

The better comedy of errors

Business



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Humor and comedy come in two different forms.

The first form is that the content is actually funny and makes the audience laugh. The very different second form is when the content is terribly unfunny, but the audience still laughs at how much an embarrassment the actors are making of themselves. In *The Comedy of Errors* written Shakespeare, the humor definitely comes in the first form. *The Comedy of Errors* is about a dad that has two twin boys, both ironically named Antipholus, and he also adopted two more twin boys, both ironically named Dromio. These sets of twins are separated at birth by a tragic shipwreck and the rest is about the father and one Antipholus and Dromio looking for the other. Comedy can be described as having six key concepts: chaos, mistaken identities, disguises, confusion, order restored in the end and also in many cases weddings in the end (or if not marriage, a serious relationship is formed at the end).

The Comedy of Errors heavily incorporates three of these key concepts; mistaken identities, confusion and chaos. The reasons *The Comedy of Errors* is the better comedy is because the Antipholuses and Dromios are constantly mixed up, nobody, not even the characters themselves really know which Dromio and Antipholus is which, and the Antipholuses are mistaken for one another, so the Dromios and other townspeople repeatedly respond to the wrong Antipholus. Based on those three reasons and when compared to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Comedy of Errors* is by far the better comedy written by Shakespeare. The first reason that *The Comedy of Errors* is the better comedy than *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is because the main characters are identical twin brothers with same name and don't even know

it. These mistaken identities are a common theme throughout the play and lead to lots of comedy.

The Syracusan Antipholus and Dromio are in pursuit of their long-lost twin brothers in Ephesus, but are unaware of the fact they ironically share the same name as their respective twin. The director of the play we saw did a good job of distinguishing the two sets of twins by having the Syracuse pair wear pink stripes and the Ephesus pair wear green stripes. This interpretation by the director really helped as an audience member because the actors playing the Antipholuses had an uncanny resemblance, and this made me understand the difficulty the other characters dealt with when seeing the Antipholuses. This understanding made me realize that the characters being mistaken for one another set up perfectly for comedy. This was evident early in the play when the Syracusan Antipholus beat on the Ephesusan Dromio and when Dromio called out Antipholus for the beating, he was talking to the Ephesusan Antipholus and he had no clue what Dromio was talking about because he didn't commit the foul.

This scene was very funny and started the play out on a good note. Mistaken identities are very common throughout The Comedy of Errors and are one reason it is the better of the Shakespearean comedies. Another reason that The Comedy of Errors is the better comedy is because no characters ever know which Antipholus or Dromio was which. Other than physical comedy, confusion is the easiest comedy to understand. Even preschoolers understand confusion and they love to see their parents or teachers looking clueless. Shakespeare uses confusion a lot in The Comedy of Errors and uses it well.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-better-comedy-of-errors/>

At every point in the play there is at least one character confused out of their mind and this leads to great comedy. A very funny part in the play is when the Ephesusan Antipholus asks the Ephesusan Dromio to get him a rope, and at the same time the Syracusan Antipholus asks the Syracusan Dromio to get him his gold coins. When the Ephesusan Dromio returns heroically with a rope, he presents it to the Syracusan Antipholus, but he is angered because he is expecting the gold coins. Then the Syracusan Dromio also returns heroically with the gold coins and presents them to the Ephesusan Antipholus, but he too gets angered because he is expecting the rope. This is very funny because neither Dromio realizes they are presenting the items to the wrong Antipholus while the crowd does and this is a good example of dramatic irony.

Overall, with confusion sprinkled everywhere throughout the entire play, *The Comedy of Errors* is the better comedy than *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The third reason that *The Comedy of Errors* is the better comedy written by Shakespeare is because there is tons of chaos. Physical humor is the cheapest humor, there is and this isn't a bad thing, it simply means that anyone can comprehend it. But, on the same token, physical humor can be funnier than any joke a professional writer could come up with. Just ask Charlie Chaplin, he made a career out of it, and Shakespeare does a great job of creating chaos in his comedies, which lead to many laughs by the audience. The funniest part of the play is very chaotic and that is when the Ephesusan Antipholus goes to his house and he can't get in because the door is locked.

Little do they know, the Ephesusan Antipholus' wife is inside with the Syracusan Antipholus, without knowing she is with her husband's charming, long-lost twin brother. Everyone outside is very confused, so chaos ensues and Dromio begins to be thrown around like a rag doll and at one point is used as a human battering ram. These stunts, physical humor, and chaos make The Comedy of Errors as funny as it is. In addition, another very funny part in The Comedy of Errors the Syracusan Antipholus is arrested and he is being chased around the stage by the police and by a craftsmen looking for the money he is owed. At the same time, the Ephesusan Antipholus is being chased around by the male actor dressed as a woman (a reason in itself why this play was the better comedy than A Midsummer Night's Dream, but also a nice tip-of-the-cap to Shakespearean times, by the director of the version we saw, when female actresses were prohibited in theatre, so males had to play female characters). This was the part of the rendition we saw where the play really benefited from being in the round.

There were characters running on and off the stage and they were constantly crossing paths to the point where we as audience members didn't know who was chasing who. These scenes exemplified chaos and extremely action-packed and chaotic, but also extremely funny. Just another why, The Comedy of Errors is the better comedy over A Midsummer Night's Dream. Other than the reasons just stated as why The Comedy of Errors is the better comedy than A Midsummer Night's Dream, there are a few reasons why A Midsummer Night's Dream is the lesser comedy. For one, Shakespeare tries to blend romance and comedy together, which does create a great play, but

takes away some of its value as a comedy. Moreover, part of comedic value is lost in the fairies.

Yes, Titania, Oberon, Puck, and the fairies are good plot-driving characters, but they lack memorable quotes that when reading the text and one could laugh out loud because they're so funny. Plus, too much of their presence are dedicated to watching the effect their magical herb has on the lovers. This brings me to my next point. When Lysander and Demetrius begin to love Helena, the play shifts from a comedy to a tragedy, and the audience begins to feel bad for Helena because she believes she is being mocked by the two men and starts feeling bad about herself. With all this in mind and the funniest parts in A Midsummer Night's Dream being the mechanical scenes, which only pop up three times in the play, The Comedy of Errors is clearly the better comedy of the two.

In conclusion, after studying both The Comedy of Errors and A Midsummer Night's Dream in class this year, The Comedy of Errors reigns as the funnier and better comedy written by Shakespeare. The Comedy of Errors is the better of the two comedies for three reasons: the Antipholuses and Dromios are constantly mixed up, nobody, not even the characters themselves really know which Dromio and Antipholus is which, and the Antipholuses are mistaken for one another, so the Dromios and other townspeople repeatedly respond to the wrong Antipholus.