



**SAMPLE – INCOMPLETE SCRIPT**

A Community Shakespeare Company  
edition of

# *The Comedy Of Errors*

Original verse adaptation by  
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*“Enriching young lives, cultivating community”*

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## Cast of Characters

<b>SOLINUS:</b>	Duke of Ephesus
<b>EGEON:</b>	Merchant of Syracuse
<b>ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS</b>	
<b>ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE:</b>	Twin sons of Egeon and Aemilia
<b>DROMIO OF EPHEBUS</b>	
<b>DROMIO OF SYRACUSE:</b>	Twin slaves of the Antipholuses
<b>BALTHASAR:</b>	A merchant
<b>ANGELO:</b>	A goldsmith
<b>DR. PINCH:</b>	A conjurer
<b>FIRST MERCHANT</b>	
<b>SECOND MERCHANT</b>	
<b>AN OFFICER</b>	
<b>A JAILER, AND ASSISTANTS</b>	
<b>AEMILIA/ABBESS:</b>	Wife of Egeon
<b>ADRIANA:</b>	Wife of Antipholus E.
<b>LUCIANA:</b>	Sister of Adriana
<b>LUCE:</b>	Adriana's kitchen maid
<b>A COURTESAN</b>	
<b>A HANDMAIDEN</b>	
<b>THE MUSE</b>	A singer, or poet

# **The Muse's Song**

(PROLOGUE: TO BE SPOKEN OR SET TO MUSIC)

(ENTER THE MUSE)

## **THE MUSE**

Upon a time, upon the sea, there sailed a fine young family  
A prosperous merchant Egeon; his wife, the fair Aemilia,  
Their sons and servants, all their wealth: their goods and memorabilia

The day was fair, the sea was mild, as homeward came man, wife and child,  
But far away and far below, Poseidon woke from sleep,  
He stirred the ocean with his trident: sending monsters from the deep

The storm at once broke loose above, and would not stop for wealth nor love,  
They lashed themselves unto the mast, and prayed they'd not go under  
Alas, they struck a mighty rock: the ship was torn asunder

Away, away; too far away, they drifted far apart that day,  
So man and wife, so man and son were destined to be strangers,  
So wife and son, so servant boys were bound for other dangers

The sky grew clear, the days would pass in searching far and wide, alas,  
Old Egeon now is seeking still, his son, he knows not whither,  
And others lost may soon be found: their fate has called them hither

(EXIT MUSE)

## **ACT I, scene 1:**

(ENTER SOLINUS, EGEON, JAILER, AND OTHERS)

### **EGEON**

Proceed, Duke Solinus, to procure my fall  
And by the doom of death, end woes and all

### **SOLINUS**

Egeon, merchant of Syracuse, plead no more,  
Before you came here to Ephesus, you knew the score,  
For well 'tis known both there and here  
That traveling merchants have much to fear.  
Unless you have a thousand marks to pay as ransom  
Before the sun sets, you die. The law is fearsome.

### **EGEON**

Yet this my comfort: when your words are done  
My woes end likewise, with the evening sun.

### **SOLINUS**

Well, Syracusian, say in brief the cause:  
What brings you here in spite of our laws?

### **EGEON**

A heavier task, Duke, you could not impose  
But in brief, here is the tale of all my woes:  
Years ago my wife gave birth to twins, two fine sons,  
The one so like the other as could only be known by their names.  
That very hour in the very same inn  
Another woman was delivered of twins,  
And because she was the poorest wretch in town  
I adopted her sons and raised them to be servants to my own.  
Alas, at sea upon a voyage, a raging storm found us,  
And to the masts of the ship, here and there they bound us.  
My wife, one son, and one servant boy stood there,  
Myself, the other son and other boy lashed here.  
The ship broke apart, they floated one way, we the other,  
I watched as they drifted, further and further . . .

### **SOLINUS**

Nay, forward, old man, finish your story,  
For though we may not pardon you, yet we may pity.

**EGEON**

Thus have you heard of me severed from my bliss,  
My wife and son, without even a kiss.  
Then seven years ago, my remaining son  
Went looking for his brother; his attendant went along  
For he, too, had lost a twin brother,  
And together these two each sought their other.  
I came here seeking them, unmindful of your laws,  
Yet here I am content to die, now you have heard the cause.

**SOLINUS**

Hapless Egeon, whom the fates have marked with woe,  
Were it not against the law, I would gladly let you go.  
Yet, will I favor you in what I can,  
I'll give you all this day to gather the sum.  
Try all the friends you may find in this town,  
If you can beg or borrow the money, your life is your own.  
Jailer, take him along now I say.

**JAILER**

I will my lord. Come, this way.

**EGEON**

Hopeless and helpless do I wend my way  
But to put off my end for another day.

(EXEUNT)

## **ACT I, scene 2:**

(ENTER ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE, DROMIO OF SYRACUSE, AND MERCHANT)

### **MERCHANT**

Therefore beware, fellow merchant, let not this happen to you,  
That old man just gone is from Syracuse too,  
And not being able to pay the fee  
Is sentenced to die by the Duke's decree.  
Here's the money you gave me to keep for you, sir,  
Guard it with your life, if your life you hold dear.

### **ANTIPHOLUS S.**

I thank you, good merchant, I'll keep it this day.  
Dromio, bear it to the Centaur, the inn where we stay.  
Keep it safe and remain there until I return,  
It's an hour till dinner, I've got some time to burn.

### **DROMIO S.**

Better to burn your time than my dinner.  
Many a man would take this money and run, but I am not such a sinner.

(EXIT DROMIO S.)

### **ANTIPHOLUS S.**

He's a trusty villain, sir, a jester who lightens my mood.  
But come, will join me in an hour for some food?

### **MERCHANT**

I crave your pardon, sir, my business calls me away at present  
But tonight I'll meet you and show you the town, it's quite pleasant.

### **ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Farewell, then. I'll wander up and down the city  
Seeking that which I know I shall not find, more's the pity.

### **MERCHANT**

I commend you to your own content.

(EXIT MERCHANT)

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

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: my brother.  
(ENTER DROMIO OF EPHEBUS)  
But what's this? Dromio, returned so soon?

**DROMIO E.**

Returned so soon? Rather come too late!  
The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit,  
The clock struck twelve upon the bell,  
My mistress struck one upon my cheek!  
She is so hot because the meat is cold,  
The meat is cold because you come not home,  
You come not home because you have no stomach,  
You have no stomach having broke your fast,  
But we who know what 'tis to hunger  
Receive the brunt of our mistress' anger!

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Stop in your wind, sir, not another peep.  
Tell me, where is the money I gave you to keep?

**DROMIO E.**

I pray you, sir, jest as you sit at dinner  
For my mistress already thinks me a sinner.  
Come home with me now, let your stomach be your clock,  
You gave me no money, so please don't mock.

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Come, Dromio, come, 'tis your jest which is out of season,  
Tell me where is the gold, before I lose my reason.

**DROMIO E.**

Sir, my charge was but to fetch you from the mart,  
My mistress struck me and said, "Do it smart!"  
You gave me no gold, of that I'm quite sure,  
Now please, come you home, or she'll give me some more.

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Enough! Tell me in what safe place you bestowed the money  
Or I'll beat you myself. You think this is funny?  
Dromio, unless you want to see sparks,  
Tell me where is my thousand marks?

**DROMIO E.**

Truly, I have some of your marks upon my head,  
And some of my mistress' marks there, and there, instead.

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

And who is this mistress you keep talking about?

**DROMIO E.**

Your wife, sir.

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

I have no wife, you lout!

(HE STRIKES DROMIO)

**DROMIO E.**

Aye! What's that for?

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

That's for being a knave! And what's more, take that,  
And that, you slave!

**DROMIO E.**

Ow! Slave I am, sir, I cannot deny,  
But until you come to your senses, I must fly!

(EXIT DROMIO E.)

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Upon my life, by some device or scheme  
This villain lost the money; that, or I'm having a bad dream.  
I'll follow him back to the inn and search the room,  
But if he's lost it . . . Dromio, prepare for thy doom!

(EXIT)

## **ACT II, scene 1**

(ENTER ADRIANA AND LUCIANA)

**ADRIANA**

Neither my husband nor the slave has returned,  
Did you see my nice dinner? Now everything's burned.

**LUCIANA**

Good sister, perhaps some merchant detained him.

**ADRIANA**

He knows better than that. I thought I had trained him.

**LUCIANA**

A man is master of his liberty, sis.

**ADRIANA**

That's not a description of marital bliss.  
Why should their liberty than ours be more?

**LUCIANA**

Because their business lies out o' door.  
Man is the master, be he beast, fowl, or fish,  
You should know that by now, despite what you wish.

**ADRIANA**

'Tis this notion of servitude keeps you unwed.

**LUCIANA**

No, 'tis the troubles of your marriage bed.

**ADRIANA**

If you were wedded, you would not speak this way.

**LUCIANA**

Before I learn to love, I'll practice to obey.  
I will marry someday, just to give it a try.  
But look, here comes your man. Your husband must be nigh.

(ENTER DROMIO OF EPHEBUS)

**ADRIANA**

What say you, Dromio? Is your tardy master at hand?

**DROMIO E.** He's at two hands with me, as my ears understand.

**ADRIANA**

Did you speak with him? Know you his mind?

**DROMIO E.**

He spoke his mind upon mine ear, and that's being kind.

**ADRIANA**

Pray, what do you mean? Out with it, lad.

**DROMIO E.**

Mistress, I believe that your husband is mad.  
When I did desire him to come home as you told  
He asked me for a thousand marks in gold.  
"Tis dinner time," quoth I. "My gold," quoth he.  
"Your meat doth burn," quoth I. "My gold," quoth he.  
"Will you come home?" quoth I. "My gold," quoth he.  
"The pig," quoth I, "is burned." "My gold," quoth he.  
"My mistress, sir," quoth I. "Hang up your mistress!"

**ADRIANA**

Quoth who?

**DROMIO E.**

Quoth my master. "I know no house, no wife, no mistress!"

**LUCIANA**

Alas!

**ADRIANA**

Go back again, slave, and fetch him home.

**DROMIO E.**

Go back? You would not send me back alone.

**ADRIANA**

Back, villain, or I'll beat your head.

**DROMIO E.**

I wish you'd beat some other part instead.

**ADRIANA**

Hence, prating peasant! Fetch your master hither.

**DROMIO E.**

If I'm to last in this service, you must case me in leather,  
For like a football do you spurn me to and fro.

**ADRIANA**

Out!

**DROMIO E.**

I'm outing, already. Look how I go!

(EXIT DROMIO E.)

**LUCIANA**

Sister, how impatience frowns in your face.

**ADRIANA**

Oh, Luciana, do you think another woman has my place,  
While I at home starve for a merry look?  
Has homely age from my poor cheek all beauty took?

**LUCIANA**

Fie! Self-harming jealousy, fie! Beat it hence.

**ADRIANA**

Maids such as you can such wisdom dispense.  
I know his eye does homage otherwhere,  
Why else, why else would he not be here?  
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.

(EXEUNT)

## **ACT II, scene 2**

(ENTER ANTIPHOLUS S.)

### **ANTIPHOLUS S.**

The gold I gave Dromio is laid up safe and sound  
And the heedful slave wandered forth to seek me around  
The village, so says the master of the inn.

(ENTER DROMIO S.)

But see, here he comes: what, sir, will you jest with me again?  
You received no gold, your mistress sent to fetch me to dinner?  
Were you mad to speak to me thus, you old sinner?

### **DROMIO S.**

Speak how, sir? When spoke I such a word?

### **ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Why, half an hour ago. Don't be absurd.

### **DROMIO S.**

I have not seen you, sir. You sent me hence,  
Home to the Centaur with the gold. I have not seen you since.

### **ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Villain, I saw you even here, not half an hour past,  
And you did deny the gold's receipt to the last.  
You told me of a mistress and a dinner burnt,  
And I beat you so your lesson would be learnt.

### **DROMIO S.**

Master, you beat not me, and it pleases me to say it.  
When you give me an order, I obey it.  
Ah, I see you do but speak with me in jest!

### **ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Dromio, put not my patience to the test.

### **DROMIO S.**

Tell me another, sir. That one was clever:  
How I denied the gold. That's good! Because I never . . .

### **ANTIPHOLUS S.**

You think I jest? Take that! And that!

(BEATS DROMIO S.)

**DROMIO S.**

Ow, that's my head! I should have worn a hat.  
And you strike me much more, I shall seek my wit in my shoulders,  
But I pray you, sir, why rain you down these boulders?

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

You do not know?

**DROMIO S.**

Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

And what of the dinner you said I should have eaten?

**DROMIO S.**

Marry, sir, I think the dinner lacks what I have.

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

What's that?

**DROMIO S.**

Basting.

(ENTER ADRIANA AND LUCIANA)

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

But who comes raging hither? I know not the gown.

**ADRIANA**

Aye, Antipholus, look strange and frown,  
For some other mistress receives your sweeter glance.

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Madam, I know you not. I came here by chance,  
In Ephesus I am but two hours old.

**ADRIANA**

Is it your new love that makes you so bold  
That you deny your wife and come not to your house?

**LUCIANA**

Fie, brother, for shame! When did you become such a louse?  
My sister sent for you by Dromio here.

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

By Dromio?

**DROMIO S.**

By me?

**LUCIANA**

Yes, by you Dromio, why do you stare?

**ADRIANA**

And you did swear, Dromio, that your master  
Boxed your ears; you said it was a disaster.  
You swore he denied his house, denied me for his wife!

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Did you say all this, Dromio? Now, by your life  
Tell me, did you converse with this gentlewoman here?

**DROMIO S.**

Sir, I never saw her till this time, I swear!

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

Villain, you lie! For I recall it just as she said,  
If you lie to me more, you'll wish you were dead.

**DROMIO S.**

I never spoke with her in all my life,  
Never called you for dinner, never called her your wife!

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

And how knows she our names, unless by inspiration,  
We're strangers in this town, just here on vacation.

**ADRIANA**

How ill it agrees with your gravity, sir,  
To pretend that with this slave you concur.  
You are an elm, my husband, I a vine,  
Fastened round you by scripture divine.

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

To me she speaks, she moves me for her theme;  
What, was I married to her in my dream?  
Or do I sleep now and imagine all this?

**DROMIO S.**

Perhaps you'll awake if she gives you a kiss.

**LUCIANA**

Dromio, go bid the servants spread the table.

**DROMIO S.**

I? What servants? What makes you think I'm able?  
Aye, this is fairy land. Oh spite of spites!  
We talk with goblins, owls and sprites!

**LUCIANA**

Don't stand there jabbering, you snail, you slug!  
Do as you're told or you'll be beaten like a rug.

**DROMIO S.**

I am transformed, master, what shall I do?

**ANTIPHOLUS S.**

I don't understand any better than you.

**ADRIANA**

Come, come, enough of this idle chat,  
Sir, you're coming to dinner, and that's that.  
Dromio, stay here and mind the gate,  
If any call for your master, say they're too late.  
He's dining with his wife, let no one in,  
Come sister, come husband, our dinner waits within.

(EXEUNT)

**(ACTS III and IV omitted from sample script)**

## About the Author – Richard Carter

Richard Carter grew up in Portland, Oregon, the son of a doctor and a dancer. Since 1986 he has made his home in the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington state.



After graduating Vassar College in 1980 and receiving his MFA in playwriting from the University of Washington, Richard's play *Blood and Iron* won Seattle's Jumpstart New Play Competition and went on to be presented on the London stage. His next play, *Winds in the Morning*, was staged at the 1997 Seattle Fringe Festival and selected to inaugurate the Wooden Boat Festival at Port Townsend, Washington in 2000.

Richard offers his talents in many venues. As Co-founder/Artistic Director of the Community Shakespeare Company, he is one of the few playwrights today with the audacity to work *with* Shakespeare. Working in rhyming couplets, updating some of the language, he delivers the best of the Bard for young actors. His adaptations are so authentic that audiences scarcely know they aren't seeing and hearing the original, and they often like it better.

Community Shakespeare Company itself breaks new ground. Its mission is to enrich young lives and cultivate community. Richard's unique adaptations enchant and engage young actors from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade up. His leadership motivates community, parents, mentors and artists to support and encourage youth. The result is a dynamic model that can be replicated in schools, organizations, clubs and communities nationwide.

Richard and his wife Jeanna, married since 1988, live on a small farm where they have been even more successful raising five children than they have been raising sheep.

## Recommendations

“This is to recommend Richard Carter with a full heart. We have enthusiastically shared many ideals and passions, especially regarding theatre by, with and for youngsters.”

- Lenka Peterson O’Connor, author: *Kids Take The Stage* (Backstage Books)

“I am extremely pleased to recommend Richard, and wish him every success in the years to come.”

- Lois Burdett, author: *Shakespeare Can Be Fun Series* (Firefly Books)

“This is to express my gratitude to Richard Carter and the Community Shakespeare Company. I take my theatre very seriously and I know what I am talking about when I say that we are indeed blessed to have Community Shakespeare in our midst.”

- Kenneth W. Jenks: Director Emeritus, U. of Utah Playwriting Program

“I wish to congratulate Richard Carter. Having taught children all over the world, I can imagine how excited teachers would be to have the opportunity to introduce a Shakespearean play to their students, knowing they would be able to grasp meaning and still retain the Shakespearian experience.”

- Ann H. Goss: Retired International School Teacher