

**УИЛЬЯМ
ШЕКСПИР**

THE TRAGEDY
OF
CORIOLANUS

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The Tragedy of Coriolanus

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The Tragedy of Coriolanus:

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William Shakespeare
The Tragedy of Coriolanus

THE TRAGEDY OF CORIOLANUS

by William Shakespeare

PERSONS REPRESENTED

CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS, a noble Roman

TITUS LARTIUS, General against the Volscians

COMINIUS, General against the Volscians

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, Friend to Coriolanus

SICINIUS VELUTUS, Tribune of the People

JUNIUS BRUTUS, Tribune of the People

YOUNG MARCIUS, son to Coriolanus

A ROMAN HERALD

TULLUS AUFIDIUS, General of the Volscians

LIEUTENANT, to Aufidius

Conspirators with Aufidius

A CITIZEN of Antium

TWO VOLSCIAN GUARDS

VOLUMNIA, Mother to Coriolanus

VIRGILIA, Wife to Coriolanus

VALERIA, Friend to Virgilia

GENTLEWOMAN attending on Virgilia

Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Aediles, Lictors,

Soldiers, Citizens, Messengers, Servants to Aufidius, and

other

Attendants

SCENE: Partly in Rome, and partly in the territories of the Volscians and Antiates

ACT I

SCENE I. Rome. A street

[Enter a company of mutinous citizens, with staves, clubs, and other weapons.]

FIRST CITIZEN

Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.

ALL

Speak, speak.

FIRST CITIZEN

You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?

ALL

Resolved, resolved.

FIRST CITIZEN

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

ALL

We know't, we know't.

FIRST CITIZEN. Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a verdict?

ALL

No more talking on't; let it be done: away, away!

SECOND CITIZEN

One word, good citizens.

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

SECOND CITIZEN

Would you proceed especially against Caius Marcius?

FIRST CITIZEN

Against him first: he's a very dog to the commonalty.

SECOND CITIZEN

Consider you what services he has done for his country?

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

SECOND CITIZEN

Nay, but speak not maliciously.

FIRST CITIZEN. I say unto you, what he hath done famously he did it to that end: though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother, and to be partly proud; which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue.

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

FIRST CITIZEN. If I must not, I need not be barren of accusations; he hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition.

[Shouts within.] What shouts are these? The other side o' the city is risen: why stay we prating here? to the Capitol!

ALL

Come, come.

FIRST CITIZEN

Soft! who comes here?

SECOND CITIZEN

Worthy Menenius Agrippa; one that hath always loved the people.

FIRST CITIZEN

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

[Enter MENENIUS AGRIPPA.]

MENENIUS

What work's, my countrymen, in hand? where go you
With bats and clubs? the matter? speak, I pray you.

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

MENENIUS

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

FIRST CITIZEN

We cannot, sir; we are undone already.

MENENIUS

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

FIRST CITIZEN. Care for us! True, indeed! They ne'er
cared for us yet. Suffer us to famish, and their storehouses
crammed with grain; make edicts for usury, to support
usurers; repeal daily any wholesome act established against
the rich, and provide more piercing statutes daily to chain up
and restrain the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they will; and
there's all the love they bear us.

MENENIUS

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

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

MENENIUS

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

Of the whole body. The belly answered, —

FIRST CITIZEN

Well, sir, what answer made the belly?

MENENIUS

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

FIRST CITIZEN

Your belly's answer? What!
The kingly crowned head, the vigilant eye,

The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,
With other muniments and petty helps
Is this our fabric, if that they, —

MENENIUS

What then? —
'Fore me, this fellow speaks! – what then? what then?

FIRST CITIZEN

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

MENENIUS

Well, what then?

FIRST CITIZEN

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

MENENIUS

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

FIRST CITIZEN

You are long about it.

MENENIUS

Note me this, good friend;

Your most grave belly was deliberate,
Not rash like his accusers, and thus answer'd:
'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 the seat o' the brain;
And, through the cranks and offices of man,
The strongest nerves and small inferior veins
From me receive that natural competency
Whereby they live: and though that all at once
You, my good friends,' – this says the belly, – mark me, —

FIRST CITIZEN

Ay, sir; well, well.

MENENIUS

'Though all at once cannot
See what I do deliver out to each,
Yet I can make my audit up, that all

From me do back receive the flour of all,
And leave me but the bran.' What say you to't?

FIRST CITIZEN

It was an answer: how apply you this?

MENENIUS

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

FIRST CITIZEN

I the great toe? why the great toe?

MENENIUS

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

[Enter CAIUS MARCIUS.]

Hail, noble Marcius!

MARCIUS

Thanks. — What's the matter, you dissentious rogues
That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
Make yourselves scabs?

FIRST CITIZEN

We have ever your good word.

MARCIUS

He that will give good words to thee will flatter
Beneath abhorring. – What would you have, you curs,
That like nor peace nor war? The one affrights you,
The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,
Where he should find you lions, finds you hares;
Where foxes, geese: you are no surer, no,
Than is the coal of fire upon the ic,
Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is
To make him worthy whose offence subdues him,
And curse that justice did it. Who deserves greatness
Deserves your hate; and your affections are
A sick man's appetite, who desires most that
Which would increase his evil. He that depends
Upon your favours swims with fins of lead,
And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye! Trust ye!
With every minute you do change a mind;
And call him noble that was now your hate,
Him vile that was your garland. What's the matter,

That in these several places of the city
You cry against the noble senate, who,
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else
Would feed on one another? – What's their seeking?

MENENIUS

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

MARCIUS

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

MENENIUS

Nay, these are almost thoroughly persuaded;
For though abundantly they lack discretion,
Yet are they passing cowardly. But, I beseech you,
What says the other troop?

MARCIUS

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

MENENIUS

What is granted them?

MARCIUS

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

MENENIUS

This is strange.

MARCIUS

Go get you home, you fragments!

[Enter a MESSENGER, hastily.]

MESSENGER

Where's Caius Marcius?

MARCIUS

Here: what's the matter?

MESSENGER

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

MARCIUS

I am glad on't: then we shall ha' means to vent
Our musty superfluity. – See, our best elders.

[Enter COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, and other
SENATORS; JUNIUS BRUTUS and SICINIUS
VELUTUS.]

FIRST SENATOR

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

MARCIUS

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

COMINIUS

You have fought together.

MARCIUS

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

FIRST SENATOR

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

COMINIUS

It is your former promise.

MARCIUS

Sir, it is;

And I am constant. – Titus Lartius, thou
Shalt see me once more strike at Tullus' face.
What, art thou stiff? stand'st out?

TITUS LARTIUS

No, Caius Marcius;
I'll lean upon one crutch and fight with the other
Ere stay behind this business.

MENENIUS

O, true bred!

FIRST SENATOR

Your company to the Capitol; where, I know,
Our greatest friends attend us.

TITUS LARTIUS

Lead you on.
Follow, Cominius; we must follow you;
Right worthy your priority.

COMINIUS

Noble Marcius!

FIRST SENATOR

Hence to your homes; be gone!

[To the Citizens.]

MARCIUS

Nay, let them follow:

The Volsces have much corn; take these rats thither
To gnaw their garners. – Worshipful mutineers,
Your valour puts well forth: pray follow.

[Exeunt Senators, COM., MAR, TIT., and MENEN.
Citizens steal away.]

SICINIUS

Was ever man so proud as is this Marcius?

BRUTUS

He has no equal.

SICINIUS

When we were chosen tribunes for the people, —

BRUTUS

Mark'd you his lip and eyes?

SICINIUS

Nay, but his taunts!

BRUTUS

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

SICINIUS

Bemock the modest moon.

BRUTUS

The present wars devour him: he is grown
Too proud to be so valiant.

SICINIUS

Such a nature,
Tickled with good success, disdains the shadow
Which he treads on at noon: but I do wonder

His insolence can brook to be commanded
Under Cominius.

BRUTUS

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

SICINIUS

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

BRUTUS

Come:

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

SICINIUS

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

BRUTUS

Let's along.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Corioli. The Senate House

[Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS and certain SENATORS.]

FIRST SENATOR

So, your opinion is, Aufidius,
That they of Rome are enter'd in our counsels
And know how we proceed.

AUFIDIUS

Is it not yours?
What ever have been thought on in this state,
That could be brought to bodily act ere Rome
Had circumvention! 'Tis not four days gone
Since I heard thence; these are the words: I think
I have the letter here; yes, here it is:

[Reads.]

'They have pressed a power, but it is not known

Whether for east or west: the dearth is great;
The people mutinous: and it is rumour'd,
Cominius, Marcius your old enemy, —
Who is of Rome worse hated than of you, —
And Titus Lartius, a most valiant Roman,
These three lead on this preparation
Whither 'tis bent: most likely 'tis for you:
Consider of it.'

FIRST SENATOR

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

AUFIDIUS

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

SECOND SENATOR

Noble Aufidius,
Take your commission; hie you to your bands;
Let us alone to guard Corioli:
If they set down before's, for the remove
Bring up your army; but I think you'll find
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 honours.
If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,
'Tis sworn between us we shall ever strike
Till one can do no more.

ALL

The gods assist you!

AUFIDIUS

And keep your honours safe!

FIRST SENATOR

Farewell.

SECOND SENATOR

Farewell.

ALL. Farewell.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. Rome. An apartmnet in MARCIUS' house

[Enter VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA; they sit down on two low stools and sew.]

VOLUMNIA. I pray you, daughter, sing, or express yourself in a more comfortable sort; if my son were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the embracements of his bed where he would show most love. When yet he was but tender-bodied, and the only son of my womb; when youth with comeliness pluck'd all gaze his way; when, for a day of kings' entreaties, a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding; I, – considering how honour would become such a person; that it was no better than picture-like to hang by th' wall if renown made it not stir; – was pleased to let him seek danger where he was 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; I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely, – had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.

[Enter a GENTLEWOMAN.]

GENTLEWOMAN

Madam, the Lady Valeria is come to visit you.

VIRGILIA

Beseech you, give me leave to retire myself.

VOLUMNIA

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

VIRGILIA

His bloody brow! O Jupiter, no blood!

VOLUMNIA

Away, you fool! It more becomes a man
Than gilt his trophy: the breasts of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, looked not lovelier
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood
At Grecian swords contending. — Tell Valeria
We are fit to bid her welcome.

[Exit GENTLEWOMAN.]

VIRGILIA

Heavens bless my lord from fell Aufidius!

VOLUMNIA

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

[Re-enter GENTLEWOMAN, with VALERIA and her Usher.]

VALERIA

My ladies both, good-day to you.

VOLUMNIA

Sweet madam.

VIRGILIA

I am glad to see your ladyship.

VALERIA. How do you both? you are manifest housekeepers. 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: I'll swear 'tis a very pretty boy. O' my troth, I looked upon him o' Wednesday, half an hour together: has 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; come, you must go visit the good lady that lies in.

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

VOLUMNIA

Why, I pray you?

VIRGILIA

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

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

VIRGILIA

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

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

VIRGILIA

O, good madam, there can be none yet.

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

VIRGILIA

Indeed, madam?

VALERIA. In earnest, it's true; I heard a senator speak it. 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 Corioli; they nothing doubt prevailing, and to make it brief wars. This is true, on mine honour; and so, I pray, go with us.

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

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

VALERIA. In troth, I think she would. – Fare you well, then. – Come, good sweet lady. – Pr'ythee, 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.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. Before Corioli

[Enter, with drum and colours, MARCIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, Officers, and soldiers.]

MARCIUS

Yonder comes news: – a wager they have met.

LARTIUS

My horse to yours, no.

MARCIUS

'Tis done.

LARTIUS

Agreed.

[Enter a Messenger.]

MARCIUS

Say, has our general met the enemy?

MESSENGER

They lie in view; but have not spoke as yet.

LARTIUS

So, the good horse is mine.

MARCIUS

I'll buy him of you.

LARTIUS

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

MARCIUS

How far off lie these armies?

MESSENGER

Within this mile and half.

MARCIUS

Then shall we hear their 'larum, and they ours. —
Now, Mars, I pr'ythee, 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, on the Walls, some Senators and others.]

Tullus Aufidius, is he within your walls?

FIRST SENATOR

No, nor a man that fears you less than he,
That's lesser than a little.

[Drum afar off]

Hark, our drums
Are bringing forth our youth! we'll break our walls
Rather than they shall pound us up: our gates,
Which yet seem shut, we have but pinn'd with rushes;
They'll open of themselves.

[Alarum far off.]

Hark you far off!
There is Aufidius; list what work he makes

Amongst your cloven army.

MARCIUS

O, they are at it!

LARTIUS

Their noise be our instruction. – Ladders, ho!

[The Volsces enter and pass over.]

MARCIUS

They fear us not, but issue forth their city.
Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight
With hearts more proof than shields. – Advance, brave Titus:
They do disdain us much beyond our thoughts,
Which makes me sweat with wrath. – Come on, my fellows:
He that retires, I'll take him for a Volsce,
And he shall feel mine edge.

[Alarums, and exeunt Romeans and Volsces fighting. Romans are beaten back to their trenches. Re-enter MARCIUS.]

MARCIUS

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

[Another alarum. The Volsces and Romans re-enter, and the fight is renewed. The Volsces retire into Corioli, and MARCIUS follows them to the gates.]

So, now the gates are ope: – now prove good seconds:

'Tis for the followers fortune widens them,
Not for the fliers: mark me, and do the like.

[He enters the gates]

FIRST SOLDIER

Fool-hardiness: not I.

SECOND SOLDIER

Nor I.

[MARCIVS is shut in.]

FIRST SOLDIER

See, they have shut him in.

ALL

To th' pot, I warrant him.

[Alarum continues]

[Re-enter TITUS LARTIUS.]

LARTIUS

What is become of Marcius?

ALL

Slain, sir, doubtless.

FIRST SOLDIER

Following the fliers at the very heels,
With them he enters; who, upon the sudden,

Clapp'd-to their gates: he is himself alone,
To answer all the city.

LARTIUS

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

[Re-enter MARCIUS, bleeding, assaulted by the
enemy.]

FIRST SOLDIER

Look, sir.

LARTIUS

O, 'tis Marcius!

Let's fetch him off, or make remain alike.

[They fight, and all enter the city.]

SCENE V. Within Corioli. A street

[Enter certain Romans, with spoils.]

FIRST ROMAN

This will I carry to Rome.

SECOND ROMAN

And I this.

THIRD ROMAN

A murrain on't! I took this for silver.

[Alarum continues still afar off.]

[Enter MARCIUS and TITUS LARTIUS with a trumpet.]

MARCIUS

See here these movers that do prize their hours
At a crack'd drachma! Cushions, leaden spoons,
Irons of a doit, doublets that hangmen would
Bury with those that wore them, these base slaves,
Ere yet the fight be done, pack up: – down with them! —
And hark, what noise the general makes! – To him! —
There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius,
Piercing our Romans; then, valiant Titus, take
Convenient numbers to make good the city;
Whilst I, with those that have the spirit, will haste
To help Cominius.

LARTIUS

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

MARCIUS

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

LARTIUS

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

MARCIUS

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

LARTIUS

Thou worthiest Marcius! —

[Exit MARCIUS.]

Go, sound thy trumpet in the market-place;
Call thither all the officers o' the town,
Where they shall know our mind: away!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VI. Near the camp of COMINIUS

[Enter COMINIUS and Foreces, retreating.]

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 charg'd again. Whiles we have struck,
By interims and conveying gusts we have heard
The charges of our friends. The Roman gods,
Lead their successes as we wish our own,
That both our powers, with smiling fronts encountering,
May give you thankful sacrifice! —

[Enter A MESSENGER.]

Thy news?

MESSENGER

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

COMINIUS

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

MESSENGER

Above an hour, my lord.

COMINIUS

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

MESSENGER

Spies of the Volsces

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

COMINIUS

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

MARCIUS

[Within.] Come I too late?

COMINIUS

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

[Enter MARCIUS.]

MARCIUS

Come I too late?

COMINIUS

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

MARCIUS

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

COMINIUS

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

MARCIUS

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

COMINIUS

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

MARCIUS

Let him alone;

He did inform the truth: but for our gentlemen,
The common file, – a plague! – tribunes for them! —
The mouse ne'er shunned the cat as they did budge
From rascals worse than they.

COMINIUS

But how prevail'd you?

MARCIUS

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

COMINIUS

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

MARCIUS

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

COMINIUS

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

MARCIUS

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

We prove this very hour.

COMINIUS

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

MARCIUS

Those are they
That most are willing. – If any such be here, —
As it were sin to doubt, – that love this painting
Wherein you see me smear'd; if any fear
Lesser his person than an ill report;
If any think brave death outweighs bad life,
And that his country's dearer than himself;
Let him alone, or so many so minded,
Wave thus [waving his hand], to express his disposition,
And follow Marcius.

[They all shout and wave their swords; take him up in their arms and cast up their caps.]

O, me alone! Make you a sword of me?
If these shows be not outward, which of you
But is four Volsces? none of you but is
Able to bear against the great Aufidius
A shield as hard as his. A certain number,
Though thanks to all, must I select from all: the rest
Shall bear the business in some other fight,
As cause will be obey'd. Please you to march;
And four shall quickly draw out my command,
Which men are best inclin'd.

COMINIUS

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

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VII. The gates of Corioli

[TITUS LARTIUS, having set a guard upon Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toward COMINIUS and CAIUS MARCIUS, enters with a LIEUTENANT, a party of Soldiers, and a Scout.]

LARTIUS

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

LIEUTENANT

Fear not our care, sir.

LARTIUS

Hence, and shut your gates upon's. —
Our guider, come; to the Roman camp conduct us.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VIII. A field of battle between the Roman and the Volscian camps

[Alarum. Enter, from opposite sides, MARCIUS and
AUFIDIUS.]

MARCIUS

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

AUFIDIUS

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

MARCIUS

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

AUFIDIUS

If I fly, Marcus,
Halloo me like a hare.

MARCIUS

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

AUFIDIUS

Wert thou the Hector
That was the whip of your bragg'd progeny,
Thou shouldst not scape me here. —

[They fight, and certain Volsces come to the aid of
AUFIDIUS.]

Officious, and not valiant, — you have sham'd me
In your condemned seconds.

[Exeunt fighting, driven in by MAR.]

SCENE IX. The Roman camp

[Alarum. A retreat is sounded. Flourish. Enter, at
one side, COMINIUS and Romans; at the other side,
MARCIUS, with his arm in a scarf, and other Romans.]

COMINIUS

If I should tell thee o'er this thy day's work,
Thou't not believe thy deeds: but I'll report it
Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles;
Where great patricians shall attend, and shrug,
I' the end admire; where ladies shall be frighted
And, gladly quak'd, hear more; where the dull tribunes,
That, with the fusty plebeians, hate thine honours,
Shall say, against their hearts 'We thank the gods
Our Rome hath such a soldier.'
Yet cam'st thou to a morsel of this feast,
Having fully dined before.

[Enter TITUS LARTIUS, with his power, from the
pursuit.]

LARTIUS

O general,
Here is the steed, we the caparison:
Hadst thou beheld, —

MARCIUS

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

COMINIUS

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

MARCIUS

I have some wounds upon me, and they smart
To hear themselves remember'd.

COMINIUS

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

MARCIUS

I thank you, general,
But cannot make my heart consent to take
A bribe to pay my sword: I do refuse it;

And stand upon my common part with those
That have beheld the doing.

[A long flourish. They all cry 'Marcius, Marcius!', cast
up their

caps and lances. COMINIUS and LARTIUS stand bare.]

May these same instruments which you profane
Never sound more! When drums and trumpets shall
I' the field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be
Made all of false-fac'd soothing.

When steel grows soft as the parasite's silk,
Let him be made a coverture for the wars.
No more, I say! for that I have not wash'd
My nose that bled, or foil'd some debile wretch, —
Which, without note, here's many else have done, —
You shout me forth in acclamations hyperbolical;
As if I loved my little should be dieted
In praises sauc'd with lies.

COMINIUS

Too modest are you;
More cruel to your good report than grateful
To us that give you truly; by your patience,
If 'gainst yourself you be incens'd, we'll put you, —

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

[Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums]

ALL

Caius Marcius Coriolanus!

CORIO LANUS

I will go wash;
And when my face is fair you shall perceive
Whether I blush or no: howbeit, I thank you; —
I mean to stride your steed; and at all times
To undercrest your good addition

To the fairness of my power.

COMINIUS

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

LARTIUS

I shall, my lord.

CORIOLANUS

The gods begin to mock me. I, that now
Refus'd 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 Corioli
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 begg'd!
Were he the butcher of my son, he should
Be free as is the wind. Deliver him, Titus.

LARTIUS

Marcus, his name?

CORIOLANUS

By Jupiter, forgot: —

I am weary; yea, my memory is tir'd. —

Have we no wine here?

COMINIUS

Go we to our tent:

The blood upon your visage dries; 'tis time

It should be look'd to: come.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE X. The camp of the Volsces

[A flourish. Cornets. Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, bloody, with two or three soldiers.]

AUFIDIUS

The town is ta'en.

FIRST SOLDIER

'Twill be 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' the part that is at mercy? – Five times, Marcius,

I have fought with thee; so often hast thou beat me;
And wouldst do so, I think, should we encounter
As often as we eat. – By the elements,
If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,
He's mine or I am his: mine emulation
Hath not that honour in't it had; for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force, —
True sword to sword, – I'll potch at him some way,
Or wrath or craft may get him.

FIRST SOLDIER

He's the devil.

AUFIDIUS

Bolder, though not so subtle. My valour's poisoned
With only suffering stain by him; for him
Shall fly out of itself: nor sleep nor sanctuary,
Being naked, sick; nor fane nor Capitol,
The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,
Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
My hate to Marcius: where I find him, were it

At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,
Against the hospitable canon, would I
Wash my fierce hand in's heart. Go you to the city;
Learn how 'tis held; and what they are that must
Be hostages for Rome.

FIRST SOLDIER

Will not you go?

AUFIDIUS

I am attended at the cypress grove: I pray you, —
'Tis south the city mills, – bring me word thither
How the world goes, that to the pace of it
I may spur on my journey.

FIRST SOLDIER

I shall, sir.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II

SCENE I. Rome. A public place

[Enter MENENIUS, SICINIUS, and BRUTUS.]

MENENIUS

The augurer tells me we shall have news tonight.

BRUTUS

Good or bad?

MENENIUS

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

SICINIUS

Nature teaches beasts to know their friends.

MENENIUS

Pray you, who does the wolf love?

SICINIUS

The lamb.

MENENIUS

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

BRUTUS

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

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

BOTH TRIBUNES

Well, sir.

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

BRUTUS

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

SICINIUS

Especially in pride.

BRUTUS

And topping all others in boasting.

MENENIUS. This is strange now: do you two know how you are censured here in the city, I mean of us o' the right-hand file? Do you?

BOTH TRIBUNES

Why, how are we censured?

MENENIUS

Because you talk of pride now, – will you not be angry?

BOTH TRIBUNES

Well, well, sir, well.

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

BRUTUS

We do it not alone, sir.

MENENIUS. I know you can do very little alone; for your helps are many, or else your actions would grow wondrous single: your abilities are too infant-like for doing much alone. You talk of pride: O that you could turn your eyes toward the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves! O that you could!

BOTH TRIBUNES

What then, sir?

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

SICINIUS

Menenius, you are known well enough too.

MENENIUS. I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying Tiber in't; said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint, hasty and tinder-like upon too trivial motion; one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning. What I think I utter, and spend my malice in my breath. Meeting two such wealsmen as you are, – I cannot call you Lycurguses, – if the drink you give me touch my palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it. I cannot say your worships have delivered the matter well when I find the ass in compound with the major part of your syllables; and though I must be content to bear with

those that say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly that tell you have good faces. If you see this in the map of my microcosm, follows it that I am known well enough too? What harm can your bisson conspectuities glean out of this character, if I be known well enough too?

BRUTUS

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

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

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

MENENIUS. Our very priests must become mockers if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a botcher's cushion or to be entombed in an ass's pack-saddle. Yet you must be saying, Marcius is proud; who, in a cheap estimation, is worth all your predecessors since Deucalion; though peradventure some of the best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. God-den to your worships: more of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians: I will be bold to take my leave of you.

[BRUTUS and SICINIUS retire.]

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