
THE TRAGEDY OF CORIOLANUS (1608)



by William Shakespeare

Styled by LimpidSoft

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John Redmond Sydney, Australia

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CAIUS MARCIUS, afterwards CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS

Generals against the Volscians

TITUS LARTIUS

COMINIUS

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, friend to Coriolanus

Tribunes of the People

SICINIUS VELUTUS

JUNIUS BRUTUS

YOUNG MARCIUS, son to Coriolanus

A ROMAN HERALD

NICANOR, a Roman

TULLUS AUFIDIUS, General of the Volscians

LIEUTENANT, to Aufidius

CONSPIRATORS, With Aufidius

ADRIAN, a Volscian

A CITIZEN of Antium

TWO VOLSCIAN GUARDS

VOLUMNIA, mother to Coriolanus

VIRGILIA, wife to Coriolanus

VALERIA, friend to Virgilia

GENTLEWOMAN attending on Virgilia

Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Aediles, Lictors,

Soldiers, Citizens, Messengers, Servants to Aufidius, and other Attendants

ACT I

ROME AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD;
CORIOLI AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD;
ANTIUM

SCENE I

Rome. A street. Enter a company of mutinous citizens, with staves, clubs, and other weapons

FIRST CITIZEN Before we proceed any further, hear me speak

ALL Speak, speak

FIRST CITIZEN YOU are all resolv'd rather to die than to famish?

ALL Resolv'd, resolv'd

FIRST CITIZEN First, you know Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people

ALL We know't, we know't

FIRST CITIZEN Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price

ALL No more talking on't; let it be done

SECOND CITIZEN One word, good citizens

FIRST CITIZEN We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good

What authority surfeits on would relieve us; if they would yield us but the superfluity while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely; but they think we are too dear. The leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularize their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them. Let us revenge this with our pikes ere we become rakes; for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge.

SECOND CITIZEN Would you proceed especially against Caius Marcius?

FIRST CITIZEN Against him first; he's a very dog to the commonalty.

SECOND CITIZEN Consider you what services he has done for his country?

FIRST CITIZEN Very well, and could be content to give him good report for't but that he pays himself with being proud.

SECOND CITIZEN Nay, but speak not maliciously

FIRST CITIZEN I say unto you, what he hath done famously he did it to that end; though

soft-conscienc'd men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother and to be partly proud, which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue.

SECOND CITIZEN What he cannot help in his nature you account a vice in him. You must in no way say he is covetous.

FIRST CITIZEN If I must not, I need not be barren of accusations; he hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition. *Shouts within* What shouts are these? The other side o' th' city is risen. Why stay we prating here? To th' Capitol!

ALL Come, come

FIRST CITIZEN Soft! who comes here?

Enter MENENIUS AGRIPPA

SECOND CITIZEN Worthy Menenius Agrippa; one that hath always lov'd the people.

FIRST CITIZEN He's one honest enough; would all the rest were so!

MENENIUS What work's, my countrymen, in hand? Where go you With bats and clubs? The matter? Speak, I pray you.

FIRST CITIZEN Our business is not unknown to th' Senate; they have had inkling this fortnight what we intend to do, which now we'll show 'em in deeds. They say poor suitors have strong breaths; they shall know we have strong arms too.

MENENIUS Why, masters, my good friends, mine honest neighbours, Will you undo yourselves?

FIRST CITIZEN We cannot, sir; we are undone already

MENENIUS I tell you, friends, most charitable care Have the patricians of you. For your wants, Your suffering in this dearth, you may as well Strike at the heaven with your staves as lift them Against the Roman state; whose course will on The way it takes, cracking ten thousand curbs Of more strong link asunder than can ever Appear in your impediment. For the dearth, The gods, not the patricians, make it, and Your knees to them, not arms, must help. Alack, You are transported by calamity Thither where more attends you; and you slander The helms o' th' state, who care for you like fathers, When you curse them as enemies.

FIRST CITIZEN Care for us! True, indeed! They ne'er car'd for us yet. Suffer us to famish, and

their storehouses cramm'd with grain; make edicts for usury, to support usurers; repeal daily any wholesome act established against the rich, and provide more piercing statutes daily to chain up and restrain the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they will; and there's all the love they bear us.

MENENIUS Either you must Confess yourselves wondrous malicious, Or be accus'd of folly. I shall tell you A pretty tale. It may be you have heard it; But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture To stale't a little more.

FIRST CITIZEN Well, I'll hear it, sir; yet you must not think to fob off our disgrace with a tale. But, an't please you, deliver.

MENENIUS There was a time when all the body's members
Rebell'd against the belly; thus accus'd it:
That only like a gulf it did remain
I' th' midst o' th' body, idle and unactive,
Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing
Like labour with the rest; where th' other
instruments
Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel,
And, mutually participate, did minister
Unto the appetite and affection common
Of the whole body. The belly answer'd—

FIRST CITIZEN Well, sir, what answer made the belly?

MENENIUS Sir, I shall tell you
Which ne'er came from the lungs, but even thus—
For look you, I may make the belly smile
As well as speak—it tauntingly replied
To th' discontented members, the mutinous parts
That envied his receipt; even so most fitly
As you malign our senators for that
They are not such as you.

FIRST CITIZEN Your belly's answer—What?
The kingly crowned head, the vigilant eye,
The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,
With other muniments and petty helps
Is this our fabric, if that they—

MENENIUS What then?
Fore me, this fellow speaks! What then? What then?

FIRST CITIZEN Should by the cormorant belly
be restrain'd,
Who is the sink o' th' body—

MENENIUS Well, what then?

FIRST CITIZEN The former agents, if they did complain,
What could the belly answer?

MENENIUS I will tell you;
If you'll bestow a small—of what you have little—
Patience awhile, you'st hear the belly's answer.

FIRST CITIZEN Y'are long about it

MENENIUS Note me this, good friend:
Your most grave belly was deliberate,
Not rash like his accusers, and thus answered.

'True is it, my incorporate friends,' quoth he
'That I receive the general food at first
Which you do live upon; and fit it is,
Because I am the storehouse and the shop
Of the whole body. But, if you do remember,
I send it through the rivers of your blood,
Even to the court, the heart, to th' seat o' th'
brain;
And, through the cranks and offices of man,
The strongest nerves and small inferior veins
From me receive that natural competency
Whereby they live. And though that all at once
You, my good friends'—this says the belly; mark
me.

FIRST CITIZEN Ay, sir; well, well

MENENIUS 'Though all at once cannot
See what I do deliver out to each,
Yet I can make my audit up, that all
From me do back receive the flour of all,
And leave me but the bran.' What say you to' t?

FIRST CITIZEN It was an answer

MENENIUS The senators of Rome are this good
belly,
And you the mutinous members; for, examine
Their counsels and their cares, digest things
rightly
Touching the weal o' th' common, you shall find
No public benefit which you receive
But it proceeds or comes from them to you,
And no way from yourselves. What do you think,
You, the great toe of this assembly?

FIRST CITIZEN I the great toe? Why the great
toe?

MENENIUS For that, being one o' th' lowest,
basest, poorest,
Of this most wise rebellion, thou goest foremost.
Thou rascal, that art worst in blood to run,
Lead'st first to win some vantage.
But make you ready your stiff bats and clubs.
Rome and her rats are at the point of battle;
The one side must have bale.

Enter CAIUS MARCIUS

Hail, noble Marcius!

MARCIUS Thanks
That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
Make yourselves scabs?

FIRST CITIZEN We have ever your good word

MARCIUS He that will give good words to thee
will flatter
Beneath abhorring. What would you have, you
curs,
That like nor peace nor war? The one affrights
you,
The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,
Where he should find you lions, finds you hares;
Where foxes, geese; you are no surer, no,
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice
Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is
To make him worthy whose offence subdues him,
And curse that justice did it. Who deserves
greatness
Deserves your hate; and your affections are

A sick man's appetite, who desires most that
Which would increase his evil. He that depends
Upon your favours swims with fins of lead,
And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye!
Trust ye?
With every minute you do change a mind
And call him noble that was now your hate,
Him vile that was your garland. What's the matter
That in these several places of the city
You cry against the noble Senate, who,
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else
Would feed on one another? What's their
seeking?

MENENIUS

For corn at their own rates, whereof they say
The city is well stor'd.

MARCIUS Hang 'em! They say!

They'll sit by th' fire and presume to know
What's done i' th' Capitol, who's like to rise,
Who thrives and who declines; side factions, and
give out
Conjectural marriages, making parties strong,
And feebling such as stand not in their liking
Below their cobbled shoes. They say there's grain
enough!
Would the nobility lay aside their ruth
And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry
With thousands of these quarter'd slaves, as high
As I could pick my lance.

MENENIUS Nay, these are almost thoroughly
persuaded;

For though abundantly they lack discretion,
Yet are they passing cowardly. But, I beseech
you,
What says the other troop?

MARCIUS They are dissolv'd

They said they were an-hungry; sigh'd forth
proverbs—
That hunger broke stone walls, that dogs must
eat,
That meat was made for mouths, that the gods
sent not
Corn for the rich men only. With these shreds
They vented their complainings; which being
answer'd,
And a petition granted them—a strange one,
To break the heart of generosity
And make bold power look pale—they threw their
caps
As they would hang them on the horns o' th'
moon,
Shouting their emulation.

MENENIUS What is granted them?

MARCIUS Five tribunes, to defend their vulgar
wisdoms,
Of their own choice. One's Junius Brutus—
Sicinius Velutus, and I know not. 'Sdeath!
The rabble should have first unroof'd the city
Ere so prevail'd with me; it will in time
Win upon power and throw forth greater themes
For insurrection's arguing.

MENENIUS This is strange

MARCIUS Go get you home, you fragments

Enter a MESSENGER, hastily

MESSENGER Where's Caius Marcius?

MARCIUS Here

MESSENGER The news is, sir, the Volsces are in
arms

MARCIUS

I am glad on't; then we shall ha' means to vent
Our musty superfluity. See, our best elders.
*Enter COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, with other
SENATORS; JUNIUS BRUTUS and SICINIUS
VELUTUS*

FIRST SENATOR Marcius, 'tis true that you have
lately told us:
The Volsces are in arms.

MARCIUS They have a leader,
Tullus Aufidius, that will put you to't.
I sin in envying his nobility;
And were I anything but what I am,
I would wish me only he.

COMINIUS You have fought together?

MARCIUS Were half to half the world by th' ears,
and he
Upon my party, I'd revolt, to make
Only my wars with him. He is a lion
That I am proud to hunt.

FIRST SENATOR Then, worthy Marcius,
Attend upon Cominius to these wars.

COMINIUS It is your former promise

MARCIUS Sir, it is;
And I am constant. Titus Lartius, thou
Shalt see me once more strike at Tullus' face.
What, art thou stiff? Stand'st out?

LARTIUS No, Caius Marcius;
I'll lean upon one crutch and fight with t' other
Ere stay behind this business.

MENENIUS O, true bred!

FIRST SENATOR Your company to th' Capitol;
where, I know,
Our greatest friends attend us.

LARTIUS *To COMINIUS* Lead you on
To MARCIUS Follow Cominius; we must follow
you;
Right worthy you priority.

COMINIUS Noble Marcius!

FIRST SENATOR *To the Citizens* Hence to your
homes; be gone

MARCIUS Nay, let them follow
The Volsces have much corn: take these rats
thither
To gnaw their garner. Worshipful mutineers,
Your valour puts well forth; pray follow.
Citizens steal away. Exeunt all but SICINIUS and
BRUTUS

SICINIUS Was ever man so proud as is this
Marcius?

BRUTUS He has no equal

SICINIUS When we were chosen tribunes for the

people—

BRUTUS Mark'd you his lip and eyes?

SICINIUS Nay, but his taunts!

BRUTUS Being mov'd, he will not spare to gird
the gods

SICINIUS Bemock the modest moon

BRUTUS The present wars devour him! He is
grown
Too proud to be so valiant.

SICINIUS Such a nature,
Tickled with good success, disdains the shadow
Which he treads on at noon. But I do wonder
His insolence can brook to be commanded
Under Cominius.

BRUTUS Fame, at the which he aims—
In whom already he is well grac'd—cannot
Better be held nor more attain'd than by
A place below the first; for what miscarries
Shall be the general's fault, though he perform
To th' utmost of a man, and giddy censure
Will then cry out of Marcius 'O, if he
Had borne the business!'

SICINIUS Besides, if things go well,
Opinion, that so sticks on Marcius, shall
Of his demerits rob Cominius.

BRUTUS Come
Half all Cominius' honours are to Marcius,
Though Marcius earn'd them not; and all his
faults
To Marcius shall be honours, though indeed
In aught he merit not.

SICINIUS Let's hence and hear
How the dispatch is made, and in what fashion,
More than his singularity, he goes
Upon this present action.

BRUTUS Let's along

SCENE II

Corioli. The Senate House.
Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS with SENATORS of
Corioli

FIRST SENATOR So, your opinion is, Aufidius,
That they of Rome are ent'red in our counsels
And know how we proceed.

AUFIDIUS Is it not yours?
What ever have been thought on in this state
That could be brought to bodily act ere Rome
Had circumvention? 'Tis not four days gone
Since I heard thence; these are the words—I think
I have the letter here; yes, here it is:
Reads 'They have press'd a power, but it is not
known
Whether for east or west. The dearth is great;
The people mutinous; and it is rumour'd,
Cominius, Marcius your old enemy,
Who is of Rome worse hated than of you,
And Titus Lartius, a most valiant Roman,

These three lead on this preparation
Whither 'tis bent. Most likely 'tis for you;
Consider of it.'

FIRST SENATOR Our army's in the field;
We never yet made doubt but Rome was ready
To answer us.

AUFIDIUS Nor did you think it folly
To keep your great pretences veil'd till when
They needs must show themselves; which in the
hatching,
It seem'd, appear'd to Rome. By the discovery
We shall be short'ned in our aim, which was
To take in many towns ere almost Rome
Should know we were afoot.

SECOND SENATOR Noble Aufidius,
Take your commission; hie you to your bands;
Let us alone to guard Corioli.
If they set down before's, for the remove
Bring up your army; but I think you'll find
Th' have not prepar'd for us.

AUFIDIUS O, doubt not that!
I speak from certainties. Nay more,
Some parcels of their power are forth already,
And only hitherward. I leave your honours.
If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,
'Tis sworn between us we shall ever strike
Till one can do no more.

ALL The gods assist you!

AUFIDIUS And keep your honours safe!

FIRST SENATOR Farewell

SECOND SENATOR Farewell

ALL Farewell

SCENE III

Rome. MARCIUS' house
Enter VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA, mother and
wife to MARCIUS; they set them down on two
low stools and sew

VOLUMNIA I pray you, daughter, sing, or express
yourself in a more comfortable sort. If my son
were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that
absence wherein he won honour than in the
embracements of his bed where he would show
most love. When yet he was but tender-bodied,
and the only son of my womb; when youth with
comeliness pluck'd all gaze his way; when, for a
day of kings' entreaties, a mother should not sell
him an hour from her beholding; I, considering
how honour would become such a person—that it
was no better than picture-like to hang by th'
wall, if renown made it not stir—was pleas'd to let
him seek danger where he was to find fame. To a
cruel war I sent him, from whence he return'd his
brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I
sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a
man-child than now in first seeing he had proved
himself a man.

VIRGILIA But had he died in the business,

madam, how then?

VOLUMNIA Then his good report should have been my son; I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely: had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.

Enter a GENTLEWOMAN

GENTLEWOMAN Madam, the Lady Valeria is come to visit you

VIRGILIA Beseech you give me leave to retire myself

VOLUMNIA Indeed you shall not
Methinks I hear hither your husband's drum;
See him pluck Aufidius down by th' hair;
As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning him.
Methinks I see him stamp thus, and call thus:
'Come on, you cowards! You were got in fear,
Though you were born in Rome.' His bloody brow
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes,
Like to a harvest-man that's task'd to mow
Or all or lose his hire.

VIRGILIA
His bloody brow? O Jupiter, no blood!

VOLUMNIA
Away, you fool! It more becomes a man
Than gilt his trophy. The breasts of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood
At Grecian sword, contemning. Tell Valeria
We are fit to bid her welcome.
Exit GENTLEWOMAN

VIRGILIA Heavens bless my lord from fell
Aufidius!

VOLUMNIA He'll beat Aufidius' head below his
knee And tread upon his neck.
*Re-enter GENTLEWOMAN, With VALERIA and
an usher*

VALERIA My ladies both, good day to you

VOLUMNIA Sweet madam!

VIRGILIA I am glad to see your ladyship

VALERIA How do you both? You are manifest
housekeepers you sewing here? A fine spot, in
good faith. How does your little son?

VIRGILIA I thank your ladyship; well, good
madam

VOLUMNIA He had rather see the swords and
hear a drum than look upon his schoolmaster.

VALERIA O' my word, the father's son! I'll swear
'tis a very pretty boy. O' my troth, I look'd upon
him a Wednesday half an hour together; has such
a confirm'd countenance! I saw him run after a
gilded butterfly; and when he caught it he let it go
again, and after it again, and over and over he
comes, and up again, catch'd it again; or whether
his fall enrag'd him, or how 'twas, he did so set

his teeth and tear it. O, I warrant, how he
mammock'd it!

VOLUMNIA One on's father's moods

VALERIA Indeed, la, 'tis a noble child

VIRGILIA A crack, madam

VALERIA Come, lay aside your stitchery; I must
have you play the idle huswife with me this
afternoon.

VIRGILIA No, good madam; I will not out of
doors

VALERIA Not out of doors!

VOLUMNIA She shall, she shall

VIRGILIA Indeed, no, by your patience; I'll not
over the threshold till my lord return from the
wars.

VALERIA Fie, you confine yourself most
unreasonably; come, you must go visit the good
lady that lies in.

VIRGILIA I will wish her speedy strength, and
visit her with my prayers; but I cannot go thither.

VOLUMNIA Why, I pray you?

VIRGILIA 'Tis not to save labour, nor that I want
love

VALERIA You would be another Penelope; yet
they say all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence
did but fill Ithaca full of moths. Come, I would
your cambric were sensible as your finger, that
you might leave pricking it for pity. Come, you
shall go with us.

VIRGILIA No, good madam, pardon me; indeed I
will not forth

VALERIA In truth, la, go with me; and I'll tell you
excellent news of your husband.

VIRGILIA O, good madam, there can be none yet

VALERIA Verily, I do not jest with you; there
came news from him last night.

VIRGILIA Indeed, madam?

VALERIA In earnest, it's true; I heard a senator
speak it is: the Volsces have an army forth;
against whom Cominius the general is gone, with
one part of our Roman power. Your lord and
Titus Lartius are set down before their city
Corioli; they nothing doubt prevailing and to
make it brief wars. This is true, on mine honour;
and so, I pray, go with us.

VIRGILIA Give me excuse, good madam; I will
obey you in everything hereafter.

VOLUMNIA Let her alone, lady; as she is now,
she will but disease our better mirth.

VALERIA In troth, I think she would good sweet
lady. Prithee, Virgilia, turn thy solemnness out o'
door and go along with us.

VIRGILIA No, at a word, madam; indeed I must
not mirth.

VALERIA Well then, farewell

 SCENE IV

Before Corioli

Enter MARCIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, with drum and colours, with CAPTAINS and soldiers. To them a MESSENGER

MARCIUS Yonder comes news; a wager—they have met

LARTIUS My horse to yours—no

MARCIUS 'Tis done

LARTIUS Agreed

MARCIUS Say, has our general met the enemy?

MESSENGER They lie in view, but have not spoke as yet

LARTIUS So, the good horse is mine

MARCIUS I'll buy him of you

LARTIUS No, I'll nor sell nor give him; lend you him I will
For half a hundred years. Summon the town.

MARCIUS How far off lie these armies?

MESSENGER Within this mile and half

MARCIUS Then shall we hear their 'larum, and they ours

Now, Mars, I prithee, make us quick in work,
That we with smoking swords may march from hence
To help our fielded friends! Come, blow thy blast.
They sound a parley. Enter two SENATORS with others, on the walls of Corioli
Tullus Aufidius, is he within your walls?

FIRST SENATOR No, nor a man that fears you less than he:
That's lesser than a little. *Drum afar off* Hark, our drums
Are bringing forth our youth. We'll break our walls
Rather than they shall pound us up; our gates,
Which yet seem shut, we have but pinn'd with rushes;
They'll open of themselves. *Alarum far off* Hark you far off!
There is Aufidius. List what work he makes
Amongst your cloven army.

MARCIUS O, they are at it!

LARTIUS Their noise be our instruction
Enter the army of the Volsces

MARCIUS They fear us not, but issue forth their city
Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight
With hearts more proof than shields. Advance, brave Titus.
They do disdain us much beyond our thoughts,
Which makes me sweat with wrath. Come on, my fellows.

He that retires, I'll take him for a Volsce,
And he shall feel mine edge.

Alarum. The Romans are beat back to their trenches.

Re-enter MARCIUS, cursing

MARCIUS All the contagion of the south light on you,
You shames of Rome! you herd of—Boils and plagues
Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorr'd
Farther than seen, and one infect another
Against the wind a mile! You souls of geese
That bear the shapes of men, how have you run
From slaves that apes would beat! Pluto and hell!
All hurt behind! Backs red, and faces pale
With flight and agued fear! Mend and charge home,
Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe
And make my wars on you. Look to't. Come on;
If you'll stand fast we'll beat them to their wives,
As they us to our trenches. Follow me.

Another alarum. The Volsces fly, and MARCIUS follows them to the gates

So, now the gates are ope; now prove good seconds;
'Tis for the followers fortune widens them,
Not for the fliers. Mark me, and do the like.

MARCIUS enters the gates

FIRST SOLDIER Fool—hardiness; not I

SECOND SOLDIER Not I

FIRST SOLDIER See, they have shut him in

ALL To th' pot, I warrant him

Re-enter TITUS LARTIUS

LARTIUS What is become of Marcius?

ALL Slain, sir, doubtless

FIRST SOLDIER Following the fliers at the very heels,
With them he enters; who, upon the sudden,
Clapp'd to their gates. He is himself alone,
To answer all the city.

LARTIUS O noble fellow!
Who sensibly outdares his senseless sword,
And when it bows stand'st up. Thou art left, Marcius;
A carbuncle entire, as big as thou art,
Were not so rich a jewel. Thou wast a soldier
Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible
Only in strokes; but with thy grim looks and
The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds
Thou mad'st thine enemies shake, as if the world
Were feverous and did tremble.

Re-enter MARCIUS, bleeding, assaulted by the enemy

FIRST SOLDIER Look, sir

LARTIUS O, 'tis Marcius!
Let's fetch him off, or make remain alike.

They fight, and all enter the city

SCENE V

Within Corioli. A street

Enter certain Romans, with spoils

FIRST ROMAN This will I carry to Rome

SECOND ROMAN And I this

THIRD ROMAN A murrain on 't! I took this for silver

Alarum continues still afar off

Enter MARCIUS and TITUS LARTIUS With a trumpeter

MARCIUS See here these movers that do prize their hours

At a crack'd drachma! Cushions, leaden spoons,
Irons of a doit, doublets that hangmen would
Bury with those that wore them, these base
slaves,
Ere yet the fight be done, pack up. Down with
them!

Exeunt pillagers

And hark, what noise the general makes! To him!
There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius,
Piercing our Romans; then, valiant Titus, take
Convenient numbers to make good the city;
Whilst I, with those that have the spirit, will haste
To help Cominius.

LARTIUS Worthy sir, thou bleed'st;
Thy exercise hath been too violent
For a second course of fight.

MARCIUS Sir, praise me not;
My work hath yet not warm'd me. Fare you well;
The blood I drop is rather physical
Than dangerous to me. To Aufidius thus
I will appear, and fight.

LARTIUS Now the fair goddess, Fortune,
Fall deep in love with thee, and her great charms
Misguide thy opposers' swords! Bold gentleman,
Prosperity be thy page!

MARCIUS Thy friend no less
Than those she placeth highest! So farewell.

LARTIUS Thou worthiest Marcius! sExit

MARCIUS
Go sound thy trumpet in the market-place;
Call thither all the officers o' th' town,
Where they shall know our mind. Away! *Exeunt*

SCENE VI

Near the camp of COMINIUS

Enter COMINIUS, as it were in retire, with soldiers

COMINIUS Breathe you, my friends
Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands
Nor cowardly in retire. Believe me, sirs,
We shall be charg'd again. Whiles we have
struck,
By interims and conveying gusts we have heard
The charges of our friends. The Roman gods,

Lead their successes as we wish our own,
That both our powers, with smiling fronts
encount'ring,
May give you thankful sacrifice!

Enter A MESSENGER

Thy news?

MESSENGER The citizens of Corioli have issued
And given to Lartius and to Marcius battle;
I saw our party to their trenches driven,
And then I came away.

COMINIUS Though thou speak'st truth,
Methinks thou speak'st not well. How long is't
since?

MESSENGER Above an hour, my lord

COMINIUS 'Tis not a mile; briefly we heard their
drums
How couldst thou in a mile confound an hour,
And bring thy news so late?

MESSENGER Spies of the Volsces
Held me in chase, that I was forc'd to wheel
Three or four miles about; else had I, sir,
Half an hour since brought my report.

Enter MARCIUS

COMINIUS Who's yonder
That does appear as he were flay'd? O gods!
He has the stamp of Marcius, and I have
Before-time seen him thus.

MARCIUS Come I too late?

COMINIUS The shepherd knows not thunder from
a tabor
More than I know the sound of Marcius' tongue
From every meaner man.

MARCIUS Come I too late?

COMINIUS Ay, if you come not in the blood of
others,
But mantled in your own.

MARCIUS O! let me clip ye
In arms as sound as when I woo'd, in heart
As merry as when our nuptial day was done,
And tapers burn'd to bedward.

COMINIUS Flower of warriors,
How is't with Titus Lartius?

MARCIUS As with a man busied about decrees:
Condemning some to death and some to exile;
Ransoming him or pitying, threat'ning th' other;
Holding Corioli in the name of Rome
Even like a fawning greyhound in the leash,
To let him slip at will.

COMINIUS Where is that slave
Which told me they had beat you to your
trenches?
Where is he? Call him hither.

MARCIUS Let him alone;
He did inform the truth. But for our gentlemen,
The common file—a plague! tribunes for them!
The mouse ne'er shunn'd the cat as they did
budge

From rascals worse than they.

COMINIUS But how prevail'd you?

MARCIUS Will the time serve to tell? I do not think
Where is the enemy? Are you lords o' th' field?
If not, why cease you till you are so?

COMINIUS Marcius,
We have at disadvantage fought, and did
Retire to win our purpose.

MARCIUS How lies their battle? Know you on
which side
They have plac'd their men of trust?

COMINIUS As I guess, Marcius,
Their bands i' th' vaward are the Antiates,
Of their best trust; o'er them Aufidius,
Their very heart of hope.

MARCIUS I do beseech you,
By all the battles wherein we have fought,
By th' blood we have shed together, by th' vows
We have made to endure friends, that you directly
Set me against Aufidius and his Antiates;
And that you not delay the present, but,
Filling the air with swords advanc'd and darts,
We prove this very hour.

COMINIUS Though I could wish
You were conducted to a gentle bath
And balms applied to you, yet dare I never
Deny your asking: take your choice of those
That best can aid your action.

MARCIUS Those are they
That most are willing. If any such be here—
As it were sin to doubt—that love this painting
Wherein you see me smear'd; if any fear
Lesser his person than an ill report;
If any think brave death outweighs bad life
And that his country's dearer than himself;
Let him alone, or so many so minded,
Wave thus to express his disposition,
And follow Marcius. *They all shout and wave
their swords, take him up in their arms and cast
up their caps*
O, me alone! Make you a sword of me?
If these shows be not outward, which of you
But is four Volsces? None of you but is
Able to bear against the great Aufidius
A shield as hard as his. A certain number,
Though thanks to all, must I select from all; the
rest
Shall bear the business in some other fight,
As cause will be obey'd. Please you to march;
And four shall quickly draw out my command,
Which men are best inclin'd.

COMINIUS March on, my fellows;
Make good this ostentation, and you shall
Divide in all with us. *Exeunt*

SCENE VII

The gates of Corioli
TITUS LARTIUS, having set a guard upon
Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toward

COMINIUS and CAIUS MARCIUS, enters with a
LIEUTENANT, other soldiers, and a scout

LARTIUS So, let the ports be guarded; keep your
duties
As I have set them down. If I do send, dispatch
Those centuries to our aid; the rest will serve
For a short holding. If we lose the field
We cannot keep the town.

LIEUTENANT Fear not our care, sir

LARTIUS Hence, and shut your gates upon's
Our guider, come; to th' Roman camp conduct
us. *Exeunt*

SCENE VIII

A field of battle between the Roman and the
Volscian camps.
Alarum, as in battle. Enter MARCIUS and
AUFIDIUS at several doors

MARCIUS I'll fight with none but thee, for I do
hate thee
Worse than a promise-breaker.

AUFIDIUS We hate alike:
Not Afric owns a serpent I abhor
More than thy fame and envy. Fix thy foot.

MARCIUS Let the first budger die the other's
slave,
And the gods doom him after!

AUFIDIUS If I fly, Marcius,
Halloa me like a hare.

MARCIUS Within these three hours, Tullus,
Alone I fought in your Corioli walls,
And made what work I pleas'd. 'Tis not my blood
Wherein thou seest me mask'd. For thy revenge
Wrench up thy power to th' highest.

AUFIDIUS Wert thou the Hector
That was the whip of your bragg'd progeny,
Thou shouldst not scape me here.
Here they fight, and certain Volsces come in the
aid of AUFIDIUS. MARCIUS fights till they be
driven in breathless
Officious, and not valiant, you have sham'd me
In your condemned seconds. *Exeunt*

SCENE IX

The Roman camp. Flourish. Alarum.
A retreat is sounded. Enter, at one door,
COMINIUS with the Romans; at another door,
MARCIUS, with his arm in a scarf

COMINIUS If I should tell thee o'er this thy day's
work,
Thou't not believe thy deeds; but I'll report it
Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles;
Where great patricians shall attend, and shrug,
I' th' end admire; where ladies shall be frighted
And, gladly quak'd, hear more; where the dull
tribunes,

That with the fusty plebeians hate thine honours,
Shall say against their hearts 'We thank the gods
Our Rome hath such a soldier.'
Yet cam'st thou to a morsel of this feast,
Having fully din'd before.

Enter TITUS LARTIUS, with his power, from the
pursuit

LARTIUS O General,
Here is the steed, we the caparison.
Hadst thou beheld—

MARCIUS Pray now, no more; my mother,
Who has a charter to extol her blood,
When she does praise me grieves me. I have done
As you have done—that's what I can; induc'd
As you have been—that's for my country.
He that has but effected his good will
Hath overta'en mine act.

COMINIUS You shall not be
The grave of your deserving; Rome must know
The value of her own. 'Twere a concealment
Worse than a theft, no less than a traducement,
To hide your doings and to silence that
Which, to the spire and top of praises vouch'd,
Would seem but modest. Therefore, I beseech
you,
In sign of what you are, not to reward
What you have done, before our army hear me.

MARCIUS I have some wounds upon me, and they
smart
To hear themselves rememb' red.

COMINIUS Should they not,
Well might they fester 'gainst ingratitude
And tent themselves with death. Of all the
horses—
Whereof we have ta'en good, and good store—of
all
The treasure in this field achiev'd and city,
We render you the tenth; to be ta'en forth
Before the common distribution at
Your only choice.

MARCIUS I thank you, General,
But cannot make my heart consent to take
A bribe to pay my sword. I do refuse it,
And stand upon my common part with those
That have beheld the doing.
A long flourish. They all cry 'Marcius, Marcius!'

CAST UP THEIR CAPS AND LANCES COMINIUS
and LARTIUS stand bare
May these same instruments which you profane
Never sound more! When drums and trumpets
shall
I' th' field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be
Made all of false—fac'd soothing. When steel
grows
Soft as the parasite's silk, let him be made
An overture for th' wars. No more, I say.
For that I have not wash'd my nose that bled,
Or foil'd some debile wretch, which without note
Here's many else have done, you shout me forth
In acclamations hyperbolic,
As if I lov'd my little should be dieted
In praises sauc'd with lies.

COMINIUS Too modest are you;

More cruel to your good report than grateful
To us that give you truly. By your patience,
If 'gainst yourself you be incens'd, we'll put you—
Like one that means his proper harm—in
manacles,

Then reason safely with you. Therefore be it
known,
As to us, to all the world, that Caius Marcius
Wears this war's garland; in token of the which,
My noble steed, known to the camp, I give him,
With all his trim belonging; and from this time,
For what he did before Corioli, can him
With all th' applause—and clamour of the host,
Caius Marcius Coriolanus.
Bear th' addition nobly ever!

Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums

ALL Caius Marcius Coriolanus!

CORIO LANUS I will go wash;
And when my face is fair you shall perceive
Whether I blush or no. Howbeit, I thank you;
I mean to stride your steed, and at all times
To undercrest your good addition
To th' fairness of my power.

COMINIUS So, to our tent;
Where, ere we do repose us, we will write
To Rome of our success. You, Titus Lartius,
Must to Corioli back. Send us to Rome
The best, with whom we may articulate
For their own good and ours.

LARTIUS I shall, my lord

CORIO LANUS The gods begin to mock me
Refus'd most princely gifts, am bound to beg
Of my Lord General.

COMINIUS Take't—'tis yours; what is't?

CORIO LANUS I sometime lay here in Corioli
At a poor man's house; he us'd me kindly.
He cried to me; I saw him prisoner;
But then Aufidius was within my view,
And wrath o'erwhelm'd my pity. I request you
To give my poor host freedom.

COMINIUS O, well begg'd!
Were he the butcher of my son, he should
Be free as is the wind. Deliver him, Titus.

LARTIUS Marcius, his name?

CORIO LANUS By Jupiter, forgot!
I am weary; yea, my memory is tir'd.
Have we no wine here?

COMINIUS Go we to our tent
The blood upon your visage dries; 'tis time
It should be look'd to. Come. *Exeunt*

SCENE X

*The camp of the Volsces. A flourish. Cornets.
Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS bloody, with two or
three soldiers*

AUFIDIUS The town is ta'en

FIRST SOLDIER 'Twill be deliver'd back on
good condition

AUFIDIUS Condition!

I would I were a Roman; for I cannot,
Being a Volsce, be that I am. Condition?
What good condition can a treaty find
I' th' part that is at mercy? Five times, Marcius,
I have fought with thee; so often hast thou beat
me;
And wouldst do so, I think, should we encounter
As often as we eat. By th' elements,
If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,
He's mine or I am his. Mine emulation
Hath not that honour in't it had; for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force,
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way,
Or wrath or craft may get him.

FIRST SOLDIER He's the devil

AUFIDIUS Bolder, though not so subtle

With only suff'ring stain by him; for him
Shall fly out of itself. Nor sleep nor sanctuary,
Being naked, sick, nor fane nor Capitol,
The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,
Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
My hate to Marcius. Where I find him, were it
At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,
Against the hospitable canon, would I
Wash my fierce hand in's heart. Go you to th'
city;
Learn how 'tis held, and what they are that must
Be hostages for Rome.

FIRST SOLDIER Will not you go?

AUFIDIUS I am attended at the cypress grove; I
pray you—

'Tis south the city mills—bring me word thither
How the world goes, that to the pace of it
I may spur on my journey.

FIRST SOLDIER I shall, sir

ACT II

SCENE I

Rome. A public place.

Enter MENENIUS, with the two Tribunes of the people, SICINIUS and BRUTUS

MENENIUS The augurer tells me we shall have news tonight

BRUTUS Good or bad?

MENENIUS Not according to the prayer of the people, for they love not Marcius.

SICINIUS Nature teaches beasts to know their friends

MENENIUS Pray you, who does the wolf love?

SICINIUS The lamb

MENENIUS Ay, to devour him, as the hungry plebeians would the noble Marcius.

BRUTUS He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear

MENENIUS He's a bear indeed, that lives like a lamb old men; tell me one thing that I shall ask you.

BOTH TRIBUNES Well, sir

MENENIUS In what enormity is Marcius poor in that you two have not in abundance?

BRUTUS He's poor in no one fault, but stor'd with all

SICINIUS Especially in pride

BRUTUS And topping all others in boasting

MENENIUS This is strange now here in the city—I mean of us o' th' right-hand file? Do you?

BOTH TRIBUNES Why, how are we censur'd?

MENENIUS Because you talk of pride now—will you not be angry?

BOTH TRIBUNES Well, well, sir, well

MENENIUS Why, 'tis no great matter; for a very little thief of occasion will rob you of a great deal of patience. Give your dispositions the reins, and be angry at your pleasures—at the least, if you take it as a pleasure to you in being so. You blame Marcius for being proud?

BRUTUS We do it not alone, sir

MENENIUS I know you can do very little alone; for your helps are many, or else your actions

would grow wondrous single: your abilities are too infant-like for doing much alone. You talk of pride. O that you could turn your eyes toward the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves! O that you could!

BOTH TRIBUNES What then, sir?

MENENIUS Why, then you should discover a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates—alias fools—as any in Rome.

SICINIUS Menenius, you are known well enough too

MENENIUS I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying Tiber in't; said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint, hasty and tinder-like upon too trivial motion; one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning. What I think I utter, and spend my malice in my breath. Meeting two such wealsmen as you are—I cannot call you Lycurguses—if the drink you give me touch my palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it. I cannot say your worships have deliver'd the matter well, when I find the ass in compound with the major part of your syllables; and though I must be content to bear with those that say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly that tell you you have good faces. If you see this in the map of my microcosm, follows it that I am known well enough too? What harm can your bisson conspectuities glean out of this character, if I be known well enough too?

BRUTUS Come, sir, come, we know you well enough

MENENIUS You know neither me, yourselves, nor any thing ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs; you wear out a good wholesome forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange-wife and a fosset-seller, and then rejoin the controversy of threepence to a second day of audience. When you are hearing a matter between party and party, if you chance to be pinch'd with the colic, you make faces like mummers, set up the bloody flag against all patience, and, in roaring for a chamber-pot, dismiss the controversy bleeding, the more entangled by your hearing. All the peace you make in their cause is calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones.

BRUTUS Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol.

MENENIUS Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous

subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a butcher's cushion or to be entomb'd in an ass's pack-saddle. Yet you must be saying Marcius is proud; who, in a cheap estimation, is worth all your predecessors since Deucalion; though peradventure some of the best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. God-den to your worships. More of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians. I will be bold to take my leave of you.

BRUTUS and SICINIUS go aside

Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and VALERIA

How now, my as fair as noble ladies—and the moon, were she earthly, no nobler—whither do you follow your eyes so fast?

VOLUMNIA Honourable Menenius, my boy
Marcius approaches; for the love of Juno, let's go.

MENENIUS Ha! Marcius coming home?

VOLUMNIA Ay, worthy Menenius, and with most prosperous approbation.

MENENIUS Take my cap, Jupiter, and I thank thee
Marcius coming home!

VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA Nay, 'tis true

VOLUMNIA Look, here's a letter from him; the
state hath another, his wife another; and I think
there's one at home for you.

MENENIUS I will make my very house reel
to-night

VIRGILIA Yes, certain, there's a letter for you; I
saw't

MENENIUS A letter for me! It gives me an estate
of seven years' health; in which time I will make
a lip at the physician. The most sovereign
prescription in Galen is but empiricitic and, to
this preservative, of no better report than a
horse-drench. Is he not wounded? He was wont
to come home wounded.

VIRGILIA O, no, no, no

VOLUMNIA O, he is wounded, I thank the gods
for't

MENENIUS So do I too, if it be not too much
his pocket? The wounds become him.

VOLUMNIA On's brows, Menenius, he comes the
third time home with the oaken garland.

MENENIUS Has he disciplin'd Aufidius soundly?

VOLUMNIA Titus Lartius writes they fought
together, but Aufidius got off.

MENENIUS And 'twas time for him too, I'll
warrant him that; an he had stay'd by him, I
would not have been so fidius'd for all the chests
in Corioli and the gold that's in them. Is the
Senate possess'd of this?

VOLUMNIA Good ladies, let's go letters from the
general, wherein he gives my son the whole name

of the war; he hath in this action outdone his
former deeds doubly.

VALERIA In troth, there's wondrous things spoke
of him

MENENIUS Wondrous! Ay, I warrant you, and not
without his true purchasing.

VIRGILIA The gods grant them true!

VOLUMNIA True! pow, waw

MENENIUS True! I'll be sworn they are true
To the TRIBUNES God save your good worships!
Marcius is coming home; he has more cause to be
proud. Where is he wounded?

VOLUMNIA I' th' shoulder and i' th' left arm;
there will be large cicatrices to show the people
when he shall stand for his place. He received in
the repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' th' body.

MENENIUS One i' th' neck and two i' th'
thigh—there's nine that I know.

VOLUMNIA He had before this last expedition
twenty-five wounds upon him.

MENENIUS Now it's twenty-seven; every gash
was an enemy's grave
A shout and flourish Hark! the trumpets.

VOLUMNIA These are the ushers of Marcius.
Before him he carries noise, and behind him he
leaves tears;
Death, that dark spirit, in's nery arm doth lie,
Which, being advanc'd, declines, and then men
die.

*A sennet. Trumpets sound. Enter COMINIUS
the GENERAL, and TITUS LARTIUS; between
them, CORIOLANUS, crown'd with an oaken
garland; with CAPTAINS and soldiers and a
HERALD*

HERALD

Know, Rome, that all alone Marcius did fight
Within Corioli gates, where he hath won,
With fame, a name to Caius Marcius; these
In honour follows Coriolanus.
Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!
Flourish

ALL Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!

CORIOLANUS No more of this, it does offend
my heart
Pray now, no more.

COMINIUS Look, sir, your mother!

CORIOLANUS

O, You have, I know, petition'd all the gods
For my prosperity! *Kneels*

VOLUMNIA Nay, my good soldier, up;
My gentle Marcius, worthy Caius, and
By deed-achieving honour newly nam'd—
What is it? Coriolanus must I can thee?
But, O, thy wife!

CORIOLANUS My gracious silence, hail!
Wouldst thou have laugh'd had I come coffin'd
home,

That weep'st to see me triumph? Ah, my dear,
Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
And mothers that lack sons.

MENENIUS Now the gods crown thee!

CORIOLANUS And live you yet? *To VALERIA*
O my sweet lady, pardon.

VOLUMNIA I know not where to turn
O, welcome home! And welcome, General.
And y'are welcome all.

MENENIUS A hundred thousand welcomes
And I could laugh; I am light and heavy.
Welcome!
A curse begin at very root on's heart
That is not glad to see thee! You are three
That Rome should dote on; yet, by the faith of
men,
We have some old crab trees here at home that
will not
Be grafted to your relish. Yet welcome, warriors.
We call a nettle but a nettle, and
The faults of fools but folly.

COMINIUS Ever right

CORIOLANUS Menenius ever, ever

HERALD Give way there, and go on

CORIOLANUS *To his wife and mother*
Your hand, and yours Ere in our own house I do
shade my head,
The good patricians must be visited;
From whom I have receiv'd not only greetings,
But with them change of honours.

VOLUMNIA I have lived
To see inherited my very wishes,
And the buildings of my fancy; only
There's one thing wanting, which I doubt not but
Our Rome will cast upon thee.

CORIOLANUS Know, good mother,
I had rather be their servant in my way
Than sway with them in theirs.

COMINIUS On, to the Capitol
Flourish. Cornets. Exeunt in state, as before
BRUTUS and SICINIUS come forward

BRUTUS
All tongues speak of him and the bleared sights
Are spectacted to see him. Your prattling nurse
Into a rapture lets her baby cry
While she chats him; the kitchen malkin pins
Her richest lockram 'bout her reechy neck,
Clamb'ring the walls to eye him; stalls, bulks,
windows,
Are smother'd up, leads fill'd and ridges hors'd
With variable complexions, all agreeing
In earnestness to see him. Seld-shown flamens
Do press among the popular throngs and puff
To win a vulgar station; our veil'd dames
Commit the war of white and damask in
Their nicely gawded cheeks to th' wanton spoil
Of Phoebus' burning kisses. Such a pother,
As if that whatsoever god who leads him
Were slily crept into his human powers,
And gave him graceful posture.

SICINIUS On the sudden

I warrant him consul.

BRUTUS Then our office may
During his power go sleep.

SICINIUS He cannot temp'rately transport his
honours
From where he should begin and end, but will
Lose those he hath won.

BRUTUS In that there's comfort

SICINIUS Doubt not
The commoners, for whom we stand, but they
Upon their ancient malice will forget
With the least cause these his new honours; which
That he will give them make I as little question
As he is proud to do't.

BRUTUS I heard him swear,
Were he to stand for consul, never would he
Appear i' th' market-place, nor on him put
The napless vesture of humility;
Nor, showing, as the manner is, his wounds
To th' people, beg their stinking breaths.

SICINIUS 'Tis right

BRUTUS It was his word
Than carry it but by the suit of the gentry to him
And the desire of the nobles.

SICINIUS I wish no better
Than have him hold that purpose, and to put it
In execution.

BRUTUS 'Tis most like he will

SICINIUS It shall be to him then as our good wills:
A sure destruction.

BRUTUS So it must fall out
To him or our authorities. For an end,
We must suggest the people in what hatred
He still hath held them; that to's power he would
Have made them mules, silenc'd their pleaders,
and
Disproportioned their freedoms; holding them
In human action and capacity
Of no more soul nor fitness for the world
Than camels in their war, who have their provand
Only for bearing burdens, and sore blows
For sinking under them.

SICINIUS This, as you say, suggested
At some time when his soaring insolence
Shall touch the people—which time shall not want,
If he be put upon't, and that's as easy
As to set dogs on sheep—will be his fire
To kindle their dry stubble; and their blaze
Shall darken him for ever.

Enter A MESSENGER

BRUTUS What's the matter?

MESSENGER You are sent for to the Capitol
That Marcius shall be consul.
I have seen the dumb men throng to see him and
The blind to hear him speak; matrons flung
gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers,
Upon him as he pass'd; the nobles bended
As to Jove's statue, and the commons made

A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts.
I never saw the like.

BRUTUS Let's to the Capitol,
And carry with us ears and eyes for th' time,
But hearts for the event.

SICINIUS Have with you

SCENE II

Rome. The Capitol. Enter two OFFICERS, to lay cushions, as it were in the Capitol

FIRST OFFICER Come, come, they are almost
here consulships?

SECOND OFFICER Three, they say; but 'tis
thought of every one Coriolanus will carry it.

FIRST OFFICER That's a brave fellow; but he's
vengeance proud and loves not the common
people.

SECOND OFFICER Faith, there have been many
great men that have flatter'd the people, who
ne'er loved them; and there be many that they
have loved, they know not wherefore; so that, if
they love they know not why, they hate upon no
better a ground.

Therefore, for Coriolanus neither to care whether
they love or hate him manifests the true
knowledge he has in their disposition, and out of
his noble carelessness lets them plainly see't.

FIRST OFFICER If he did not care whether he
had their love or no, he waded indifferently 'twixt
doing them neither good nor harm; but he seeks
their hate with greater devotion than they can
render it him, and leaves nothing undone that
may fully discover him their opposite. Now to
seem to affect the malice and displeasure of the
people is as bad as that which he dislikes—to
flatter them for their love.

SECOND OFFICER He hath deserved worthily of
his country; and his ascent is not by such easy
degrees as those who, having been supple and
courteous to the people, bonneted, without any
further deed to have them at all, into their
estimation and report; but he hath so planted his
honours in their eyes and his actions in their
hearts that for their tongues to be silent and not
confess so much were a kind of ingrateful injury;
to report otherwise were a malice that, giving
itself the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke
from every ear that heard it.

FIRST OFFICER No more of him; he's a worthy
man are coming.

*A sennet. Enter the PATRICIANS and the
TRIBUNES OF THE PEOPLE, LICTORS before
them; CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, COMINIUS
the Consul. SICINIUS and BRUTUS take their
places by themselves.*

CORIOLANUS stands

MENENIUS
Having determin'd of the Volscies, and
To send for Titus Lartius, it remains,

As the main point of this our after-meeting,
To gratify his noble service that
Hath thus stood for his country. Therefore please
you,
Most reverend and grave elders, to desire
The present consul and last general
In our well-found successes to report
A little of that worthy work perform'd
By Caius Marcius Coriolanus; whom
We met here both to thank and to remember
With honours like himself. *CORIOLANUS sits*

FIRST SENATOR Speak, good Cominius
Leave nothing out for length, and make us think
Rather our state's defective for requital
Than we to stretch it out. Masters o' th' people,
We do request your kindest ears; and, after,
Your loving motion toward the common body,
To yield what passes here.

SICINIUS We are convented
Upon a pleasing treaty, and have hearts
Inclinable to honour and advance
The theme of our assembly.

BRUTUS Which the rather
We shall be bless'd to do, if he remember
A kinder value of the people than
He hath hereto priz'd them at.

MENENIUS That's off, that's off;
I would you rather had been silent. Please you
To hear Cominius speak?

BRUTUS Most willingly But yet my caution was
more pertinent
Than the rebuke you give it.

MENENIUS He loves your people;
But tie him not to be their bedfellow.
Worthy Cominius, speak.
CORIOLANUS rises, and offers to go away
Nay, keep your place.

FIRST SENATOR
Sit, Coriolanus, never shame to hear
What you have nobly done.

CORIOLANUS Your Honours' pardon I had
rather have my wounds to heal again
Than hear say how I got them.

BRUTUS Sir, I hope
My words disbench'd you not.

CORIOLANUS No, sir; yet oft,
When blows have made me stay, I fled from
words.
You sooth'd not, therefore hurt not. But your
people,
I love them as they weigh—

MENENIUS Pray now, sit down

CORIOLANUS I had rather have one scratch my
head i' th' sun
When the alarum were struck than idly sit
To hear my nothings monster'd. *Exit*

MENENIUS Masters of the people,
Your multiplying spawn how can he flatter—
That's thousand to one good one—when you now
see

He had rather venture all his limbs for honour
Than one on's ears to hear it? Proceed, Cominius.

COMINIUS I shall lack voice; the deeds of
Coriolanus
Should not be utter'd feebly. It is held
That valour is the chiefest virtue and
Most dignifies the haver. If it be,
The man I speak of cannot in the world
Be singly counterpois'd. At sixteen years,
When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought
Beyond the mark of others; our then Dictator,
Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight
When with his Amazonian chin he drove
The bristled lips before him; he bestrid
An o'erpress'd Roman and i' th' consul's view
Slew three opposers; Tarquin's self he met,
And struck him on his knee. In that day's feats,
When he might act the woman in the scene,
He prov'd best man i' th' field, and for his meed
Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age
Man-ent'red thus, he waxed like a sea,
And in the brunt of seventeen battles since
He lurch'd all swords of the garland. For this last,
Before and in Corioli, let me say
I cannot speak him home. He stopp'd the fliers,
And by his rare example made the coward
Turn terror into sport; as weeds before
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd
And fell below his stem. His sword, death's
stamp,
Where it did mark, it took; from face to foot
He was a thing of blood, whose every motion
Was tim'd with dying cries. Alone he ent'red
The mortal gate of th' city, which he painted
With shunless destiny; aidless came off,
And with a sudden re-enforcement struck
Corioli like a planet. Now all's his.
When by and by the din of war 'gan pierce
His ready sense, then straight his doubled spirit
Re-quick'ned what in flesh was fatigate,
And to the battle came he; where he did
Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if
'Twere a perpetual spoil; and till we call'd
Both field and city ours he never stood
To ease his breast with panting.

MENENIUS Worthy man!

FIRST SENATOR
He cannot but with measure fit the honours
Which we devise him.

COMINIUS Our spoils he kick'd at,
And look'd upon things precious as they were
The common muck of the world. He covets less
Than misery itself would give, rewards
His deeds with doing them, and is content
To spend the time to end it.

MENENIUS He's right noble;
Let him be call'd for.

FIRST SENATOR Call Coriolanus

OFFICER He doth appear.

Re-enter CORIOLANUS

MENENIUS The Senate, Coriolanus, are well
pleas'd

To make thee consul.

CORIOLANUS I do owe them still
My life and services.

MENENIUS It then remains
That you do speak to the people.

CORIOLANUS I do beseech you
Let me o'erleap that custom; for I cannot
Put on the gown, stand naked, and entreat them
For my wounds' sake to give their suffrage.
Please you
That I may pass this doing.

SICINIUS Sir, the people
Must have their voices; neither will they bate
One jot of ceremony.

MENENIUS Put them not to't Pray you go fit you
to the custom, and
Take to you, as your predecessors have,
Your honour with your form.

CORIOLANUS It is a part
That I shall blush in acting, and might well
Be taken from the people.

BRUTUS Mark you that?

CORIOLANUS To brag unto them 'Thus I did,
and thus!'
Show them th' unaching scars which I should
hide,
As if I had receiv'd them for the hire
Of their breath only!

MENENIUS Do not stand upon't We recommend
to you, Tribunes of the People,
Our purpose to them; and to our noble consul
Wish we all joy and honour.

SENATORS To Coriolanus come all joy and
honour!

*Flourish. Cornets. Then exeunt all
but SICINIUS and BRUTUS*

BRUTUS You see how he intends to use the people

SICINIUS May they perceive's intent! He will
require them
As if he did contemn what he requested
Should be in them to give.

BRUTUS Come, we'll inform them
Of our proceedings here. On th' market-place
I know they do attend us. *Exeunt*

SCENE III

*Rome. The Forum
Enter seven or eight citizens*

FIRST CITIZEN Once, if he do require our
voices, we ought not to deny him.

SECOND CITIZEN We may, sir, if we will

THIRD CITIZEN We have power in ourselves to
do it, but it is a power that we have no power to
do; for if he show us his wounds and tell us his
deeds, we are to put our tongues into those

wounds and speak for them; so, if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is monstrous, and for the multitude to be ingrateful were to make a monster of the multitude; of the which we being members should bring ourselves to be monstrous members.

FIRST CITIZEN And to make us no better thought of, a little help will serve; for once we stood up about the corn, he himself stuck not to call us the many-headed multitude.

THIRD CITIZEN We have been call'd so of many; not that our heads are some brown, some black, some abram, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely colour'd; and truly I think if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south, and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o' th' compass.

SECOND CITIZEN Think you so? Which way do you judge my wit would ly?

THIRD CITIZEN Nay, your wit will not so soon out as another man's will—'tis strongly wedg'd up in a block-head; but if it were at liberty 'twould sure southward.

SECOND CITIZEN Why that way?

THIRD CITIZEN To lose itself in a fog; where being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth would return for conscience' sake, to help to get thee a wife.

SECOND CITIZEN YOU are never without your tricks; you may, you may.

THIRD CITIZEN Are you all resolv'd to give your voices? But that's no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man.

Enter CORIOLANUS, in a gown of humility, with MENENIUS

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility. Mark his behaviour.

We are not to stay all together, but to come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests by particulars, wherein every one of us has a single honour, in giving him our own voices with our own tongues; therefore follow me, and I'll direct you how you shall go by him.

ALL Content, content

MENENIUS

O sir, you are not right; have you not known The worthiest men have done't?

CORIOLANUS What must I say?

'I pray, sir'—Plague upon't! I cannot bring My tongue to such a pace. 'Look, sir, my wounds I got them in my country's service, when Some certain of your brethren roar'd and ran From th' noise of our own drums.'

MENENIUS O me, the gods!

You must not speak of that. You must desire them To think upon you.

CORIOLANUS Think upon me? Hang 'em!

I would they would forget me, like the virtues Which our divines lose by 'em.

MENENIUS You'll mar all

I'll leave you. Pray you speak to 'em, I pray you, In wholesome manner. *Exit*

Re-enter three of the citizens

CORIOLANUS Bid them wash their faces And keep their teeth clean. So, here comes a brace.

You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

THIRD CITIZEN We do, sir; tell us what hath brought you to't

CORIOLANUS Mine own desert

SECOND CITIZEN Your own desert?

CORIOLANUS Ay, not mine own desire

THIRD CITIZEN How, not your own desire?

CORIOLANUS No, sir, 'twas never my desire yet to trouble the poor with begging.

THIRD CITIZEN YOU MUST think, if we give you anything, we hope to gain by you.

CORIOLANUS Well then, I pray, your price o' th' consulship?

FIRST CITIZEN The price is to ask it kindly

CORIOLANUS Kindly, sir, I pray let me ha't you, which shall be yours in private. Your good voice, sir; what say you?

SECOND CITIZEN You shall ha' it, worthy sir

CORIOLANUS A match, sir
I have your alms. Adieu.

THIRD CITIZEN But this is something odd

SECOND CITIZEN An 'twere to give again—but 'tis no matter

Exeunt the three citizens

Re-enter two other citizens

CORIOLANUS Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune of your voices that I may be consul, I have here the customary gown.

FOURTH CITIZEN You have deserved nobly of your country, and you have not deserved nobly.

CORIOLANUS Your enigma?

FOURTH CITIZEN You have been a scourge to her enemies; you have been a rod to her friends. You have not indeed loved the common people.

CORIOLANUS You should account me the more virtuous, that I have not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them; 'tis a condition they account gentle; and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the insinuating nod and be off to them most counterfeitly. That is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some

popular man and give it bountiful to the desirers.
Therefore, beseech you I may be consul.

FIFTH CITIZEN We hope to find you our friend;
and therefore give you our voices heartily.

FOURTH CITIZEN You have received many
wounds for your country

CORIOLANUS I will not seal your knowledge
with showing them
will make much of your voices, and so trouble
you no farther.

BOTH CITIZENS The gods give you joy, sir,
heartily!

Exeunt citizens

CORIOLANUS Most sweet voices!
Better it is to die, better to starve,
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.
Why in this wolvish toge should I stand here
To beg of Hob and Dick that do appear
Their needless vouches? Custom calls me to't.
What custom wills, in all things should we do't,
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And mountainous error be too highly heap'd
For truth to o'erpeer. Rather than fool it so,
Let the high office and the honour go
To one that would do thus. I am half through:
The one part suffered, the other will I do.

Re-enter three citizens more

Here come moe voices.
Your voices. For your voices I have fought;
Watch'd for your voices; for your voices bear
Of wounds two dozen odd; battles thrice six
I have seen and heard of; for your voices have
Done many things, some less, some more. Your
voices?
Indeed, I would be consul.

SIXTH CITIZEN He has done nobly, and cannot
go without any honest man's voice.

SEVENTH CITIZEN Therefore let him be consul
joy, and make him good friend to the people!

ALL Amen, amen
Exeunt citizens

CORIOLANUS Worthy voices!
*Re-enter MENENIUS with BRUTUS and
SICINIUS*

MENENIUS
You have stood your limitation, and the tribunes
Endue you with the people's voice. Remains
That, in th' official marks invested, you
Anon do meet the Senate.

CORIOLANUS Is this done?

SICINIUS The custom of request you have
discharg'd
The people do admit you, and are summon'd
To meet anon, upon your approbation.

CORIOLANUS Where? At the Senate House?

SICINIUS There, Coriolanus

CORIOLANUS May I change these garments?

SICINIUS You may, sir

CORIOLANUS That I'll straight do, and, knowing

myself again,
Repair to th' Senate House.

MENENIUS I'll keep you company

BRUTUS We stay here for the people

SICINIUS Fare you well
Exeunt CORIOLANUS and MENENIUS
He has it now; and by his looks methinks
'Tis warm at's heart.

BRUTUS With a proud heart he wore
His humble weeds. Will you dismiss the people?
Re-enter citizens

SICINIUS
How now, my masters! Have you chose this man?

FIRST CITIZEN He has our voices, sir

BRUTUS
We pray the gods he may deserve your loves

SECOND CITIZEN Amen, sir
He mock'd us when he begg'd our voices.

THIRD CITIZEN Certainly;
He flouted us downright.

FIRST CITIZEN No, 'tis his kind of speech—he
did not mock us

SECOND CITIZEN Not one amongst us, save
yourself, but says
He us'd us scornfully. He should have show'd us
His marks of merit, wounds receiv'd for's
country.

SICINIUS Why, so he did, I am sure

ALL No, no; no man saw 'em

THIRD CITIZEN He said he had wounds which
he could show in private,
And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn,
'I would be consul,' says he; 'aged custom
But by your voices will not so permit me;
Your voices therefore.' When we granted that,
Here was 'I thank you for your voices. Thank
you,
Your most sweet voices. Now you have left your
voices,
I have no further with you.' Was not this
mockery?

SICINIUS Why either were you ignorant to see't,
Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness
To yield your voices?

BRUTUS Could you not have told him—
As you were lesson'd—when he had no power
But was a petty servant to the state,
He was your enemy; ever spake against
Your liberties and the charters that you bear
I' th' body of the weal; and now, arriving
A place of potency and sway o' th' state,
If he should still malignantly remain
Fast foe to th' plebeii, your voices might
Be curses to yourselves? You should have said
That as his worthy deeds did claim no less
Than what he stood for, so his gracious nature
Would think upon you for your voices, and
Translate his malice towards you into love,

Standing your friendly lord.

SICINIUS Thus to have said,
As you were fore-advis'd, had touch'd his spirit
And tried his inclination; from him pluck'd
Either his gracious promise, which you might,
As cause had call'd you up, have held him to;
Or else it would have gall'd his surly nature,
Which easily endures not article
Tying him to aught. So, putting him to rage,
You should have ta'en th' advantage of his choler
And pass'd him unelected.

BRUTUS Did you perceive
He did solicit you in free contempt
When he did need your loves; and do you think
That his contempt shall not be bruising to you
When he hath power to crush? Why, had your
bodies
No heart among you? Or had you tongues to cry
Against the rectorship of judgment?

SICINIUS Have you
Ere now denied the asker, and now again,
Of him that did not ask but mock, bestow
Your su'd-for tongues?

THIRD CITIZEN He's not confirm'd: we may
deny him yet

SECOND CITIZENS And will deny him;
I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

FIRST CITIZEN I twice five hundred, and their
friends to piece 'em.

BRUTUS
Get you hence instantly, and tell those friends
They have chose a consul that will from them
take
Their liberties, make them of no more voice
Than dogs, that are as often beat for barking
As therefore kept to do so.

SICINIUS Let them assemble;
And, on a safer judgment, all revoke
Your ignorant election. Enforce his pride
And his old hate unto you; besides, forget not
With what contempt he wore the humble weed;
How in his suit he scorn'd you; but your loves,
Thinking upon his services, took from you
Th' apprehension of his present portance,
Which, most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion
After the inveterate hate he bears you.

BRUTUS Lay
A fault on us, your tribunes, that we labour'd,
No impediment between, but that you must
Cast your election on him.

SICINIUS Say you chose him
More after our commandment than as guided
By your own true affections; and that your minds,
Pre-occupied with what you rather must do
Than what you should, made you against the
grain
To voice him consul. Lay the fault on us.

BRUTUS Ay, spare us not
How youngly he began to serve his country,
How long continued; and what stock he springs
of-

The noble house o' th' Marcians; from whence
came
That Ancus Marcius, Numa's daughter's son,
Who, after great Hostilius, here was king;
Of the same house Publius and Quintus were,
That our best water brought by conduits hither;
And Censorinus, nobly named so,
Twice being by the people chosen censor,
Was his great ancestor.

SICINIUS One thus descended,
That hath beside well in his person wrought
To be set high in place, we did commend
To your remembrances; but you have found,
Scaling his present bearing with his past,
That he's your fixed enemy, and revoke
Your sudden approbation.

BRUTUS Say you ne'er had done't-
Harp on that still-but by our putting on;
And presently, when you have drawn your
number,
Repair to th' Capitol.

CITIZENS will will so; almost all
Repent in their election. *Exeunt plebeians*

BRUTUS Let them go on;
This mutiny were better put in hazard
Than stay, past doubt, for greater.
If, as his nature is, he fall in rage
With their refusal, both observe and answer
The vantage of his anger.

SICINIUS To th' Capitol, come
We will be there before the stream o' th' people;
And this shall seem, as partly 'tis, their own,
Which we have goaded onward. *Exeunt*

ACT III

SCENE I

Rome. A street.

Cornets. Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, all the GENTRY, COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, and other SENATORS

CORIOLANUS Tullus Aufidius, then, had made new head?

LARTIUS He had, my lord; and that it was which caus'd Our swifter composition.

CORIOLANUS So then the Volsces stand but as at first, Ready, when time shall prompt them, to make road Upon's again.

COMINIUS They are worn, Lord Consul, so That we shall hardly in our ages see Their banners wave again.

CORIOLANUS Saw you Aufidius?

LARTIUS On safeguard he came to me, and did curse Against the Volsces, for they had so vilely Yielded the town. He is retir'd to Antium.

CORIOLANUS Spoke he of me?

LARTIUS He did, my lord

CORIOLANUS How? What?

LARTIUS How often he had met you, sword to sword; That of all things upon the earth he hated Your person most; that he would pawn his fortunes To hopeless restitution, so he might Be call'd your vanquisher.

CORIOLANUS At Antium lives he?

LARTIUS At Antium

CORIOLANUS I wish I had a cause to seek him there, To oppose his hatred fully. Welcome home.

Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS

Behold, these are the tribunes of the people, The tongues o' th' common mouth. I do despise them, For they do prank them in authority,

Against all noble sufferance.

SICINIUS Pass no further

CORIOLANUS Ha! What is that?

BRUTUS It will be dangerous to go on—no further

CORIOLANUS What makes this change?

MENENIUS The matter?

COMINIUS Hath he not pass'd the noble and the common?

BRUTUS Cominius, no

CORIOLANUS Have I had children's voices?

FIRST SENATOR Tribunes, give way: he shall to th' market-place

BRUTUS The people are incens'd against him

SICINIUS Stop,
Or all will fall in broil.

CORIOLANUS Are these your herd?
Must these have voices, that can yield them now
And straight disclaim their tongues? What are
your offices?
You being their mouths, why rule you not their
teeth?
Have you not set them on?

MENENIUS Be calm, be calm

CORIOLANUS It is a purpos'd thing, and grows
by plot,
To curb the will of the nobility;
Suffer't, and live with such as cannot rule
Nor ever will be rul'd.

BRUTUS Call't not a plot
The people cry you mock'd them; and of late,
When corn was given them gratis, you repin'd;
Scandal'd the suppliants for the people, call'd
them
Time-pleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.

CORIOLANUS Why, this was known before

BRUTUS Not to them all

CORIOLANUS Have you inform'd them sithence?

BRUTUS How? I inform them!

COMINIUS You are like to do such business

BRUTUS Not unlike
Each way to better yours.

CORIOLANUS Why then should I be consul? By yond clouds,
Let me deserve so ill as you, and make me

Your fellow tribune.

SICINIUS You show too much of that
For which the people stir; if you will pass
To where you are bound, you must enquire your
way,
Which you are out of, with a gentler spirit,
Or never be so noble as a consul,
Nor yoke with him for tribune.

MENENIUS Let's be calm

COMINIUS The people are abus'd; set on
Becomes not Rome; nor has Coriolanus
Deserved this so dishonour'd rub, laid falsely
I' th' plain way of his merit.

CORIOLANUS Tell me of corn!
This was my speech, and I will speak't again—

MENENIUS Not now, not now

FIRST SENATOR Not in this heat, sir, now

CORIOLANUS Now, as I live, I will
My nobler friends, I crave their pardons.
For the mutable, rank-scented meiny, let them
Regard me as I do not flatter, and
Therein behold themselves. I say again,
In soothing them we nourish 'gainst our Senate
The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,
Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd,
and scatter'd,
By mingling them with us, the honour'd number,
Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that
Which they have given to beggars.

MENENIUS Well, no more

FIRST SENATOR
No more words, we beseech you

CORIOLANUS How? no more!
As for my country I have shed my blood,
Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs
Coin words till their decay against those measles
Which we disdain should tetter us, yet sought
The very way to catch them.

BRUTUS You speak o' th' people
As if you were a god, to punish; not
A man of their infirmity.

SICINIUS 'Twere well
We let the people know't.

MENENIUS What, what? his cholera?

CORIOLANUS Cholera!
Were I as patient as the midnight sleep,
By Jove, 'twould be my mind!

SICINIUS It is a mind
That shall remain a poison where it is,
Not poison any further.

CORIOLANUS Shall remain!
Hear you this Triton of the minnows? Mark you
His absolute 'shall'?

COMINIUS 'Twas from the canon

CORIOLANUS 'Shall'!
O good but most unwise patricians! Why,
You grave but reckless senators, have you thus

Given Hydra here to choose an officer
That with his peremptory 'shall,' being but
The horn and noise o' th' monster's, wants not
spirit
To say he'll turn your current in a ditch,
And make your channel his? If he have power,
Then veil your ignorance; if none, awake
Your dangerous lenity. If you are learn'd,
Be not as common fools; if you are not,
Let them have cushions by you. You are
plebeians,
If they be senators; and they are no less,
When, both your voices blended, the great'st taste
Most palates theirs. They choose their magistrate;
And such a one as he, who puts his 'shall,'
His popular 'shall,' against a graver bench
Than ever frown'd in Greece. By Jove himself,
It makes the consuls base; and my soul aches
To know, when two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon confusion
May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take
The one by th' other.

COMINIUS Well, on to th' market-place

CORIOLANUS Whoever gave that counsel to give
forth
The corn o' th' storehouse gratis, as 'twas us'd
Sometime in Greece—

MENENIUS Well, well, no more of that

CORIOLANUS Though there the people had more
absolute pow'r—
I say they nourish'd disobedience, fed
The ruin of the state.

BRUTUS Why shall the people give
One that speaks thus their voice?

CORIOLANUS I'll give my reasons,
More worthier than their voices. They know the
corn
Was not our recompense, resting well assur'd
They ne'er did service for't; being press'd to th'
war
Even when the navel of the state was touch'd,
They would not thread the gates. This kind of
service
Did not deserve corn gratis. Being i' th' war,
Their mutinies and revolts, wherein they show'd
Most valour, spoke not for them. Th' accusation
Which they have often made against the Senate,
All cause unborn, could never be the native
Of our so frank donation. Well, what then?
How shall this bosom multiplied digest
The Senate's courtesy? Let deeds express
What's like to be their words: 'We did request it;
We are the greater poll, and in true fear
They gave us our demands.' Thus we debase
The nature of our seats, and make the rabble
Call our cares fears; which will in time
Break ope the locks o' th' Senate and bring in
The crows to peck the eagles.

MENENIUS Come, enough

BRUTUS Enough, with over measure

CORIOLANUS No, take more
What may be sworn by, both divine and human,
Seal what I end withal! This double worship,

Where one part does disdain with cause, the other
 Insult without all reason; where gentry, title,
 wisdom,
 Cannot conclude but by the yea and no
 Of general ignorance—it must omit
 Real necessities, and give way the while
 To unstable slightness. Purpose so barr'd, it
 follows
 Nothing is done to purpose. Therefore, beseech
 you—
 You that will be less fearful than discreet;
 That love the fundamental part of state
 More than you doubt the change on't; that prefer
 A noble life before a long, and wish
 To jump a body with a dangerous physic
 That's sure of death without it—at once pluck out
 The multitudinous tongue; let them not lick
 The sweet which is their poison. Your dishonour
 Mangles true judgment, and bereaves the state
 Of that integrity which should become't,
 Not having the power to do the good it would,
 For th' ill which doth control't.

BRUTUS Has said enough

SICINIUS

Has spoken like a traitor and shall answer
 As traitors do.

CORIOLANUS

Thou wretch, despite o'erwhelm thee!
 What should the people do with these bald
 tribunes,
 On whom depending, their obedience fails
 To the greater bench? In a rebellion,
 When what's not meet, but what must be, was
 law,
 Then were they chosen; in a better hour
 Let what is meet be said it must be meet,
 And throw their power i' th' dust.

BRUTUS Manifest treason!

SICINIUS This a consul? No

BRUTUS The aediles, ho! *Enter an AEDILE*
 Let him be apprehended.

SICINIUS Go call the people, (*Exit AEDILE*) in
 whose name myself
 Attach thee as a traitorous innovator,
 A foe to th' public weal. Obey, I charge thee,
 And follow to thine answer.

CORIOLANUS Hence, old goat!

PATRICIANS We'll surety him

COMINIUS Ag'd sir, hands off

CORIOLANUS

Hence, rotten thing! or I shall shake thy bones
 Out of thy garments.

SICINIUS Help, ye citizens!

Enter a rabble of plebeians, with the AEDILES

MENENIUS On both sides more respect

SICINIUS Here's he that would take from you all

your power

BRUTUS Seize him, aediles

PLEBEIANS Down with him! down with him!

SECOND SENATOR Weapons, weapons,
 weapons!

They all bustle about CORIOLANUS

ALL Tribunes! patricians! citizens! What, ho!
 Sicinius! Brutus! Coriolanus! Citizens!

PATRICIANS Peace, peace, peace; stay, hold,
 peace!

MENENIUS

What is about to be? I am out of breath;
 Confusion's near; I cannot speak. You tribunes
 To th' people—Coriolanus, patience!
 Speak, good Sicinius.

SICINIUS Hear me, people; peace!

PLEBEIANS Let's hear our tribune

SICINIUS You are at point to lose your liberties
 Marcius would have all from you; Marcius,
 Whom late you have nam'd for consul.

MENENIUS Fie, fie, fie!

This is the way to kindle, not to quench.

FIRST SENATOR To unbuild the city, and to lay
 all flat

SICINIUS What is the city but the people?

PLEBEIANS True,

The people are the city.

BRUTUS By the consent of all we were establish'd
 The people's magistrates.

PLEBEIANS You so remain

MENENIUS And so are like to do

COMINIUS That is the way to lay the city flat,
 To bring the roof to the foundation,
 And bury all which yet distinctly ranges
 In heaps and piles of ruin.

SICINIUS This deserves death

BRUTUS Or let us stand to our authority
 Or let us lose it. We do here pronounce,
 Upon the part o' th' people, in whose power
 We were elected theirs: Marcius is worthy
 Of present death.

SICINIUS Therefore lay hold of him;
 Bear him to th' rock Tarpeian, and from thence
 Into destruction cast him.

BRUTUS AEdiles, seize him

PLEBEIANS Yield, Marcius, yield

MENENIUS

Hear me one word; beseech you, Tribunes,
 Hear me but a word.

AEDILES Peace, peace!

MENENIUS Be that you seem, truly your
 country's friend,
 And temp'rately proceed to what you would

Thus violently redress.

BRUTUS Sir, those cold ways,
That seem like prudent helps, are very poisonous
Where the disease is violent. Lay hands upon him
And bear him to the rock.

CORIOLANUS draws his sword

CORIOLANUS No: I'll die here
There's some among you have beheld me
fighting;
Come, try upon yourselves what you have seen
me.

MENENIUS
Down with that sword! Tribunes, withdraw
awhile

BRUTUS Lay hands upon him

MENENIUS Help Marcius, help,
You that be noble; help him, young and old.

PLEBEIANS Down with him, down with him!
*In this mutiny the TRIBUNES, the AEDILES,
and the people are beat in*

MENENIUS
Go, get you to your house; be gone, away
All will be nought else.

SECOND SENATOR Get you gone

CORIOLANUS Stand fast;
We have as many friends as enemies.

MENENIUS Shall it be put to that?

FIRST SENATOR The gods forbid!
I prithee, noble friend, home to thy house;
Leave us to cure this cause.

MENENIUS For 'tis a sore upon us
You cannot tent yourself; be gone, beseech you.

COMINIUS Come, sir, along with us

CORIOLANUS
I would they were barbarians, as they are,
Though in Rome litter'd; not Romans, as they are
not,
Though calved i' th' porch o' th' Capitol.

MENENIUS Be gone
Put not your worthy rage into your tongue;
One time will owe another.

CORIOLANUS On fair ground
I could beat forty of them.

MENENIUS I could myself
Take up a brace o' th' best of them; yea, the two
tribunes.

COMINIUS But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetic,
And manhood is call'd foolery when it stands
Against a falling fabric. Will you hence,
Before the tag return? whose rage doth rend
Like interrupted waters, and o'erbear
What they are us'd to bear.

MENENIUS Pray you be gone
I'll try whether my old wit be in request
With those that have but little; this must be
patch'd

With cloth of any colour.

COMINIUS Nay, come away
*Exeunt CORIOLANUS and COMINIUS,
with others*

PATRICIANS This man has marr'd his fortune

MENENIUS
His nature is too noble for the world:
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for's power to thunder. His heart's his
mouth;
What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent;
And, being angry, does forget that ever
He heard the name of death. *A noise within*
Here's goodly work!

PATRICIANS I would they were a-bed

MENENIUS I would they were in Tiber
What the vengeance, could he not speak 'em fair?
*Re-enter BRUTUS and SICINIUS, the rabble
again*

SICINIUS Where is this viper
That would depopulate the city and
Be every man himself?

MENENIUS You worthy Tribunes—

SICINIUS He shall be thrown down the Tarpeian
rock
With rigorous hands; he hath resisted law,
And therefore law shall scorn him further trial
Than the severity of the public power,
Which he so sets at nought.

FIRST CITIZEN He shall well know
The noble tribunes are the people's mouths,
And we their hands.

PLEBEIANS He shall, sure on't

MENENIUS Sir, sir—

SICINIUS Peace!

MENENIUS Do not cry havoc, where you should
but hunt
With modest warrant.

SICINIUS Sir, how comes't that you
Have help to make this rescue?

MENENIUS Hear me speak
As I do know the consul's worthiness,
So can I name his faults.

SICINIUS Consul! What consul?

MENENIUS The consul Coriolanus

BRUTUS He consul!

PLEBEIANS No, no, no, no, no

MENENIUS If, by the tribunes' leave, and yours,
good people,
I may be heard, I would crave a word or two;
The which shall turn you to no further harm
Than so much loss of time.

SICINIUS Speak briefly, then,
For we are peremptory to dispatch
This viperous traitor; to eject him hence

Were but one danger, and to keep him here
Our certain death; therefore it is decreed
He dies to-night.

MENENIUS Now the good gods forbid
That our renowned Rome, whose gratitude
Towards her deserved children is enroll'd
In Jove's own book, like an unnatural dam
Should now eat up her own!

SICINIUS He's a disease that must be cut away

MENENIUS O, he's a limb that has but a disease—
Mortal, to cut it off: to cure it, easy.
What has he done to Rome that's worthy death?
Killing our enemies, the blood he hath lost—
Which I dare vouch is more than that he hath
By many an ounce—he dropt it for his country;
And what is left, to lose it by his country
Were to us all that do't and suffer it
A brand to th' end o' th' world.

SICINIUS This is clean kam

BRUTUS Merely awry
It honour'd him.

SICINIUS The service of the foot,
Being once gangren'd, is not then respected
For what before it was.

BRUTUS We'll hear no more
Pursue him to his house and pluck him thence,
Lest his infection, being of catching nature,
Spread further.

MENENIUS One word more, one word
This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find
The harm of unscann'd swiftness, will, too late,
Tie leaden pounds to's heels. Proceed by process,
Lest parties—as he is below'd—break out,
And sack great Rome with Romans.

BRUTUS If it were so—

SICINIUS What do ye talk?
Have we not had a taste of his obedience—
Our aediles smote, ourselves resisted? Come!

MENENIUS Consider this: he has been bred i' th'
wars
Since 'a could draw a sword, and is ill school'd
In bolted language; meal and bran together
He throws without distinction. Give me leave,
I'll go to him and undertake to bring him
Where he shall answer by a lawful form,
In peace, to his utmost peril.

FIRST SENATOR Noble Tribunes,
It is the humane way; the other course
Will prove too bloody, and the end of it
Unknown to the beginning.

SICINIUS Noble Menenius,
Be you then as the people's officer.
Masters, lay down your weapons.

BRUTUS Go not home

SICINIUS Meet on the market-place
Where, if you bring not Marcius, we'll proceed
In our first way.

MENENIUS I'll bring him to you

To the SENATORS Let me desire your company;
he must come,
Or what is worst will follow.

FIRST SENATOR Pray you let's to him

SCENE II

Rome. The house of CORIOLANUS
Enter CORIOLANUS with NOBLES

CORIOLANUS
Let them pull all about mine ears, present me
Death on the wheel or at wild horses' heels;
Or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock,
That the precipitation might down stretch
Below the beam of sight; yet will I still
Be thus to them.

FIRST PATRICIAN You do the nobler

CORIOLANUS I muse my mother
Does not approve me further, who was wont
To call them woollen vassals, things created
To buy and sell with groats; to show bare heads
In congregations, to yawn, be still, and wonder,
When one but of my ordinance stood up
To speak of peace or war.

Enter VOLUMNIA

I talk of you:
Why did you wish me milder? Would you have
me
False to my nature? Rather say I play
The man I am.

VOLUMNIA O, sir, sir, sir,
I would have had you put your power well on
Before you had worn it out.

CORIOLANUS Let go

VOLUMNIA You might have been enough the
man you are
With striving less to be so; lesser had been
The thwartings of your dispositions, if
You had not show'd them how ye were dispos'd,
Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

CORIOLANUS Let them hang

VOLUMNIA Ay, and burn too
Enter MENENIUS with the SENATORS

MENENIUS Come, come, you have been too
rough, something too rough;
You must return and mend it.

FIRST SENATOR There's no remedy,
Unless, by not so doing, our good city
Cleave in the midst and perish.

VOLUMNIA Pray be counsell'd;
I have a heart as little apt as yours,
But yet a brain that leads my use of anger
To better vantage.

MENENIUS Well said, noble woman!
Before he should thus stoop to th' herd, but that
The violent fit o' th' time craves it as physic
For the whole state, I would put mine armour on,

Which I can scarcely bear.

CORIOLANUS What must I do?

MENENIUS Return to th' tribunes

CORIOLANUS Well, what then, what then?

MENENIUS Repent what you have spoke

CORIOLANUS For them! I cannot do it to the
gods;
Must I then do't to them?

VOLUMNIA You are too absolute;
Though therein you can never be too noble
But when extremities speak. I have heard you say
Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,
I' th' war do grow together; grant that, and tell me
In peace what each of them by th' other lose
That they combine not there.

CORIOLANUS Tush, tush!

MENENIUS A good demand

VOLUMNIA
If it be honour in your wars to seem
The same you are not, which for your best ends
You adopt your policy, how is it less or worse
That it shall hold companionship in peace
With honour as in war; since that to both
It stands in like request?

CORIOLANUS Why force you this?

VOLUMNIA
Because that now it lies you on to speak
To th' people, not by your own instruction,
Nor by th' matter which your heart prompts you,
But with such words that are but roted in
Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.
Now, this no more dishonours you at all
Than to take in a town with gentle words,
Which else would put you to your fortune and
The hazard of much blood.
I would dissemble with my nature where
My fortunes and my friends at stake requir'd
I should do so in honour. I am in this
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles;
And you will rather show our general louts
How you can frown, than spend a fawn upon 'em
For the inheritance of their loves and safeguard
Of what that want might ruin.

MENENIUS Noble lady!
Come, go with us, speak fair; you may salve so,
Not what is dangerous present, but the los
Of what is past.

VOLUMNIA I prithee now, My son,
Go to them with this bonnet in thy hand;
And thus far having stretch'd it—here be with
them—
Thy knee bussing the stones—for in such busines
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th' ignorant
More learned than the ears—waving thy head,
Which often thus correcting thy—stout heart,
Now humble as the ripest mulberry
That will not hold the handling. Or say to them
Thou art their soldier and, being bred in broils,
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,

Were fit for thee to use, as they to claim,
In asking their good loves; but thou wilt frame
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far
As thou hast power and person.

MENENIUS This but done
Even as she speaks, why, their hearts were yours;
For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free
As words to little purpose.

VOLUMNIA Prithee now,
Go, and be rul'd; although I know thou hadst
rather
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf
Than flatter him in a bower.

Enter COMINIUS

Here is Cominius.

COMINIUS
I have been i' th' market-place; and, sir, 'tis fit
You make strong party, or defend yourself
By calmness or by absence; all's in anger.

MENENIUS Only fair speech

COMINIUS I think 'twill serve, if he
Can thereto frame his spirit.

VOLUMNIA He must and will
Prithee now, say you will, and go about it.

CORIOLANUS
Must I go show them my unbarb'd sconce? Must I
With my base tongue give to my noble heart
A lie that it must bear? Well, I will do't;
Yet, were there but this single plot to lose,
This mould of Marcius, they to dust should grind
it,
And throw't against the wind. To th'
market-place!
You have put me now to such a part which never
I shall discharge to th' life.

COMINIUS Come, come, we'll prompt you

VOLUMNIA I prithee now, sweet son, as thou hast
said
My praises made thee first a soldier, so,
To have my praise for this, perform a part
Thou hast not done before.

CORIOLANUS Well, I must do't
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit! My throat of war be turn'd,
Which quier'd with my drum, into a pipe
Small as an eunuch or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep! The smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight! A beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my arm'd
knees,
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath receiv'd an alms! I will not do't,
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,
And by my body's action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.

VOLUMNIA At thy choice, then
To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin. Let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear

Thy dangerous stoutness; for I mock at death
With as big heart as thou. Do as thou list.
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'dst it from
me;
But owe thy pride thyself.

CORIOLANUS Pray be content
Mother, I am going to the market-place;
Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves,
Cog their hearts from them, and come home
below'd
Of all the trades in Rome. Look, I am going.
Commend me to my wife. I'll return consul,
Or never trust to what my tongue can do
I' th' way of flattery further.

VOLUMNIA Do your will

COMINIUS Away! The tribunes do attend you
To answer mildly; for they are prepar'd
With accusations, as I hear, more strong
Than are upon you yet.

CORIOLANUS The word is 'mildly
Let them accuse me by invention; I
Will answer in mine honour.

MENENIUS Ay, but mildly

CORIOLANUS Well, mildly be it then—mildly

SCENE III

Rome. The Forum

Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS

BRUTUS In this point charge him home, that he
affects
Tyrannical power. If he evade us there,
Enforce him with his envy to the people,
And that the spoil got on the Antiates
Was ne'er distributed.

Enter an AEDILE

What, will he come?

AEDILE He's coming

BRUTUS How accompanied?

AEDILE With old Menenius, and those senators
That always favour'd him.

SICINIUS Have you a catalogue
Of all the voices that we have procur'd,
Set down by th' poll?

AEDILE I have; 'tis ready

SICINIUS Have you corrected them by tribes?

AEDILE I have

SICINIUS Assemble presently the people hither;
And when they hear me say 'It shall be so
I' th' right and strength o' th' commons' be it
either
For death, for fine, or banishment, then let them,
If I say fine, cry 'Fine!'—if death, cry 'Death!'
Insisting on the old prerogative

And power i' th' truth o' th' cause.

AEDILE I shall inform them

BRUTUS And when such time they have begun to
cry,
Let them not cease, but with a din confus'd
Enforce the present execution
Of what we chance to sentence.

AEDILE Very well

SICINIUS Make them be strong, and ready for this
hint,
When we shall hap to give't them.

BRUTUS Go about it

Put him to choler straight. He hath been us'd
Ever to conquer, and to have his worth
Of contradiction; being once chaf'd, he cannot
Be rein'd again to temperance; then he speaks
What's in his heart, and that is there which looks
With us to break his neck.

*Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS and
COMINIUS, with others*

SICINIUS Well, here he comes

MENENIUS Calmly, I do beseech you

CORIOLANUS Ay, as an ostler, that for th'
poorest piece
Will bear the knave by th' volume. Th' honour'd
gods
Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice
Supplied with worthy men! plant love among's!
Throng our large temples with the shows of
peace,
And not our streets with war!

FIRST SENATOR Amen, amen!

MENENIUS A noble wish

Re-enter the AEDILE, with the plebeians

SICINIUS Draw near, ye people

AEDILE List to your tribunes

CORIOLANUS First, hear me speak

BOTH TRIBUNES Well, say

CORIOLANUS Shall I be charg'd no further than
this present?
Must all determine here?

SICINIUS I do demand,
If you submit you to the people's voices,
Allow their officers, and are content
To suffer lawful censure for such faults
As shall be prov'd upon you.

CORIOLANUS I am content

MENENIUS Lo, citizens, he says he is content
The warlike service he has done, consider; think
Upon the wounds his body bears, which show
Like graves i' th' holy churchyard.

CORIOLANUS Scratches with briers,
Scars to move laughter only.

MENENIUS Consider further,
That when he speaks not like a citizen,
You find him like a soldier; do not take

His rougher accents for malicious sounds,
But, as I say, such as become a soldier
Rather than envy you.

COMINIUS Well, well! No more

CORIOLANUS What is the matter,
That being pass'd for consul with full voice,
I am so dishonour'd that the very hour
You take it off again?

SICINIUS Answer to us

CORIOLANUS Say then; 'tis true, I ought so

SICINIUS
We charge you that you have contriv'd to take
From Rome all season'd office, and to wind
Yourself into a power tyrannical;
For which you are a traitor to the people.

CORIOLANUS How—traitor?

MENENIUS Nay, temperately! Your promise

CORIOLANUS
The fires i' th' lowest hell fold in the people!
Call me their traitor! Thou injurious tribune!
Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths,
In thy hands clutch'd as many millions, in
Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say
'Thou liest' unto thee with a voice as free
As I do pray the gods.

SICINIUS Mark you this, people?

PLEBEIANS To th' rock, to th' rock, with him!

SICINIUS Peace!
We need not put new matter to his charge.
What you have seen him do and heard him speak,
Beating your officers, cursing yourselves,
Opposing laws with strokes, and here defying
Those whose great power must try him—even this,
So criminal and in such capital kind,
Deserves th' extremest death.

BRUTUS But since he hath
Serv'd well for Rome—

CORIOLANUS What do you prate of service?

BRUTUS I talk of that that know it

CORIOLANUS You!

MENENIUS Is this the promise that you made
your mother?

COMINIUS Know, I pray you—

CORIOLANUS I'll know no further
Let them pronounce the steep Tarpeian death,
Vagabond exile, flaying, pent to linger
But with a grain a day, I would not buy
Their mercy at the price of one fair word,
Nor check my courage for what they can give,
To have't with saying 'Good morrow.'

SICINIUS For that he has—
As much as in him lies—from time to time
Envied against the people, seeking means
To pluck away their power; as now at last
Given hostile strokes, and that not in the presence
Of dreaded justice, but on the ministers

That do distribute it—in the name o' th' people,
And in the power of us the tribunes, we,
Ev'n from this instant, banish him our city,
In peril of precipitation
From off the rock Tarpeian, never more
To enter our Rome gates. I' th' people's name,
I say it shall be so.

PLEBEIANS
It shall be so, it shall be so! Let him away!
He's banish'd, and it shall be so.

COMINIUS Hear me, my masters and my
common friends—

SICINIUS He's sentenc'd; no more hearing

COMINIUS Let me speak
I have been consul, and can show for Rome
Her enemies' marks upon me. I do love
My country's good with a respect more tender,
More holy and profound, than mine own life,
My dear wife's estimate, her womb's increase
And treasure of my loins. Then if I would
Speak that—

SICINIUS We know your drift

BRUTUS
There's no more to be said, but he is banish'd,
As enemy to the people and his country.
It shall be so.

PLEBEIANS It shall be so, it shall be so

CORIOLANUS
YOU common cry of curs, whose breath I hate
As reek o' th' rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air—I banish you.
And here remain with your uncertainty!
Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts;
Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes,
Fan you into despair! Have the power still
To banish your defenders, till at length
Your ignorance—which finds not till it feels,
Making but reservation of yourselves
Still your own foes—deliver you
As most abated captives to some nation
That won you without blows! Despising
For you the city, thus I turn my back;
There is a world elsewhere.

*Exeunt CORIOLANUS, COMINIUS,
MENENIUS, with the other PATRICIANS*

AEDILE The people's enemy is gone, is gone!
They all shout and throw up their caps

PLEBEIANS
Our enemy is banish'd, he is gone! Hoo—oo!

SICINIUS Go see him out at gates, and follow him,
As he hath follow'd you, with all despite;
Give him deserv'd vexation. Let a guard
Attend us through the city.

PLEBEIANS
Come, come, let's see him out at gates; come!
The gods preserve our noble tribunes! Come.
Exeunt

ACT IV

SCENE I

Rome. Before a gate of the city
Enter CORIOLANUS, VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA,
MENENIUS, COMINIUS, with the young
NOBILITY of Rome

CORIOLANUS Come, leave your tears; a brief
farewell
With many heads butts me away. Nay, mother,
Where is your ancient courage? You were us'd
To say extremities was the trier of spirits;
That common chances common men could bear;
That when the sea was calm all boats alike
Show'd mastership in floating; fortune's blows,
When most struck home, being gentle wounded
craves
A noble cunning. You were us'd to load me
With precepts that would make invincible
The heart that conn'd them.

VIRGILIA O heavens! O heavens!

CORIOLANUS Nay, I prithee, woman—

VOLUMNIA Now the red pestilence strike all
trades in Rome,
And occupations perish!

CORIOLANUS What, what, what!
I shall be lov'd when I am lack'd. Nay, mother,
Resume that spirit when you were wont to say,
If you had been the wife of Hercules,
Six of his labours you'd have done, and sav'd
Your husband so much sweat. Cominius,
Droop not; adieu. Farewell, my wife, my mother.
I'll do well yet. Thou old and true Menenius,
Thy tears are salter than a younger man's
And venomous to thine eyes. My sometime
General,
I have seen thee stern, and thou hast oft beheld
Heart-hard'ning spectacles; tell these sad women
'Tis fond to wail inevitable strokes,
As 'tis to laugh at 'em. My mother, you wot well
My hazards still have been your solace; and
Believe't not lightly—though I go alone,
Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen
Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen—your
son
Will or exceed the common or be caught
With cautelous baits and practice.

VOLUMNIA My first son,
Whither wilt thou go? Take good Cominius
With thee awhile; determine on some course
More than a wild exposure to each chance

That starts i' th' way before thee.

VIRGILIA O the gods!

COMINIUS I'll follow thee a month, devise with
the
Where thou shalt rest, that thou mayst hear of us,
And we of thee; so, if the time thrust forth
A cause for thy repeal, we shall not send
O'er the vast world to seek a single man,
And lose advantage, which doth ever cool
I' th' absence of the needer.

CORIOLANUS Fare ye well;
Thou hast years upon thee, and thou art too full
Of the wars' surfeits to go rove with one
That's yet unbruised; bring me but out at gate.
Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and
My friends of noble touch; when I am forth,
Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you come.
While I remain above the ground you shall
Hear from me still, and never of me aught
But what is like me formerly.

MENENIUS That's worthily
As any ear can hear. Come, let's not weep.
If I could shake off but one seven years
From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,
I'd with thee every foot.

CORIOLANUS Give me thy hand
Come. *Exeunt*

SCENE II

Rome. A street near the gate
Enter the two Tribunes, SICINIUS and BRUTUS
with the AEDILE

SICINIUS
Bid them all home; he's gone, and we'll no
further
The nobility are vex'd, whom we see have sided
In his behalf.

BRUTUS Now we have shown our power,
Let us seem humbler after it is done
Than when it was a-doing.

SICINIUS Bid them home
Say their great enemy is gone, and they
Stand in their ancient strength.

BRUTUS Dismiss them home
Here comes his mother.
Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and

MENENIUS

SICINIUS Let's not meet her

BRUTUS Why?

SICINIUS They say she's mad

BRUTUS They have ta'en note of us; keep on your way

VOLUMNIA O, Y'are well met; th' hoarded plague o' th' gods
Requite your love!

MENENIUS Peace, peace, be not so loud

VOLUMNIA If that I could for weeping, you should hear—
Nay, and you shall hear some. *To BRUTUS* Will you be gone?

VIRGILIA (*To SICINIUS*) You shall stay too power
To say so to my husband.

SICINIUS Are you mankind?

VOLUMNIA Ay, fool; is that a shame? Note but this, fool:
Was not a man my father? Hadst thou foxship
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome
Than thou hast spoken words?

SICINIUS O blessed heavens!

VOLUMNIA Moe noble blows than ever thou wise words;
And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what—yet go!
Nay, but thou shalt stay too. I would my son
Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,
His good sword in his hand.

SICINIUS What then?

VIRGILIA What then!
He'd make an end of thy posterity.

VOLUMNIA Bastards and all
Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome!

MENENIUS Come, come, peace

SICINIUS I would he had continued to his country
As he began, and not unknit himself
The noble knot he made.

BRUTUS I would he had

VOLUMNIA 'I would he had!' 'Twas you incens'd the rabble—
Cats that can judge as fitly of his worth
As I can of those mysteries which heaven
Will not have earth to know.

BRUTUS Pray, let's go

VOLUMNIA Now, pray, sir, get you gone;
You have done a brave deed. Ere you go, hear this:
As far as doth the Capitol exceed
The meanest house in Rome, so far my son—
This lady's husband here, this, do you see?—
Whom you have banish'd does exceed you an.

BRUTUS Well, well, we'll leave you

SICINIUS Why stay we to be baited

With one that wants her wits? *Exeunt TRIBUNES*

VOLUMNIA Take my prayers with you
I would the gods had nothing else to do
But to confirm my curses. Could I meet 'em
But once a day, it would unclog my heart
Of what lies heavy to't.

MENENIUS You have told them home,
And, by my troth, you have cause. You'll sup
with me?

VOLUMNIA Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself,
And so shall starve with feeding. Come, let's go.
Leave this faint puling and lament as I do,
In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.

Exeunt VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA

MENENIUS Fie, fie, fie! *Exit*

SCENE III

*A highway between Rome and Antium
Enter a ROMAN and a VOLSCE, meeting*

ROMAN I know you well, sir, and you know me;
your name, I think, is Adrian.

VOLSCE It is so, sir

ROMAN I am a Roman; and my services are, as
you are, against 'em
Know you me yet?

VOLSCE Nicanor? No!

ROMAN The same, sir

VOLSCE YOU had more beard when I last saw
you, but your favour is well appear'd by your
tongue. What's the news in Rome? I have a note
from the Volscian state, to find you out there. You
have well saved me a day's journey.

ROMAN There hath been in Rome strange
insurrections: the people against the senators,
patricians, and nobles.

VOLSCE Hath been! Is it ended, then? Our state
thinks not so; they are in a most warlike
preparation, and hope to come upon them in
the heat of their division.

ROMAN The main blaze of it is past, but a small
thing would make it flame again; for the nobles
receive so to heart the banishment of that worthy
Coriolanus that they are in a ripe aptness to take
all power from the people, and to pluck from
them their tribunes for ever. This lies glowing, I
can tell you, and is almost mature for the violent
breaking out.

VOLSCE Coriolanus banish'd!

ROMAN Banish'd, sir

VOLSCE You will be welcome with this
intelligence, Nicanor

ROMAN The day serves well for them now fittest
time to corrupt a man's wife is when she's fall'n
out with her husband. Your noble Tullus Aufidius

will appear well in these wars, his great opposer,
Coriolanus, being now in no request of his
country.

VOLSCE He cannot choose encounter you; you
have ended my business, and I will merrily
accompany you home.

ROMAN I shall between this and supper tell you
most strange things from Rome, all tending to the
good of their adversaries. Have you an army
ready, say you?

VOLSCE A most royal one: the centurions and
their charges, distinctly billeted, already in th'
entertainment, and to be on foot at an hour's
warning.

ROMAN I am joyful to hear of their readiness, and
am the man, I think, that shall set them in present
action. So, sir, heartily well met, and most glad of
your company.

VOLSCE You take my part from me, sir glad of
yours.

ROMAN Well, let us go together

SCENE IV

Antium. Before AUFIDIUS' house
Enter CORIOLANUS, in mean apparel, disguis'd
and muffled

CORIOLANUS A goodly city is this Antium
'Tis I that made thy widows: many an heir
Of these fair edifices fore my wars
Have I heard groan and drop. Then know me not.
Lest that thy wives with spits and boys with
stones,
In puny battle slay me.

Enter A CITIZEN

Save you, sir.

CITIZEN And you

CORIOLANUS Direct me, if it be your will,
Where great Aufidius lies. Is he in Antium?

CITIZEN He is, and feasts the nobles of the state
At his house this night.

CORIOLANUS Which is his house, beseech you?

CITIZEN This here before you

CORIOLANUS Thank you, sir; farewell
O world, thy slippery turns! Friends now fast
sworn,
Whose double bosoms seems to wear one heart,
Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal and
exercise
Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love,
Unseparable, shall within this hour,
On a dissension of a doit, break out
To bitterest enmity; so fellest foes,
Whose passions and whose plots have broke their
sleep
To take the one the other, by some chance,
Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear
friends

And interjoin their issues. So with me:
My birthplace hate I, and my love's upon
This enemy town. I'll enter. If he slay me,
He does fair justice: if he give me way,
I'll do his country service.

SCENE V

Antium. AUFIDIUS' house
Music plays. Enter A SERVINGMAN

FIRST SERVANT

Wine, wine, wine! What service is here! I think
our fellows are asleep. *Exit*

Enter another SERVINGMAN

SECOND SERVANT Where's Cotus? My master
calls for him Cotus! *Exit*

Enter CORIOLANUS

CORIOLANUS A goodly house
Appear not like a guest.

Re-enter the first SERVINGMAN

FIRST SERVANT What would you have, friend?
Whence are you? Here's no place for you: pray
go to the door.

Exit

CORIOLANUS

I have deserv'd no better entertainment
In being Coriolanus.

Re-enter second SERVINGMAN

SECOND SERVANT Whence are you, sir? Has
the porter his eyes in his head that he gives
entrance to such companions? Pray get you out.

CORIOLANUS Away!

SECOND SERVANT Away? Get you away

CORIOLANUS Now th' art troublesome

SECOND SERVANT Are you so brave? I'll have
you talk'd with anon

Enter a third SERVINGMAN. The first meets him

THIRD SERVANT What fellow's this?

FIRST SERVANT A strange one as ever I look'd
on out o' th' house. Prithee call my master to
him.

THIRD SERVANT What have you to do here,
fellow? Pray you avoid the house.

CORIOLANUS Let me but stand—I will not hurt
your hearth

THIRD SERVANT What are you?

CORIOLANUS A gentleman

THIRD SERVANT A marv'ulous poor one

CORIOLANUS True, so I am

THIRD SERVANT Pray you, poor gentleman,
take up some other station; here's no place for
you. Pray you avoid. Come.

CORIOLANUS Follow your function, go and
batten on cold bits

Pushes him away from him

THIRD SERVANT What, you will not? Prithee
tell my master what a strange guest he has here.

SECOND SERVANT And I shall

THIRD SERVANT Where dwell'st thou?

CORIOLANUS Under the canopy

THIRD SERVANT Under the canopy?

CORIOLANUS Ay

THIRD SERVANT Where's that?

CORIOLANUS I' th' city of kites and crows

THIRD SERVANT I' th' city of kites and crows!
What an ass it is! Then thou dwell'st with daws
too?

CORIOLANUS No, I serve not thy master

THIRD SERVANT How, sir! Do you meddle with
my master?

CORIOLANUS Ay; 'tis an honest service than
to meddle with thy mistress. Thou prat'st and
prat'st; serve with thy trencher; hence!

Beats him away

Enter AUFIDIUS with the second SERVINGMAN

AUFIDIUS Where is this fellow?

SECOND SERVANT Here, sir; I'd have beaten
him like a dog, but for disturbing the lords within.

AUFIDIUS Whence com'st thou? What wouldst
thou? Thy name?
Why speak'st not? Speak, man. What's thy
name?

CORIOLANUS *Unmuffling* If, Tullus,
Not yet thou know'st me, and, seeing me, dost not
Think me for the man I am, necessity
Commands me name myself.

AUFIDIUS What is thy name?

CORIOLANUS A name unmusical to the
Volscians' ears,
And harsh in sound to thine.

AUFIDIUS Say, what's thy name?
Thou has a grim appearance, and thy face
Bears a command in't; though thy tackle's torn,
Thou show'st a noble vessel. What's thy name?

CORIOLANUS Prepare thy brow to
frown—know'st thou me yet?

AUFIDIUS I know thee not

CORIOLANUS
My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done
To thee particularly, and to all the Volsces,
Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may
My surname, Coriolanus. The painful service,
The extreme dangers, and the drops of blood
Shed for my thankless country, are requited
But with that surname—a good memory
And witness of the malice and displeasure
Which thou shouldst bear me. Only that name
remains;
The cruelty and envy of the people,

Permitted by our dastard nobles, who
Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest,
An suffer'd me by th' voice of slaves to be
Whoop'd out of Rome. Now this extremity
Hath brought me to thy hearth; not out of hope,
Mistake me not, to save my life; for if
I had fear'd death, of all the men i' th' world
I would have 'voided thee; but in mere spite,
To be full quit of those my banishers,
Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast
A heart of wreak in thee, that wilt revenge
Thine own particular wrongs and stop those
maims
Of shame seen through thy country, speed thee
straight
And make my misery serve thy turn. So use it
That my revengeful services may prove
As benefits to thee; for I will fight
Against my cank' red country with the spleen
Of all the under fiends. But if so be
Thou dar'st not this, and that to prove more
fortunes
Th'art tir'd, then, in a word, I also am
Longer to live most weary, and present
My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice;
Which not to cut would show thee but a fool,
Since I have ever followed thee with hate,
Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,
And cannot live but to thy shame, unless
It be to do thee service.

AUFIDIUS O Marcius, Marcius!
Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my
heart
A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter
Should from yond cloud speak divine things,
And say "'Tis true,' I'd not believe them more
Than thee, all noble Marcius. Let me twine
Mine arms about that body, where against
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke
And scarr'd the moon with splinters; here I clip
The anvil of my sword, and do contest
As hotly and as nobly with thy love
As ever in ambitious strength I did
Contend against thy valour. Know thou first,
I lov'd the maid I married; never man
Sigh'd truer breath; but that I see thee here,
Thou noble thing, more dances my rapt heart
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw
Bestride my threshold. Why, thou Mars, I tell thee
We have a power on foot, and I had purpose
Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn,
Or lose mine arm for't. Thou hast beat me out
Twelve several times, and I have nightly since
Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me—
We have been down together in my sleep,
Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat—
And wak'd half dead with nothing. Worthy
Marcius,
Had we no other quarrel else to Rome but that
Thou art thence banish'd, we would muster all
From twelve to seventy, and, pouring war
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,
Like a bold flood o'erbeat. O, come, go in,
And take our friendly senators by th' hands,
Who now are here, taking their leaves of me
Who am prepar'd against your territories,

Though not for Rome itself.

CORIOLANUS You bless me, gods!

AUFIDIUS Therefore, most

The leading of thine own revenges, take
Th' one half of my commission, and set down—
As best thou art experienc'd, since thou know'st
Thy country's strength and weakness—thine own
ways,
Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,
Or rudely visit them in parts remote
To fright them ere destroy. But come in;
Let me commend thee first to those that shall
Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes!
And more a friend than e'er an enemy;
Yet, Marcius, that was much. Your hand; most
welcome!

*Exeunt CORIOLANUS and
AUFIDIUS*

The two SERVINGMEN come forward

FIRST SERVANT Here's a strange alteration!

SECOND SERVANT By my hand, I had thought
to have stricken him with a cudgel; and yet my
mind gave me his clothes made a false report of
him.

FIRST SERVANT What an arm he has! He turn'd
me about with his finger and his thumb, as one
would set up a top.

SECOND SERVANT Nay, I knew by his face that
there was something in him; he had, sir, a kind of
face, methought—I cannot tell how to term it.

FIRST SERVANT He had so, looking as it
were—Would I were hang'd, but I thought there
was more in him than I could think.

SECOND SERVANT So did I, I'll be sworn man
i' th' world.

FIRST SERVANT I think he is; but a greater
soldier than he you wot on.

SECOND SERVANT Who, my master?

FIRST SERVANT Nay, it's no matter for that

SECOND SERVANT Worth six on him

FIRST SERVANT Nay, not so neither; but I take
him to be the greater soldier.

SECOND SERVANT Faith, look you, one cannot
tell how to say that; for the defence of a town our
general is excellent.

FIRST SERVANT Ay, and for an assault too

Re-enter the third SERVINGMAN

THIRD SERVANT O slaves, I can tell you
news—news, you rascals!

BOTH What, what, what? Let's partake

THIRD SERVANT I would not be a Roman, of all
nations;
I had as lief be a condemn'd man.

BOTH Wherefore? wherefore?

THIRD SERVANT Why, here's he that was wont

to thwack our general—Caius Marcius.

FIRST SERVANT Why do you say 'thwack our
general'?

THIRD SERVANT I do not say 'thwack our
general,' but he was always good enough for him.

SECOND SERVANT Come, we are fellows and
friends
hard for him, I have heard him say so himself.

FIRST SERVANT He was too hard for him
directly, to say the troth on't; before Corioli he
scotch'd him and notch'd him like a carbonado.

SECOND SERVANT An he had been cannibally
given, he might have broil'd and eaten him too.

FIRST SERVANT But more of thy news!

THIRD SERVANT Why, he is so made on here
within as if he were son and heir to Mars; set at
upper end o' th' table; no question asked him by
any of the senators but they stand bald before
him.

Our general himself makes a mistress of him,
sanctifies himself with's hand, and turns up the
white o' th' eye to his discourse.

But the bottom of the news is, our general is cut
i' th' middle and but one half of what he was
yesterday, for the other has half by the entreaty
and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says,
and sowl the porter of Rome gates by th' ears; he
will mow all down before him, and leave his
passage poll'd.

SECOND SERVANT And he's as like to do't as
any man I can imagine

THIRD SERVANT Do't! He will do't; for look
you, sir, he has as many friends as enemies;
which friends, sir, as it were, durst not—look you,
sir—show themselves, as we term it, his friends,
whilst he's in directitude.

FIRST SERVANT Directitude? What's that?

THIRD SERVANT But when they shall see, sir,
his crest up again and the man in blood, they will
out of their burrows, like conies after rain, and
revel an with him.

FIRST SERVANT But when goes this forward?

THIRD SERVANT To—morrow, to—day, presently
drum struck up this afternoon; 'tis as it were
parcel of their feast, and to be executed ere they
wipe their lips.

SECOND SERVANT Why, then we shall have a
stirring world again

This peace is nothing but to rust iron, increase
tailors, and breed ballad-makers.

FIRST SERVANT Let me have war, say I; it
exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's
spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent.
Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; mull'd, deaf,
sleepy, insensible; a getter of more bastard
children than war's a destroyer of men.

SECOND SERVANT 'Tis so; and as war in some
sort may be said to be a ravisher, so it cannot be

denied but peace is a great maker of cuckolds.

FIRST SERVANT Ay, and it makes men hate one another

THIRD SERVANT Reason: because they then less need one another wars for my money. I hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians. They are rising, they are rising.

BOTH In, in, in, in! *Exeunt*

SCENE VI

Rome. A public place

Enter the two Tribunes, SICINIUS and BRUTUS

SICINIUS We hear not of him, neither need we fear him His remedies are tame. The present peace And quietness of the people, which before Were in wild hurry, here do make his friends Blush that the world goes well; who rather had, Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold Dissentious numbers pest'ring streets than see Our tradesmen singing in their shops, and going About their functions friendly.

Enter MENENIUS

BRUTUS We stood to't in good time

SICINIUS 'Tis he, 'tis he Of late. Hail, sir!

MENENIUS Hail to you both!

SICINIUS Your Coriolanus is not much miss'd But with his friends. The commonwealth doth stand, And so would do, were he more angry at it.

MENENIUS All's well, and might have been much better He could have temporiz'd.

SICINIUS Where is he, hear you?

MENENIUS Nay, I hear nothing; his mother and his wife Hear nothing from him.

Enter three or four citizens

CITIZENS The gods preserve you both!

SICINIUS God-den, our neighbours

BRUTUS God-den to you all, god-den to you an

FIRST CITIZEN Ourselves, our wives, and children, on our knees Are bound to pray for you both.

SICINIUS Live and thrive!

BRUTUS Farewell, kind neighbours; we wish'd Coriolanus Had lov'd you as we did.

CITIZENS Now the gods keep you!

BOTH TRIBUNES Farewell, farewell

SICINIUS This is a happier and more comely time

Than when these fellows ran about the streets Crying confusion.

BRUTUS Caius Marcius was A worthy officer i' the war, but insolent, O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking, Self-loving—

SICINIUS And affecting one sole throne, Without assistance.

MENENIUS I think not so

SICINIUS We should by this, to all our lamentation, If he had gone forth consul, found it so.

BRUTUS The gods have well prevented it, and Rome Sits safe and still without him.

Enter an AEDILE

AEDILE Worthy tribunes, There is a slave, whom we have put in prison, Reports the Volsces with several powers Are ent'red in the Roman territories, And with the deepest malice of the war Destroy what lies before 'em.

MENENIUS 'Tis Aufidius, Who, hearing of our Marcius' banishment, Thrusts forth his horns again into the world, Which were inshell'd when Marcius stood for Rome, And durst not once peep out.

SICINIUS Come, what talk you of Marcius?

BRUTUS Go see this rumourer whipp'd The Volsces dare break with us.

MENENIUS Cannot be! We have record that very well it can; And three examples of the like hath been Within my age. But reason with the fellow Before you punish him, where he heard this, Lest you shall chance to whip your information And beat the messenger who bids beware Of what is to be dreaded.

SICINIUS Tell not me I know this cannot be.

BRUTUS Not Possible

Enter A MESSENGER

MESSENGER The nobles in great earnestness are going All to the Senate House; some news is come That turns their countenances.

SICINIUS 'Tis this slave— Go whip him fore the people's eyes—his raising, Nothing but his report.

MESSENGER Yes, worthy sir, The slave's report is seconded, and more, More fearful, is deliver'd.

SICINIUS What more fearful?

MESSENGER It is spoke freely out of many mouths— How probable I do not know—that Marcius,

Join'd with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome,
And vows revenge as spacious as between
The young'st and oldest thing.

SICINIUS This is most likely!

BRUTUS Rais'd only that the weaker sort may
wish Good Marcius home again.

SICINIUS The very trick on 't

MENENIUS This is unlikely
He and Aufidius can no more atone
Than violent'st contrariety.

Enter a second MESSENGER

SECOND MESSENGER You are sent for to the
Senate
A fearful army, led by Caius Marcius
Associated with Aufidius, rages
Upon our territories, and have already
O'erborne their way, consum'd with fire and took
What lay before them.

Enter COMINIUS

COMINIUS O, you have made good work!

MENENIUS What news? what news?

COMINIUS You have help to ravish your own
daughters and
To melt the city leads upon your pates,
To see your wives dishonour'd to your noses—

MENENIUS What's the news? What's the news?

COMINIUS Your temples burned in their cement,
and
Your franchises, whereon you stood, confin'd
Into an auger's bore.

MENENIUS Pray now, your news?
You have made fair work, I fear me. Pray, your
news.
If Marcius should be join'd wi' th' Volscians—

COMINIUS If!
He is their god; he leads them like a thing
Made by some other deity than Nature,
That shapes man better; and they follow him
Against us brats with no less confidence
Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,
Or butchers killing flies.

MENENIUS You have made good work,
You and your apron men; you that stood so much
Upon the voice of occupation and
The breath of garlic-eaters!

COMINIUS He'll shake
Your Rome about your ears.

MENENIUS As Hercules
Did shake down mellow fruit. You have made fair
work!

BRUTUS But is this true, sir?

COMINIUS Ay; and you'll look pale
Before you find it other. All the regions
Do smilingly revolt, and who resists
Are mock'd for valiant ignorance,
And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame
him?

Your enemies and his find something in him.

MENENIUS We are all undone unless
The noble man have mercy.

COMINIUS Who shall ask it?
The tribunes cannot do't for shame; the people
Deserve such pity of him as the wolf
Does of the shepherds; for his best friends, if they
Should say 'Be good to Rome'—they charg'd him
even
As those should do that had deserv'd his hate,
And therein show'd fike enemies.

MENENIUS 'Tis true;
If he were putting to my house the brand
That should consume it, I have not the face
To say 'Beseech you, cease.' You have made fair
hands,
You and your crafts! You have crafted fair!

COMINIUS You have brought
A trembling upon Rome, such as was never
S' incapable of help.

BOTH TRIBUNES Say not we brought it

MENENIUS
How! Was't we? We lov'd him, but, like beasts
And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your
clusters,
Who did hoot him out o' th' city.

COMINIUS But I fear
They'll roar him in again. Tullus Aufidius,
The second name of men, obeys his points
As if he were his officer. Desperation
Is all the policy, strength, and defence,
That Rome can make against them.

Enter a troop of citizens

MENENIUS Here comes the clusters
And is Aufidius with him? You are they
That made the air unwholesome when you cast
Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at
Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming,
And not a hair upon a soldier's head
Which will not prove a whip; as many coxcombs
As you threw caps up will he tumble down,
And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter;
If he could burn us all into one coal
We have deserv'd it.

PLEBEIANS Faith, we hear fearful news

FIRST CITIZEN For mine own part,
When I said banish him, I said 'twas pity.

SECOND CITIZEN And so did I

THIRD CITIZEN And so did I; and, to say the
truth, so did very many of us. That we did, we did
for the best; and though we willingly consented
to his banishment, yet it was against our will.

COMINIUS Y'are goodly things, you voices!

MENENIUS You have made
Good work, you and your cry! Shall's to the
Capitol?

COMINIUS O, ay, what else?

Exeunt COMINIUS and

MENENIUS

SICINIUS Go, masters, get you be not dismay'd;
 These are a side that would be glad to have
 This true which they so seem to fear. Go home,
 And show no sign of fear.

FIRST CITIZEN The gods be good to us! Come,
 masters, let's home ever said we were i' th'
 wrong when we banish'd him.

SECOND CITIZEN So did we all
Exeunt citizens

BRUTUS I do not like this news

SICINIUS Nor I

BRUTUS Let's to the Capitol
 Would buy this for a lie!

SICINIUS Pray let's go

SCENE VII

*A camp at a short distance from Rome
 Enter AUFIDIUS with his LIEUTENANT*

AUFIDIUS Do they still fly to th' Roman?

LIEUTENANT
 I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but
 Your soldiers use him as the grace fore meat,
 Their talk at table, and their thanks at end;
 And you are dark'ned in this action, sir,
 Even by your own.

AUFIDIUS I cannot help it now,
 Unless by using means I lame the foot
 Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier,
 Even to my person, than I thought he would
 When first I did embrace him; yet his nature
 In that's no changeling, and I must excuse
 What cannot be amended.

LIEUTENANT Yet I wish, sir—
 I mean, for your particular—you had not
 Join'd in commission with him, but either
 Had borne the action of yourself, or else
 To him had left it solely.

AUFIDIUS
 I understand thee well; and be thou sure,
 When he shall come to his account, he knows not
 What I can urge against him. Although it seems,
 And so he thinks, and is no less apparent
 To th' vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly
 And shows good husbandry for the Volscian state,
 Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon
 As draw his sword; yet he hath left undone
 That which shall break his neck or hazard mine
 Whene'er we come to our account.

LIEUTENANT
 Sir, I beseech you, think you he'll carry Rome?

AUFIDIUS
 All places yield to him ere he sits down,
 And the nobility of Rome are his;
 The senators and patricians love him too.
 The tribunes are no soldiers, and their people

Will be as rash in the repeal as hasty
 To expel him thence. I think he'll be to Rome
 As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it
 By sovereignty of nature. First he was
 A noble servant to them, but he could not
 Carry his honours even. Whether 'twas pride,
 Which out of daily fortune ever taints
 The happy man; whether defect of judgment,
 To fail in the disposing of those chances
 Which he was lord of; or whether nature,
 Not to be other than one thing, not moving
 From th' casque to th' cushion, but commanding
 peace
 Even with the same austerity and garb
 As he controll'd the war; but one of these—
 As he hath spices of them all—not all,
 For I dare so far free him—made him fear'd,
 So hated, and so banish'd. But he has a merit
 To choke it in the utterance. So our virtues
 Lie in th' interpretation of the time;
 And power, unto itself most commendable,
 Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
 T' extol what it hath done.
 One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail;
 Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail.
 Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,
 Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly art thou mine.

Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I

Rome. A public place

Enter MENENIUS, COMINIUS, SICINIUS and BRUTUS, the two Tribunes, with others

MENENIUS No, I'll not go

Which was sometime his general, who lov'd him
In a most dear particular. He call'd me father;
But what o' that? Go, you that banish'd him:
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee
The way into his mercy. Nay, if he coy'd
To hear Cominius speak, I'll keep at home.

COMINIUS He would not seem to know me

MENENIUS Do you hear?

COMINIUS

Yet one time he did call me by my name
I urg'd our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. 'Coriolanus'
He would not answer to; forbid all names;
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
Till he had forg'd himself a name i' th' fire
Of burning Rome.

MENENIUS Why, so! You have made good work
A pair of tribunes that have wrack'd for Rome
To make coals cheap—a noble memory!

COMINIUS

I minded him how royal 'twas to pardon
When it was less expected; he replied,
It was a bare petition of a state
To one whom they had punish'd.

MENENIUS Very well
Could he say less?

COMINIUS I offer'd to awaken his regard
For's private friends; his answer to me was,
He could not stay to pick them in a pile
Of noisome musty chaff. He said 'twas folly,
For one poor grain or two, to leave unburnt
And still to nose th' offence.

MENENIUS For one poor grain or two!
I am one of those. His mother, wife, his child,
And this brave fellow too—we are the grains:
You are the musty chaff, and you are smelt
Above the moon. We must be burnt for you.

SICINIUS

Nay, pray be patient; if you refuse your aid
In this so never-needed help, yet do not
Upbraid's with our distress. But sure, if you
Would be your country's pleader, your good
tongue,

More than the instant army we can make,
Might stop our countryman.

MENENIUS No; I'll not meddle

SICINIUS Pray you go to him

MENENIUS What should I do?

BRUTUS Only make trial what your love can do
For Rome, towards Marcius.

MENENIUS Well, and say that Marcius
Return me, as Cominius is return'd,
Unheard—what then?
But as a discontented friend, grief-shot
With his unkindness? Say't be so?

SICINIUS Yet your good will
Must have that thanks from Rome after the
measure
As you intended well.

MENENIUS I'll undertake't;

I think he'll hear me. Yet to bite his lip
And hum at good Cominius much unhearts me.
He was not taken well: he had not din'd;
The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then
We pout upon the morning, are unapt
To give or to forgive; but when we have stuff'd
These pipes and these conveyances of our blood
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
Than in our priest-like fasts. Therefore I'll watch
him
Till he be dieted to my request,
And then I'll set upon him.

BRUTUS You know the very road into his kindness
And cannot lose your way.

MENENIUS Good faith, I'll prove him,
Speed how it will. I shall ere long have
knowledge
Of my success. *Exit*

COMINIUS He'll never hear him

SICINIUS Not?

COMINIUS

I tell you he does sit in gold, his eye
Red as 'twould burn Rome, and his injury
The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him;
'Twas very faintly he said 'Rise'; dismiss'd me
Thus with his speechless hand. What he would
do,
He sent in writing after me; what he would not,
Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions;
So that all hope is vain,
Unless his noble mother and his wife,
Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him
For mercy to his country. Therefore let's hence,
And with our fair entreaties haste them on.
Exeunt

 SCENE II

The Volscian camp before Rome

Enter MENENIUS to the WATCH on guard

FIRST WATCH Stay

SECOND WATCH Stand, and go back

MENENIUS

You guard like men, 'tis well; but, by your leave,
I am an officer of state and come
To speak with Coriolanus.

FIRST WATCH From whence?

MENENIUS From Rome

FIRST WATCH YOU may not pass; you must
return
Will no more hear from thence.

SECOND WATCH

You'll see your Rome embrac'd with fire before
You'll speak with Coriolanus.

MENENIUS Good my friends,

If you have heard your general talk of Rome
And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks
My name hath touch'd your ears: it is Menenius.

FIRST WATCH Be it so; go back
Is not here passable.

MENENIUS I tell thee, fellow,

Thy general is my lover. I have been
The book of his good acts whence men have read
His fame unparallel'd haply amplified;
For I have ever verified my friends—
Of whom he's chief—with all the size that verity
Would without lapsing suffer. Nay, sometimes,
Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground,
I have tumbled past the throw, and in his praise
Have almost stamp'd the leasing; therefore,
fellow,
I must have leave to pass.

FIRST WATCH Faith, sir, if you had told as many
lies in his behalf as you have uttered words in
your own, you should not pass here; no, though it
were as virtuous to lie as to live chastely.
Therefore go back.

MENENIUS Prithee, fellow, remember my name
is Menenius, always factionary on the party of
your general.

SECOND WATCH Howsoever you have been his
liar, as you say you have, I am one that, telling
true under him, must say you cannot pass.
Therefore go back.

MENENIUS Has he din'd, canst thou tell? For I
would not speak with him till after dinner.

FIRST WATCH You are a Roman, are you?

MENENIUS I am as thy general is

FIRST WATCH Then you should hate Rome, as he
does you have push'd out your gates the very
defender of them, and in a violent popular

ignorance given your enemy your shield, think to
front his revenges with the easy groans of old
women, the virginal palms of your daughters, or
with the palsied intercession of such a decay'd
dotant as you seem to be? Can you think to blow
out the intended fire your city is ready to flame in
with such weak breath as this? No, you are
deceiv'd; therefore back to Rome and prepare for
your execution. You are condemn'd; our general
has sworn you out of reprieve and pardon.

MENENIUS Sirrah, if thy captain knew I were
here, he would use me with estimation.

FIRST WATCH Come, my captain knows you not

MENENIUS I mean thy general

FIRST WATCH My general cares not for you
let forth your half pint of blood. Back—that's the
utmost of your having. Back.

MENENIUS Nay, but fellow, fellow—

Enter CORIOLANUS with AUFIDIUS

CORIOLANUS What's the matter?

MENENIUS Now, you companion, I'll say an
errand for you; you shall know now that I am in
estimation; you shall perceive that a Jack
guardant cannot office me from my son
Coriolanus. Guess but by my entertainment with
him if thou stand'st not i' th' state of hanging, or
of some death more long in spectatorship and
crueller in suffering; behold now presently, and
swoon for what's to come upon thee. The
glorious gods sit in hourly synod about thy
particular prosperity, and love thee no worse than
thy old father Menenius does! O my son! my
son! thou art preparing fire for us; look thee,
here's water to quench it. I was hardly moved to
come to thee; but being assured none but myself
could move thee, I have been blown out of your
gates with sighs, and conjure thee to pardon
Rome and thy petitionary countrymen. The good
gods assuage thy wrath, and turn the dregs of it
upon this varlet here; this, who, like a block, hath
denied my access to thee.

CORIOLANUS Away!

MENENIUS How! away!

CORIOLANUS Wife, mother, child, I know not
Are servanted to others. Though I owe
My revenge properly, my remission lies
In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,
Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison rather
Than pity note how much. Therefore be gone.
Mine ears against your suits are stronger than
Your gates against my force. Yet, for I lov'd thee,
Take this along; I writ it for thy sake
(*Gives a letter*)
And would have sent it. Another word,
Menenius,
I will not hear thee speak. This man, Aufidius,
Was my belov'd in Rome; yet thou behold'st.

AUFIDIUS You keep a constant temper

Exeunt CORIOLANUS and Aufidius

FIRST WATCH Now, sir, is your name Menenius?

SECOND WATCH 'Tis a spell, you see, of much power! You know the way home again.

FIRST WATCH Do you hear how we are shent for keeping your greatness back?

SECOND WATCH What cause, do you think, I have to swoon?

MENENIUS I neither care for th' world nor your general; for such things as you, I can scarce think there's any, y'are so slight. He that hath a will to die by himself fears it not from another. Let your general do his worst. For you, be that you are, long; and your misery increase with your age! I say to you, as I was said to: Away! *Exit*

FIRST WATCH A noble fellow, I warrant him

SECOND WATCH The worthy fellow is our general; he's the rock, the oak not to be wind-shaken. *Exeunt*

SCENE III

The tent of CORIOLANUS

Enter CORIOLANUS, AUFIDIUS, and others

CORIOLANUS We will before the walls of Rome to-morrow
Set down our host. My partner in this action,
You must report to th' Volscian lords how plainly
I have borne this business.

AUFIDIUS Only their ends
You have respected; stopp'd your ears against
The general suit of Rome; never admitted
A private whisper—no, not with such friends
That thought them sure of you.

CORIOLANUS This last old man,
Whom with crack'd heart I have sent to Rome,
Lov'd me above the measure of a father;
Nay, godded me indeed. Their latest refuge
Was to send him; for whose old love I have—
Though I show'd sourly to him—once more offer'd
The first conditions, which they did refuse
And cannot now accept. To grace him only,
That thought he could do more, a very little
I have yielded to; fresh embassies and suits,
Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter
Will I lend ear to. *Shout within* Ha! what shout is this?
Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow
In the same time 'tis made? I will not.

*Enter, in mourning habits, VIRGILIA,
VOLUMNIA, VALERIA, YOUNG MARCIUS,
with attendants*

My wife comes foremost, then the honour'd
mould
Wherein this trunk was fram'd, and in her hand
The grandchild to her blood. But out, affection!
All bond and privilege of nature, break!
Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.
What is that curtsy worth? or those doves' eyes,

Which can make gods forsworn? I melt, and am
not
Of stronger earth than others. My mother bows,
As if Olympus to a molehill should
In supplication nod; and my young boy
Hath an aspect of intercession which
Great nature cries 'Deny not.' Let the Volsces
Plough Rome and harrow Italy; I'll never
Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand
As if a man were author of himself
And knew no other kin.

VIRGILIA My lord and husband!

CORIOLANUS These eyes are not the same I
wore in Rome

VIRGILIA The sorrow that delivers us thus
chang'd
Makes you think so.

CORIOLANUS Like a dull actor now
I have forgot my part and I am out,
Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,
Forgive my tyranny; but do not say,
For that, 'Forgive our Romans.' O, a kiss
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge!
Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss
I carried from thee, dear, and my true lip
Hath virgin'd it e'er since. You gods! I prate,
And the most noble mother of the world
Leave unsaluted. Sink, my knee, i' th' earth;
Kneels
Of thy deep duty more impression show
Than that of common sons.

VOLUMNIA O, stand up blest!
Whilst with no softer cushion than the flint
I kneel before thee, and unproperly
Show duty, as mistaken all this while
Between the child and parent. *Kneels*

CORIOLANUS What's this?
Your knees to me, to your corrected son?
Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach
Fillip the stars; then let the mutinous winds
Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun,
Murd'ring impossibility, to make
What cannot be slight work.

VOLUMNIA Thou art my warrior;
I help to frame thee. Do you know this lady?

CORIOLANUS The noble sister of Publicola,
The moon of Rome, chaste as the icicle
That's curdied by the frost from purest snow,
And hangs on Dian's temple—dear Valeria!

VOLUMNIA This is a poor epitome of yours,
Which by th' interpretation of full time
May show like all yourself.

CORIOLANUS The god of soldiers,
With the consent of supreme Jove, inform
Thy thoughts with nobleness, that thou mayst
prove
To shame invulnerable, and stick i' th' wars
Like a great sea-mark, standing every flaw,

And saving those that eye thee!

VOLUMNIA Your knee, sirrah

CORIOLANUS That's my brave boy

VOLUMNIA Even he, your wife, this lady, and myself,
Are suitors to you.

CORIOLANUS I beseech you, peace!
Or, if you'd ask, remember this before:
The thing I have forsworn to grant may never
Be held by you denials. Do not bid me
Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate
Again with Rome's mechanics. Tell me not
Wherein I seem unnatural; desire not
T'allay my rages and revenges with
Your colder reasons.

VOLUMNIA O, no more, no more!
You have said you will not grant us any thing—
For we have nothing else to ask but that
Which you deny already; yet we will ask,
That, if you fail in our request, the blame
May hang upon your hardness; therefore hear us.

CORIOLANUS
Aufidius, and you Volscies, mark; for we'll
Hear nought from Rome in private. Your request?

VOLUMNIA
Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment
And state of bodies would bewray what life
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself
How more unfortunate than all living women
Are we come hither; since that thy sight, which should
Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with
comforts,
Constrains them weep and shake with fear and
sorrow,
Making the mother, wife, and child, to see
The son, the husband, and the father, tearing
His country's bowels out. And to poor we
Thine enmity's most capital: thou bar'st us
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
That all but we enjoy. For how can we,
Alas, how can we for our country pray,
Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,
Whereto we are bound? Alack, or we must lose
The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,
Our comfort in the country. We must find
An evident calamity, though we had
Our wish, which side should win; for either thou
Must as a foreign recreant be led
With manacles through our streets, or else
Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,
And bear the palm for having bravely shed
Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,
I purpose not to wait on fortune till
These wars determine; if I can not persuade thee
Rather to show a noble grace to both parts
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread—
Trust to't, thou shalt not—on thy mother's womb
That brought thee to this world.

VIRGILIA Ay, and mine,
That brought you forth this boy to keep your
name

Living to time.

BOY 'A shall not tread on me!
I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight.

CORIOLANUS Not of a woman's tenderness to be
Requires nor child nor woman's face to see.
I have sat too long. *Rising*

VOLUMNIA Nay, go not from us thus
If it were so that our request did tend
To save the Romans, thereby to destroy
The Volscies whom you serve, you might
condemn us
As poisonous of your honour. No, our suit
Is that you reconcile them: while the Volscies
May say 'This mercy we have show'd,' the
Romans
'This we receiv'd,' and each in either side
Give the all-hail to thee, and cry 'Be blest
For making up this peace!' Thou know'st, great
son,
The end of war's uncertain; but this certain,
That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit
Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name
Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses;
Whose chronicle thus writ: 'The man was noble,
But with his last attempt he wip'd it out,
Destroy'd his country, and his name remains
To th' ensuing age abhorr'd.' Speak to me, son.
Thou hast affected the fine strains of honour,
To imitate the graces of the gods,
To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' th' air,
And yet to charge thy sulphur with a bolt
That should but rive an oak. Why dost not speak?
Think'st thou it honourable for a noble man
Still to remember wrongs? Daughter, speak you:
He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy;
Perhaps thy childishness will move him more
Than can our reasons. There's no man in the
world
More bound to's mother, yet here he lets me prate
Like one i' th' stocks. Thou hast never in thy life
Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy,
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
Has cluck'd thee to the wars, and safely home
Loaden with honour. Say my request's unjust,
And spurn me back; but if it be not so,
Thou art not honest, and the gods will plague
thee,
That thou restrain'st from me the duty which
To a mother's part belongs. He turns away.
Down, ladies; let us shame him with our knees.
To his surname Coriolanus 'longs more pride
Than pity to our prayers. Down. An end;
This is the last. So we will home to Rome,
And die among our neighbours. Nay, behold's!
This boy, that cannot tell what he would have
But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship,
Does reason our petition with more strength
Than thou hast to deny't. Come, let us go.
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother;
His wife is in Corioli, and his child
Like him by chance. Yet give us our dispatch.
I am hush'd until our city be afire,
And then I'll speak a little.

He holds her by the hand, silent

CORIOLANUS O mother, mother!

What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!
You have won a happy victory to Rome;
But for your son—believe it, O, believe it!—
Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,
If not most mortal to him. But let it come.
Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,
I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,
Were you in my stead, would you have heard
A mother less, or granted less, Aufidius?

AUFIDIUS I was mov'd withal

CORIOLANUS I dare be sworn you were!
And, sir, it is no little thing to make
Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir,
What peace you'll make, advise me. For my part,
I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you; and pray you
Stand to me in this cause. O mother! wife!

AUFIDIUS *Aside* I am glad thou hast set thy
mercy and thy honour
At difference in thee. Out of that I'll work
Myself a former fortune.

CORIOLANUS (*To the ladies*) Ay, by and by;
But we will drink together; and you shall bear
A better witness back than words, which we,
On like conditions, will have counter-seal'd.
Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve
To have a temple built you. All the swords
In Italy, and her confederate arms,
Could not have made this peace. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV

Rome. A public place

Enter MENENIUS and SICINIUS

MENENIUS
See you yond coign o' th' Capitol, yond
cornerstone?

SICINIUS Why, what of that?

MENENIUS
If it be possible for you to displace it with your
little finger, there is some hope the ladies of
Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with
him. But I say there is no hope in't; our throats
are sentenc'd, and stay upon execution.

SICINIUS Is't possible that so short a time can
alter the condition of a man?

MENENIUS
There is differency between a grub and a
butterfly; yet your butterfly was a grub. This
Marcius is grown from man to dragon; he has
wings, he's more than a creeping thing.

SICINIUS He lov'd his mother dearly

MENENIUS
So did he me; and he no more remembers his
mother now than an eight-year-old horse. The
tartness of his face sours ripe grapes; when he
walks, he moves like an engine and the ground

shrinks before his treading. He is able to pierce a
corslet with his eye, talks like a knell, and his
hum is a battery. He sits in his state as a thing
made for Alexander. What he bids be done is
finish'd with his bidding. He wants nothing of a
god but eternity, and a heaven to throne in.

SICINIUS Yes—mercy, if you report him truly

MENENIUS I paint him in the character
shall bring from him. There is no more mercy in
him than there is milk in a male tiger; that shall
our poor city find. And all this is 'long of you.

SICINIUS The gods be good unto us!

MENENIUS No, in such a case the gods will not
be good unto us
When we banish'd him we respected not them;
and, he returning to break our necks, they respect
not us.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER Sir, if you'd save your life, fly to
your house

The plebeians have got your fellow tribune
And hale him up and down; all swearing if
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home
They'll give him death by inches.

Enter another MESSENGER

SICINIUS What's the news?

SECOND MESSENGER
Good news, good news! The ladies have
prevail'd,
The Volscians are dislodg'd, and Marcius gone.
A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,
No, not th' expulsion of the Tarquins.

SICINIUS Friend,
Art thou certain this is true? Is't most certain?

SECOND MESSENGER As certain as I know the
sun is fire
Where have you lurk'd, that you make doubt of
it?
Ne'er through an arch so hurried the blown tide
As the recomforted through th' gates. Why, hark
you!

Trumpets, hautboys, drums beat, all together

The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries, and fifes,
Tabors and cymbals, and the shouting Romans,
Make the sun dance. Hark you! *A shout within*

MENENIUS This is good news
I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia
Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,
A city full; of tribunes such as you,
A sea and land full. You have pray'd well to-day:
This morning for ten thousand of your throats
I'd not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy!

Sound still with the shouts

SICINIUS First, the gods bless you for your
tidings; next,
Accept my thankfulness.

SECOND MESSENGER Sir, we have all

Great cause to give great thanks.

SICINIUS They are near the city?

MESSENGER Almost at point to enter

SICINIUS We'll meet them,
And help the joy. *Exeunt*

SCENE V

Rome. A street near the gate
Enter two SENATORS With VOLUMNIA,
VIRGILIA, VALERIA, passing over the stage,
with other LORDS

FIRST SENATOR Behold our patroness, the life
of Rome!
Call all your tribes together, praise the gods,
And make triumphant fires; strew flowers before
them.
Unshout the noise that banish'd Marcius,
Repeal him with the welcome of his mother;

ALL Welcome, ladies, welcome!
A flourish with drums and trumpets.
Exeunt

SCENE VI

Corioli. A public place
Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS with attendants

AUFIDIUS Go tell the lords o' th' city I am here;
Deliver them this paper' having read it,
Bid them repair to th' market-place, where I,
Even in theirs and in the commons' ears,
Will vouch the truth of it. Him I accuse
The city ports by this hath enter'd and
Intends t' appear before the people, hoping
To purge himself with words. Dispatch.

Exeunt attendants
Enter three or four CONSPIRATORS of
AUFIDIUS' faction
Most welcome!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR How is it with our
general?

AUFIDIUS Even so
As with a man by his own alms empoison'd,
And with his charity slain.

SECOND CONSPIRATOR Most noble sir,
If you do hold the same intent wherein
You wish'd us parties, we'll deliver you
Of your great danger.

AUFIDIUS Sir, I cannot tell;
We must proceed as we do find the people.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR The people will remain
uncertain whilst
'Twixt you there's difference; but the fall of either
Makes the survivor heir of all.

AUFIDIUS I know it;
And my pretext to strike at him admits

A good construction. I rais'd him, and I pawn'd
Mine honour for his truth; who being so
heighten'd,
He watered his new plants with dews of flattery,
Seducing so my friends; and to this end
He bow'd his nature, never known before
But to be rough, unswayable, and free.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR Sir, his stoutness
When he did stand for consul, which he lost
By lack of stooping—

AUFIDIUS That I would have spoken of
Being banish'd for't, he came unto my hearth,
Presented to my knife his throat. I took him;
Made him joint-servant with me; gave him way
In all his own desires; nay, let him choose
Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,
My best and freshest men; serv'd his designments
In mine own person; help to reap the fame
Which he did end all his, and took some pride
To do myself this wrong. Till, at the last,
I seem'd his follower, not partner; and
He wag'd me with his countenance as if
I had been mercenary.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR So he did, my lord
The army marvell'd at it; and, in the last,
When he had carried Rome and that we look'd
For no less spoil than glory—

AUFIDIUS There was it;
For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him.
At a few drops of women's rheum, which are
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour
Of our great action; therefore shall he die,
And I'll renew me in his fall. But, hark!

Drums and trumpets sound, with great
shouts of the people

FIRST CONSPIRATOR Your native town you
enter'd like a post,
And had no welcomes home; but he returns
Splitting the air with noise.

SECOND CONSPIRATOR And patient fools,
Whose children he hath slain, their base throats
tear
With giving him glory.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR Therefore, at your
vantage,
Ere he express himself or move the people
With what he would say, let him feel your sword,
Which we will second. When he lies along,
After your way his tale pronounc'd shall bury
His reasons with his body.

AUFIDIUS Say no more:
Here come the lords.

Enter the LORDS of the city

LORDS You are most welcome home

AUFIDIUS I have not deserv'd it
But, worthy lords, have you with heed perused
What I have written to you?

LORDS We have

FIRST LORD And grieve to hear't
What faults he made before the last, I think

Might have found easy fines; but there to end
Where he was to begin, and give away
The benefit of our levies, answering us
With our own charge, making a treaty where
There was a yielding—this admits no excuse.

AUFIDIUS He approaches; you shall hear him
*Enter CORIOLANUS, marching with drum and
colours; the commoners being with him*

CORIOLANUS
Hail, lords! I am return'd your soldier;
No more infected with my country's love
Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting
Under your great command. You are to know
That prosperously I have attempted, and
With bloody passage led your wars even to
The gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought
home
Doth more than counterpoise a full third part
The charges of the action. We have made peace
With no less honour to the Antiates
Than shame to th' Romans; and we here deliver,
Subscrib'd by th' consuls and patricians,
Together with the seal o' th' Senate, what
We have compounded on.

AUFIDIUS Read it not, noble lords;
But tell the traitor in the highest degree
He hath abus'd your powers.

CORIOLANUS Traitor! How now?

AUFIDIUS Ay, traitor, Marcius

CORIOLANUS Marcius!

AUFIDIUS Ay, Marcius, Caius Marcius! Dost
thou think
I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name
Coriolanus, in Corioli?
You lords and heads o' th' state, perfidiously
He has betray'd your business and given up,
For certain drops of salt, your city Rome—
I say your city—to his wife and mother;
Breaking his oath and resolution like
A twist of rotten silk; never admitting
Counsel o' th' war; but at his nurse's tears
He whin'd and roar'd away your victory,
That pages blush'd at him, and men of heart
Look'd wond'ring each at others.

CORIOLANUS Hear'st thou, Mars?

AUFIDIUS Name not the god, thou boy of tears—

CORIOLANUS Ha!

AUFIDIUS —no more

CORIOLANUS Measureless liar, thou hast made
my heart
Too great for what contains it. 'Boy'! O slave!
Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever
I was forc'd to scold. Your judgments, my grave
lords,
Must give this cur the lie; and his own notion—
Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him, that
Must bear my beating to his grave—shall join
To thrust the lie unto him.

FIRST LORD Peace, both, and hear me speak

CORIOLANUS Cut me to pieces, Volscies; men
and lads,

Stain all your edges on me. 'Boy'! False hound!
If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli.
Alone I did it. 'Boy'!

AUFIDIUS Why, noble lords,
Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,
Which was your shame, by this unholy braggart,
Fore your own eyes and ears?

CONSPIRATORS Let him die for't

ALL THE PEOPLE Tear him to pieces son. My
daughter. He kill'd my cousin Marcus. He kill'd
my father.

SECOND LORD Peace, ho! No outrage—peace!
The man is noble, and his fame folds in
This orb o' th' earth. His last offences to us
Shall have judicious hearing. Stand, Aufidius,
And trouble not the peace.

CORIOLANUS O that I had him,
With six Aufidiuses, or more—his tribe,
To use my lawful sword!

AUFIDIUS Insolent villain!

CONSPIRATORS Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!
*The CONSPIRATORS draw and kill
CORIOLANUS, who falls.
AUFIDIUS stands on him*

LORDS Hold, hold, hold, hold!

AUFIDIUS My noble masters, hear me speak

FIRST LORD O Tullus!

SECOND LORD Thou hast done a deed whereat
valour will weep

THIRD LORD Tread not upon him
Put up your swords.

AUFIDIUS
My lords, when you shall know—as in this rage,
Provok'd by him, you cannot—the great danger
Which this man's life did owe you, you'll rejoice
That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours
To call me to your Senate, I'll deliver
Myself your loyal servant, or endure
Your heaviest censure.

FIRST LORD Bear from hence his body,
And mourn you for him. Let him be regarded
As the most noble corse that ever herald
Did follow to his um.

SECOND LORD His own impatience
Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame.
Let's make the best of it.

AUFIDIUS My rage is gone,
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up.
Help, three o' th' chiefest soldiers; I'll be one.
Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully;
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
Hath widowed and unchilded many a one,
Which to this hour bewail the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble memory.
Assist.

*Exeunt, bearing the body of CORIOLANUS
A dead march sounded*