

**THE WORKS OF WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE, IN TWELVE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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The Works of William Shakespeare, in Twelve Volumes, Vol. II by William Shakespeare

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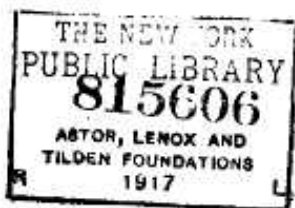
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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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SHAKESPEARE, IN TWELVE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**



COMEDY OF ERRORS.



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THE
COMEDY OF ERRORS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SOLINUS, duke of Ephesus. ÆGEON, a merchant of Syracuse. ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse, twin brothers, and sons to Ægeon and Emilia DROMIO of Ephesus, and DRO- MIO of Syracuse, twin broth- ers, and attendants on the two Antipholuses. BALTHAZAR, a merchant. ANGELO, a goldsmith.	First Merchant, friend to Antipholus of Syracuse. Second Merchant, to whom Angelo is a debtor. FINCH, a schoolmaster. EMILIA, wife to Ægeon, an abbess at Ephesus. ADRIANA, wife to Antipholus of Ephesus. LUCIANA, her sister. LUCE, servant to Adriana, A Courtesan.
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Gaoler, Officers, and other Attendants.

SCENE—*Ephesus.*

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A hall in the Duke's palace.*

*Enter Duke, ÆGEON, Gaoler, Officers, and other
Attendants.*

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

Duke. Merchant of Syracuse, plead no more;
I am not partial to infringe our laws :
The enmity and discord which of late
Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your duke
To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,—
Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,

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Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,—
 Excludes all pity from our threatening looks,
 For, since the mortal and intestine jars
 'Twixt thy seditious countrymen and us,
 It hath in solemn synods been decreed,
 Both by the Syracusians and ourselves,
 T' admit no traffic to our adverse towns:
 Nay, more, if any born at Ephesus
 Be seen at Syracusian marts and fairs;
 Again, if any Syracusian born
 Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,
 His goods confiscate to the duke's dispose;
 Unless a thousand marks be levied,
 To quit the penalty and ransom him,
 Thy substance, valu'd at the highest rate,
 Cannot amount unto a hundred marks;
 Therefore by law thou art condemn'd to die.

Ege. Yet this my comfort,—when your words are done,

My woes end likewise with the evening sun.

Duke. Well, Syracusian, say, in brief, the cause
 Why thou departed'st from thy native home,
 And for what cause thou cam'st to Ephesus.

Ege. A heavier task could not have been impos'd
 Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable:
 Yet, that the world may witness that my end
 Was wrought by nature, not by vile offense,
 I'll utter what my sorrow gives me leave,
 In Syracuse was I born; and wed
 Unto a woman, happy but for me,
 And by me too, had not our hap been bad,
 With her I liv'd in joy; our wealth increas'd
 By prosperous voyages I often made
 To Epidamnum, till my factor's death,
 And the great care of goods at random left,
 Drew me from kind embracements of my spouse;
 From whom my absence was not six months old,
 Before herself—almost at fainting under
 The pleasing punishment that women bear—
 Had made provision for her following me,
 And soon and safe arriv'd where I was.
 There had she not been long but she became

A joyful mother of two goodly sons ;
And, which was strange, the one so like the other
As could not be distinguish'd but by names.
That very hour, and in the self-same inn,
A meaner woman was deliver'd
Of such a burden, male twins, both alike :
Those, for their parents were exceeding poor,
I bought, and brought up to attend my sons.
My wife, not meanly proud of two such boys,
Made daily motions for our home return ;
Unwilling I agreed. Alas, too soon
We came aboard !
A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd,
Before the always-wind-obeying deep
Gave any tragic instance of our harm :
But longer did we not retain much hope ;
For what obscur'd light the heavens did grant
Did but convey unto our fearful minds
A doubtful warrant of immediate death ;
Which though myself would gladly have embrac'd,
Yet the incessant weepings of my wife,
Weeping before for what she saw must come,
And piteous plainings of the pretty babes,
That mourn'd for fashion, ignorant what to fear,
Forc'd me to seek delays for them and me,
And this it was,—for other means was none :—
The sailors sought for safety by our boat,
And left the ship, then sinking-ripe, to us :
My wife, more careful for the latter-born,
Had fasten'd him unto a small spare mast,
Such as seafaring men provide for storms ;
To him one of the other twins was bound,
Whilst I had been like heedful of the other :
The children thus dispos'd, my wife and I,
Fixing our eyes on whom our care was fix'd,
Fasten'd ourselves at either end the mast ;
And floating straight, obedient to the stream,
Were carried towards Corinth, as we thought.
At length the sun, gazing upon the earth,
Dispers'd those vapors that offended us ;
And, by the benefit of his wish'd light,
The seas wax'd calm, and we discover'd