



**BRAVE SPIRITS THEATRE
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REHEARSAL SCRIPT
Coriolanus
2018

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Coriolanus

by William Shakespeare

directed by
Charlene V. Smith

January 2018

ACT ONE

1.1 Enter a company of mutinous Citizens with staves, clubs, and other weapons.

CITIZEN Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.

ALL Speak, speak!

CITIZEN You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?

ALL Resolved, resolved!

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.

CITIZENS (*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!

Enter Menenius Agrippa.

CITIZEN Soft, who comes here?

CITIZEN Worthy Menenius Agrippa, one that hath always
loved the people.

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.

CITIZEN Our business is not unknown to th' Senate.

CITIZEN They say poor suitors have strong breaths; they shall
know we have strong arms too.

MENENIUS I tell you, friends, most charitable care
Have the patricians of you. 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.

CITIZENS Care for us? They ne'er cared for us yet. Suffer us to
famish, and their storehouses crammed with grain;
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 accused 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.

CITIZEN

Well, we'll hear it, sir; yet you must not think to fob
off our disgrace with a tale.

MENENIUS

There was a time when all the body's members
Rebelled against the belly, thus accused 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 labor 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 answered—

CITIZEN

Well, sir, what answer made the belly?

MENENIUS

Sir, I shall tell you. With a kind of smile—
For, look you, I may make the belly smile
As well as speak—

CITIZEN

Your belly's answer—what?

MENENIUS

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

CITIZEN

You're 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;
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—

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?

Where he should find you lions, finds you hares;
Where foxes, geese. Who deserves greatness
Deserves your hate. Hang you! Trust you?
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 stored.

MARTIUS

Hang 'em! They say?
They'll sit by th' fire and presume to know
What's done i' th' Capitol. 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 quartered 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?

MARTIUS

They are dissolved. Hang 'em!

They said they were an-hungry, sighed 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 answered
And a petition granted them—they threw their caps,
Shouting their emulation.

MENENIUS

What is granted them?

MARTIUS

Two tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms,
Of their own choice. One's Julia Brutus,
Sicinius Velutus the other is. 'Sdeath!
The rabble should have first unroofed the city
Ere so prevailed with me. It will in time
Win upon power and throw forth greater themes
For insurrection's arguing.

MENENIUS

This is strange.

MARTIUS

Go get you home, you fragments.

Enter Sicinius Velutus, Julia Brutus, (two Tribunes); Cominius, Titus Lartius, with other Senators.

See our best elders.

SENATOR

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

MARTIUS

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!

MARTIUS

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.

SENATOR

Then, worthy Martius,

Attend upon Cominius to these wars.

COMINIUS

It is your former promise.

MARTIUS

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 Martius,

I'll lean upon one crutch and fight with t' other

Ere stay behind this business.

MENENIUS

O, true bred!

SENATOR

Your company to th' Capitol, where I know

Our greatest friends attend us.

LARTIUS, *to Cominius* Lead you on.—

SENATOR Hence to your homes, begone.

MARTIUS Nay, let them follow.
The Volsces have much corn; take these rats thither
To gnaw their garners.—Pray follow.

They exit. Citizens steal away. Sicinius and Brutus remain.

SICINIUS Was ever man so proud as is this Martius?

BRUTUS He has no equal.

SICINIUS When we were chosen tribunes for the people—

BRUTUS Marked you his lip and eyes?

SICINIUS Nay, but his taunts.

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

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.

They exit.

1.2 Enter Tullus Aufidius with Senators of Corioles.

SENATOR So, your opinion is, Aufidius,

That they of Rome are entered in our counsels
And know how we proceed.

AUFIDIUS

Is it not yours?
Whatever 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.
(He reads.) They have pressed a power, but it is not known
Whether for east or west. The dearth is great.
The people mutinous; and, it is rumored,
Cominius, Martius your old enemy,
And Titus Lartius, a most valiant Roman,
These three lead on this preparation
Whither 'tis bent. Most likely 'tis for you.
Consider of it.

SENATOR

Noble Aufidius,
Take your commission; hie you to your bands.
Let us alone to guard Corioles.
If they set down before 's, for the remove
Bring up your army. But I think you'll find
They've not prepared 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 Honors.
If we and Caius Martius 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 Honors safe!

SENATOR Farewell.

SENATOR Farewell.

ALL Farewell.

All exit.

1.3 Enter Volumnia and Virgilia, mother and wife to Martius. 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 honor 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 for a day of kings' entreaties a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding, I, considering how honor would become such a person was pleased to let him seek danger where he

was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him,
from whence he returned, 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.
Hear me profess sincerely: had I a dozen sons, each
in my love alike and none less dear than thine and
my good Martius, 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.
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 mailed hand then wiping, forth he goes.

VIRGILIA

His bloody brow? O Jupiter, no blood!

VOLUMNIA Away, you fool! It more becomes a man
 Than gilt his trophy.—Tell Valeria
 We are fit to bid her welcome.

Gentlewoman exits.

VIRGILIA Heavens bless my lord from fell Aufidius!

VOLUMNIA He'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee
 And tread upon his neck.

Enter Valeria with an Usher and a Gentlewoman.

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.
 What are 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! H'as such a confirmed
 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,
 caught it again. Or whether his fall enraged him or

how 'twas, he did so set his teeth and tear it. O, I
warrant how he mammocked 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.
You would be another Penelope. Yet they say
all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill
Ithaca full of moths. 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. Thus 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 Corioles. This is true, on mine honor, 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.—Fare you well, then.—Come, 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. I wish you much mirth.

VALERIA Well, then, farewell.

Ladies exit.

1.4 Enter Martius, Titus Lartius, with Trumpet, Drum, and Colors, with Captains and Soldiers, as before the city of Corioles. To them a Messenger.

MARTIUS Yonder comes news. A wager they have met.

LARTIUS My horse to yours, no.

MARTIUS 'Tis done.

LARTIUS Agreed.

MARTIUS 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.

MARTIUS 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.

MARTIUS How far off lie these armies?

MESSENGER Within this mile and half.

MARTIUS 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 a Senator on the walls of Corioles.

Tullus Aufidius, is he within your walls?

SENATOR No, nor a man that fears you less than he:

That's lesser than a little. *Alarum far off.*

Hark you, far off!

There is Aufidius. List what work he makes

Amongst your cloven army.

They exit from the walls.

MARTIUS O, they are at it!

LARTIUS Their noise be our instruction.—Ladders, ho!

Enter the Army of the Volsces as through the city gates.

MARTIUS They fear us not but issue forth their city.—
Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight
With hearts more proof than shields.—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. They exit, with the Volsces following.

Enter Martius cursing, with Roman soldiers.

MARTIUS All the contagion of the south light on you,
You shames of Rome! You souls of geese,
That bear the shapes of men, 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 's!

Another alarum. The Volsces re-enter and are driven back to the gates of Corioles, which open to admit them.

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.

Martius follows the fleeing Volsces through the gates, and is shut in.

SOLDIER Foolhardiness, not I.

SOLDIER Nor I.

SOLDIER See they have shut him in.

Alarum continues.

Enter Titus Lartius.

LARTIUS What is become of Martius?

ALL Slain, sir, doubtless.

SOLDIER Following the fliers at the very heels,
With them he enters, who upon the sudden
Clapped 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 wast a soldier
not fierce and terrible
Only in strokes, but with thy grim looks and

The thunderlike percussion of thy sounds
Thou mad'st thine enemies shake, as if the world
Were feverous and did tremble.

Enter Martius, bleeding, as if from Corioles, assaulted by the enemy.

SOLDIER Look, sir.

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

They fight, and all enter the city, exiting the stage.

1.5 Enter certain Romans, with spoils.

FIRST ROMAN This will I carry to Rome.

SECOND ROMAN And I this.

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

Enter Martius, and Titus Lartius with a Trumpet.

MARTIUS See here these movers that do prize their hours
At a cracked 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!

The Romans with spoils exit. Alarum continues still afar off.

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.

MARTIUS Sir, praise me not.

My work hath yet not warmed me. Fare you well.

They exit.

1.6 Enter Cominius as it were in retire, with Soldiers.

COMINIUS Breathe you, my friends. Well fought! We are come off

Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands
Nor cowardly in retire. Believe me, sirs,
We shall be charged again.

Enter a Messenger.

Thy news?

MESSENGER The citizens of Corioles have issued

And given to Lartius and to Martius battle.
I saw our party to their trenches driven,
And then I came away.

COMINIUS Though thou speakest 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 forced to wheel
Three or four miles about; else had I, sir,
Half an hour since brought my report. *He exits.*

Enter Martius, bloody.

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

MARTIUS Come I too late?

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

MARTIUS O, let me clip you
In arms as sound as when I wooed, in heart
As merry as when our nuptial day was done
And tapers burnt to bedward! *They embrace.*

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

MARTIUS As with a man busied about decrees,

Condemning some to death and some to exile;
Ransoming him or pitying, threat'ning th' other;
Holding Corioles in the name of Rome.

COMINIUS

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

MARTIUS

Let him alone.
He did inform the truth. But for our gentlemen,
The common file—a plague! Tribunes for them!—
The mouse ne'er shunned the cat as they did budge
From rascals worse than they.

COMINIUS

But how prevailed you?

MARTIUS

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

Martius, we have at disadvantage fought
And did retire to win our purpose.

MARTIUS

How lies their battle? Know you on which side
They have placed their men of trust?

COMINIUS

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

MARTIUS

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 advanced 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.

MARTIUS

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 smeared; 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 Martius. *He waves his sword.*
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 obeyed. Please you to march,
And I shall quickly draw out my command,
Which men are best inclined.

COMINIUS

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

They exit.

1.7 Titus Lartius, having set a guard upon Corioles, going with Drum and Trumpet toward Cominius and Caius Martius, 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.
(*To the Scout.*) Our guider, come. To th' Roman

camp conduct us.

They exit, the Lieutenant one way, Lartius another.

1.8 Alarum, as in battle. Enter Martius and Aufidius at several doors.

MARTIUS 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.

MARTIUS Within these three hours, Tullus,
Alone I fought in your Corioles' walls
And made what work I pleased. 'Tis not my blood
Wherein thou seest me masked. For thy revenge,
Wrench up thy power to th' highest.

Here they fight, and certain Volsces come in the aid of Aufidius.

(*To the Volsces.*) Officious and not valiant, you have shamed me
In your condemnèd seconds.

Martius fights till they be driven in breathless. Aufidius and Martius exit, separately.

1.9 Alarum. A retreat is sounded. Flourish. Enter, Enter Titus Lartius with his power, from the pursuit. at one door, Cominius with the Romans; at another door Martius, 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;
I' th' end admire; where ladies shall be frighted

And, gladly quaked, hear more; where the dull tribunes,
That with the fusty plebeians hate thine honors,
Shall say against their hearts “We thank the gods
Our Rome hath such a soldier.”

MARTIUS

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;
Induced as you have been—that’s for my country.

COMINIUS

You shall not be
The grave of your deserving. Rome must know
The value of her own. Of all the horses—
Whereof we have ta’en good and good store—of all
The treasure in this field achieved and city,
We render you the tenth, to be ta’en forth
Before the common distribution
At your only choice.

MARTIUS

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 “Martius, Martius!” and cast up their caps and lances. Cominius and Lartius stand bare.

May these same instruments, which you profane,
Never sound more! No more, I say.

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 incensed, 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 Martius
Wears this war's garland. And from this time,
For what he did before Corioles, call him,
With all th' applause and clamor of the host,
Martius Caius Coriolanus! Bear
Th' addition nobly ever!

Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums.

ALL

Martius Caius Coriolanus!

CORIOLANUS

I will go wash;
And when my face is fair, you shall perceive
Whether I blush or no. Howbeit, I thank you.

COMINIUS

So, to our tent,
Where, ere we do repose us, we will write
To Rome of our success.

CORIOLANUS

The gods begin to mock me. I, that now

Refused most princely gifts, am bound to beg
Of my lord general.

COMINIUS Take 't, 'tis yours. What is 't?

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

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

LARTIUS Martius, his name?

CORIOLANUS By Jupiter, forgot!
I am weary; yea, my memory is tired.
Have we no wine here?

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

A flourish of cornets. They exit.

1.10 Enter Tullus Aufidius bloody, with two or three Soldiers.

AUFIDIUS The town is ta'en.

SOLDIER 'Twill be delivered 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, Martius,
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 face to face,
He's mine, or I am his. Nor sleep nor sanctuary,
Being naked, sick, nor temple 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 Martius. 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.

SOLDIER I shall, sir.

They exit, Aufidius through one door, Soldiers through another.

ACT TWO

2.1 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 Martius.

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 Martius.

BRUTUS He's a lamb indeed, that baas like a bear.

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

BOTH Well, sir.

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

BRUTUS He's poor in no one fault, but stored with all.

SICINIUS Especially in pride.

BRUTUS And topping all others in boasting.

MENENIUS This is strange now. You blame Martius 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 infantlike 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 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; 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. 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 anything. Yet you must be saying Martius is proud, who, in a cheap estimation, is worth all your predecessors since Deucalion. Good e'en 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.

He begins to exit. Brutus and Sicinius stand aside.

Enter Volumnia, Virgilia, and Valeria.

VOLUMNIA Honorable Menenius, my boy Martius approaches. For the love of Juno, let's go!

MENENIUS Ha? Martius coming home?

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

MENENIUS Take my cap, Jupiter, and I thank thee! (*He throws his cap in the air.*) Hoo! Martius coming home?

VALERIA, VIRGILIA Nay, 'tis true.

VOLUMNIA Look, here's a letter from him. *She produces a paper.* 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 tonight. A letter for

me?

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

MENENIUS 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. Brings he victory in his pocket, the wounds become him.

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

MENENIUS Is the Senate possessed of this?

VOLUMNIA Good ladies, let's go.—Yes, yes, yes. The Senate has 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.

MENENIUS (*To the Tribunes.*) God save your good Worships! Martius 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 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 Martius: before him he carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears. Death, that dark spirit, in 's nery arm doth lie, Which, being advanced, declines, and then men die.

A sennet.

Enter Cominius the General and Titus Lartius, between them Coriolanus crowned with an oaken garland, with Captains and Soldiers and a Herald. Trumpets sound.

HERALD

Know, Rome, that all alone Martius did fight
Within Corioles' gates, where he hath won,
With fame, a name to Martius Caius; these
In honor follows "Coriolanus."
Welcome to Rome, renownèd Coriolanus.

Sound flourish.

ALL

Welcome to Rome, renownèd 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, petitioned all the gods
For my prosperity. *Kneels.*

VOLUMNIA

Nay, my good soldier, up.

He stands.

My gentle Martius, worthy Caius, and
By deed-achieving honor newly named—
What is it? Coriolanus must I call thee?
But, O, thy wife—

CORIOLANUS

My gracious silence, hail.
Wouldst thou have laughed had I come coffined home,
That weep'st to see me triumph? Ah, my dear,
Such eyes the widows in Corioles wear
And mothers that lack sons.

MENENIUS

Now the gods crown thee!

CORIOLANUS

And live you yet?

VOLUMNIA

I know not where to turn. O, welcome home!—
And, welcome, general.—And you're welcome all.

MENENIUS

A hundred thousand welcomes! I could weep,
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. Your hand and yours.

Ere in our own house I do shade my head,

The good patricians must be visited,

From whom I have received not only greetings,

But with them change of honors.

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 of cornets. They exit in state, as before.

Brutus and Sicinius come forward.

BRUTUS

All tongues speak of him, and the blearèd sights

Are spectaclèd to see him.

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 honors
 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 honors—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' marketplace 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.

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 authority's for an end.
We must suggest the people in what hatred
He still hath held 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 forever.

Enter a Messenger.

BRUTUS What's the matter?

MESENTER You are sent for to the Capitol. 'Tis thought
That Martius 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 scarves and handkerchiefs,
Upon him as he passed; 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.

They exit.

2.2 Enter two Officers, to lay cushions, as it were in the Capitol.

FIRST OFFICER

Come, come. They are almost here. How many stand for consulships?

SECOND OFFICER

Three, they say; but 'tis thought of everyone 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 hath been many great men that have flattered the people who ne'er loved them; and there be many that they have loved they know not wherefore. Therefore, for Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or hate him manifests the true knowledge he has in their disposition.

FIRST OFFICER

If he did not care whether he had their love or no, he waved indifferently 'twixt doing them neither good

nor harm; but he seeks their hate with greater
devotion than they can render it him.

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.

FIRST OFFICER

Make way. They are coming.

A sennet. Enter the Patricians and the Tribunes of the people, Lictors before them; Coriolanus, Menenius, Cominius the consul. The Patricians sit. Sicinius and Brutus take their places by themselves. Coriolanus stands.

MENENIUS

Having determined of the Volsces 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 performed
By Martius Caius Coriolanus, whom
We met here both to thank and to remember
With honors like himself. [Coriolanus sits.]

SENATOR

Speak, good Cominius.
Leave nothing out for length. (*To the Tribunes.*)
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 convened
Upon a pleasing treaty and have hearts
Inclinable to honor and advance
The theme of our assembly.

BRUTUS

Which the rather
We shall be blest to do if he remember
A kinder value of the people than
He hath hereto prized 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.

SENATOR

Sit, Coriolanus. Never shame to hear

What you have nobly done.

CORIOLANUS

Your Honors, pardon.

I had rather have my wounds to heal again
Than hear say how I got them.

BRUTUS

Sir, I hope

My words disbenched you not?

CORIOLANUS

No, miss. Yet oft,

When blows have made me stay, I fled from words.
You soothed 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 monstered. *Coriolanus exits.*

MENENIUS

Masters of the people,
He had rather venture all his limbs for honor
Than one on 's ears to hear it.—Proceed, Cominius.

COMINIUS

I shall lack voice. The deeds of Coriolanus
Should not be uttered feebly. It is held
That valor is the chiefest virtue and
Most dignifies the haver; if it be,
The man I speak of cannot in the world
Be singly counterpoised. At sixteen years,

When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought
Beyond the mark of others. In that day's feats,
When he might act the woman in the scene,
He proved best man i' th' field and for his meed
Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age
Man-entered thus, he waxèd like a sea,
And in the brunt of seventeen battles since
He lurched all swords of the garland. For this last,
Before and in Corioles, let me say,
I cannot speak him home. He stopped the flyers
And by his rare example made the coward
Turn terror into sport. 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 timed with dying cries. Alone he entered
The mortal gate o' th' city, which he painted
With shunless destiny; aidless came off
And with a sudden reinforcement struck
Corioles like a planet. Now all's his,
Then 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 called
Both field and city ours, he never stood
To ease his breast with panting.

MENENIUS

Worthy man!

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

COMINIUS Our spoils he kicked at
And looked 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 called for.

SENATOR Call Coriolanus.

OFFICER He doth appear.

Enter Coriolanus.

MENENIUS The Senate, Coriolanus, are well pleased
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 honor with your form.

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

BRUTUS, *to Sicinius* 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 received 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 honor.

SENATORS To Coriolanus come all joy and honor!

Flourish cornets. Then they exit. Sicinius and Brutus remain.

BRUTUS You see how he intends to use the people.

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

BRUTUS Come, we'll inform them
Of our proceedings here. On th' marketplace
I know they do attend us.

(They exit.)

2.3 Enter seven or eight Citizens.

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

CITIZEN We may, sir, if we will.

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.

BRUTUS I say, if he would incline to the people, there was
never a worthier man.

Enter Coriolanus in a gown of humility, with Menenius.

SICINIUS Here he comes, and in the gown of humility.

BRUTUS Mark his behavior.

SICINIUS You 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.

ALL Content, content. *Citizens exit.*

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 roared 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.

MENENIUS You'll mar all.
 I'll leave you. Pray you, speak to 'em, I pray you,
 In wholesome manner. *He exits.*

CORIO LANUS Bid them wash their faces
 And keep their teeth clean.

Enter three of the Citizens.

So, here comes a brace.—
You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

CITIZEN We do, sir. Tell us what hath brought you to 't.

CORIO LANUS Mine own desert.

CITIZEN Your own desert?

CORIO LANUS Ay, but not mine own desire.

CITIZEN How, not your own desire?

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

CITIZEN You must think if we give you anything, we hope to
 gain by you.

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

CITIZEN The price is to ask it kindly.

CORIO LANUS Kindly, sir, I pray, let me ha 't. I have wounds to
 show you, which shall be yours in private.—Your
 good voice, sir. What say you?

CITIZEN You shall ha 't, worthy sir.

CORIO LANUS A match, sir. There's in all two worthy voices begged.
I have your alms. Adieu.

CITIZEN But this is something odd.

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

These citizens exit. Enter two other Citizens.

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

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

CORIO LANUS Your enigma?

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.

CORIO LANUS 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. Therefore, beseech you, I may be consul.

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

CITIZEN You have received many wounds for your country.

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

BOTH The gods give you joy, sir, heartily.

Citizens exit.

CORIO LANUS Most sweet voices!

Better it is to die, better to starve,
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.
Why in this woolvish toge should I stand here
To beg of Hob and Dick that does 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 heaped
For truth to o'erpeer. Rather than fool it so,
Let the high office and the honor go
To one that would do thus. I am half through;
The one part suffered, the other will I do.

Enter three Citizens more.

Here come more voices.—
Your voices! For your voices I have fought;
Watched 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.

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

CITIZEN Therefore let him be consul. The gods give him joy,
and make him good friend to the people!

ALL Amen, amen. God save thee, noble consul.
Citizens exit.

CORIOLANUS Worthy voices!

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 discharged.
The people do admit you, and are summoned
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.—Will you along?

BRUTUS We stay here for the people.

SICINIUS Fare you well.

Coriolanus and Menenius exit. Enter the Plebeians.

SICINIUS How now, my masters, have you chose this man?

CITIZEN He has our voices, sir.

BRUTUS We pray the gods he may deserve your loves.

CITIZEN Amen, sir. To my poor unworthy notice,
He mocked us when he begged our voices.

CITIZEN Certainly, he flouted us downright.

CITIZEN No, 'tis his kind of speech. He did not mock us.

CITIZEN He used us scornfully. He should have showed us
His marks of merit, wounds received for 's country.

SICINIUS Why, so he did, I am sure.

ALL No, no. No one saw 'em.

CITIZEN He said he had wounds, which he could show in private

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 lessoned? 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-advised, had touched his spirit
And tried his inclination; from him plucked
Either his gracious promise, which you might,
As cause had called you up, have held him to;
Or else it would have galled 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 passed 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?

CITIZEN He's not confirmed.
We may deny him yet.

CITIZEN And will deny him.
I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

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 therefor 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 scorned you.

BRUTUS Lay
A fault on us, your tribunes, that we labored,
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,
Preoccupied 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
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.

ALL
We will so. Almost all
Repent in their election. *Plebeians exit.*

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.

They exit.

ACT THREE

3.1 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 caused
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 retired 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 called 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.

BRUTUS It will be dangerous to go on. No further.

CORIOLANUS What makes this change?

MENENIUS The matter?

COMINIUS Hath he not passed the noble and the common?

BRUTUS Cominius, no.

CORIOLANUS Have I had children's voices?

BRUTUS The people are incensed 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.

CORIO LANUS It is a purposed thing, and grows by plot.

BRUTUS Call 't not a plot.

 The people cry you mocked them; and, of late,
 When corn was given them gratis, you repined,
 Scandaled the suppliants for the people, called them
 Timepleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.

CORIO LANUS Why, this was known before.

BRUTUS Not to them all.

CORIO LANUS Have you informed them sithence?

BRUTUS How? I inform them?

COMINIUS You are like to do such business.

MENENIUS Let's be calm.

COMINIUS The people are abused, set on. This palt'ring
 Becomes not Rome.

CORIO LANUS Tell me of corn?

 This was my speech, and I will speak 't again.

MENENIUS Not now, not now.

SENATOR Not in this heat, sir, now.

CORIO LANUS Now, as I live, I will.

In soothing them, we nourish 'gainst our senate
The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,
Which we ourselves have plowed for, sowed, and scattered
By mingling them with us, the honored number,
Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that
Which they have given to beggars.

MENENIUS

Well, no more.

SENATOR

No more words, we beseech you.

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 choler?

CORIOLANUS

Choler?
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.

CORIO LANUS

“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? You are plebeians,
If they be senators; and they are no less
When, both your voices blended, the great’st taste
Most palates theirs. By Jove himself,
It makes the consuls base!
Whoever gave that counsel to give forth
The corn o’ th’ storehouse gratis—

MENENIUS

Well, well, no more of that.

CORIO LANUS

I say they nourished disobedience, fed
The ruin of the state.

BRUTUS

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

CORIO LANUS

I’ll give my reasons,
More worthier than their voices. They know the corn

Was not our recompense, resting well assured
They ne'er did service for 't. Being pressed to th' war,
Even when the navel of the state was touched,
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 showed
Most valor, 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. 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!

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 barred, it follows
Nothing is done to purpose. Therefore, beseech you

That love the fundamental part of state
More than you doubt the change on 't, that prefer
A noble life before a long, at once pluck out
The multitudinous tongue; let them not lick
The sweet which is their poison. Your dishonor
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 th' 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! Let him be apprehended.

Enter an Aedile.

SICINIUS Go, call the people; *Aedile exits.* In whose name myself
Attach thee as a traitorous innovator.

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

SICINIUS Help, you 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.

ALL PLEBEIANS Down with him, down with him!

SENATOR Weapons, weapons, weapons!
They all bustle about Coriolanus.
Tribunes, patricians, citizens, what ho!
Sicinius, Brutus, Coriolanus, citizens!

ALL 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!

ALL PLEBEIANS Let's hear our tribune. Peace! Speak, speak, speak.

SICINIUS You are at point to lose your liberties.
Martius would have all from you, Martius,
Whom late you have named for consul.

MENENIUS Fie, fie, fie!
This is the way to kindle, not to quench.

SENATOR To unbuild the city and to lay all flat.

SICINIUS What is the city but the people?

ALL PLEBEIANS True,
The people are the city.

BRUTUS By the consent of all, we were established
The people's magistrates.

ALL PLEBEIANS You so remain.

MENENIUS And so are like to do.

CORIOLANUS 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, Martius is worthy
Of present death.

SICINIUS Therefore lay hold of him.

BRUTUS Aediles, seize him!

ALL PLEBEIANS Yield, Martius, 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 cliff.

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!

ALL PLEBEIANS Down with him, down with him!

MENENIUS, *to Coriolanus* Go, get you to your house. Begone, away.
All will be naught else.

SENATOR Get you gone.

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

MENENIUS Shall it be put to that?

CORIOLANUS On fair ground
I could beat forty of them.

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

COMINIUS Come, sir, along with us.

MENENIUS, *to Coriolanus* Pray you, begone.
I'll try whether my old wit be in request
With those that have but little. This must be patched
With cloth of any color.

COMINIUS Nay, come away.

Coriolanus and Cominius exit.

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 naught.

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?

ALL 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 tonight.

MENENIUS

Now the good gods forbid
That our renownèd Rome, whose gratitude
Towards her deservèd children is enrolled
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 dropped it for his country.

SICINIUS

The service of the foot,
Being once gangrened, 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

Consider this: he has been bred i' th' wars
Since he could draw a sword, and is ill schooled
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 marketplace. *To Menenius.* We'll attend you there,
Where if you bring not Martius, we'll proceed
In our first way.

MENENIUS

I'll bring him to you.

Sicinius and Brutus exit.

PATRICIAN

This man has marred 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. He must come,
Or what is worst will follow.

All exit.

3.2 Enter Coriolanus with Nobles and Volumnia

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.
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.

Enter Menenius, Cominius.

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

VOLUMNIA Pray be counseled.
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.

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
Honor and policy, like unsevered 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 honor 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 honor 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 dishonors 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 required
I should do so in honor. I am in this
Your wife, your son, the 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 loss
Of what is past.

VOLUMNIA

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 asked, as free
As words to little purpose.

VOLUMNIA

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

CORIOLANUS

Must I
With my base tongue give to my noble heart
A lie that it must bear? Well, I will do 't.
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.

CORIO LANUS

Well, I must do 't.

Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit! My throat of war be turned,
Which choired with my drum, into a pipe
Small as an eunuch or the virgin voice
That babies lull asleep! A beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my armed knees,
Who bowed but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath received an alms. I will not do 't,
Lest I surcease to honor 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 dishonor
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'st it from me,
But owe thy pride thyself.

CORIO LANUS

Pray be content.
Mother, I am going to the marketplace.
Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves,

Cog their hearts from them, and come home beloved
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.

Volumnia exits.

COMINIUS Away! The Tribunes do attend you. Arm yourself
To answer mildly, for they are prepared
With accusations, as I hear, more strong
Than are upon you yet.

CORIOLANUS The word is "mildly." Pray you, let us go.
Let them accuse me by invention, I
Will answer in mine honor.

MENENIUS Ay, but mildly.

CORIOLANUS Well, mildly be it, then. Mildly.

They exit.

3.3 Enter Sicinius and Brutus.

Enter an Aedile.

BRUTUS What, will he come?

AEDILE He's coming.

SICINIUS Have you a catalogue

Of all the voices that we have procured,
Set down by th' poll?

AEDILE I have. 'Tis ready.

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.

Aedile exits.

BRUTUS Put him to choler straight. He hath been used
Ever to conquer and to have his worth
Of contradiction. Being once chafed, he cannot
Be reined 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 (Senators).

SICINIUS Well, here he comes.

MENENIUS Calmly, I do beseech you.

Enter the Aedile with the Plebeians.

SICINIUS Draw near, you people.

AEDILE List to your tribunes. Audience! Peace, I say!

CORIO LANUS First, hear me speak.

BOTH TRIBUNES Well, say.—Peace, ho!

CORIO LANUS Shall I be charged 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 proved upon you.

CORIO LANUS 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.

CORIO LANUS Scratches with briars,
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.

CORIO LANUS What is the matter,
That, being passed for consul with full voice,
I am so dishonored that the very hour
You take it off again?

SICINIUS Answer to us.

CORIO LANUS Say then. 'Tis true, I ought so.

SICINIUS We charge you that you have contrived to take
From Rome all seasoned office and to wind
Yourself into a power tyrannical,
For which you are a traitor to the people.

CORIO LANUS How? Traitor?

MENENIUS Nay, temperately! Your promise.

CORIO LANUS 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 clutched 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?

ALL 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
 Served 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.

SICINIUS For that he has

Envied against the people, seeking means
To pluck away their power, as now at last
Given hostile strokes, in the name o' th' people
And in the power of us the Tribunes, we,
Even 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.

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

COMINIUS Hear me, my masters and my common friends—

SICINIUS He's sentenced. No more hearing.

COMINIUS Let me speak.

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

ALL PLEBEIANS It shall be so, it shall be so!

CORIOLANUS You common cry of curs, 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 rumor 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.

Coriolanus, Cominius, with others (Senators) exit.

AEDILE The people's enemy is gone, is gone.

ALL PLEBEIANS Our enemy is banished; he is gone. Hoo, hoo!

They all shout and throw up their caps.

SICINIUS Go see him out at gates, and follow him,
As he hath followed you, with all despite.

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

They exit.

— INTERMISSION —

ACT FOUR

4.2 Enter the two Tribunes, Sicinius, and Brutus, with the Aedile.

SICINIUS Bid them all home. He's gone, and we'll no further.
 Say their great enemy is gone, and they
 Stand in their ancient strength.

BRUTUS Dismiss them home.

Aedile exits.

SICINIUS The nobility are vexed, 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.

 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, you're well met. The 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. Will you be gone?

VIRGILIA You shall stay too. I would I had the 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 blessèd heavens!

VOLUMNIA More noble blows than ever thou wise words,
And for Rome's good.

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 incensed 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, *to Sicinius* Pray, let's go.

VOLUMNIA

Now, pray, miss, 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 banished, does exceed you all.

BRUTUS

Well, well, we'll leave you.

SICINIUS

Why stay we to be baited

With one that wants her wits?

Tribunes exit.

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.

(To Virgilia.) Come, let's go.

Leave this faint puling, and lament as I do,

In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.

They exit.

MENENIUS Fie, fie, fie!

He exits.

4.3 Enter a Roman (Nicanor) and a Volsce (Adrian).

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

VOLSCE It is so, sir. Truly, I have forgot you.

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
favor is well approved 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 forever.

VOLSCE Coriolanus banished?

ROMAN Banished, sir. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will appear well in these wars, his great opposer Coriolanus being now in no request of his country.

VOLSCE I am most fortunate thus accidentally to encounter you. You have ended my business, and I will merrily accompany you home.

ROMAN So, sir, heartily well met, and most glad of your company.

They exit.

4.4 Enter Coriolanus in mean apparel, disguised, and muffled.

CORIOLANUS A goodly city is this Antium. City,
'Tis I that made thy widows. 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.

Citizen exits.

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.

He exits.

[4.5] Music plays. Enter a Servingman.

FIRST SERVINGMAN Wine, wine, wine! What service is here? I think our
 fellows are asleep.

Enter another Servingman.

SECOND SERVINGMAN Where's Cotus? My master calls for him. Cotus!

CORIOLANUS A goodly house. The feast smells well, but I
 Appear not like a guest.

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

He exits.

CORIOLANUS I have deserved no better entertainment
 In being Coriolanus.

Enter Second Servingman.

SECOND SERVINGMAN 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 SERVINGMAN Away? Get you away.

CORIOLANUS Now th' art troublesome.

SECOND SERVINGMAN Are you so brave? I'll have you talked with anon.

Enter Third Servingman; the First, entering, meets him.

THIRD SERVINGMAN What fellow's this?

FIRST SERVINGMAN A strange one as ever I looked on. I cannot get him
out o' th' house. Prithee, call my master to him.

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

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

THIRD SERVINGMAN What are you?

CORIOLANUS A gentleman.

THIRD SERVINGMAN A marv'llous poor one.

CORIOLANUS True, so I am.

THIRD SERVINGMAN 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.

THIRD SERVINGMAN Where dwell'st thou?

CORIOLANUS Under the canopy.

THIRD SERVINGMAN Under the canopy?

CORIOLANUS Ay.

THIRD SERVINGMAN Where's that?

CORIO LANUS I' th' city of kites and crows.

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

CORIO LANUS No, I serve not thy master.

THIRD SERVINGMAN How, sir? Do you meddle with my master?

CORIO LANUS 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?

THIRD SERVINGMAN 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?

CORIO LANUS 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?

CORIO LANUS A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears

And harsh in sound to thine.

AUFIDIUS

Say, what's thy name?

Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face
Bears a command in it. What's thy name?

CORIOLANUS

My name is Caius Martius, 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 devoured the rest,
And suffered me by th' voice of slaves to be
Whooped 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 feared 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 cankered country with the spleen
Of all the under fiends. But if so be
Thou dar'st not this, and that to prove more fortunes
Thou 'rt tired, 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 Martius, Martius,
Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart
A root of ancient envy. Let me twine
Mine arms about that body. 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 valor. Know thou first,
I loved the maid I married; never man

Sighed 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. 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 waked half dead with nothing. Worthy Martius,
Had we no other quarrel else to Rome but that
Thou art thence banished, we would muster all
From twelve to seventy and, pouring war
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,
Like a bold flood o'erbear 't. O, come, go in,
And take our friendly senators by th' hands,
Who now are here, taking their leaves of me,
Who am prepared against your territories,
Though not for Rome itself.

CORIOLANUS

You bless me, gods.

AUFIDIUS

Therefore, most absolute sir, if thou wilt have
The leading of thine own revenges, take
Th' one half of my commission and set down—
As best thou art experienced, 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 ere an enemy—
Yet, Martius, that was much. Your hand. Most welcome!

Coriolanus and Aufidius exit.

Two of the Servingmen come forward.

FIRST SERVINGMAN Here's a strange alteration!

SECOND SERVINGMAN 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 SERVINGMAN What an arm he has! He turned me about with his
finger and his thumb as one would set up a top.

SECOND SERVINGMAN 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.

THIRD SERVINGMAN I would not be a Roman, of all nations; I had as lief
be a condemned man. You shall have the drum
struck up this afternoon.

SECOND SERVINGMAN Why then, we shall have a stirring world again. This
peace is nothing but to rust iron, increase tailors,
and breed ballad-makers.

FIRST SERVINGMAN Let me have war, say I. It exceeds peace as far as day
does night. It's sprightly walking, audible, and full of
vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; mulled,
deaf, sleepy, insensible; a getter of more bastard
children than war's a destroyer of men.

SECOND SERVINGMAN Ay, and it makes men hate one another.

THIRD SERVINGMAN Reason: because they then less need one another.
The wars for my money! I hope to see Romans as
cheap as Volscians. (*Noise within.*) They are rising;
they are rising.

FIRST AND SECOND SERVINGMEN In, in, in, in!

They exit.

4.6 Enter the two Tribunes, Sicinius and Brutus.

Enter three or four Citizens.

ALL CITIZENS The gods preserve you both!

SICINIUS Good èen, our neighbors.

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

SICINIUS Live, and thrive!

BRUTUS Farewell, kind neighbors. We wished Coriolanus
Had loved you as we did.

ALL CITIZENS Now the gods keep you!

BOTH TRIBUNES Farewell, farewell.

Citizens exit.

SICINIUS This is a happier and more comely time
Than when these fellows ran about the streets
Crying confusion. Here do we 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.

BRUTUS We stood to 't in good time.

Enter Menenius.

BRUTUS Is this Menenius?

SICINIUS 'Tis he, 'tis he. O, he is grown most kind
Of late.—Hail, sir.

MENENIUS Hail to you both.

SICINIUS Your Coriolanus is not much missed
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 if
He could have temporized.

SICINIUS Where is he, hear you?

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

SICINIUS We hear not of him, neither need we fear him.

Enter an Aedile.

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

MENENIUS 'Tis Aufidius,
Who, hearing of our Martius' banishment,
Thrusts forth his horns again into the world.

BRUTUS Go see this rumorer whipped. It cannot be
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 coming
That turns their countenances.
It is spoke freely out of many mouths—
How probable I do not know—that Martius,
Joined 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

Raised only that the weaker sort may wish
Good Martius home again.

SICINIUS

The very trick on 't.

MENENIUS

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

Enter Comenius

COMINIUS

O, you have made good work!

MENENIUS What news? What news?

COMINIUS You have holp to ravish your own daughters and
To melt the city leads upon your pates,
To see your wives dishonored to your noses—

MENENIUS What's the news? What's the news?
If Martius should be joined with 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 You have made fair work.

BRUTUS But is this true, sir?

COMINIUS Ay, and you'll look pale
Before you find it other.

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

TRIBUNES

Say not we brought it.

MENENIUS

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

Enter a troop of Citizens.

MENENIUS

Here come the clusters.—

CITIZEN

Faith, we hear fearful news.

MENENIUS

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 deserved it.

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

CITIZEN And so did I.

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 You're goodly things, you voices!

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

COMINIUS O, ay, what else?

Both exit.

SICINIUS Go, masters, get you home. Be not dismayed.
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.

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

CITIZEN So did we all. But, come, let's home.

Citizens exit.

BRUTUS I do not like this news.

SICINIUS Nor I.

BRUTUS Let's to the Capitol. Would half my wealth
Would buy this for a lie.

SICINIUS Pray, let's go.

Tribunes exit.

4.7 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.

LIEUTENANT Yet I wish, sir—
I mean for your particular—you had not
Joined in commission with him, but either

Have 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 dragonlike, and does achieve as soon
As draw his sword.

LIEUTENANT

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

AUFIDIUS

All places yields 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.
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.

They exit.

ACT FIVE

5.1 Enter Menenius, Cominius, Sicinius, Brutus (the two Tribunes), with others.

MENENIUS No, I'll not go. You hear what he hath said
Which was sometime his general, who loved him
In a most dear particular. He called me father,
But what o' that? Go you that banished him;
A mile before his tent, fall down, and knee
The way into his mercy. Nay, if he coyed
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 urged our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. "Coriolanus"
He would not answer to, forbade all names.
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
Till he had forged himself a name o' th' fire
Of burning Rome.

MENENIUS Why, so; you have made good work!
A pair of tribunes that have wracked Rome
To make coals cheap! 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 Martius.

MENENIUS Well, and say that Martius
Return me, as Cominius is returned, 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.

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

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

He exits.

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 jailor to his pity. I kneeled before him;
'Twas very faintly he said "Rise"; dismissed 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.

They exit.

5.2 Enter Menenius to the Watch, or Guard.

FIRST WATCH Stay! Whence are you?

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. Our general
Will no more hear from thence.

MENENIUS Good my friends,
If you have heard your general talk of Rome
My name hath touched your ears. It is Menenius.

FIRST WATCH Be it so; go back. The virtue of your name
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 unparalleled happily amplified. Therefore, fellow,
I must have leave to pass.

SECOND WATCH You are a Roman, are you?

MENENIUS I am, as thy general is.

SECOND WATCH Then you should hate Rome as he does. Can you,
when you have pushed 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 decayed
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 deceived.
Therefore, back to Rome and prepare for your
execution. You are condemned. 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.

SECOND WATCH Come, my captain knows you not.

MENENIUS I mean thy general.

SECOND WATCH My general cares not for you. Back, I say, go, lest I let
forth your half pint of blood.

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. 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. 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. My affairs
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, begone.
Mine ears against your suits are stronger than
Your gates against my force. Yet, for I loved thee,
Take this along; I writ it for thy sake,
And would have sent it. Another word, Menenius,
I will not hear thee speak.—This man, Aufidius,
Was my beloved in Rome; yet thou behold'st.

AUFIDIUS

You keep a constant temper.

They exit.

The Guard and Menenius remain.

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?

MENENIUS I neither care for th' world nor your general. For
such things as you, I can scarce think there's any,
you're 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!

He exits.

Watch exit.

5.3 Enter Sicinius, Cominius, and a Messenger.

MESSENGER Sir, if you'd save your life, fly to your house.
The plebeians have got your fellow tribune
And hale her up and down, all swearing if
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home,
They'll give her death by inches.

Enter Menenius

MENENIUS See you yond quoin o’ th’ Capitol, bond
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 sentenced
and stay upon execution. 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 banished him, we respected not them; and
he returning to break our necks, they respect not us.

Exit.

5.4 Enter Coriolanus and Aufidius.

CORIOLANUS We will before the walls of Rome tomorrow
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, stopped 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 a cracked heart I have sent to Rome,
Loved 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 showed sourly to him—once more offered
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 Virgilia, Volumnia, Valeria, young Martius, with Attendants.

My wife comes foremost, then the honored mold
Wherein this trunk was framed, 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
Plow 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 changed
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 virgined it e'er since. You gods! I prate

And the most noble mother of the world
Leave unsaluted. Sink, my knee, i' th' earth;
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.

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,
Murdering impossibility to make
What cannot be slight work.

VOLUMNIA

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

CORIOLANUS

Dear Valeria.

VOLUMNIA

This is a poor epitome of yours,
Which by th' interpretation of full time
May show like all yourself. 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 anything;
 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 Volsces, mark, for we'll
 Hear naught 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 barr'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 cannot 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.

YOUNG MARTIUS

He 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.

VOLUMNIA

Nay, go not from us thus.
If it were so, that our request did tend
To save the Romans, thereby to destroy
The Volsces whom you serve, you might condemn us
As poisonous of your honor. No, our suit
Is that you reconcile them, while the Volsces
May say "This mercy we have showed," the Romans
"This we received," 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 dogged with curses,

Whose chronicle thus writ: “The man was noble,
But with his last attempt he wiped it out,
Destroyed his country, and his name remains
To th’ ensuing age abhorred.” Speak to me, son.
Think’st thou it honorable 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
Showed thy dear mother any courtesy
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
Has clucked thee to the wars and safely home,
Loaden with honor. 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 neighbors.—Come, let us go.
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother,

His wife is in Corioles, and his child
Like him by chance.—Yet give us our dispatch.
I am hushed 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 prevailed,
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 moved 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
I am glad thou hast set thy mercy and thy honor
At difference in thee. Out of that I'll work
Myself a former fortune.

CORIOLANUS
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 countersealed.
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.

They exit.

(5.5 Enter Tullus Aufidius, with Attendants.)

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

AUFIDIUS
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; served 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 seemed his follower, not partner; and
He waged me with his countenance as if
I had been mercenary.

CONSPIRATOR

So he did, my lord.
The army marvelled at it, and, in the last,
When he had carried Rome and that we looked
For no less spoil than glory—

AUFIDIUS

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

Drums and trumpets sounds, with great shouts of the people.

CONSPIRATOR

Your native town you entered like a post
And had no welcomes home, but he returns
Splitting the air with noise.

CONSPIRATOR

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

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.

AUFIDIUS Say no more.

Enter the Lords of the city.

Enter Coriolanus marching with Drum and Colors, the Commoners being with him.

CORIO LANUS Hail, lords! I am returned 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 honor to the Antiates
Than shame to th' Romans, and we here deliver,
Subscribed 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 abused your powers.

CORIO LANUS "Traitor"? How now?

AUFIDIUS Ay, traitor, Martius.

CORIOLANUS Martius?

AUFIDIUS Ay, Martius, Caius Martius. Dost thou think
I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name
Coriolanus, in Corioles?
You lords and heads o' th' state, perfidiously
He has betrayed 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 whined and roared away your victory,
That pages blushed at him and men of heart
Looked wond'ring each at other.

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!—
Cut me to pieces, Volsces. 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 dovecote, I
Fluttered your Volscians in Corioles,
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?

LORD

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.

ALL CONSPIRATORS

Let him die for 't.

ALL PEOPLE

Tear him to pieces! Do it presently! He killed my
son! My daughter! He killed my cousin Marcus! He
killed my father!

CORIOLANUS

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

AUFIDIUS

Insolent villain!

ALL CONSPIRATORS

Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!

Draw the Conspirators, and kills Martius, who falls. Aufidius stands on him.

They exit bearing the body of Martius. A dead march sounded.

5.6 Enter two Senators, with Ladies (Volumnia, Virgilia, Valeria) passing over the stage, with other Lords.

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 banished Martius,
 Repeal him with the welcome of his mother.
 Cry "Welcome, ladies, welcome!"

ALL Welcome, ladies, welcome!

A flourish with drums and trumpets.

They exit.