



Coriolanus

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Act II, Scene 1

Rome. A public place.

[Enter MENENIUS with the two Tribunes of the people,] [p]SICINIUS and BRUTUS.

Menenius Agrippa. The augurer tells me we shall have news to-night.

Junius Brutus. Good or bad?

Menenius Agrippa. Not according to the prayer of the people, for they love not CORIOLANUS. 920

Sicinius Velutus. Nature teaches beasts to know their friends.

Menenius Agrippa. Pray you, who does the wolf love?

Sicinius Velutus. The lamb.

Menenius Agrippa. Ay, to devour him; as the hungry plebeians would the noble CORIOLANUS. 925

Junius Brutus. He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear.

Menenius Agrippa. 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. Well, sir. 930

Menenius Agrippa. In what enormity is CORIOLANUS poor in, that you two have not in abundance?

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

Sicinius Velutus. Especially in pride.

Junius Brutus. And topping all others in boasting. 935

Menenius Agrippa. 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. Why, how are we censured?

Menenius Agrippa. Because you talk of pride now,—will you not be angry? 940

Both. Well, well, sir, well.

Menenius Agrippa. 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 CORIOLANUS for being proud? 945

Junius Brutus. We do it not alone, sir.

Menenius Agrippa. 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! 950
955

Junius Brutus. What then, sir?

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

Sicinius Velutus. Menenius, you are known well enough too. 960

Menenius Agrippa. 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 can't 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 you have good faces. If you see this in the map of my microcosm, follows it that I am known well enough too? what barm can your bisson conspectuities glean out of this character, if I be known well enough too? 965
970
975
980

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

Menenius Agrippa. You know neither me, yourselves nor any thing. 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 rejoin the controversy of three pence 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. 985
990
995

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

Menenius Agrippa. 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, CORIOLANUS is proud; who in a cheap estimation, is worth predecessors since Deucalion, though peradventure some of the best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. God-den to your worships: more of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians: I will be bold to take my leave of you.
[BRUTUS and SICINIUS go aside]
[Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and VALERIA]
 How now, my as fair as noble ladies,—and the moon, were she earthly, no nobler,—whither do you follow your eyes so fast?

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

Menenius Agrippa. Ha! CORIOLANUS coming home!

Volumnia. Ay, worthy Menenius; and with most prosperous approbation.

Menenius Agrippa. Take my cap, Jupiter, and I thank thee. Hoo! CORIOLANUS coming home!

Volumnia. *[together with Virgilia]* Nay, 'tis true.

Virgilia. Nay, 'tis true.

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

Menenius Agrippa. I will make my very house reel tonight: a letter for me!

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

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

Virgilia. O, no, no, no.

Volumnia. O, he is wounded; I thank the gods for't.

Menenius Agrippa. So do I too, if it be not too much: brings a' victory in his pocket? the wounds become him.

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

Menenius Agrippa. Has he disciplined Aufidius soundly?

Volumnia. Titus TITUS writes, they fought together, but Aufidius got off. 1045

Menenius Agrippa. And 'twas time for him too, I'll warrant him that: an he had stayed by him, I would not have been so fidiused for all the chests in Corioli, and the gold that's in them. Is the senate possessed of this? 1050

Volumnia. Good ladies, let's go. Yes, yes, yes; the senate has letters from the general, wherein he gives my son the whole name of the war: he hath in this action outdone his former deeds doubly

Valeria. In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of him. 1055

Menenius Agrippa. Wondrous! ay, I warrant you, and not without his true purchasing.

Virgilia. The gods grant them true!

Volumnia. True! pow, wow.

Menenius Agrippa. True! I'll be sworn they are true. 1060
Where is he wounded?
[To the Tribunes]
God save your good worships! CORIOLANUS is coming home: he has more cause to be proud. Where is he wounded?

Volumnia. I' the shoulder and i' the left arm there will be large cicatrices to show the people, when he shall stand for his place. He received in the repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' the body. 1065

Menenius Agrippa. One i' the neck, and two i' the thigh,—there's nine that I know. 1070

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

Menenius Agrippa. Now it's twenty-seven: every gash was an enemy's grave. 1075
[A shout and flourish]
Hark! the trumpets.

Volumnia. These are the ushers of CORIOLANUS: before him he carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears: Death, that dark spirit, in 's nery arm doth lie; Which, being advanced, declines, and then men die. 1080
[A sennet. Trumpets sound. Enter COMINIUS the]
general, and TITUS LARTIUS; between them, CORIOLANUS, crowned with an oaken garland; with Captains and Soldiers, and a Herald]

Herald. Know, Rome, that all alone CORIOLANUS did fight Within Corioli gates: where he hath won, 1085
With fame, a name to Caius CORIOLANUS; these
In honour follows Coriolanus.
Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!

[Flourish]

All. Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus! 1090

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

Cominius. Look, sir, your mother!

Coriolanus. O,
You have, I know, petition'd all the gods 1095
For my prosperity!

[Kneels]

Volumnia. Nay, my good soldier, up;
My gentle CORIOLANUS, worthy Caius, and 1100
By deed-achieving honour newly named,—
What is it?—Coriolanus must I call thee?—
But O, thy wife!

Coriolanus. My gracious silence, hail!
Wouldst thou have laugh'd had I come coffin'd home,
That weep'st to see me triumph? Ay, my dear, 1105
Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
And mothers that lack sons.

Menenius Agrippa. Now, the gods crown thee!

Coriolanus. And live you yet? 1110
[To VALERIA]
O my sweet lady, pardon.

Volumnia. I know not where to turn: O, welcome home:
And welcome, general: and ye're welcome all.

Menenius Agrippa. A hundred thousand welcomes. I could weep 1115
And I could laugh, I am light and heavy. Welcome.
A curse begin at very root on's heart,
That is not glad to see thee! You are three
That Rome should dote on: yet, by the faith of men,
We have some old crab-trees here 1120
at home that will not
Be grafted to your relish. Yet welcome, warriors:
We call a nettle but a nettle and
The faults of fools but folly.

Cominius. Ever right.

Coriolanus. Menenius ever, ever. 1125

Herald. Give way there, and go on!

Coriolanus. *[To VOLUMNIA 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 received not only greetings, 1130
But with them change of honours.

Volumnia. I have lived 1135
To see inherited my very wishes
And the buildings of my fancy: only
There's one thing wanting, which I doubt not but
Our Rome will cast upon thee.

Coriolanus. Know, good mother,
I had rather be their servant in my way,

Than sway with them in theirs.

Cominius. On, to the Capitol! 1140
[Flourish. Cornets. Exeunt in state, as before.]
 BRUTUS and SICINIUS come forward]

Junius Brutus. All tongues speak of him, and the bleared sights
 Are spectacled to see him: your prattling nurse 1145
 Into a rapture lets her baby cry
 While she chats him: the kitchen malkin pins
 Her richest lockram 'bout her reechy neck,
 Clambering the walls to eye him: stalls, bulks, windows,
 Are smother'd up, leads fill'd, and ridges horsed 1150
 With variable complexions, all agreeing
 In earnestness to see him: seld-shown flamens
 Do press among the popular throngs and puff
 To win a vulgar station: or veil'd dames
 Commit the war of white and damask in
 Their nicely-gawded cheeks to the wanton spoil 1155
 Of Phoebus' burning kisses: such a pother
 As if that whatsoever god who leads him
 Were slily crept into his human powers
 And gave him graceful posture.

Sicinius Velutus. On the sudden, 1160
 I warrant him consul.

Junius Brutus. Then our office may,
 During his power, go sleep.

Sicinius Velutus. He cannot temperately transport his honours 1165
 From where he should begin and end, but will
 Lose those he hath won.

Junius Brutus. In that there's comfort.

Sicinius Velutus. Doubt not 1170
 The commoners, for whom we stand, but they
 Upon their ancient malice will forget
 With the least cause these his new honours, which
 That he will give them make I as little question
 As he is proud to do't.

Junius Brutus. I heard him swear, 1175
 Were he to stand for consul, never would he
 Appear i' the market-place nor on him put
 The napless vesture of humility;
 Nor showing, as the manner is, his wounds
 To the people, beg their stinking breaths.

Sicinius Velutus. 'Tis right. 1180

Junius Brutus. It was his word: O, he would miss it rather
 Than carry it but by the suit of the gentry to him,
 And the desire of the nobles.

Sicinius Velutus. I wish no better 1185
 Than have him hold that purpose and to put it
 In execution.

Junius Brutus. 'Tis most like he will.

Sicinius Velutus. It shall be to him then as our good wills,
A sure destruction.

Junius Brutus. So it must fall out 1190
To him or our authorities. For an end,
We must suggest the people in what hatred
He still hath held them; that to's power he would
Have made them mules, silenced their pleaders and
Disproportioned their freedoms, holding them, 1195
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 burdens, and sore blows
For sinking under them. 1200

Sicinius Velutus. This, as you say, suggested
At some time when his soaring insolence
Shall touch the people—which time shall not want,
If he be put upon 't; and that's as easy
As to set dogs on sheep—will be his fire 1205
To kindle their dry stubble; and their blaze
Shall darken him for ever.

[Enter a Messenger]

Junius Brutus. What's the matter?

Messenger. You are sent for to the Capitol. 'Tis thought 1210
That CORIOLANUS shall be consul:
I have seen the dumb men throng to see him and
The blind to bear him speak: matrons flung gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers,
Upon him as he pass'd: the nobles bended, 1215
As to Jove's statue, and the commons made
A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts:
I never saw the like.

Junius Brutus. Let's to the Capitol;
And carry with us ears and eyes for the time, 1220
But hearts for the event.

Sicinius Velutus. Have with you.

[Exeunt]



Coriolanus

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Act II, Scene 2

The same. The Capitol.

[Enter two Officers, to lay cushions]

First Officer. Come, come, they are almost here. How many stand for consulships? 1225

Second Officer. Three, they say: but 'tis thought of every one Coriolanus will carry it.

First Officer. That's a brave fellow; but he's vengeance proud, and loves not the common people. 1230

Second Officer. Faith, there had been many great men that have flattered the people, who ne'er loved them; and there be many that they have loved, they know not wherefore: so that, if they love they know not why, they hate upon no better a ground: therefore, for Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or hate him manifests the true knowledge he has in their disposition; and out of his noble carelessness lets them plainly see't. 1235

First Officer. If he did not care whether he had their love or no, he waded indifferently 'twixt doing them neither good nor harm: but he seeks their hate with greater devotion than can render it him; and leaves nothing undone that may fully discover him their opposite. Now, to seem to affect the malice and displeasure of the people is as bad as that which he dislikes, to flatter them for their love. 1240

Second Officer. He hath deserved worthily of his country: and his ascent is not by such easy degrees as those who, having been supple and courteous to the people, bonneted, without any further deed to have them at an into their estimation and report: but he hath so planted his honours in their eyes, and his actions in their hearts, that for their tongues to be silent, and not confess so much, were a kind of ingrateful injury; to report otherwise, were a malice, that, giving itself the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke from every ear that heard it. 1245

First Officer. No more of him; he is a worthy man: make way, they are coming. 1250

[A sennet. Enter, with actors before them, COMINIUS]

the consul, MENENIUS, CORIOLANUS, Senators,
SICINIUS and BRUTUS. The Senators take their
places; the Tribunes take their Places by
themselves. CORIOLANUS stands] 1265

Menenius Agrippa. Having determined of the Volsces and
To send for Titus TITUS, it remains,
As the main point of this our after-meeting,
To gratify his noble service that 1270
Hath thus stood for his country: therefore,
please you,
Most reverend and grave elders, to desire
The present consul, and last general
In our well-found successes, to report 1275
A little of that worthy work perform'd
By Caius CORIOLANUS Coriolanus, whom
We met here both to thank and to remember
With honours like himself.

First Senator. Speak, good Cominius:
Leave nothing out for length, and make us think 1280
Rather our state's defective for requital
Than we to stretch it out.
[To the Tribunes]
Masters o' the people, 1285
We do request your kindest ears, and after,
Your loving motion toward the common body,
To yield what passes here.

Sicinius Velutus. We are convented
Upon a pleasing treaty, and have hearts 1290
Inclinable to honour and advance
The theme of our assembly.

Junius Brutus. Which the rather
We shall be blest to do, if he remember
A kinder value of the people than 1295
He hath hereto prized them at.

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

Junius Brutus. Most willingly;
But yet my caution was more pertinent 1300
Than the rebuke you give it.

Menenius Agrippa. He loves your people
But tie him not to be their bedfellow.
Worthy Cominius, speak.
[CORIOLANUS offers to go away] 1305
Nay, keep your place.

First Senator. Sit, Coriolanus; never shame to hear
What you have nobly done.

Coriolanus. Your horror's pardon:
I had rather have my wounds to heal again 1310
Than hear say how I got them.

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

Coriolanus. No, sir: yet oft,
When blows have made me stay, I fled from words. 1315
You soothed not, therefore hurt not: but
your people,
I love them as they weigh.

Menenius Agrippa. Pray now, sit down.

Coriolanus. I had rather have one scratch my head i' the sun 1320
When the alarum were struck than idly sit
To hear my nothings monster'd.

[Exit]

Menenius Agrippa. Masters of the people,
Your multiplying spawn how can he flatter— 1325
That's thousand to one good one—when you now see
He had rather venture all his limbs for honour
Than one on's ears to hear it? Proceed, Cominius.

Cominius. I shall lack voice: the deeds of Coriolanus
Should not be utter'd feebly. It is held 1330
That valour is the chiefest virtue, and
Most dignifies the haver: if it be,
The man I speak of cannot in the world
Be singly counterpoised. At sixteen years,
When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought 1335
Beyond the mark of others: our then dictator,
Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight,
When with his Amazonian chin he drove
The bristled lips before him: be bestrid
An o'er-press'd Roman and i' the consul's view 1340
Slew three opposers: Tarquin's self he met,
And struck him on his knee: in that day's feats,
When he might act the woman in the scene,
He proved best man i' the field, and for his meed
Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age 1345
Man-enter'd thus, he waxed like a sea,
And in the brunt of seventeen battles since
He lurch'd all swords of the garland. For this last,
Before and in Corioli, let me say,
I cannot speak him home: he stopp'd the fliers; 1350
And by his rare example made the coward
Turn terror into sport: as weeds before
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd
And fell below his stem: his sword, death's stamp,
Where it did mark, it took; from face to foot 1355
He was a thing of blood, whose every motion
Was timed with dying cries: alone he enter'd
The mortal gate of the city, which he painted
With shunless destiny; aidless came off,
And with a sudden reinforcement struck 1360
Corioli like a planet: now all's his:
When, by and by, the din of war gan pierce
His ready sense; then straight his doubled spirit
Re-quicken'd what in flesh was fatigate,
And to the battle came he; where he did 1365
Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if
'Twere a perpetual spoil: and till we call'd
Both field and city ours, he never stood
To ease his breast with panting.

Menenius Agrippa. Worthy man! 1370

First Senator. He cannot but with measure fit the honours
Which we devise him.

Cominius. Our spoils he kick'd at,
And look'd upon things precious as they were
The common muck of the world: he covets less **1375**
Than misery itself would give; rewards
His deeds with doing them, and is content
To spend the time to end it.

Menenius Agrippa. He's right noble:
Let him be call'd for. **1380**

First Senator. Call Coriolanus.

Officer. He doth appear.

[Re-enter CORIOLANUS]

Menenius Agrippa. The senate, Coriolanus, are well pleased
To make thee consul. **1385**

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

Menenius Agrippa. It then remains
That you do speak to the people.

Coriolanus. I do beseech you, **1390**
Let me o'erleap that custom, for I cannot
Put on the gown, stand naked and entreat them,
For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage: please you
That I may pass this doing.

Sicinius Velutus. Sir, the people **1395**
Must have their voices; neither will they bate
One jot of ceremony.

Menenius Agrippa. Put them not to't:
Pray you, go fit you to the custom and
Take to you, as your predecessors have, **1400**
Your honour with your form.

Coriolanus. It is apart
That I shall blush in acting, and might well
Be taken from the people.

Junius Brutus. Mark you that? **1405**

Coriolanus. To brag unto them, thus I did, and thus;
Show them the unaching scars which I should hide,
As if I had received them for the hire
Of their breath only!

Menenius Agrippa. Do not stand upon't. **1410**
We recommend to you, tribunes of the people,
Our purpose to them: and to our noble consul
Wish we all joy and honour. Senators. To Coriolanus come all joy and honour!
[Flourish of cornets. Exeunt all but SICINIUS]
and BRUTUS] **1415**

Junius Brutus. You see how he intends to use the people.

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

Junius Brutus. Come, we'll inform them
Of our proceedings here: on the marketplace,
I know, they do attend us.

1420

[Exeunt]

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Coriolanus

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Act II, Scene 3

The same. The Forum.

[Enter seven or eight Citizens]

First Citizen. Once, if he do require our voices, we ought not to deny him. 1425

Second Citizen. We may, sir, if we will.

Third Citizen. We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do; for if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them; so, if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is monstrous, and for the multitude to be ingrateful, were to make a monster of the multitude: of the which we being members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous members. 1430
1435

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

Third Citizen. We have been called so of many; not that our heads are some brown, some black, some auburn, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely coloured: and truly I think if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south, and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o' the compass. 1440
1445

Second Citizen. Think you so? Which way do you judge my wit would fly?

Third Citizen. Nay, your wit will not so soon out as another man's will; 'tis strongly wedged up in a block-head, but if it were at liberty, 'twould, sure, southward. 1450

Second Citizen. Why that way?

Third Citizen. To lose itself in a fog, where being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth would return for conscience sake, to help to get thee a wife. 1455

Second Citizen. You are never without your tricks: you may, you may.

Third Citizen. Are you all resolved to give your voices? But that's no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man. 1460
[Enter CORIOLANUS in a gown of humility,]
 with MENENIUS]
 Here he comes, and in the gown of humility: mark his behavior. We are not to stay all together, but to come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests by particulars; wherein every one of us has a single honour, in giving him our own voices with our own tongues: therefore follow me, and I direct you how you shall go by him. 1470

All. Content, content.

[Exeunt Citizens]

Menenius Agrippa. O sir, you are not right: have you not known The worthiest men have done't?

Coriolanus. What must I say? 1475
 '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 the noise of our own drums.' 1480

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

Coriolanus. Think upon me! hang 'em!
 I would they would forget me, like the virtues 1485
 Which our divines lose by 'em.

Menenius Agrippa. You'll mar all:
 I'll leave you: pray you, speak to 'em, I pray you,
 In wholesome manner.

[Exit]

Coriolanus. Bid them wash their faces
 And keep their teeth clean.
[Re-enter two of the Citizens]
 So, here comes a brace.
[Re-enter a third Citizen] 1495
 You know the cause, air, of my standing here.

Third Citizen. We do, sir; tell us what hath brought you to't.

Coriolanus. Mine own desert.

Second Citizen. Your own desert!

Coriolanus. Ay, but not mine own desire. 1500

Third Citizen. How not your own desire?

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

Third Citizen. You must think, if we give you any thing, we hope to gain by you. 1505

Coriolanus. Well then, I pray, your price o' the consulship?

First Citizen. The price is to ask it kindly.

Coriolanus. 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? 1510

Second Citizen. You shall ha' it, worthy sir.

Coriolanus. A match, sir. There's in all two worthy voices begged. I have your alms: adieu.

Third Citizen. But this is something odd.

Second Citizen. An 'twere to give again,—but 'tis no matter. 1515

[Exeunt the three Citizens]

[Re-enter two other Citizens]

Coriolanus. Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune of your voices that I may be consul, I have here the customary gown. 1520

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

Coriolanus. Your enigma?

Fourth Citizen. You have been a scourge to her enemies, you have been a rod to her friends; you have not indeed loved the common people. 1525

Coriolanus. You should account me the more virtuous that I have not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them; 'tis a condition they account gentle: and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the insinuating nod and be off to them most counterfeitly; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man and give it bountiful to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you, I may be consul. 1530
1535

Fifth Citizen. We hope to find you our friend; and therefore give you our voices heartily.

Fourth Citizen. You have received many wounds for your country. 1540

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

Both Citizens. The gods give you joy, sir, heartily!

[Exeunt]

Coriolanus. Most sweet voices! 1545
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 vouches? Custom calls me to't: 1550
 What custom wills, in all things should we do't,
 The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
 And mountainous error be too highly heapt
 For truth to o'er-peer. Rather than fool it so,
 Let the high office and the honour go 1555
 To one that would do thus. I am half through;
 The one part suffer'd, the other will I do.
[Re-enter three Citizens more]
 Here come more voices.
 Your voices: for your voices I have fought; 1560
 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. 1565

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

Seventh Citizen. Therefore let him be consul: the gods give him joy, and make him good friend to the people!

All Citizens. Amen, amen. God save thee, noble consul! 1570

[Exeunt]

Coriolanus. Worthy voices!

[Re-enter MENENIUS, with BRUTUS and SICINIUS]

Menenius Agrippa. You have stood your limitation; and the tribunes
 Endue you with the people's voice: remains 1575
 That, in the official marks invested, you
 Anon do meet the senate.

Coriolanus. Is this done?

Sicinius Velutus. The custom of request you have discharged:
 The people do admit you, and are summon'd 1580
 To meet anon, upon your approbation.

Coriolanus. Where? at the senate-house?

Sicinius Velutus. There, Coriolanus.

Coriolanus. May I change these garments?

Sicinius Velutus. You may, sir. 1585

Coriolanus. That I'll straight do; and, knowing myself again,
 Repair to the senate-house.

Menenius Agrippa. I'll keep you company. Will you along?

Junius Brutus. We stay here for the people.

Sicinius Velutus. Fare you well. 1590
[Exeunt CORIOLANUS and MENENIUS]
 He has it now, and by his looks methink
 'Tis warm at 's heart.

Junius Brutus. With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds.
will you dismiss the people? 1595

[Re-enter Citizens]

Sicinius Velutus. How now, my masters! have you chose this man?

First Citizen. He has our voices, sir.

Junius Brutus. We pray the gods he may deserve your loves.

Second Citizen. Amen, sir: to my poor unworthy notice,
He mock'd us when he begg'd our voices. 1600

Third Citizen. Certainly
He flouted us downright.

First Citizen. No, 'tis his kind of speech: he did not mock us.

Second Citizen. Not one amongst us, save yourself, but says
He used us scornfully: he should have show'd us
His marks of merit, wounds received for's country. 1605

Sicinius Velutus. Why, so he did, I am sure.

Citizens. No, no; no man saw 'em.

Third Citizen. He said he had wounds, which he could show
in private; 1610

And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn,
'I would be consul,' says he: 'aged custom,
But by your voices, will not so permit me;
Your voices therefore.' When we granted that, 1615
Here was 'I thank you for your voices: thank you:
Your most sweet voices: now you have left
your voices,
I have no further with you.' Was not this mockery?

Sicinius Velutus. Why either were you ignorant to see't,
Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness
To yield your voices? 1620

Junius Brutus. Could you not have told him
As you were lesson'd, when he had no power,
But was a petty servant to the state, 1625

He was your enemy, ever spake against
Your liberties and the charters that you bear
I' the body of the weal; and now, arriving
A place of potency and sway o' the state,
If he should still malignantly remain 1630

Fast foe to the plebeii, your voices might
Be curses to yourselves? You should have said
That as his worthy deeds did claim no less
Than what he stood for, so his gracious nature
Would think upon you for your voices and 1635
Translate his malice towards you into love,
Standing your friendly lord.

Sicinius Velutus. Thus to have said,
As you were fore-advised, had touch'd his spirit
And tried his inclination; from him pluck'd 1640
Either his gracious promise, which you might,
As cause had call'd you up, have held him to

Or else it would have gall'd his surly nature,
Which easily endures not article 1645
Tying him to aught; so putting him to rage,
You should have ta'en the advantage of his choler
And pass'd him unelected.

Junius Brutus. Did you perceive
He did solicit you in free contempt 1650
When he did need your loves, and do you think
That his contempt shall not be bruising to you,
When he hath power to crush? Why, had your bodies
No heart among you? or had you tongues to cry
Against the rectorship of judgment?

Sicinius Velutus. Have you 1655
Ere now denied the asker? and now again
Of him that did not ask, but mock, bestow
Your sued-for tongues?

Third Citizen. He's not confirm'd; we may deny him yet.

Second Citizen. And will deny him: 1660
I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

First Citizen. I twice five hundred and their friends to piece 'em.

Junius Brutus. Get you hence instantly, and tell those friends,
They have chose a consul that will from them take 1665
Their liberties; make them of no more voice
Than dogs that are as often beat for barking
As therefore kept to do so.

Sicinius Velutus. Let them assemble,
And on a safer judgment all revoke 1670
Your ignorant election; enforce his pride,
And his old hate unto you; besides, forget not
With what contempt he wore the humble weed,
How in his suit he scorn'd you; but your loves,
Thinking upon his services, took from you 1675
The apprehension of his present portance,
Which most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion
After the inveterate hate he bears you.

Junius Brutus. Lay 1680
A fault on us, your tribunes; that we laboured,
No impediment between, but that you must
Cast your election on him.

Sicinius Velutus. Say, you chose him 1685
More after our commandment than as guided
By your own true affections, and that your minds,
Preoccupied with what you rather must do
Than what you should, made you against the grain
To voice him consul: lay the fault on us.

Junius Brutus. Ay, spare us not. Say we read lectures to you. 1690
How youngly he began to serve his country,
How long continued, and what stock he springs of,
The noble house o' the Marcians, from whence came
That Ancus CORIOLANUS, Numa's daughter's son,
Who, after great Hostilius, here was king;
Of the same house Publius and Quintus were, 1695
That our beat water brought by conduits hither;

And [*Censorinus*,] nobly named so,
Twice being [*by the people chosen*] censor,
Was his great ancestor.

Sicinius Velutus. One thus descended,
That hath beside well in his person wrought 1700
To be set high in place, we did commend
To your remembrances: but you have found,
Scaling his present bearing with his past,
That he's your fixed enemy, and revoke
Your sudden approbation. 1705

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

All. We will so: almost all 1710
Repent in their election.

[Exeunt Citizens]

Junius Brutus. Let them go on;
This mutiny were better put in hazard,
Than stay, past doubt, for greater: 1715
If, as his nature is, he fall in rage
With their refusal, both observe and answer
The vantage of his anger.

Sicinius Velutus. To the Capitol, come:
We will be there before the stream o' the people; 1720
And this shall seem, as partly 'tis, their own,
Which we have goaded onward.

[Exeunt]