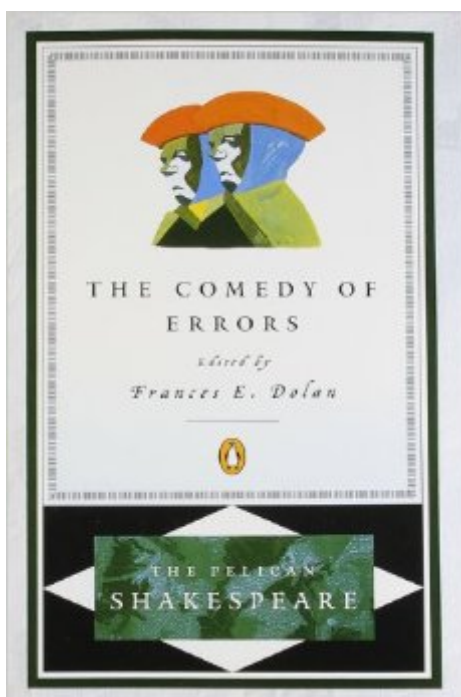


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# The Comedy Of Errors (The Pelican Shakespeare)



## Synopsis

The acclaimed Pelican Shakespeare series edited by A. R. Braunmuller and Stephen Orgel. The legendary Pelican Shakespeare series features authoritative and meticulously researched texts paired with scholarship by renowned Shakespeareans. Each book includes an essay on the theatrical world of Shakespeare's time, an introduction to the individual play, and a detailed note on the text used. Updated by general editors Stephen Orgel and A. R. Braunmuller, these easy-to-read editions incorporate over thirty years of Shakespeare scholarship undertaken since the original series, edited by Alfred Harbage, appeared between 1956 and 1967. With definitive texts and illuminating essays, the Pelican Shakespeare will remain a valued resource for students, teachers, and theater professionals for many years to come. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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## Customer Reviews

One of the problems that great artists present to us is where to begin in getting to know their works. Their masterworks are often so full of what they have spent a lifetime developing that most of it is lost on those who have not yet put in a significant amount of effort becoming familiar with that artist's style and means of expression. Yet, if one begins with their apprentice works one may

become discouraged because they lack the miracles of the masterworks. So, where does one begin? Shakespeare offers the reader an additional challenge of an English that is removed in style and idiom from us by 400 years. It is not an insurmountable challenge. In fact, it is quite easy to overcome with a bit of time reading it and getting into the flow. It just seems strange in the beginning, but it really does become easy to read once you spend some time with it. However, getting over that small hill has kept many from enjoying the glories of Shakespeare. This play, "The Comedy of Errors", is clearly an early work. It has many virtues, but despite them it does not offer much of what we really value in Shakespeare. It is a very fine play and is constructed very well. It is a wonderful first work to read of Shakespeare because it is short and has a very simple plot. The new reader does not have to spend much effort contemplating characters or the immense subtlety of language of the great works. Its charms are direct and what it has to offer is pretty much on the surface of the words. The plot is, like all farces, ridiculous. It involves twin brothers who are served by twin slaves. They are separated early in life and when the play opens one set does not know the other exists.

Along with "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Comedy of Errors" remains my favorite comedy to this day. While this is a hilarious play, the story actually starts quite sad. A merchant from Syracuse named Egeon is illegally in Ephesus, and will be executed unless he can come up with 1,000 marks. He appeals to the Duke and explains that he has been separated from his wife, his two identical twin sons (Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse), and their 2 identical twin servants (Dromio of Ephesus and Dromio of Syracuse). Yes, it DOES pass plausibility that twins would have identical names, but the confusion to come can only occur if the names match. So, we have to be willing to forgive this if we are to enjoy the merry comedy to come. The Duke is moved into sympathy, and gives Egeon the day to come up with 1,000 marks. There are some who feel this sad scene ruins the story, but the truth is this one bit of sadness prevents the comedy from becoming an utter farce. Also, despite the comedy to come, this sad scene sets the mood, we really never forget about this one serious element, and we enjoy the comedy as we are in suspense about Egeon's fate. Well, in comes Antipholus of Syracuse and his servant Dromio of Syracuse. We learn that Egeon was speaking of them. (A Syracuse and D Syracuse grew up with Egeon.) What makes this comedy so wonderful is that not only does Shakespeare maintain the comedy, but he gradually increases the tension. At FIRST, the errors only lead to comical misunderstandings. But later, more outside parties get involved, and the situations grow more serious. Later, Antipholus of Ephesus suspects his wife is having an affair. (And in my opinion, he had stronger grounds for suspecting this

than the so called noble Othello.

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