

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE?

By Jonathan Dorf

(The present. One in the morning. An airport gate. Four passengers wait amidst their bags for their plane: ROMEO, unconsciously shredding a tissue; TITANIA, reading a fashion magazine; ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE, pacing back and forth; and VIOLA, listening to a Walkman. A sign says "London-Delayed.")

**ROMEO**

Juliet! Juliet!

(He falls onto the floor and sobs.)

**TITANIA**

Titania. My name is Titania.

**ROMEO**

I loved Juliet. And now she's dead.

**TITANIA**

As long as she doesn't fly in first class.

**ROMEO**

(shakes his head)

She's dead back in Italy.

**TITANIA**

Anybody have a hankie for . . .

**ROMEO**

Romeo.

**TITANIA**

Anybody have a hankie for Romeo? He lost Juliet!

(Antipholus stops pacing and pulls a handkerchief from his pocket.)

**ROMEO**

Thanks.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

I lost my older brother, Antipholus of Ephesus, for almost twenty-five years. We got separated during a shipwreck.

**TITANIA**

(aside to Antipholus)

She's—

(Titania makes the sign for dead, perhaps the finger sliding across her throat.)

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Oh. I'm so sorry.

**TITANIA**

You said you're from Ephesus?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Syracuse originally. I live in Ephesus now. Where I found my twin brother.

**TITANIA**

I think we stopped at both on my Mediterranean cruise.

(Romeo renews his bawling.)

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Any idea if this plane is boarding soon?

(Viola overhears and comes over.)

**VIOLA**

It hasn't even landed yet.

(eyeing Romeo)

Is he going to be all right?

**TITANIA**

I hope so. I don't know if I can take this for an entire flight.

**VIOLA**

Who is Juliet?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Was.

**VIOLA**

Who was Juliet?

**TITANIA**

Wife? Girlfriend? Mother?

**VIOLA**

I don't think it's his mother.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

(to Romeo)

Who was Juliet?

**ROMEO**

Juliet is the sun.

(as if he sees Juliet)

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief  
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.  
Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.  
It is my lady, O, it is my love!

**TITANIA**

I'm starting to get a picture.

**ROMEO**

She hangs upon the cheek of night  
As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear—  
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!

**VIOLA**

He's so in love.

**TITANIA**

With a dead girl. Romeo, it's not healthy.  
(beat)

It's good that you're going to London. Get away. Whenever Oberon—that's my husband—and I get into a fight, I run off with my entourage, go somewhere exotic.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

My faithful Dromio has been with me almost since birth. He's entourage enough for me.

**TITANIA**

Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, Mustardseed . . .

**VIOLA**

Your entourage?

**TITANIA**

Out finding me a cappuccino. It's like they roll up the sidewalks at night in this airport.

**VIOLA**

It's one in the morning.

(beat)

I dressed up as a male servant once. It's how I met my husband.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

My wife mistook my brother for me. And he didn't even have to dress up. We're identical.

**VIOLA**

Dressed as a man I look a great deal like Sebastian, my twin.

**ROMEO**

I'm going to London to find the man who's responsible for Juliet's death. And when I find him, I'm going to challenge him to a duel and kill him.

(Antipholus, Viola and Titania huddle.)

**TITANIA**

Does he have any weapons?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

How would he get through the X-ray machine?

**VIOLA**

Can't you see he's out of his head with love?

(They turn back to Romeo.)

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Do you know who he is, this man?

**ROMEO**

I know his name, and I know where he lives.

**TITANIA**

Who is it?

**ROMEO**

His name is William Shakespeare.

**TITANIA**

(beat)

Oh.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

I thought he lived in Stratford-en-Avon.

**VIOLA**

If you kill Shakespeare—

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Did I say that out loud?

**VIOLA**

If he kills Shakespeare—

**ROMEO**

He made me fall in love with Juliet, and then he let her die. He can't do that to a person.

**TITANIA**

I'm sure he didn't mean it.

**ROMEO**

Didn't mean it?!

**TITANIA**

To do it on purpose.

**ROMEO**

Why not?

**TITANIA**

Shakespeare *loves* love. And in his hands, love can be wonderful.

**VIOLA**

It really can.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Confusing.

**TITANIA**

Confusing, exciting, tragic, absolutely humiliating—believe me, I know—and wonderful.

(beat)

Let me convince you.

**VIOLA**

Me too.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

All of us.

**TITANIA**

Let us convince you that William Shakespeare does indeed *love* love.

**ROMEO**

(beat)

I'll give you 'til the plane arrives.

**TITANIA**

That could be any minute.

**ROMEO**

'Til the plane arrives.

**TITANIA**

Fine. Listen.

(A sound or light cue marks the change of scene. Antipholus becomes Oberon, perhaps putting on a crown of leaves. He and Titania go to opposite edges of the stage and "enter.")

**OBERON**

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

**TITANIA**

What, jealous Oberon? Fairies, skip hence—I have forsworn his bed and company.

**OBERON**

Tarry, rash wanton! Am not I thy lord?

**TITANIA**

Then I must be thy lady. Why art thou here  
Come from the farthest steep of India?  
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,  
Your buskin'd mistress, and your warrior love,  
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come  
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

**OBERON**

How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,  
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,  
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?

**TITANIA**

These are forgeries of jealousy.

**OBERON**

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?  
I do but beg a little changeling boy,  
To be my henchman.

**TITANIA**

Set your heart at rest;  
The fairy land buys not the child of me.  
His mother was a vot'ress of my order,  
And in the spiced Indian air, by night,  
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side.  
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die,  
And for her sake do I rear up her boy;  
And for her sake I will not part with him.

**OBERON**

How long within this wood intend you stay?

**TITANIA**

Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.  
If you will patiently dance in our round,  
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;  
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

**OBERON**

Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

**TITANIA**

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!  
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

(Titania exits.)

**OBERON**

Well, go thy way. Thou shalt not from this grove  
Till I torment thee for this injury.  
My gentle Puck, come hither.

(Viola gives Romeo a shove, and he  
steps into the scene as Puck, again  
putting on some distinguishing costume  
piece.)

Mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell.  
It fell upon a little western flower,  
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,  
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.  
Fetch me that flow'r; the herb I showed thee once.  
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid  
Will make or man or woman madly dote  
Upon the next live creature that it sees.

**PUCK**

I'll put a girdle round about the earth  
In forty minutes.

(Puck exits.)

**OBERON**

Having once this juice,  
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,  
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes;  
The next thing then she waking looks upon  
(Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,  
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape),  
She shall pursue it with the soul of love.  
And ere I take this charm from off her sight  
(As I can take it with another herb),  
I'll make her render up her page to me.

(Sound or lighting cue, and we are back  
in the airport.)

**ANTIPHOLUS**

So you're the fairy queen, huh?

**TITANIA**

Guilty.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Impressive.

**ROMEO**

I think I may be adding Puck and Oberon to my list.

**VIOLA**

I'm sure the story gets better—doesn't it, Titania?

**ROMEO**

It'd better, or Shakespeare's going to have company. And who is this Puck person anyway?

(Sound or light cue to signal we're out of the airport. Romeo gets back into his Puck costume, while Titania lies on the ground, asleep.)

**PUCK**

Thou speakest aright;  
I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
I jest to Oberon and make him smile  
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal;  
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,  
In very likeness of a roasted crab,  
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob,  
And on her withered dewlop pour the ale.  
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;  
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,  
And "tailor" cries, and falls into a cough;  
And then the whole quire hold their hips and loff,  
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear  
A merrier hour was never wasted there.  
Here comes Oberon.

(Enter Antipholus as Oberon. Puck presents him with the flower, then

exits, and Oberon approaches the sleeping Titania.)

**OBERON**

What thou seest when thou dost wake,  
Do it for thy true-love take;  
Love and languish for his sake.  
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,  
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,  
In thy eye that shall appear  
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear:  
Wake when some vile thing is near.

(Oberon exits, and Romeo reenters as Bottom, wearing an ass head.)

**BOTTOM**

(sings)

The woosel cock so black of hue,  
With orange-tawny bill,  
The throstle with his note so true,  
The wren with little quill—

**TITANIA**

(awakes)

What angel wakes me from my flow'ry bed?

**BOTTOM**

(sings)

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,  
The plain-song cuckoo grey,  
Whose note full many a man doth mark,  
And dares not answer nay—  
For indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird?  
Who would give a bird the lie, though he cry "cuckoo" never  
so?

**TITANIA**

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again.  
Mine ear is much enamored of thy note;  
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;  
And thy fair virtue's force (perforce) doth move me  
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

**BOTTOM**

Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that.  
And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little

company together now-a-days. The more the pity that some honest neighbors will not make them friends.

**TITANIA**

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

**BOTTOM**

Not so, neither; but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine owe turn.

**TITANIA**

Out of this wood do not desire to go;  
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.  
I am a spirit of no common rate;  
The summer still doth tend upon my state;  
And I do love thee; therefore go with me.  
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;  
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,  
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep.  
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,  
That thou shalt like an aery spirit go.

(She exits with Bottom. Enter Oberon.)

**OBERON**

I wonder if Titania be awak'd;  
Then what it was that next came in her eye,  
Which she must dote on in extremity.

(Enter Romeo as Puck this time.)

Here comes my messenger. How now, mad spirit?  
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

**PUCK**

My mistress with a monster is in love.  
Near to her close and consecrated bower,  
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,  
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,  
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,  
Were met together to rehearse a play  
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.  
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,  
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport,  
Forsook his scene, and ent'red in a brake;  
When I did him at his advantage take,  
An ass's nolle I fixed on his head.  
At his sight, away his fellows fly  
And left sweet Pyramus translated there.

When in that moment (so it came to pass)  
Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.

(The airport cue.)

**ROMEO**

Don't worry, Titania—I'll avenge you too.

**VIOLA**

(to Romeo)

Would you excuse us for a moment?

(Viola huddles with Antipholus and  
Titania.)

I thought we were trying to get Shakespeare *off* the hook.

**TITANIA**

We are.

**VIOLA**

So you're telling Romeo about how you fell in love with a  
man with a donkey's head?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

It doesn't seem like the best choice.

**TITANIA**

It works out in the end.

**VIOLA**

Then get to the end! The plane could be here any minute.

(They break their huddle.)

**ROMEO**

Do you have any idea where I'd find Puck and Oberon? After  
I finish with Shakespeare—

**TITANIA**

Listen to the ending first, Romeo.

(to Viola and Antipholus)

I'll skip the "O, how I love thee! How I dote on thee!"  
part in the bower.

(Light or sound cue: exiting the  
airport. Antipholus costumes himself  
as Oberon, who drags Romeo, who becomes  
Puck, with him. Titania takes up

position, asleep, nearby. It'd be great to pull a member of the audience onto the stage and put the ass head on him; he can be the sleeping Bottom.)

**OBERON**

Her dotage now I do begin to pity.  
For meeting her of late behind the wood  
Seeking sweet favors for this hateful fool,  
I did upbraid her, and fall out with her.  
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,  
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,  
I then did ask of her her changeling child;  
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent  
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.  
And now I have the boy, I will undo  
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.  
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp  
From off the head of the Athenian swain,  
That he, awaking, may to Athens back again repair,  
And think no more of this night's accidents  
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.  
But first I will release the Fairy Queen.

(He touches Titania's eyes.)

Be as thou wast wont to be;  
See as thou wast wont to see.  
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower  
Hath such force and blessed power.  
Now, my Titania, wake you, my sweet queen.

**TITANIA**

My Oberon, what visions have I seen!  
Methought I was enamor'd of an ass.

**OBERON**

(points at the sleeping audience member)

There lies your love.

**TITANIA**

How came these things to pass?  
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

**OBERON**

Silence a while. Puck, take off this head.  
(Puck removes the ass head from the audience member.)

Titania, music call, and strike more dead  
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

**TITANIA**

Music, ho, music, such as charmeth sleep!

(Puck plays music.)

**OBERON**

Now thou and I are new in amity,  
And will tomorrow midnight solemnly  
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,  
And bless it to all fair prosperity.

**PUCK**

Fairy King, attend and mark;  
I do hear the morning lark.

**OBERON**

Then, my queen, in silence sad,  
Trip we after night's shade.  
We the globe can compass soon,  
Swifter than the wand'ring moon.

**TITANIA**

Come, my lord, and in our flight,  
Tell me how it came this night  
That I sleeping here was found,  
With these mortals on the ground.

(A sound or light cue: back to the  
airport. Romeo pulls out a small pad  
and a pen)

**ROMEO**

Puck is P-U-C-K, right? Could you spell Oberon?

**TITANIA**

Why?

**ROMEO**

O-B . . .

**TITANIA**

E-R-O-N. Why do you need the spelling?

**ROMEO**

They're on my list.

**TITANIA**

But it worked out! It was all a good laugh.

**ROMEO**

At your expense.

**TITANIA**

I laughed.

(more to the others than to Romeo)

Eventually.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

(to Romeo)

Would you excuse us one more time?

(Romeo nods, and the others huddle.)

Didn't you have anything better than fairies sleeping on the ground with donkeys?

**TITANIA**

It was a donkey *head*. Bottom wasn't a donkey from head to toe.

**VIOLA**

Bottom?

**TITANIA**

Nick Bottom—the weaver. The mortal with the donkey head.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

The point is, your story didn't help.

**VIOLA**

And now Romeo wants to get revenge on Puck and Oberon too.

**TITANIA**

He'll never catch them. Mortals can never catch fairies, especially those two.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

One word: Tinkerbelle.

**VIOLA**

That plane could be here any minute. We have to save them.

### **ANTIPHOLUS**

(breaking from the huddle)

Romeo, let's not go jumping to any conclusions just because of one little donkey head. Love did a lot of great things for me. The path was strange, but—I was in Ephesus with Dromio, my faithful attendant, looking for my long-lost brother, when two women I had never seen before approached us.

(Sound or light cue. Romeo becomes Dromio of Syracuse, Titania becomes Adriana and Viola, Luciana.)

### **ADRIANA**

Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown,  
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects:  
I am not Adriana, nor thy wife.  
The time was once, when thou, unurg'd wouldst vow  
That never words were music to thine ear,  
That never object pleasing in thine eye,  
That never touch well welcome to thy hand,  
That never meat sweet-savor'd in thy taste,  
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carv'd to thee.  
How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,  
That thou art then estranged from thyself?  
Thyself I call it, being strange to me.  
How dearly would it touch thee to the quick,  
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious,  
And that this body, consecrate to thee,  
By ruffian lust should be contaminate?  
Wouldst thou not spit at me, and spurn at me,  
And from my false hand cut the wedding-ring?

### **ANTIPHOLUS**

Plead you to me, fair dame? I know you not:  
In Ephesus I am but two hours old,  
As strange unto your town as your talk,  
Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,  
Wants wit in all one word to understand.

### **LUCIANA**

Fie, brother, how the world is chang'd with you:  
When were you wont to use my sister thus?  
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

By Dromio?

**DROMIO**

By me?

**ADRIANA**

By thee, and this thou didst return from him,  
That he did buffet thee, and in his blows  
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Did you converse, sir, with this gentlewoman?  
What is the course and drift of your compact?

**DROMIO**

I, sir? I never saw her till this time.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Villain, thou liest, for even her very words  
Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

**DROMIO**

I never spake with her in all my life.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

How can she thus then call us by our names,  
Unless it be by inspiration?

**ADRIANA**

How ill agrees it with your gravity  
To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,  
Abetting him to thwart me in my mood!  
Be it my wrong you are from me exempt,  
But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.  
Come, I will fasten on this sleeve of thine:  
Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

To me she speaks, she moves me for her theme:  
What, was I married to her in my dream?  
Or sleep I now and think I hear all this?  
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?  
Until I know this sure uncertainty,  
I'll entertain the [offer'd] fallacy.

**LUCIANA**

Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner.

**DROMIO**

O for my beads! I cross me for a sinner.  
This is the fairy land. O spite of spites!  
We talk with goblins, owls, and sprites;  
If we obey them not, this will ensue:  
They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

**LUCIANA**

Why prat'st thou to thyself, and answer'st not?  
Dromio, thou [drumble], thou snail, thou slug, thou sot!

**DROMIO**

I am transformed, master, am [not I]?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

I think so thou art in mind, and so am I.

**DROMIO**

Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Thou hast thine own form.

**DROMIO**

No, I am an ape.

**LUCIANA**

If thou art chang'd to aught, 'tis to an ass.

**DROMIO**

'Tis true she rides me and I long for grass.  
'Tis so, I am an ass, else it could never be  
But I should know her as well as she knows me.

**ADRIANA**

Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,  
To put the finger in the eye and weep,  
Whilst man and master laughs my woes to scorn.  
Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.  
Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day,  
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks.  
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,  
Say he dines forth, and let no creature enter.  
Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?  
Sleeping or waking, mad or well-advis'd?  
Known unto these, and to myself disguis'd?  
I'll say as they say, and persevere so,  
And in this mist at all adventures go.

**DROMIO**

Master, shall I be porter at the gate?

**ADRIANA**

Ay, and let none enter, lest I break your pate.

**LUCIANA**

Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.

(Sound or light cue.)

**ROMEO**

Witches? Are all your love stories about fairies and  
witches?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

They weren't witches. Dromio and I were just a little  
confused. We didn't know that my twin brother-

**VIOLA**

Your *identical* twin brother-right?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

My *identical* twin brother. We didn't know that his wife  
had mistaken me for him, and *my* Dromio for his identical  
twin brother, also named Dromio.

**TITANIA**

Sounds wonderful.

**ROMEO**

Not to me.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Oh come on, Romeo. When I saw Luciana, my brother's wife's  
sister,

(brief pause while the others "do the  
math")

it was love at first sight. Of course, she thought I was her sister's husband at the time—

(Sound or light cue. Viola becomes Luciana again.)

**LUCIANA**

And may it be that you have quite forgot  
A husband's office? Shall, Antipholus,  
Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot?  
If you did wed my sister for her wealth,  
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness:  
Or if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth,  
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness:  
Let not my sister read it in your eye;  
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator.  
Alas, poor women, make us [but] believe  
(Being compact of credit) that you love us;  
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve:  
Then, gentle brother, get you in again;  
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her [wife]:  
'Tis holy sport to be a little vain,  
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Sweet mistress—what your name is else, I know not.  
Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine—  
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not  
Than our earth's wonder, more than earth divine.  
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak:  
Lay open to my earthy, gross conceit,  
Smoth' red in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,  
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.  
Against my soul's pure truth why labor you,  
To make it wander in an unknown field?  
Are you a god? Would you create me new?  
Transform me then, and to your pow'r I'll yield.  
But if that I am I, then well I know  
Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,  
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe:  
Far more, far more, to you do I decline.  
O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,  
To drown me in thy [sister's] flood of tears.  
Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote.

**LUCIANA**

What, are you mad, that you do reason so?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Not mad, but mated—how, I do not know.

**LUCIANA**

It is a fault that springeth from your eye.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

For gazing on your beams, fair sun, being by.

**LUCIANA**

Gaze when you should, and that will clear your sight.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

As good to wink, sweet love, as look on night.

**LUCIANA**

Why call you me love? Call my sister so.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Thy sister's sister.

**LUCIANA**

That's my sister.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

No;

It is thyself, mine own self's better part:  
Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,  
My food, my fortune, and my sweet hope's aim,  
My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim.

**LUCIANA**

All this my sister is, or else should be.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Call thyself sister, sweet, for I am thee:  
Thee will I love and with thee lead my life;  
Thou hast no husband yet, nor I no wife.  
Give me thy hand.

**LUCIANA**

O soft, sir, hold you still;  
I'll fetch my sister to get her good will.

(Luciana exits. Enter Romeo on the run  
as Dromio.)

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Why, how now, Dromio, where run'st thou so fast?

**DROMIO**

Do you know me, sir? Am I Dromio?  
Am I your man? Am I myself?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Thou art Dromio, thou art my man, thou art thyself.

**DROMIO**

I am an ass, I am a woman's man, and besides myself.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

What woman's man, and how besides thyself?

**DROMIO**

Marry, sir, besides myself, I am due to a woman: one that claims me, one that haunts me, one that will have me.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

What claim lays she to thee?

**DROMIO**

Marry, sir, such claim as you would lay to your horse, and she would have me as a beast; not that, I being a beast, she would have me, but that she, being a very beastly creature, lays claim to me.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

What is she?

**DROMIO**

A very reverent body: ay, such a one as a man may not speak of without he say "Sir-reverence." I have but lean luck in the match, and yet she is a wondrous fat marriage.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

How dost thou mean a fat marriage?

**DROMIO**

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 longer than the whole world.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

What complexion is she of?

**DROMIO**

Swart, like my shoe, but her face nothing like so clean kept: for why? She sweats, a man may go over shoes in the grime of it.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

That's a fault that water will mend.

**DROMIO**

No, sir, 'tis in grain, Noah's flood could not do it.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

What's her name?

**DROMIO**

Nell, sir; but her name [and] three quarters, than an ell and three quarters, will not measure her from hip to hip.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Then she bears some breadth?

**DROMIO**

No longer from head to foot than from hip to hip: she is spherical, like a globe; I could find out countries in her.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

In what part of her body stands Ireland?

**DROMIO**

Marry, sir, in her buttocks, I found it out by the bogs.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Where Scotland?

**DROMIO**

I found it by the barrenness, hard in the palm of the hand.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Where France?

**DROMIO**

In her forehead, arm'd and reverted, making war against her  
heir.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Where England?

**DROMIO**

I look'd for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no  
whiteness in them. But I guess, it stood in her chin, by  
the salt rheum that ran between France and it.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Where Spain?

**DROMIO**

Faith, I saw it not; but I felt it hot in her breath.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Where America, the Indies?

**DROMIO**

O, sir, upon her nose, all o'er embellish'd with rubies,  
carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the  
hot breath of Spain, who sent whole armadoes of carrects to  
be ballast at her nose.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands?

**DROMIO**

O, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude, this drudge or  
diviner laid claim to me, call'd me Dromio, swore I was  
assur'd to her, told me what privy marks I had about me, as  
the mark of my shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great  
wart on my left arm, that I, amaz'd, ran from her as a  
witch.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Go hie thee presently, post to the road,  
And if the wind blow any way from shore,  
I will not harbor in this town to-night.  
If any bark put forth, come to the mart,  
Where I will walk till thou return to me.  
If every one knows us, and we know none,  
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack, and be gone.

**DROMIO**

As from a bear a man would run for life,  
So fly I from her that would be my wife.

(Exit Dromio.)

**ANTIPHOLUS**

There's none but witches do inhabit here,  
And therefore 'tis high time that I were hence.  
She that doth call me husband, eue my soul  
Doth for a wife abhor. But her fair sister,  
Possess'd with such a gentle sovereign grace,  
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,  
Hath almost made me traitor to myself;  
But lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,  
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

(Sound or light cue.)

**ROMEO**

You just said they were all witches.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

At the time, I *thought* they were witches.

**TITANIA**

They weren't witches.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

No.

**VIOLA**

Well?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

What?

**VIOLA**

What were they?

**ANTIPHOLUS**

(beat)

Women.

**TITANIA**

That's it?

### **ANTIPHOLUS**

No, that's not it. It had a happy ending, of course.

(beat)

Shakespeare wrote a play about it.

*Shakespeare in Love?* is a one act play, of which this is a portion. To receive a complete reading copy, and for other contact information, please return to the "Shakespeare in Love?" information page (click your browser's "Back" button or visit [www.singlelane.com/proplay/shakespeare.html](http://www.singlelane.com/proplay/shakespeare.html).)