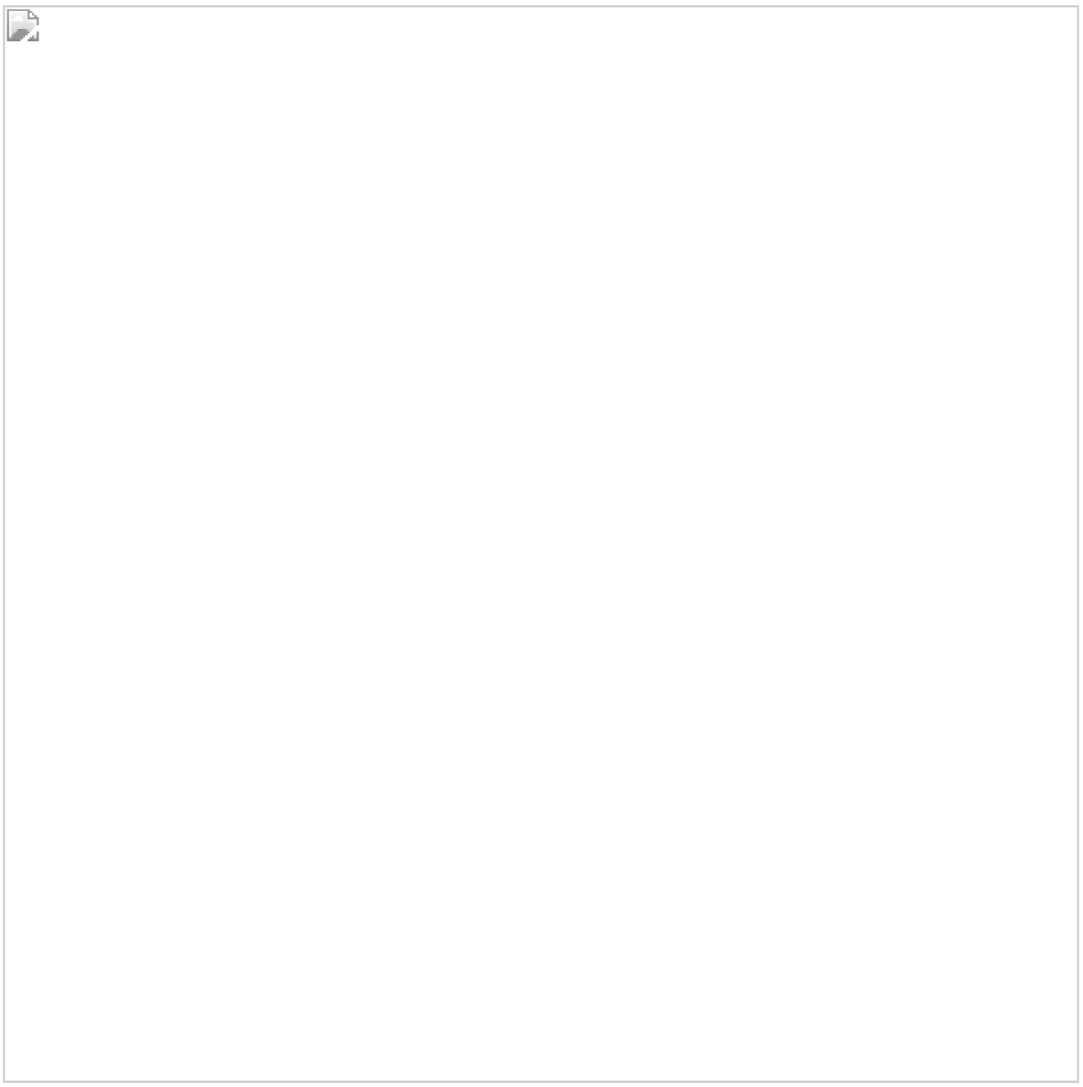
Then the other Antipholus and Dromio came along, and Adriana cried that they were mad. They ran into a priory to be safe.

The Abbess barred the door: “No, not a creature enters in my house.” Scolding does not help a man, she told Adriana, who went to ask the Duke for help.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Abbess would not let anyone in. Why might a safe place matter to someone who is frightened?

Doctor Pinch and the Abbey · another picture

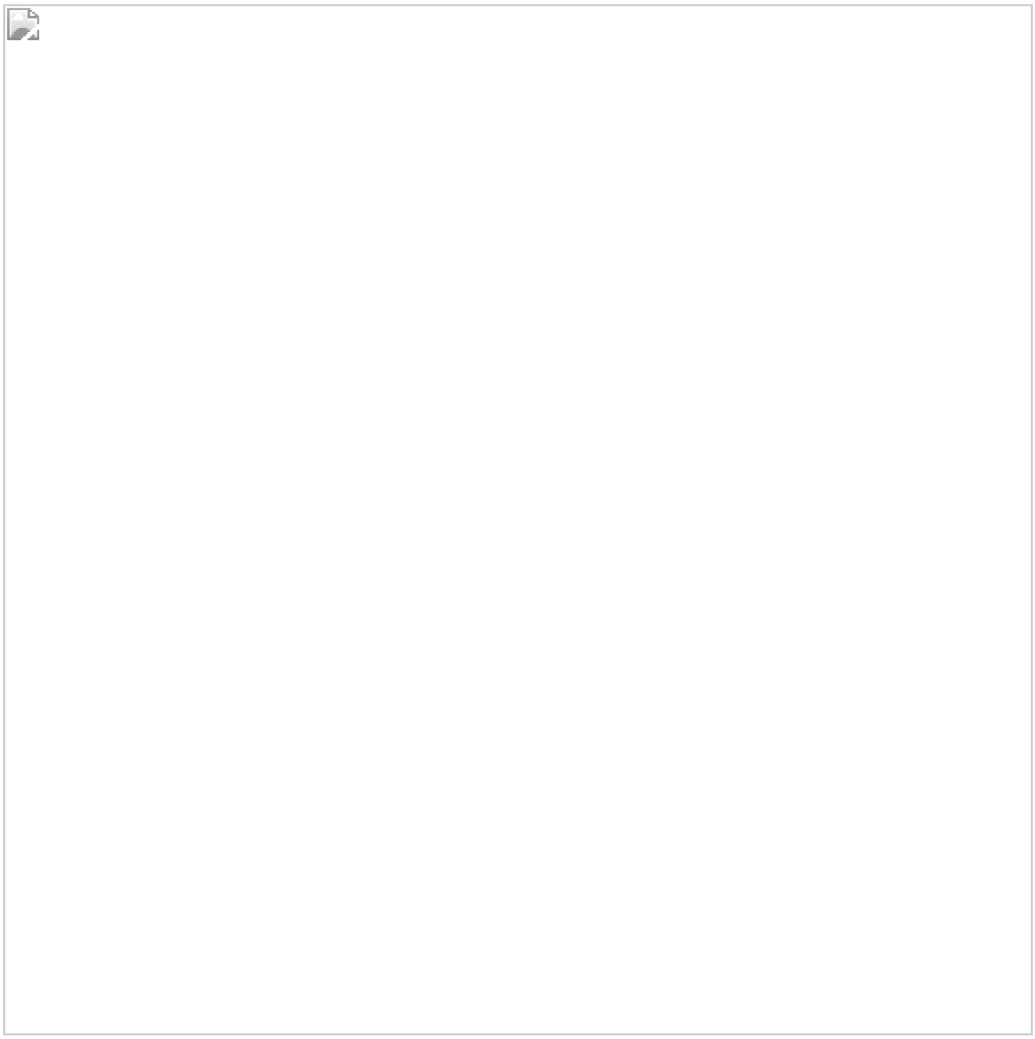


Think about it

1. Where did Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse run to be safe?

- ○ A priory, where the Abbess kept the door
- ○ The goldsmith's shop
- ○ The harbor

Sunset



It was nearly sunset. “The dial points at five,” said a merchant. The Duke came past the abbey with Egeon, whose day was almost done.

“If any friend will pay the sum for him, he shall not die,” the Duke called. Nobody came forward.

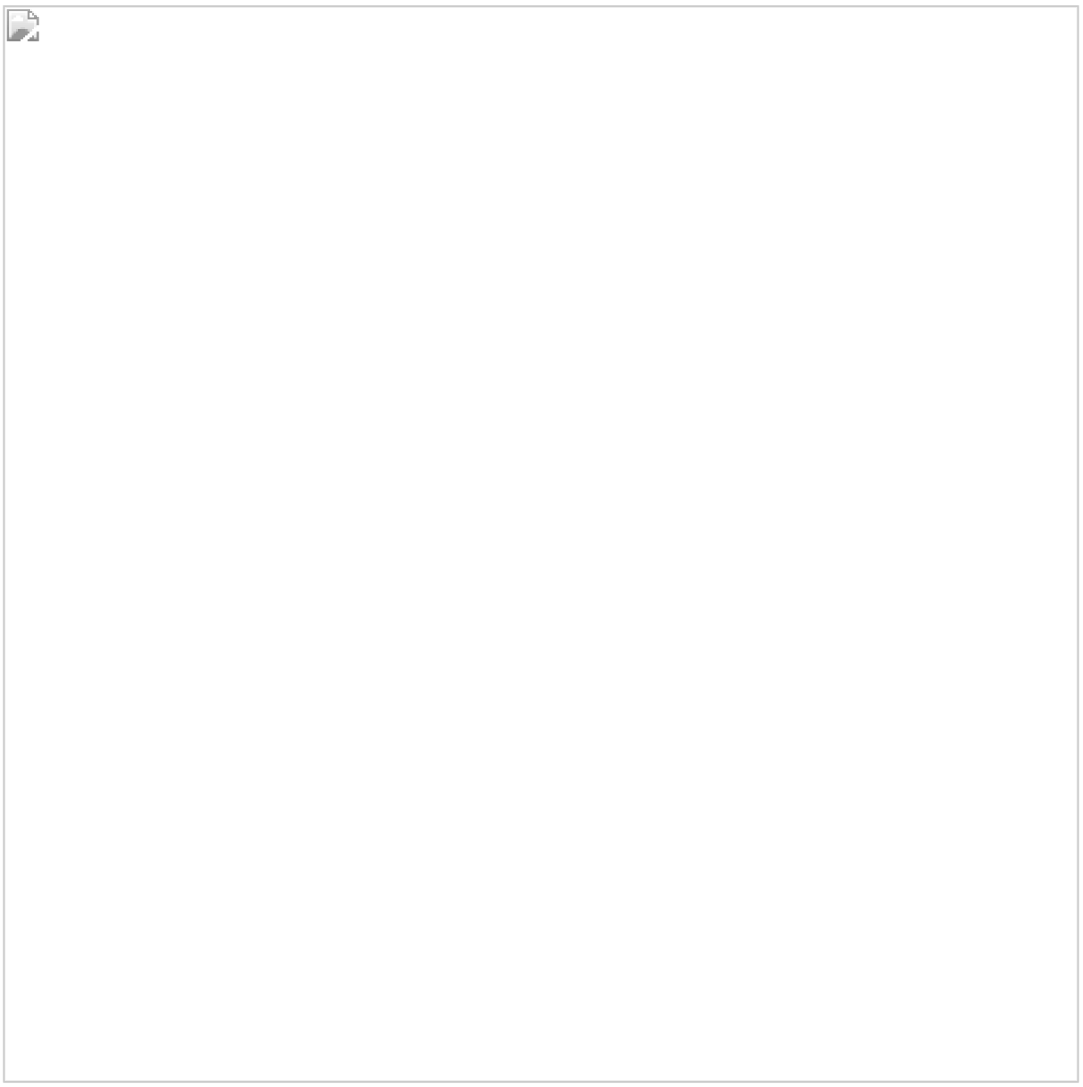
Adriana knelt and asked the Duke for her husband. Then in came Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus, who had slipped free of their ropes. “Justice, most gracious duke!” he cried, and told all that had happened.

“I see my son Antipholus and Dromio,” said Egeon. But Antipholus of Ephesus said, “I never saw my father in my life.” The Duke thought Egeon’s age had muddled him.

TALK ABOUT IT

Egeon thought he had found his son, and the son said he had never seen him. Who was telling the truth?

Sunset · another picture

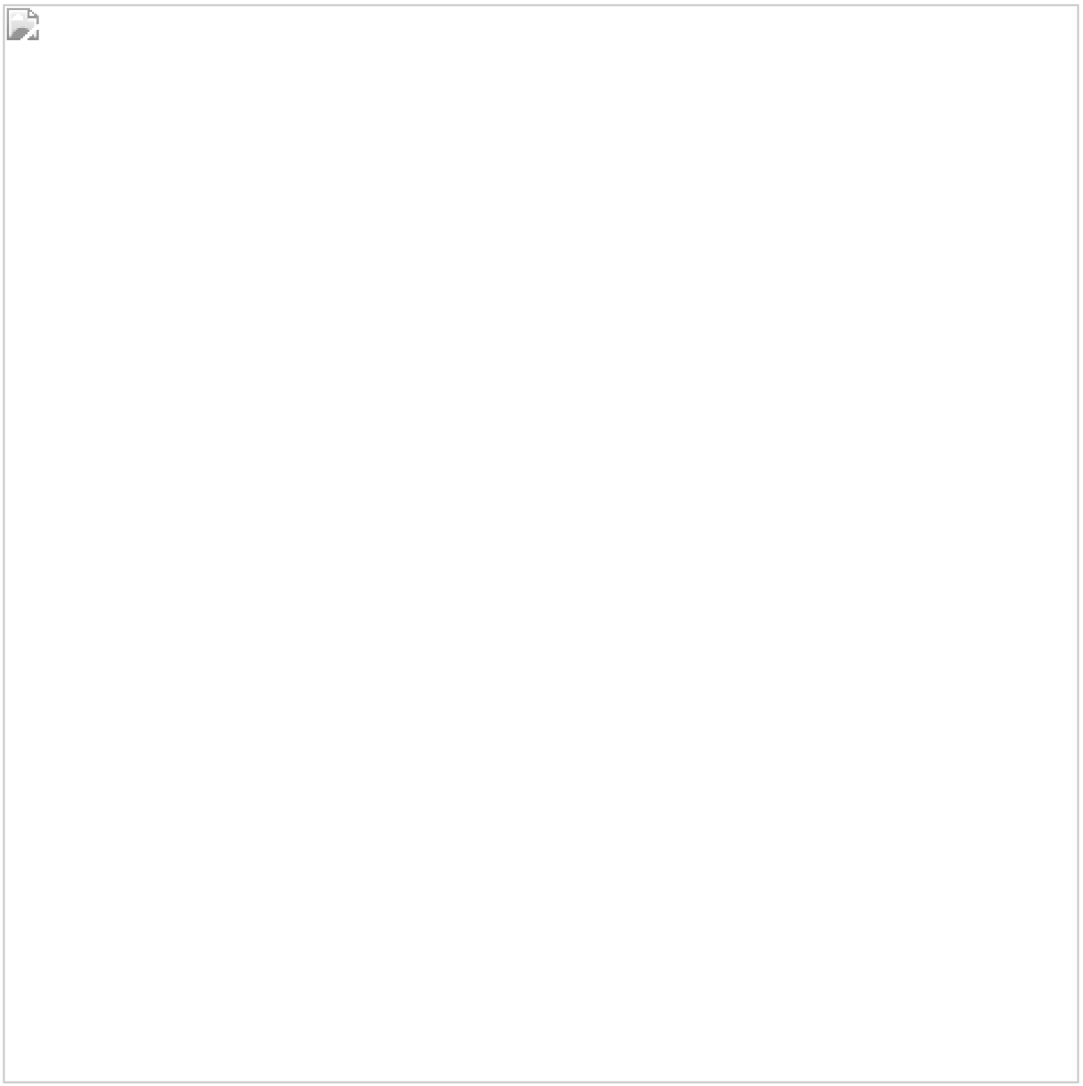


Think about it

1. What did Egeon think when he saw Antipholus of Ephesus?

- ○ That he was his son
- ○ That he was the Duke's soldier
- ○ That he was a stranger

Two of Everything



Then the Abbess came out, leading Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse. “I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me,” said Adriana.

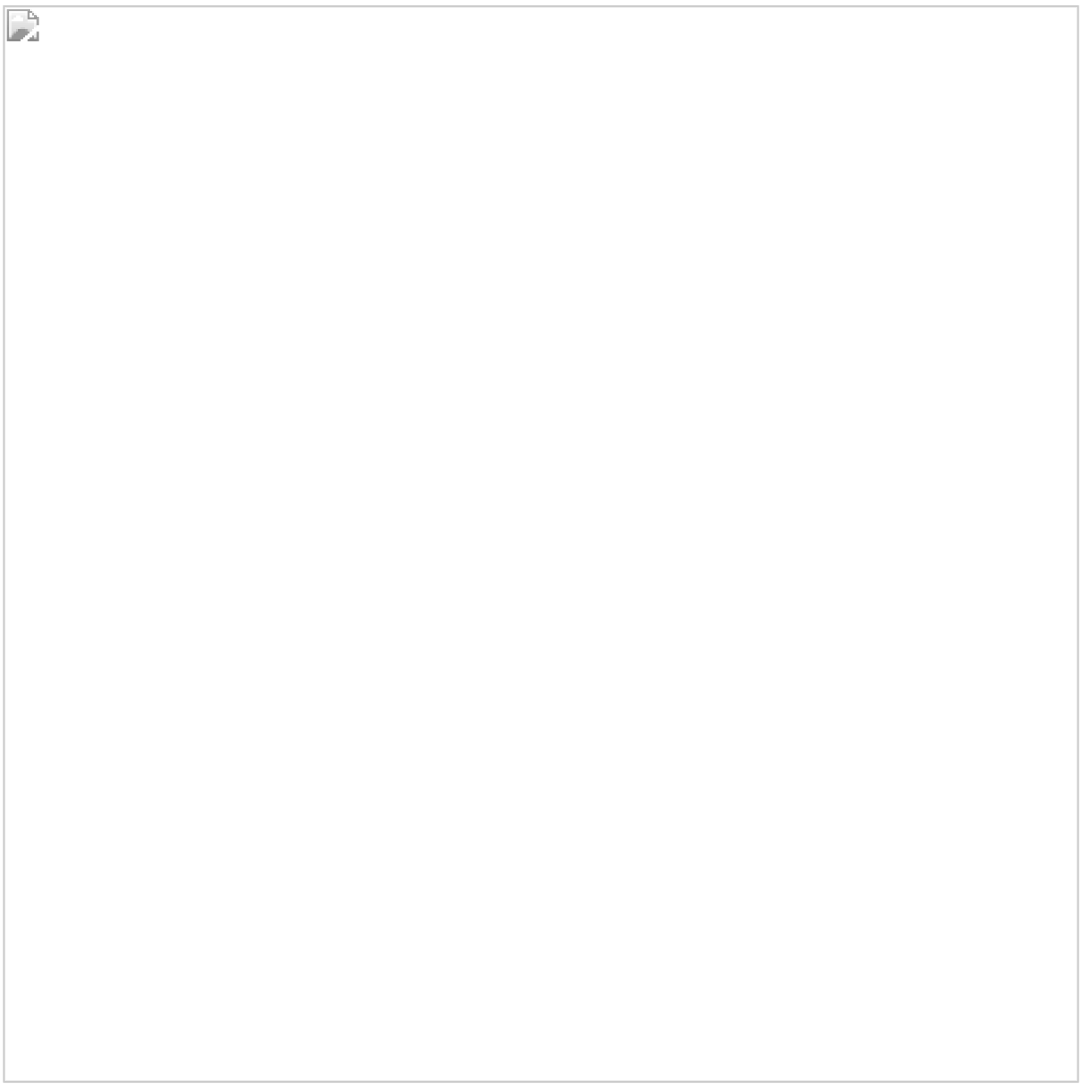
Antipholus of Syracuse stared at the old man: “Egeon, art thou not? or else his ghost?” Egeon gazed at the Abbess. “If I dream not, thou art Emilia.” She was his wife, lost in the storm, and the twins were her sons.

One son offered gold for the fine. “It shall not need, thy father hath his life,” said the Duke. Egeon was free, with no fine paid.

The Abbess invited all to a feast. “With all my heart, I’ll gossip at this feast,” said Antipholus of Ephesus.

TALK ABOUT IT

A whole family was found again in one day. Who in this story do you most want to hear from at the feast?



Think about it

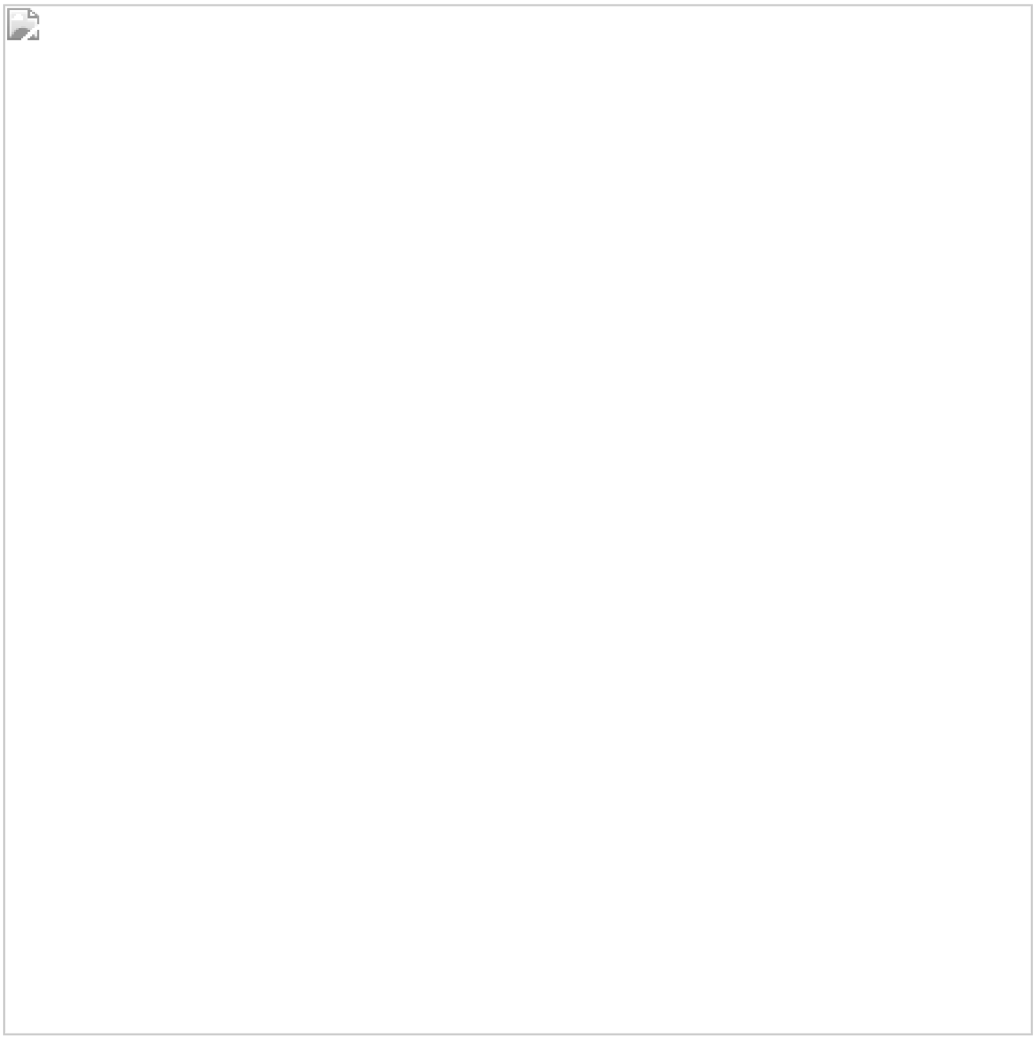
1. Who was the Abbess?

- ○ Emilia, Egeon's lost wife
- ○ Adriana's mother
- ○ The Duke's sister

2. What did the Duke say about the fine?

- ○ It was not needed, Egeon was free
- ○ It must be paid at once
- ○ It was doubled

Hand in Hand



Everyone went into the abbey but the two Dromios. Dromio of Syracuse asked the wrong master, “Master, shall I fetch your stuff from shipboard?” His own master said, “Embrace thy brother there, rejoice with him.”

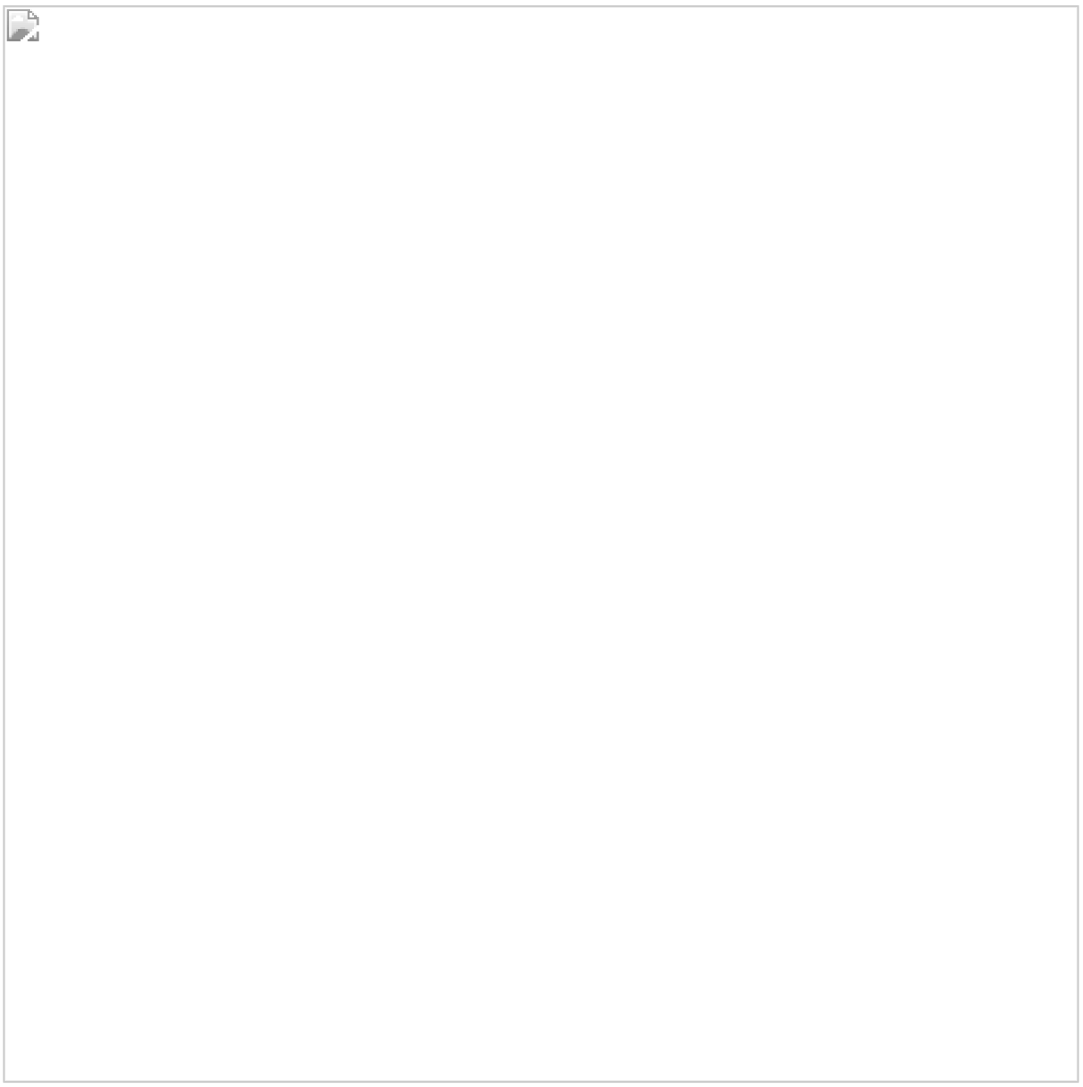
Dromio of Ephesus looked at his twin. “Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother.”

Who would walk in first? Neither knew which was older. “We’ll draw cuts for the senior. Till then, lead thou first.”

“Nay, then, thus,” said Dromio of Ephesus. “We came into the world like brother and brother, and now let’s go hand in hand, not one before another.” And they went in together.

TALK ABOUT IT

The two Dromios walked in hand in hand, not one before the other. What do you notice about that?



Think about it

1. How did the two Dromios go into the feast?

- ○ Hand in hand
- ○ One far behind the other
- ○ Racing

2. A whole family was lost, and then found. Which part of the story do you most want to draw?

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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