

A Comedy of Errors or Everyone's A Twinner

By

adapted by David Muncaster

from a play by some bloke called William Shakespeare

2014

davidmuncaster.com

Cast of Characters

<u>Jenny</u> :	A wealthy townswoman
<u>Penny</u> :	Her twin - lost at sea
<u>Sally</u> :	Jenny's servant
<u>Ali</u> :	Penny's servant and Sally's twin - Lost at sea
<u>Tom</u> :	Jenny's husband
<u>Dom</u> :	Tom's brother - a bachelor
<u>Milly</u> :	Narrator
<u>Tilly</u> :	Narrator

ACT I

Scene 1

The characters line up across the stage in the order that they speak. PENNY and JENNY should look alike as should ALI and SALLY and these the twins should be dressed identically. Likeness is less crucial for the other sets of twins.

PENNY:
I'm Penny.

JENNY:
I'm Jenny.

LILY:
I'm Lily.

TOM:
I'm Tom.

SALLY:
I'm Sally.

ALI:
I'm Ali.

DOM:
I'm Dom.

TILLY:
I'm Tilly.

ALL:
Wrong Order!

The characters re-arrange themselves.

PENNY:
I'm Penny.

JENNY:
I'm Jenny.

LILY:
I'm Lily.

TOM:
I'm Tom.

(CONTINUED)

SALLY:

I'm Sally.

ALI:

I'm Ali.

TILLY:

I'm Tilly.

DOM:

I'm Dom.

PENNY:

We're here to tell you of the journey we've been on,

JENNY:

We six girls,

TOM:

And Tom,

DOM:

And Dom.

TILLY:

Hang on, Tommah doesn't rhyme with onnah.

LILY:

We've got a situation here.

ALI:

Oh, keep you're knickers on; this is hardly Shakespeare.

PENNY:

This is the story of a merchant who's name,

JENNY:

Doesn't rhyme with anything.

LILY:

Anyway, he came,

TOM:

To this village with a tale to tell.

SALLY:

And a load of fruit and veg that he intended to sell.

ALI:

So, on Market Day he set up his stall,

TILLY:

but the other traders didn't like this,

DOM:

Not at all.

PENNY:

"He doesn't have a trading licence" they complained
bitterly,

JENNY:

"I have a driving licence" he replied, wittily.

LILY:

The local council didn't find this very funny,

TOM:

They sell the licences and they cost lots of money.

SALLY:

So, as they prepared to execute him,

ALI:

Bit harsh!

TILLY:

He told them a sad story,

DOM:

to which they are parsh-

ALI:

-al.

PENNY:

Many years ago he set off on a voyage,

JENNY:

Him, his wife, their slaves and twin daughters.

PENNY:

It started OK,

JENNY:

But they soon hit stormy waters.

TOM:

He lashed himself to the mast with one daughter,

PENNY:

Penny.

TOM:

And one slave,

ALI:

Ali.

DOM:

Whilst his wife and the other daughter,

JENNY:

Jenny.

DOM:

And slave,

SALLY:

Sally.

DOM:

Were rescued but never seen again.

*Pause whilst characters wait for someone to take
the lead. Eventually -*

LILY:

Then.

TILLY:

Years later Penny set off to find her sister,

LILY:

But she didn't return, and the old merchant missed her,

TILLY:

He came here to look for her and our story begins,

LILY:

With Penny's arrival. So we'll be back in a few mins.

*All the characters leave the stage. After a moment
PENNY and ALI return.*

PENNY:

Aha! So this is <local place>. Just as I imagined it.

ALI:

As bad as that? Can we sit down for a bit.

PENNY:

I'm sorry, Ali, no. There are things to be done,
and that's not going to happen with you sat on your
bum.

(CONTINUED)

ALI:

What evs. OK, what can I do?
You know that I live only to please you.

PENNY:

Take some money and find us a room for the night,
we must sleep well for tomorrow we fight!

ALI:

Eh?

PENNY:

Er. I mean we start looking for Jenny.

ALI:

I see. Fear not, my mistress, I will find us a bed,
Somewhere you can rest your pretty little head.

ALI exits with PENNY's purse.

PENNY:

Sometimes that girl drives me out of my mind
If I'd had any sense, I'd have left her behind.

SALLY enters.

SALLY:

Ah, there you are I've been looking all over.

PENNY:

But I haven't moved. I'm not one to rover.

SALLY:

Rover?

PENNY:

Appalling isn't it? Anyway, have you got us a room? You
were very quick. Is there an inn nearby?

SALLY:

Are you taking the mick?

PENNY:

What is this insolence? Remember who I am!

SALLY:

Look. Are you coming home? He's done peas and ham.

PENNY:

It seems that you have finally lost your mind.
Give me back my purse. A room, myself, I will find.

(CONTINUED)

SALLY:

Oh, I get it. You're drunk, my mistress. Or, perhaps, worse,
Why on earth would I have your purse?
Now, you'd better come home - your husband is waiting,
You've no idea of the havoc you're creating.

PENNY:

That does it. I've heard enough cheek,
I'll beat you so hard you won't sit for a week.

PENNY chases SALLY around and eventually off the stage. TOM is sitting at home. SALLY storms in.

TOM:

At last, I thought you'd never come back.
But where is Jenny? My wife you lack.

SALLY:

Oh, Master there is something wrong with that madam,
she claims that she doesn't know you from Adam.

TOM:

What is this? Is she playing with my heart?
Perhaps she thinks that it is time we should part.

SALLY:

Oh no, Master. Please don't jump to conclusions.
I'm sure it is just a matter of confusions.

TOM:

Nonsense. I will not be made a fool.
In this house there is only room for one person to rule.

SALLY makes a face to suggest that she knows who that is and it isn't TOM. Meanwhile, PENNY returns to the place she was before. ALI enters.

ALI:

Excellent news: I've found us a place,
bed, board: it's really quite ace,
and to make you smile as you're counting your sheep,
You'll be pleased to know it's absolutely dirt cheap!

PENNY:

You have a nerve coming back so soon,
I'll show you what I think of your dirt cheap room.

PENNY begins to chase a bewildered ALI around the stage when they are both stopped in their tracks by the entrance of TOM.

TOM:

My dear, my sweet, please act your age,
tell me why are you in such a rage.

PENNY:

What has it got to do with you, stranger?
Leave us alone or you'll put yourself in danger.

TOM:

My darling, you are breaking my heart,
don't tell me that you want us to part.

PENNY:

Well, that was the idea, if you don't mind,
Hurry along now, if you'd be so kind.

TOM:

Oh woe! Please don't do this to me,
I beg of you, hear my plea!

PENNY:

Hang on, hang on. What are you on about,
(to ALI) Whoever this is, he's a fruitcake, no doubt.

TOM:

Your servant...

ALI:

Me?

TOM:

Said that you wouldn't come home?

ALI:

I did?

TOM:

And now you say you wish to be alone.

PENNY:

That's true.

TOM:

But I can't let you go after so many years,

PENNY:

Years?

TOM:

Please tell me that things are not as they appear. s.

PENNY:

I cannot begin to understand this matter,
to me you seem as mad as a hatter,
but if you're offering food and two beds,
we might as well accept and get a few zeds.

TOM:

Oh, thank you, my sweet. You will not regret,
soon all these thoughts of leaving, you'll forget.

PENNY:

You'll behave?

TOM:

I promise.

PENNY:

I don't even know your name.

TOM:

Of course you do. It's Thomis!

*The three of them leave and arrive at TOM's house.
TOM and PENNY sit down for a meal whilst ALI keeps
guard sitting inside the door. Outside of the door
JENNY arrives with SALLY.*

JENNY:

Come, Sally, it's been a long day

SALLY attempts to open the door but it is locked.

SALLY:

It is locked.

JENNY:

Oh, get out of me way.

Yep, it is definitely locked.

JENNY:

You're right. I suppose you'd better knock.

SALLY:

Don't you have a key for the lock?

JENNY:

Oh of course, I never thought of that.
Perhaps my key is under the mat.

There is no mat.

JENNY:

Just do as I say or we'll be here all night,
and I'm half starved: in need of a bite.

SALLY knocks on the door. ALI calls from within.

ALI:

Who is it, who's knocking, who's there?

SALLY:

Who on earth are you and what are you doing in there?

ALI:

Well, that's for me to know and for you to find out.

JENNY:

Open this door before I give you a clout.

ALI:

Ooh, I like to see you try through a big wooden door,
now do run along; you are beginning to bore.

SALLY:

(To JENNY) I could climb through a window, you'll have
the last laugh.

JENNY:

Oh, forget it. We'll eat at the cafe (pronounced caff).

*JENNY and SALLY exit. PENNY and TOM are eating.
DOM enters.*

DOM:

Aha. I see I have impeccable timing,
I walk in just as you are dining.

TOM:

OK bruv; you can pull up a chair,
you might as well join us

DOM:

It's only fair.

PENNY:

(Who is obviously somewhat taken with DOM) Well hello,
why don't you come sit by me?

DOM:

Um, OK

PENNY:

Come closer. I don't want to let you get away.

(CONTINUED)

TOM:

Ahem. I'm still here if you hadn't noticed,
sit by me, Dom.

PENNY:

Oh no, I protest (pronounced protist).
This surely is the most handsome of men.

TOM:

But I am your husband!

PENNY:

Oh, that again.

TOM:

Why must you treat me so unkindly?
Don't you know that I love you blindly?

PENNY:

Oh, I wish the same could be said of me,
but sadly for you, I can see!

DOM:

I think it's probably best if I went (*he does*).

PENNY:

Now see what you've done. I was in there,
one hundred percent.

TOM:

That's enough. You will go to your room,
you can stay locked in there until I'm in my tomb.

PENNY:

Not likely, I don't like your game, mister,
I think I'd better look elsewhere for my sister.

PENNY escapes dragging ALI with her.

ALI:

What? I was just about to have a snooze.

PENNY:

We must leave, there's no time to lose.

ALI:

Oh, come on. Let me go to my bed.

PENNY:

Do that and we'll both wind up dead.
Whoever that guy is he's round the twist,
we must go. I insist.

(CONTINUED)

ALI:
All right, all right. But where shall we go?

PENNY:
You decide.

ALI:
How should I know?

PENNY:
Just find us some transport. Anything will do.
Whatever you can find. I leave it up to you.
I'll wait for you here, and don't be long,
Off you go then. Run along!

*ALI exits. PENNY is looking for a place to hide
when she is accosted by TILLY who has a gold chain
that she claims PENNY ordered.*

TILLY:
Oh, what good fortune that I should meet,
the very person I'm coming to see right here, in the
street.

PENNY:
You were coming to see me?

TILLY:
I have your gold chain.

PENNY:
My gold... Oh I see.

*PENNY is working out how to use the situation to
her advantage.*

PENNY:
Tell me. I forget. Did I pay you a deposit?

TILLY:
A depos.. Oh, you are a wit,
You're the most respectable lady in town,
I'm hardly going to ask you to put something down.

PENNY:
It's a rather nice chain. Pure gold is it?

TILLY:
Twenty four carrott. Isn't it exquisite?

PENNY:
Very well. *(She puts it in her pocket)* I'll pay you
tomorrow.

TILLY:

Ah. Madam. It is with great sorrow...

PENNY:

What?

TILLY:

If it was up to me, I'd happily delay,
but I'm afraid that I must have the money today.

PENNY:

Oh, very well. So much for being respectable.

TILLY:

It's just with the chain being so delectable.

PENNY:

Yeah, yeah. Whatever you say,
you're like all the rest; you just want your pay.
Don't worry. I shall re-imburse.
Just turn your back whilst I get out my purse.

*TILLY turns her back and PENNY scarpers. When
TILLY eventually turns round she looks about her
until it finally dawns on her what has happened at
which point she runs off yelling "Stop thief" etc.*

JENNY and SALLY enter.

JENNY:

Right. Now that our hunger has abated,
we must face the moment for which we have waited.
I must have revenge; read my lips,
it is my husband, Tom, who has had his chips.
Did he think I would creep away like a mouse?
How dare he bar me from my very own house?
The time is nigh, he has no hope,
Sally! Go fetch me a rope.

SALLY:

Oh Mistress, I beg, don't act so rashly,
after all, you've had your bangers and mash. He
might have made a simple error,
there's really no need for all this terror.

JENNY:

Be off with you and don't answer back,
unless you also would care for a whack!

JENNY shrieks and runs off. TILLY enters.

TILLY:

Ha! You thought I'd fell for your trick,
sorry to disappoint, but I ain't that thick.
You might think that you are just being funny,
but I don't. So give me my money.

JENNY:

I'm sorry, but will you kindly explain?
I've happily pay you when you give me the chain.

TILLY:

The law is plain; please don't mock it,
the chain is in your very own pocket.

JENNY:

Did you hit your head whilst playing conkers?
That might explain why you've gone bonkers.
Now run along, I've things I must do,

TILLY:

Like what?

JENNY:

Nothing to do with you.

TILLY:

I regret that your behaviour is improper,
I've no choice. I must call for a copper.

Right on cue, LILY enters in a police uniform.

LILY:

I was just passing by,
walking quite near. Then,
I thought 'ello, 'ello, 'ello,
what's going on here, then?

TILLY:

You must arrest this woman, she must be detain ned,
she is a thief and has stolen my chain ned.

JENNY:

Chain ned?

TILLY:

Shut up.

LILY:

Well, if this is to be a matter of litigation,
I suggest we go down and sort it out at the station.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY:

This is too much, my patience is tested,
are you telling me that I'm being arrested?

TILLY:

You patience is quite an irrelevance.

LILY:

Anything you say will be taken down and may be used in
evidence.

ALI enters.

ALI:

All sorted. We sail in an hour,
(*noticing LILY*) Oh dear. Have things turned a little
sour?

TILLY:

Aha. I see your scheme starting to take shape,
you planed to steal the chain and make your escape.

JENNY:

(*To ALI*) The whole world has gone utterly mad,
I need some cash to send her (*LILY*) back to her pad.

TILLY:

(*To audience*) Lily pad you see? Oh never mind.

ALI:

Where am I going to find any cash?

JENNY:

My house!

ALI:

Your house? Isn't that a bit rash.
Have you forgotten we live over the seas?
Not somewhere I can nip back to with ease.

JENNY:

I'll swing for you, I will, I swear.
My house is standing right there!

ALI:

Um. OK. Er, what ever you say.
I'll be right back, um, straight away.

ALI runs off.

LILY:

Well, isn't it all just going swell?
Come on. I'm putting you in a cell.

JENNY:

Wait. She'll be back in half a mo,
I'll pay my bail and you'll let me go.

TILLY:

If I were you I wouldn't trust her,
that girl might come back with a knuckle duster.

JENNY:

Then take me to your commander in chief,
we'll soon find out which of us is the thief.
For, where is this chain, can you see it?
If you've given it to me then where be it?

LILY:

She's got a point.

JENNY:

(Sneering at TILLY) Sorry to disappoint.

LILY:

I agree, I won't put you in jail,
if your servant returns with the bail.
I will get to the bottom of this crime,
and find out which of you should be doing time.

JENNY:

I'm glad that you've finally seen sense,
because I am confident of my innocence.
And now you need have no more concerns
for I see that my servant returns.

SALLY enters with some rope behind her back.

JENNY:

Did you get it?

SALLY:

Yes I did.

JENNY:

(Jolly) I knew you'd net it.
That's splendid.
So hand it over, let's get this sorted,
no longer do I need to be escorted.

SALLY hands JENNY the rope.

JENNY:

What's this?

SALLY:

Rope.

JENNY:

You dope!
My need of rope was no longer essential,
the supply of cash was more providential!

LILY:

You posh types are always the same,
come on; I've had enough of this game.
I know how to make all this plop stop,
I'm taking the lot of you all down the cop shop.

*LILY, TILLY, JENNY and SALLY all exit. From the
opposite side of the stage PENNY enters.*

PENNY:

This chain is pure gold, I have no doubt,
but we must flee before I'm found out.
Ah, here she comes, I hope with the news
that we will soon be taking a cruise.

ALI enters.

ALI:

Well, I have it though it wasn't easy,
that man can be decidedly measly.
Your "wife" has been arrested, I told him quite
clearly,
and all he said was, "oh really".

PENNY:

I will be arrested if I get caught,
so come on, where's the transport?

ALI:

Transport? Are you trying to be funny?
You sent me off to get you some money.

PENNY:

Money is useful I cannot dispute,
but our need to move on is much more acute.
Please will you go and find us a ride,
Someone's coming. I must hide.

*PENNY secretes herself somewhere on stage whilst
ALI exits. There will be some business with ALI
and SALLY entering and exiting, running across the
stage but never on the stage at the same time
until they eventually enter from opposite sides
and bump into each other. PENNY watches in
amazement as ALI and SALLY work out who they are.*

(CONTINUED)

SALLY:

You're Ali!

ALI:

You're Sally!

SALLY:

My, oh my!

ALI:

I thought you were dead.

SALLY:

So did I.

ALI:

You thought you were dead?

SALLY:

No, me you.

ALI:

Ah yes. Me too.

SALLY:

I'm so happy.

ALI:

I'm elated.

SALLY:

It is time.

ALI:

We celebrated.

*ALI and SALLY embrace. PENNY comes out of her
hiding place.*

PENNY:

To see you two together at last,
brings back such happy memories of past,
but now that you've found you sister so dear,
I wonder; could my sister be near?

SALLY:

Why yes, she lives just there,
in that house,
together with me and Tom,
her spouse.

TOM enters.

TOM:

(To PENNY) Oh there you are,
now you're in trouble.
(Seeing ALI and SALLY) What's this?
Am I seeing double?

PENNY:

Listen, before you start making a stink,
let me explain. It's not what you think.
Poor Jenny, think how you dissed her,
but I am not she, I am her sister.

TOM:

You're Penny?

PENNY:

Not Jenny.

TOM:

My, oh my!
I thought you were dead.

PENNY:

So did I.

TOM:

You thought you were dead?

PENNY:

No, not me, you fool.

TOM:

Oh. You're sister. My precious jewel!
My angel, my darling, my harvest moon,
my beautiful diamond.

SALLY:

You've changed you tune!

TOM:

I cannot deny, my heart is mended,
and here she comes!

PENNY:

Oh, splendid!

JENNY enters.

JENNY:

You're Penny!

PENNY:

You're Jenny!

JENNY:

I thought you were dead.

SALLY:

Oh, not again.

ALI:

Just take it as read.

The twins embrace. TILLY and LILY enter.

TILLY:

And so, at last, the mystery was solved.

LILY:

The twins re-united

TILLY:

Their arguments resolved.

LILY:

Jenny and Tom were back with each other.

DOM enters.

TILLY:

Whilst Penny got herself hitched to Thomas's brother.

DOM and PENNY embrace.

LILY:

Oh yes, and that merchant,

TILLY:

Jen and Pen's father.

LILY:

Of whom you've probably forgotten.

TILLY:

Got his market stall.

LILY:

He was no longer verboten.

PENNY:

I'm Penny.

JENNY:

I'm Jenny.

LILY:

I'm Lily.

TOM:

I'm Tom.

SALLY:

I'm Sally.

ALI:

I'm Ali.

TILLY:

I'm Tilly.

DOM:

I'm Dom.

TILLY:

Our journey is over.

LILY:

Despite all the confusion.

TILLY:

We managed to get here.

LILY:

We've reached our conclusion.

TILLY:

I hope you enjoyed it.

LILY:

I think I heard laughter.

TILLY:

And of course everyone

ALL:

Lived happily ever after.