

Living Shakespeare

THE TRAGEDY OF

CORIOLANUS

by

William Shakespeare

With The New Temple Notes and Glossary

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CORIOLANUS

ACTING VERSION

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CAIUS MARTIUS, afterwards CAIUS MARTIUS	YOUNG MARTIUS, son to Coriolanus.
CORIANUS	A Roman Herald.
TITUS LARTIUS, } generals against	TULLUS AUFIDIUS, general of the Volscians.
COMINIUS, } the Volscians.	Conspirators with Aufidius.
MENENIUS AGRIPPA, friend to Coriolanus.	
SICINIUS VELUTUS, } tribunes of the people.	VOLUMNIA, mother to Coriolanus.
JUNIUS BRUTUS, }	VIRGILIA, wife to Coriolanus.

Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Aediles, Lictors, Soldiers, Citizens, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE: Rome and the neighbourhood; Corioli and the neighbourhood; Antium.

ACT ONE

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

- 1 Cit. Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.
 All. Speak, speak.
 1 Cit. You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?
 All. Resolved, resolved.
 1 Cit. First, you know Caius Martius is chief enemy to the people.
 All. We know 't, we know 't.
 1 Cit. Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price.
 Is 't a verdict?
 All. Soft.
 1 Cit. Who comes here?

Enter Menenius Agrippa

- 2 Cit. Worthy Menenius Agrippa, one that hath always loved the people.
 1 Cit. He's one honest enough; would all the rest were so!
 Men. What work's, my countrymen, in hand? Where go you with bats and clubs? The matter? Speak, I pray you.
 1 Cit. Our business is not unknown to th' senate; they have had inkling this fortnight what we intend to do, which now we'll show 'em in deeds. They say poor suitors have strong breaths: they shall know we have strong arms too. We'll have corn at our price.
 Men. Why, masters, my good friends, mine honest neighbours, Will you undo yourselves?

Enter Caius Martius

Hail, noble Martius!

- Mar. Thanks. What's the matter, you dissentious rogues, That rubbing the poor itch of your opinion, Make yourselves scabs?
 1 Cit. We have ever your good word.
 Mar. He that will give good words to thee will flatter Beneath abhorring. What would you have, you curs, That like not peace nor war? the one affrights you, The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you, Where he should find you lions, finds you hares; Where foxes, geese: you are no surer, no, Than is the coal of fire upon the ice, Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is To make him worthy whose offence subdues him And curse that justice did it. Who deserves greatness Deserves your hate. And your affections are A sick man's appetite, who desires most that Which would increase his evil. He that depends

- Upon your favours swims with fins of lead And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye! Trust ye? With every minute you do change a mind, And call him noble that was now your hate, Him vile that was your garland. What's the matter That in these several places of the city You cry against the noble senate, who (Under the gods) keep you in awe, which else Would feed on one another? What's their seeking? Corn at our price!
 All. For corn at their own rates, whereof, they say, The city is well stor'd.
 Mar. Hang 'em! They say! They'll sit by th' fire, and presume to know What's done i' th' Capitol: who's like to rise, Who thrives and who declines; side factions and give out Conjectural marriages, making parties strong, And feebling such as stand not in their liking Below their cobbled shoes. They say there's grain enough! Would the nobility lay aside their ruth, And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry With thousands of these quarter'd slaves, as high As I could pick my lance.
 Men. Nay, these are all most thoroughly persuaded; For though abundantly they lack discretion, Yet are they passing cowardly. But, I beseech you, What says the other troop?
 Mar. They are dissolv'd: 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' th' moon, Shouting their emulation.
 Men. What is granted them?
 Mar. Five tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms, Of their own choice. One's Junius Brutus, one 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.
 Men. This is strange.
 Mar. Go, get you home, you fragments!
Enter a Messenger, hastily
 Mes. Where's Caius Martius?
 Mar. Here: what's the matter?

- Mes. The news is, sir, the Volscs are in arms.
 Mar. 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

- 1 Sen. Martius, 'tis true that you have lately told us; The Volscs are in arms.
 Mar. They have a leader, Tullus Aufidius, that will put you to 't. 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.
 1 Sen. Then, worthy Martius, Attend upon Cominius to these wars.
 Com. It is your former promise.
 Mar. Sir, it is.
 1 Sen. (to the Citizens) Hence to your homes; be gone!
 Mar. Nay, let them follow. The Volscs have much corn; take these rats thither To gnaw their garners. *Citizens steal away*
 Worshipful mutineers, Your valour puts well forth. Pray, follow. *Exeunt all but Sicinius and Brutus*
 Sic. Was ever man so proud as is this Martius?
 Bru. He has no equal.
 Sic. When we were chosen tribunes for the people—
 Bru. Mark'd you his lip and eyes?
 Sic. Nay, but his taunts.
 Bru. Being mov'd, he will not spare to gird the gods.
 Sic. Bemock the modest moon.
 Bru. The present wars devour him! He is grown Too proud to be so valiant.
 Sic. 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.
 Bru. Fame, at the which he aims, In whom already he's well grac'd, can not 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 Martius, "O, if he Had borne the business!"
 Sic. Besides, if things go well, Opinion, that so sticks on Martius, shall Of his merits rob Cominius. *Exeunt*

Enter Volunnia and Virgilia; they set them down on two low stools, and sew

Vol. 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 plucked all gaze his way; when, for a day of kings' entreaties, a mother would 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 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.

Vir. But had he died in the business, madam, how then?
Vol. 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 Martius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.

Exeunt

Nar. One part of the Roman army under Cominius meets the Volsces in the field. Another part under Martius besieges Corioli.

Mar. 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 Volscer, and he shall feel mine edge.

Alarum. The Romans are beat back to their trenches. Re-enter Martius cursing

Mar. 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 abhor'd farther than seen, and one infect another Against the wind a riddle! 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 fly, and Martius follows them to the gates

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

Enters the gates

1Rom. This will I carry to Rome.

2Rom. And I this.

3Rom. A murrain on 't! I took this for silver.

Alarum continues still afar off

Enter Martius and Titus Lartius with a trumpeter

Mar. See here these movers that do prize their honours 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!

And hark! what noise the general makes! To him! There is a 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.

Exeunt

Enter Cominius, as it were in retire, with soldiers; to them, Martius

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

Mar. Come I too late?

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

Mar. Come I too late?

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

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

Com. As I guess, Martius, Their bands 't' th' vaward are the Antiates, Of their best trust; o'er them Aufidius, Their very heart of hope.

Mar. 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 do not delay the present, but, Filling the air with swords advanc'd and darts, We prove this very hour.

Com. 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.

Mar. Those are they That are most 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 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.

They all shout and wave their swords; take him up in their arms, and cast up their caps

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.

Exeunt

Alarum as in battle. Enter from opposite sides, Martius and Aufidius

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

Auf. We hate alike:

Not Afric owns a serpent I abhor More than thy fame I envy. Fix thy foot.

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

Auf. If I fly, Martius,

Holloa me like a hare.

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

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

Exeunt

Nar. Martius drives Aufidius from the field but fails to kill him. He returns from Corioli to Rome in triumph.

Enter Cominius and Titus Lartius with the Romans; Martius

Com. Therefore, be it known, As to us, to all the world, that Caius Martius Wears this war's garland: in token of 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 th' applause and clamour of the host, Caius Martius Coriolanus.

Exeunt

ACT TWO

Enter Menenius, Sicinius and Brutus; Volunnia and Virgilia. Trumpets sound. Enter Cominius and Titus Lartius; between them Coriolanus, crowned with an oak leaf garland; with Captains, Soldiers, and a Herald

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

Flourish

All. Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!

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

Com. Look, sir, your mother!

Cor. O, Kneels

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

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

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

Men. Now, the gods crown thee!

Vol. I know not where to turn: O, welcome home!

And welcome, general: and you're welcome all.

Men. A hundred thousand welcomes.

I could weep And I could laugh, I am light and heavy. Welcome! A curse begran the 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.

Com. Ever right.

Cor. Menenius, ever, ever.

Her. Give way there, and go on.

Cor. (to Volunnia and Virgilia) Your hand, and yours! Ere in our own house I do shade my head, The good patricians must be visited; From whom I have receiv'd not only greeting, But with them change of honours.

Vol. I have liv'd 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.

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

Com. On, to the Capitol!
Exeunt

*Flourish. Enter, with Lictors before them,
Cominius the Consul, Menenius, Senators, Sicinius
and Brutus. The Senators take their places; the
Tribunes take their places by themselves*

Sen. Call Coriolanus.
Off. He doth appear.

Enter Coriolanus

Men. The senate, Coriolanus, are well pleas'd
To make thee consul.

Cor. I do owe them still
My life and services.

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

Cor. 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.

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

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

Cor. It is a part
That I shall blush in acting, and might well
Be taken from the people.
To brag unto them, "Thus I did, and thus!"
Show them th' unaching scars which I should hide,
As if I had receiv'd them for the hire
Of their breath only!

Men. Do not stand upon 't.
We recommend to you, tribunes of the people,
Our purpose to them: and to our noble consul
Wish we all joy and honour.

Sen. To Coriolanus come all joy and honour!
Exeunt all but Sicinius and Brutus

Nar. Sicinius and Brutus, the two elected tribunes of the people,
plot the downfall of Coriolanus.

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

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

Bru. 'Tis most like he will.
Sic. It shall be to him then as our good wills:
A sure destruction.

Bru. We must suggest the people in what hatred
He still hath held them; that to 's power he would
Have made them mules, silenc'd their pleaders and
Disproportioned their freedoms; holding them,
In human action and capacity,
Of no more soul nor fitness for the world
Than camels in the war, who have their provand
Only for bearing burthens, and sore blows
For sinking under them.

Sic. This, as you say, suggested
At some time when his soaring insolence

Shall touch the people, will be the fire
To kindle their dry stubble; and their blaze
Shall darken him for ever.

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

Enter Coriolanus in a gown of humility, with Menenius

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

Men. O me, the gods!
You must not speak of that: you must desire them
To think upon you.

Cor. Think upon me! hang 'em!
I would they would forget me, like the virtues
Which our divines waste on 'em.

Men. You'll mar all.
I'll leave you. Pray you, speak to 'em, I pray you,
In wholesome manner.
Exit

Enter two Citizens

Cor. Bid them wash their faces,
And keep their teeth clean. So, here comes a brace.
You know, sir, the cause of my standing here.

1 Cit. We do, sir; tell us what hath brought you to 't.
Cor. Mine own desert.

2 Cit. Your own desert?
Cor. Ay, but not mine own desire.

1 Cit. How not your own desire?
Cor. No, sir, 'twas never my desire yet to trouble the poor
with begging.

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

Cor. Well then, I pray, your price o' th' consulship?
1 Cit. The price is, to ask it kindly.

Cor. 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?

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

Cor. Your enigma?
2 Cit. You have been a scourge to her enemies, you have been
a rod to her friends. You have not indeed loved the com-
mon people.

Cor. You should account me the more virtuous, that I have
not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn
brother, the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them;
'tis a condition they account gentle: and since the wisdom
of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I
will practise the insinuating nod, and be off to them most
counterfeitly; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitch-
ment of some popular man, and give it bountiful to the
desires. Therefore, beseech you I may be consul.

2 Cit. We hope to find you our friend; and therefore give you
our voices heartily.

Cor. I will make much of your voices and so trouble you no
farther. There's in all two worthy voices begged. I have
your alms! adieu.

Both Cit. The gods give you joy, sir, heartily!
Exeunt

Cor. 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 do appear
Their needless vouchers? Custom calls me to 't.
What custom wills, in all things should we do 't.
The dust on antique time would lie unswep't,
And mountainous error be too highly heap'd

For truth to o'erpeer. Rather than fool it so,
Let the high office and the honour go
To one that would do thus. I am half through;
The one part suffer'd, the other will I do.

Enter two Citizens more

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

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

4 Cit. 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!

Exeunt Citizens

Cor. Worthy voices!

Exit

ACT THREE

*Enter Coriolanus, Menenius, all the Gentry, Cominius,
Titus Lartius, and other Senators; to them, Sicinius
and Brutus*

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

Sic. Pass no further.

Cor. Ha? what is that?

Bru. It will be dangerous to go on; no further.

Cor. What makes this change?

Men. Hath he not pass'd the noble and the common?

Bru. The people are incens'd against him.

Sic. Stop.

Or all will fall in broil.

Cor. 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?

Men. Be calm, be calm.

Cor. It is a purpos'd thing, and grows by plot,
To curb the will of the nobility:

Suffer 't, and live with such as cannot rule,
Nor ever will be rul'd.

Bru. Call 't not a plot:

The people cry you mock'd them; and of late,
When corn was given them gratis, you repin'd,
Scandal'd the suppliants for the people, call'd them
Time-pleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.

Cor. Why, this was known before.

Bru. Not to them all.

Cor. Have you inform'd them sithence?

Bru. How! I inform them!

Cor. You are like to do such business.

Bru. Not unlike,

Each way, to better yours.

Cor. Why then should I be consul? By yond clouds,
Let me deserve so ill as you, and make me
Your fellow tribune.

Sic. You show too much of that

For which the people stir: if you will pass
To where you are bound, you must inquire your way,
Which you are out of, with a gentler spirit,
Or never be so noble as a consul,
Nor yoke with him for tribune.

Men. Let's be calm.

Com. The people are abus'd; set on. This pal'd ring

- Becomes not Rome; nor has Coriolanus
Deserved this so dishonour'd rub, laid falsely
I th' plain way of his merit.
- Cor. Tell me of corn!
- Men. This was my speech, and I will speak 't again—
Not now, not now.
- Cor. Now, as I live, I will.
My nobler friends, I crave their pardons. For
The mutable, rank-scented meiny, let them
Regard me as I do not flatter, and
Therein behold themselves. I say again,
In soothing them, we nourish 'gainst our senate
The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,
Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd, and
scatter'd,
By mingling them with us, the honour'd number;
Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that
Which they have given to beggars.
- Men. Well, no more.
- Cor. How! No more!
As for my country I have shed my blood,
Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs
Coin words till their decay against those measles,
Which we disdain should tetter us, yet sought
The very way to catch them.
- Bru. You speak o' th' people,
As if you were a god, to punish; not
A man, of their infirmity.
- Sic. 'Twere well
We let the people know 't.
- Men. What, what? his cholera?
- Cor. Cholera!
Were I as patient as the midnight sleep,
By Jove, 'twould be my mind!
- Sic. It is a mind
- Cor. That shall remain a poison where it is,
Not poison any further.
- Cor. "Shall" remain!
Hear you this Triton of the minnows? mark you
His absolute "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' monsters, wants not spirit
To say he'll turn your current in a ditch,
And make your channel his?
If you are learned,
Be not as common fools; if you are not,
Let them have cushions by you. You are plebeians,
If they be senators; and they no less
When, both your voices blended, the great'st taste
Most palates theirs. They choose their magistrate;
And such a one as he, who puts his "shall,"
His popular "shall," against a graver bench
Than ever frow'd in Greece. By Jove himself,
It makes the consuls base! and my soul aches
To know, when two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon confusion
May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take
The one by th' other.
- Men. This double worship,
Where one part does disdain with cause, the other
Insult without all reason; where gentry, title, wisdom,
Cannot conclude but by the yea and no
Of general ignorance—it must omit
Real necessities, and give way the while
To unstable slightness. Purpose so barr'd, it follows
Nothing is done to purpose. Therefore, beseech you,
At once pluck out
The multitudinous tongue; let them not lick
The sweet which is their poison. Your dishonour
Mangles true judgement, 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.
- Bru. Has said enough.
- Sic. Has spoken like a traitor and shall answer
As traitors do.
- Cor. 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.
- Bru. Manifest treason!
- Sic. This a consul? No.
- Bru. Let him be apprehended.
- Sic. Go, call the people: in whose name myself
Attach thee as a traitorous innovator,
A foe to th' public weal. Obey, I charge thee,
And follow to thine answer.
- Cor. Hence, old goat!
Hence, rotten thing! or I shall shake thy bones
Out of thy garments.
- Sic. Help, ye citizens! Help!
- Enter a rabble of Plebeians, with the Aediles
- Sic. Here's he that would take from you all your power.
- Bru. Seize him!
- Men. I prithee, noble friend, home to thy house;
Leave us to cure this cause.
- Exeunt
- Enter Coriolanus with Nobles
- Cor. 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.
- 1 Sen. You do the nobler.
- Cor. I muse my mother
Does not approve me further, who was wont
To call them woollen vassals, things created
To buy and sell with groats; to show bare heads
In congregations, to yawn, be still and wonder,
When one but of my ordinaunce stood up
To speak of peace or war.
- Enter Volumentia
- I talk of you:
Why do you wish me milder? would you have me
False to my nature? Rather say I play
The man I am.
- Vol. O, sir, sir, sir,
I would have had you put your power well on,
Before you had worn it out.
- Cor. Let go.
- Vol. You might have been enough the man you are,
With striving less to be so: lesser had been
The thwartings of your dispositions, if
You had not shown them how ye were dispos'd
Ere they lack'd power to cross you.
- Cor. Let them hang.
- Vol. Ay, and burn too.
- Enter Menenius with the Senators
- Men. Come, come, you have been too rough, something too
rough;
You must return and mend it.
- Sen. There's no remedy,
Unless, by not so doing, our good city
Cleave in the midst and perish.
- Vol. Pray, be counsel'd:
I have a heart as little apt as yours,
But yet a brain that leads my use of anger
- To better vantage.
- Men. Well said, noble woman!
Before he should thus stoop to th' herd—but that
The violent fit o' th' time craves it as physic
For the whole state—I would put mine armour on,
Which I can scarcely bear.
- Cor. What must I do?
- Men. Return to th' tribunes.
- Cor. Well, what then? what then?
- Men. Repent what you have spoke.
- Cor. For them? I cannot do it to the gods;
Must I then do 't to them?
- Vol. You are too absolute;
Though therein you can never be too noble
But when extremities speak. I have heard you say,
Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,
I th' war do grow together; grant that, and tell me
In peace what each of them by th' other lose
That they combine not there.
- Cor. Tush, tush!
- Men. A good demand.
- Vol. If it be honour in your wars to seem
The same you are not, which for your best ends
You adopt your policy, how is it less or worse
That it shall hold companionship in peace
With honour as in war; since that to both
It stands in like request?
- Cor. Why force you this?
- Vol. 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 rooted in
Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.
Now, this no more dishonours you at all
Than to take in a town with gentle words,
Which else would put you to your fortune and
The hazard of much blood.
I would dissemble with my nature, where
My fortune and my friends at stake requir'd
I should do so in honour. I am in this,
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles;
And you will rather show our general louts
How you can frown than spend a fawn upon 'em
For the inheritance of their loves and safeguard
Of what that want might ruin.
- Men. Noble lady!
Come, go with us: speak fair; you may salve so,
Not what is dangerous present, but the loss
Of what is past.
- Vol. I prithee now, my son,
Go to them with this bonnet in thy hand;
And thus far having stretch'd it—here be with them—
Thy knee bussing the stones: for in such business
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th' ignorant
More learned than the ears—waving thy head,
Which often thus correcting thy stout heart,
Now humble as the ripest mulberry
That will not hold the handling; or say to them,
Thou art their soldier, and being bred in broils
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,
Were fit for thee to use, as they to claim,
In asking their good loves; but thou wilt frame
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far
As thou hast power and person.
- Men. This but done,
Even as she speaks, why, their hearts were yours;
For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free
As words to little purpose.
- Vol. Prithee now,
Go, and be rul'd: although I know thou hadst rather
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf
Than flatter him in a bower.
- Enter Cominius
- Here is Cominius.

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

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

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

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

Com. Come, come, we'll prompt you.

Vol. 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.

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

Vol. At thy choice then.
To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin: let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear
Thy dangerous stoutness, for I mock at death
With as big a heart as thou. Do as thou list.
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'dst it from me,
But owe thy pride thyself.

Cor. Pray, be content:
Mother, I am going to the market-place;
Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves,
Cog their hearts from them, and come home below'd
Of all 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.

Vol. Do your will.
Exeunt

Enter Sicinius and Brutus, with Citizens; Coriolanus, Menenius, and Cominius; with Senators and Patricians

Sic. Draw near, ye people.

1 Cit. List to your tribunes. Audience! peace, I say!

Cor. First, hear me speak.

Both Tr. Well, say. Peace, ho!

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

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

Cor. I am content.

Men. 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.

Cor. Scratches with briars,

Men. Scars to move laughter only.
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.

Com. Well, well, no more.

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

Sic. Answer to us.

Cor. Say, then, 'tis true, I ought so.

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

Cor. How! traitor!

Men. Nay, temperately! your promise.

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

Sic. Mark you this, people?

Cit. To th' rock, to th' rock with him!

Sic. 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.

Bru. But since he hath
Serv'd well for Rome—

Cor. What do you prate of service?

Bru. I talk of that, that know it.

Cor. You!

Men. Is this the promise that you made your mother?

Com. Know, I pray you,—

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

Sic. In the name o' th' people,
Add 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.

Cit. It shall be so.

Com. Hear me, my masters and my common friends,—

Sic. He's sentenc'd; no more hearing.

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

Cit. It shall be so, it shall be so.

Cor. You common cry of ours! whose breath I hate
As reek o' th' rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air—I banish you.
And here remain with your uncertainty!
Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts!
Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes,
Fan you into despair! Have the power still
To banish your defenders, till at length
Your ignorance deliver you as most
Abated captives to some nation
That won you without blows! Despising
For you the city, thus I turn my back:
There is a world elsewhere

*Exeunt Coriolanus, Cominius, Menenius,
Senators and Patricians*

Bru. The people's enemy is gone, is gone!
Sic. Our enemy is banished! he is gone!
Cit. The gods preserve our noble tribunes.

Exeunt

ACT FOUR

*Enter Coriolanus, Volturnia, Virgilia, Menenius,
Cominius*

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

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

Cor. What, what, what!
I shall be lov'd when I am lack'd. Nay, mother,
Resume that spirit when you were wont to say,
If you had been the wife of Hercules,
Six of his labours you'd have done, and sav'd
Your husband so much sweat. Cominius,
Droop not, adieu. Farewell, my wife, my mother:
I'll do well yet. Thou old and true Menenius,
Thy tears are saltier than a younger man's,
And venomous to thine eyes. Tell these sad women
'Tis fond to wait inevitable strokes
As 'tis to laugh at 'em.

Vol. My first son,
Whither wilt thou go? Take good Cominius
With thee awhile: determine on some course
More than a wild exposure to each chance
That starts i' th' way before thee.

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

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

Exeunt

Nar. Coriolanus joins forces with his old enemy Aufidius.
They march on Rome.

ACT FIVE

*Enter Coriolanus, Aufidius, and others; to them, in
mourning habits, Virgilia, Volturnia, young Martius,
with Attendants*

Cor. My wife comes foremost; then the honour'd mould
Wherein this trunk was fram'd, and in her hand
The grandchild to her blood. But out, affection!

Vir. My lord and husband!
 Cor. These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome.
 Vir. The sorrow that delivers us thus chang'd
 Makes you think so.

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

Of thy deep duty more impression show
 Than that of common sons.

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

Cor. What's this?
 Your knees to me? to your corrected son?
Raises her

Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach
 Fillip the stars; then let the mutinous winds
 Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun,
 Murd'ring impossibility, to make
 What cannot be, slight work.

Vol. Thou art my warrior;
 I help to frame thee.
 (*showing young Martius*) This is a poor epitome of yours,
 Which by th' interpretation of full time
 May show like all yourself.

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

Vol. Your knee, sirrah.
 Cor. That's my brave boy!
 Vol. Even he, your wife, myself
 Are suitors to you.

Cor. I beseech you, peace!
 Or, if you'd ask, remember this before:
 The things 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.

Vol. 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.

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

Vol. 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 honour: no, our suit
 Is, that you reconcile them: while the Volsces
 May say, "This mercy we have show'd," the Romans,
 "This we receiv'd"; and each in either side
 Give the all-hail to thee, and cry, "Be blest
 For making up this peace." Thou know'st, great son,
 The end of war is uncertain: but this certain,
 That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit
 Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name
 Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses;

Whose chronicle thus writ: "The man was noble,
 But with his last attempt he wip'd it out,
 Destroy'd his country, and his name remains
 To th' ensuing age abhorr'd." Speak to me, son:
 Thou hast affected the fine strains of honour,
 To imitate the graces of the gods;
 To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' th' air,
 And yet to charge thy sulphur with a bolt
 That should but rive an oak. Why dost not speak?
 Think'st thou it honourable for a noble man
 Still to remember wrongs? Daughter, speak you:
 He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy:
 Perhaps thy childishness will move him more
 Than can our reasons. There's no man in the world
 More bound to 's mother, yet here he lets me prate
 Like one i' th' stocks. Thou hast never in thy life
 Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy,
 When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
 Has cluck'd thee to the wars, and safely home
 Loaden with honour. Say my request's unjust,
 And spurn me back; but if it be not so,
 Thou art not honest, and the gods will plague thee,
 That thou restrain'st from me the duty which
 To a mother's part belongs. He turns away:
 Down; let us shame him with our knees.
 To his surname Coriolanus 'longs more pride
 Than pity to our prayers. Down: an end;
 This is the last: so we will home to Rome,
 And die among our neighbours. Nay, behold!
 This boy, that cannot tell what he would have,
 But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship,
 Does reason our petition with more strength
 Than thou hast to deny 't. Come, let us go:
 This fellow had a Volscian to his mother;
 His wife is in Corioli, and his child
 Like him by chance. Yet give us our dispatch.
 I am hush'd until our city be a-fire,
 And then I'll speak a little.

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

Auf. I was mov'd withal.
 Cor. 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!
Speaks with them apart

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

Cor. (*coming forward with Volumnia and Virgilia*) Come,
 enter with us. Ladies, you deserve
 To have a temple built you. All the swords
 In Italy, and her confederate arms,
 Could not have made this peace.
Exeunt

Nar. Coriolanus makes peace with Rome. He returns to Corioli.
*Enter Aufidius, Conspirators, and Lords of the city;
 to them, Coriolanus, marching with drum and colours;
 the commoners being with him*

Cor. Hail, lords! I am return'd your soldier;

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

Auf. Read it not, noble lords;
 But tell the traitor in the highest degree
 He hath abus'd your powers.
 Cor. Traitor! how now!
 Auf. Ay, traitor, Martius!
 Cor. Martius!
 Auf. Ay, Martius, Caius Martius! Dost thou think
 I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name
 Coriolanus, in Corioli?
 You lords and head o' th' state, perfidiously
 He has betray'd our business and given up,
 For certain drops of salt, your city Rome,
 I say "your city," to his wife and mother;
 Breaking his oath and resolution, like
 A twist of rotten silk; never admitting
 Counsel o' th' war; but at his nurse's tears
 He whin'd and roar'd away your victory;
 That pages blush'd at him and men of heart
 Looked wond'ring each at other.

Cor. Hear'st thou, Mars?
 Auf. Name not the god, thou boy of tears!
 Cor. Ha!
 Auf. No more.
 Cor. Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
 Too great for what contains it. "Boy!" O slave!
 Pardon me, my lords, 'tis the first time that ever
 I was forc'd to scold. Your judgements, my grave lords,
 Must give this cur the lie: and his own notion—
 Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him; that
 Must bear my beating to his grave—shall join
 To thrust the lie unto him.
 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 dove-cote, I
 Fluttered your Volscians in Corioli.
 Alone I did it. "Boy!"

Auf. 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?

Cons. Let him die for 't.
 Cor. O that I had him,
 With six Aufidiuses or more, his tribe,
 To use my lawful sword!

Auf. Insolent villain!
 Cons. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!

*The Conspirators draw and kill Coriolanus;
 Aufidius stands on his body but is restrained*

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

*Exeunt bearing away the body of Coriolanus
 A dead march sounded*

With what he would say, let him feel your sword :
Which we will second ; when he lies along,
After your way his tale pronounc'd shall bury
His reasons with his body.

Auf. Say no more.

Here come the lords. 60

Enter the Lords of the city

All the Lords. You are most welcome home.

Auf. I have not deserv'd it.

But, worthy lords, have you with heed perus'd
What I have written to you ?

Lords. We have.

First Lord. And grieve to hear 't :
What faults he made before the last, I think
Might have found easy fines : but there to end
Where he was to begin, and give away
The benefit of our levies, answering us
With our own charge : making a treaty, where
There was a yielding ; this admits no excuse.

Auf. He approaches, you shall hear him. 70

Enter Coriolanus, marching with drum and colours ; the commoners being with him

Cor. Hail, lords, I am return'd your soldier :
No more infected with my country's love
Than when I parted hence : but still subsisting
Under your great command. You are to know,
That prosperously I have attempted, and
With bloody passage led your wars, even to
The gates of Rome : our spoils we have brought home
Doth more than counterpoise a full third part
The charges of the action. We have made peace
With no less honour to the Antiates 80
Than shame to the Romans. And we here deliver,
Subscrib'd by the consuls, and patricians,
Together with the seal o' the senate, what
We have compounded on.

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

Cor. Traitor ? how now ?

Auf. Ay, traitor, Martius !

Cor. Martius !

Auf. Ay, Martius, Caius Martius : dost thou think
I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name
Coriolanus, in Corioles ? 90
You lords and heads o' the state, perfidiously
He has betray'd your business, and given up
For certain drops of salt, your city Rome :
I say 'your city,' to his wife and mother,
Breaking his oath and resolution, like
A twist of rotten silk, never admitting
Counsel o' the war : but at his nurse's tears
He whin'd and roar'd away your victory,
That pages blush'd at him, and men of heart
Look'd wondering each at other.

Cor. Hear'st thou, Mars ? 100

Auf. Name not the god, thou boy of tears.

Cor. Ha !

Auf. No more.

Cor. Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
Too great for what contains it. 'Boy ?' O slave !
Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever
I was forc'd to scold. Your judgements, my grave
lords,
Must give this cur the lie : and his own notion,
Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him, that
Must bear my beating to his grave, shall join
To thrust the lie unto him. 110

First Lord. Peace, both, and hear me speak.

Cor. Cut me to pieces, Volscies, men and lads,
Stain all your edges on me. 'Boy,' false hound !
If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioles ;
Alone I did it. 'Boy !'

Auf. 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 ?

All Consp. Let him die for 't. 120

All the People. 'Tear him to pieces.' 'Do it presently.'
'He killed my son.' 'My daughter.' 'He killed

my cousin Marcus.' 'He killed my father.'

Sec. Lord. Peace, ho : no outrage, peace !
The man is noble, and his fame folds in
This orb o' the earth : his last offences to us
Shall have judicious hearing. Stand, Aufidius,
And trouble not the peace.

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

Auf. Insolent villain ! 130

All Consp. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him !
The Conspirators draw, and kill Coriolanus :
Aufidius stands on his body
Hold, hold, hold, hold !

Lords. My noble masters, hear me speak

First Lord. O Tullus,—

Sec. Lord. Thou hast done a deed, whereat valour will weep.

Third Lord. Tread not upon him. Masters all, be quiet,
Put up your swords.

Auf. My lords, when you shall know (as in this rage
Provok'd by him, you cannot) the great danger
Which this man's life did owe you, you'll rejoice
That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours
To call me to your senate, I'll deliver 140
Myself your loyal servant, or endure
Your heaviest censure.

First Lord. Bear from hence his body,
And mourn you for him. Let him be regarded
As the most noble corpse that ever herald
Did follow to his urn.

Sec. Lord. His own impatience
Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame :
Let's make the best of it.

Auf. My rage is gone,
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up :
Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers, I'll be one.
Beat thou the drum that it speak mournfully : 150
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one,
Which to this hour bewail the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble memory.

Assist. *Exeunt, bearing the body of Coriolanus
A dead march sounded*

Notes

I. iii. 43. *At Grecian sword, contemning*; probably the best of the emendations of F's reading, *At Grecian sword. Contemning, tell, Valeria*. It would be tempting to think that the mysterious italicised *Contemning* concealed a proper name, if it were not that that gives a rhythm both weak and abrupt.

I. iii. 82. *Penelope* . . . ; during Odysseus' absence at the siege of Troy, his wife, Penelope, wooed by many suitors, promised to give her answer when she had completed the weaving on which she was engaged. Each night she unravelled the weaving which she had done by day.

I. iv. 14. *less than be*; the sense is perfectly clear, and the mistake is one not uncommon in Shakespeare (and elsewhere) with negatives or words of a negative force ; but, strictly, *less* should be *more*.

I. iv. 42. *trencher*; after *trencher* F reads *follows*, usually emended to *followed*. I think that *follows* (a weak contrast to *beat*) probably crept in from the following stage direction, and that omission is better than emendation.

I. vi. 77. *O, me alone ! make you a sword of me ?* Capell's punctuation (F has no question mark). Many explanations, none wholly satisfactory. Coriolanus' point appears to be that they are raising (or should raise) him as they do their swords. And I am not sure that it has been sufficiently observed that *O, me alone !* echoes *Let him alone* three lines above, and that Coriolanus is perhaps commenting on the fact that, instead of there being only one volunteer, he himself is lifted in isolation among the whole body of volunteers.

I. viii. 11. *Hector*; the famous Trojan : the Romans were supposed

to be descended from the Trojans under Æneas : and so the sense must be 'the whip wielded by your boasted ancestor,' unless we suppose a blunder as to Hector's race (oras to the Roman descent), and take it in the much more natural sense 'Hector who scourged . . .'

I. viii. 14. *Officious* . . . seconds; Aufidius' remark is of course addressed not to Coriolanus but to the Volscies who, over-officious, have shamed him by their aid (seconds).

I. ix. 46. *overture*; so F. A meaning can be elicited, 'let an offer of the wars be made to him (the parasite),' but there is probably corruption, and the usual emendation of *overture* seems to me unhelpful.

I. x. 16-23. I have, rather dubiously, retained the F punctuation, from the feeling that it is probably too odd to be due merely to a compositor's carelessness. If intended, it must represent Aufidius' disjointed utterance in anger.

II. i. 56. *I can say*; almost universally emended to *I cannot say*; but as the passage is difficult in any case I prefer to retain the F reading. And no satisfactory explanation has been offered of Menenius' gibe about *the ass in compound*. It sounds like an allusion to some well-known Latin Grammar rule or tag.

II. i. 63. *bisson*; I give the usual emendation of the F reading *besome*, but without much conviction.

II. i. 150. *One in the neck* . . . ; unless Menenius means to add two to Volunnius' count, 'number one' in the neck, and 'number two' in the thigh, his mathematics are less good than they are three lines lower. But he is much more probably reckoning, as it were on his fingers, without reference to Volunnius.

II. iii. 59. *which our divines lose by them*; i.e. 'in preaching which our divines waste their breath.'

II. iii. 241. Something has clearly dropped out, and reference to North makes it clear that the missing name is *Censorinus*. We should perhaps insert the line *And Censorinus, that was so surnam'd*.

III. ii. 26. *There's no remedy* . . . ; 'there's no help for it, unless you want the city to be destroyed.'

III. ii. 32. *herd*; Warburton's emendation of F *heart*.

III. iii. 132. *Making but reservation*; so F. If we retain it, it presumably means 'reserving only yourselves from banishment'; but this is not easy, and there is something to be said for Capell's emendation of *not for but*.

IV. i. 7-9. *fortune's blows* . . . ; 'to be noble when wounded by fortune's keenest strokes needs . . .'

IV. vi. 2. *His remedies are tame, the* . . . ; so F. Theobald inserted the obvious *i'* in place of the comma, but the resulting sense is far from satisfactory, since the argument should be that the present peace makes the wildness of his remedies look foolish. Hence a good deal of unconvincing conjecture.

IV. vi. 99. *Hercules*; one of his labours was to fetch the golden apples of the Hesperides ; but perhaps no more is intended than the picture of great strength exerted in a task which could be performed by the slightest.

IV. vi. 137. Here is first announced the motif of burning, which, as Bradley points out, runs through the rest of the play.

IV. vii. 55. *fowler*; we should perhaps accept Johnson's emendation, *Esander*.

MANY words and phrases in Shakespeare require glossing, not because they are in themselves unfamiliar, but for the opposite reason, that Shakespeare uses in their Elizabethan and unfamiliar sense a large number of words which seem so familiar that there is no incentive to look for them in the glossary. It is hoped that a glossary arranged as below will make it easy to see at a glance what words and phrases in any particular scene require elucidation. A number of phrases are glossed by what seems to be, in their context, the modern equivalent rather than by lexicographical glosses on the words which compose them.

Act First

line	SCENE I	line
10 IS'T A VERDICT? is the motion carried?	135 CRANKS, winding passages offices, in same sense as 'usual office'	
15 AUTHORITY, those in authority	148 DIGEST, understand	
19 OBJECT, spectacle	157 RASCAL, lean deer	
21 SUFFERANCE, suffering	170 BLOOD, condition	
22 RAKES, pun on the sense 'as lean as a rake'	161 DALE, disaster	
36 SOFT-CONSCIENCE'D MEN, 'sentimentalists'	173 MAKE, deem	
38 TO BE PARTLY, partly to be	182 GARLAND, 'hero'	
39 TO THE ALTITUDE OF HIS VIRTUE, as far as his valour justifies	191 SIBT, espouse	
70 APPEAR IN YOUR IMPEDIMENT, be put in an impediment by you	196 QUARRY, heap of dead (properly of game)	
92 SIBORAGE, injuries	197 QUARTER'D, slaughtered	
96 GULF, whirlpool	198 PICK, pitch	
99 WHERE, whither?	209 GEMERDITY, the nobles	
101 PARTICIPATE, participating	219 FURT WILL FORTH, makes a fine show	
102 AFFECTION, desire	254 GIRD, gird at	
110 HIS RECEIPT, his receiving food	257 TO BE, of being (?)	
128 INCORPORATE, belonging to the same body	266 CENSURE, public opinion	
	270 SEMERITS, merits	
	276 SINGULARITY, normal idiosyn- crasies	

SCENE II

6 CIRCUMVENTION, power to cir- cumvent	24 SHORTEN'D IN OUR AIM, restricted (or ? hurried) in our design
21 PRETENCES, intentions	29 FOR THE REMOVE, to raise the siege

SCENE III

2 COMFORTABLE, cheerful	68 CRACK, a 'limb'
40 TROPIFY, monument	85 SENSIBLE, sensitive
52 SPOT, pattern	104 DISEASE, 'wet-blanket'
59 CONFIRM'D, resolute	108 AT A WORD, once for all
65 MAMMOCK'D, tore to bits	

SCENE IV

12 FIELD'D, engaged in the open field	54 SENSIBLY, through having senses
17 POUND, pen	55 LEFT, deserted
43 SECONDS, supporters	64 MAKE REMAIN, remain

SCENE V

4 MOVERS, busy people	18 PHYSICAL, health-giving
6 OF A DOIT, worth a doit (i.e. copper coin of small value)	24 THOSE, of those

SCENE VI

17 CONFOUND, use up	84 CAUSE WILL BE OBEY'D, occasion must be served
53 VAWARD, front line	87 OSTENTATION, manifestation
63 PROVE, try	

SCENE VII

1 PORTS, gates	3 CENTURIES, companies of a hundred men
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SCENE IX

14 CHARTER, licence	49 WITHOUT NOTE, without being observed
18 EFFECTED HIS GOOD WILL, done his best	60 GARLAND, honours
30 'GAINST, as a reproach to	62 THEM BELONGING, harness apper- taining
31 TENT, cure (a tent was a roll of lint used to cleanse a wound)	72 UNDERBERT, go under, i.e. wear ADDITION, title
36 ONLY, sole	73 FAIBERS, best
48 DENILE, feeble	77 ARTICULATE, negotiate

Glossary

SCENE X

1 CONDITION, terms	25 HOSPITABLE CANON, laws of hospitality
14 POTCH, poke	
21 EMBARQUEMENTS, restraints	

Act Second

SCENE I

46 HUMOROUS, whimsical	195 CHANGE, variety
53 WALSMEN, legislators	205 RAPTURE, fit
54 LYCURGUS, the famous Spartan lawmaker	206 CHATS, gossip about
63 BISSON CONSPICUITIES, dim vision	207 MALKIN, slut
70 FOMENT, lap (faucet)	207 LOCKRAM, cheap linen
71 REJOURN, adjourn	RECHRY, dirty (properly with smoke)
75 BLOODY FLAG, the war-banner (?)	208 BULET, counter in front of shop
88 BOTCHER, patcher	211 BELD-SHOWN, seldom-seen FLAMENS, priests
90 CHEAP ESTIMATION, low valua- tion	212 POPULAR, of the people
92 DEUCALION, the Noah of Greek mythology	213 VOLGAR STATION, place in the crowd
115 MAKE A LIFT, make a face at, 'cock snooks'	214 DAMASK, red
117 EMPIRICUTIC, quackish	213 AND END, to where he should end
158 NERVY, snewy	232 NAPLES VESTURE, threadbare garment
159 DECLINES, falls (as a word falls)	240 GOOD WILLS, as your advantage demands
187 BE GRAT'D TO YOUR RELISH, improved as you would like (or (?) to as to relish you)	249 PROVAND, food

SCENE II

27 BONNET, take the hat off	139 PASS, omit (cf. Amer. 'pass up')
103 SPEAK HIM HOME, do him justice	144 WITH YOUR FORM, in the customary manner
117 FATIGUED, fatigued	156 REQUIRE, ask
123 HE CANNOT . . . HONOURS, the honours will sit well on him	

SCENE III

1 ONCE, once for all	195 ARTICLE, stipulation
34 YOU MAY, YOU MAY, 'go along with you'	211 PIECE, back
96 CONDITION, quality	247 SCALING, weighing
THEY ACCOUNT GENTLE, they make much of	250 PUTTING ON, investigation
114 WOOLVISH, woollen (?)	251 DRAWN, collected
172 FURTHER WITH YOU, further concern with you	257 ANSWER THE VANTAGE OF HIS ANGER, take the chance his anger gives

Act Third

SCENE I

3 COMPOSITION, agreement	98 VAIL, make stoop
6 WORK, exhausted	101 BY, beside (i.e. in the senate)
9 SAFE-GUARD, safe-conduct	124 THERAP, file through
16 TO MORELESS RESTITUTION, be- yond hope of redemption	129 NATIVE, cause
23 FRANK THEM, trick themselves out	131 DIGEST, comprehend
24 AGAINST ALL NOBLE SUFFERANCE, beyond what the nobility can tolerate	145 CONCLUDE, settle a policy
47 SIBRENCE, since	154 JUMP, 'kill or cure'
50 RUB, obstacle (met. from bowls)	166 GREATER BENCH, i.e. the senate
66 KEINIE, multitude	172 AEDILES, officers of justice
70 COCKLE, weeds	174 ATTACH, arrest
79 TITTER, cause skin sores	205 RANGES, occupies a position
82 OF THEIR INFIRMITY, with human weaknesses like theirs	241 ONE TIME WILL OWE ANOTHER, you will have another chance
90 FROM, wide of	247 TAG, cannille
	303 EAM, crooked, 'cock-eyed'
	304 MERELY, absolutely
	321 BOLTED, sifted

SCENE II

line	line
5 BEAM, fange	86 PERSON, i.e. art adapted to it
12 ORDINANCE, rank	99 UNBAR'D SCONCE, uncovered head
39 ABSOLUTE, immovable	102 THIS SINGLE PLOT, only my own, person
41 BUT WHEN EXTREMITIES SPEAK, except when a crisis demands it	113 QUIRED, sounds in unison with
55 ROTED, learned by rote	116 TENT, encamp
74 HERE BE WITH THEM, make this concession to them	121 SURCEASE, cease
75 BUBBLING, kissing	133 COG, trick
79 HUMBLE, verb	143 ACCUSE ME BY INVENTION, invent accusations

SCENE III

26 WORTH, 'money's worth'	45 ALLOW, admit the status of
29-30 LOOKS WITH US TO BREAK, is our ally towards breaking	64 SEASON'D, established
43 DETERMINE, be concluded	82 CAPITAL, the same sense as in 'capital charge'

Act Fourth

SCENE I

33 CAUTELOUS, crafty	49 OF NOBLE TOUCH, of tried (by the touchstone) nobility
36 EXPOSTURE, exposure	

SCENE III

9 APPEAR'D, made evident	48 YOU TAKE MY PART FROM ME, you take the words out of my mouth
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SCENE IV

17 DISSESSION OF A DOIT, 'two- penny halfpenny quarrel'	25 GIVE ME WAY, give me the chance
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SCENE V

14 COMPANIONS, tramps	154 SET UP, spin
34 BATTEN, gorge	187 DIRECTLY, in plain truth
46 MEDDLE WITH MY MASTER, i.e. why bring him into it?	188 SCOTCUL'D, slashed
63 SHOW'ST, appearest	189 CARBONADO, a piece of meat slashed for broiling
72 MEMORY, memorial	202 BOWL, drag
86 WEARS, vengeance	204 FULL'D, filled
87-88 MAINS OF SHAME, shameful wounds	215 VENT, utterance
151 GAVE, told	226 MULL'D, dulled

SCENE VI

59 TURN THEIR COUNTENANCES, makes them change colour	86 FRANCHISES, liberties
72 ATONE, unite	97 OCCUPATION, workers
	125 POINTE, orders

SCENE VII

37 EVEN, temperately	44 GARB, behaviour
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Act Fifth

SCENE I

3 IN A MOST DEAR PARTICULAR, in an intimate personal relation	16 RACK'D, strained (?)
6 COV'D, was reluctant	37 INSTANT, at the moment

SCENE II

10 LOTS TO BLANKS, any odds	61 JACK GUARDANT, jack-in-office
13 PASSABLE, current	OFFICE ME FROM, use his position to keep me from
29 FACTIONARY, active as partisan	81-82 I OWE MY REVENGE PROPERLY, my revenge is my own affair
41 FRONT, confront	96 SHERT, rated
59 COMPANION, casual	

SCENE III

3 PLAINLY, openly	104 CAPITAL, fatal
74 SEA-MARK, any object by which a course is set, here a rock	201-202 WORK MYSELF A FORMER FORTUNE, reinstate my for- tunes
82 CAPTULATE, negotiate	

SCENE IV

18 ENGINE, engine of war	22 FOR, to represent (i.e. a statue)
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SCENE VI

6 PORTS, gates	107 NOTION, understanding
37 END, garner (dial.)	121 PRESENTLY, immediately
50 POST, messenger	138 OWE YOU, hold in store for you