



# Coriolanus

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## Act IV, Scene 2

*The same. A street near the gate.*

*[Enter SICINIUS, BRUTUS, and an AEdile]*

**Sicinius Velutus.** Bid them all home; he's gone, and we'll no further.  
The nobility are vex'd, whom we see have sided  
In his behalf. 2590

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

**Sicinius Velutus.** Bid them home:  
Say their great enemy is gone, and they  
Stand in their ancient strength. 2595

**Junius Brutus.** Dismiss them home.  
*[Exit AEdile]*  
Here comes his mother.

**Sicinius Velutus.** Let's not meet her. 2600

**Junius Brutus.** Why?

**Sicinius Velutus.** They say she's mad.

**Junius Brutus.** They have ta'en note of us: keep on your way.

*[Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and MENENIUS]*

**Volumnia.** O, ye're well met: the hoarded plague o' the gods  
Requite your love! 2605

**Menenius Agrippa.** Peace, peace; be not so loud.

**Volumnia.** If that I could for weeping, you should hear,—  
Nay, and you shall hear some.  
*[To BRUTUS]* 2610  
Will you be gone?

**Virgilia.** *[To SICINIUS]* You shall stay too: I would I had the power  
To say so to my husband.

**Sicinius Velutus.** Are you mankind?

**Volumnia.** Ay, fool; is that a shame? Note but this fool. 2615  
Was not a man my father? Hadst thou foxship

To banish him that struck more blows for Rome  
Than thou hast spoken words?

**Sicinius Velutus.** O blessed heavens!

**Volumnia.** More noble blows than ever thou wise words; 2620  
And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what; yet go:  
Nay, but thou shalt stay too: I would my son  
Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,  
His good sword in his hand.

**Sicinius Velutus.** What then? 2625

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

**Volumnia.** Bastards and all.  
Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome!

**Menenius Agrippa.** Come, come, peace. 2630

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

**Junius Brutus.** I would he had.

**Volumnia.** 'I would he had!' 'Twas you incensed the rabble: 2635  
Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth  
As I can of those mysteries which heaven  
Will not have earth to know.

**Junius Brutus.** Pray, let us go.

**Volumnia.** Now, pray, sir, get you gone: 2640  
You have done a brave deed. Ere you go, hear this:—  
As far as doth the Capitol exceed  
The meanest house in Rome, so far my son—  
This lady's husband here, this, do you see—  
Whom you have banish'd, does exceed you all. 2645

**Junius Brutus.** Well, well, we'll leave you.

**Sicinius Velutus.** Why stay we to be baited  
With one that wants her wits?

**Volumnia.** Take my prayers with you. 2650  
*[Exeunt Tribunes]*  
I would the gods had nothing else to do  
But to confirm my curses! Could I meet 'em  
But once a-day, it would unclog my heart  
Of what lies heavy to't.

**Menenius Agrippa.** You have told them home; 2655  
And, by my troth, you have cause. You'll sup with me?

**Volumnia.** Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself,  
And so shall starve with feeding. Come, let's go:  
Leave this faint puling and lament as I do,  
In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come. 2660

**Menenius Agrippa.** Fie, fie, fie!

*[Exeunt]*

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### Act IV, Scene 3

#### *A highway between Rome and Antium.*

*[Enter CORIOLANUS, VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, MENENIUS,] [p]COMINIUS, with the young Nobility of Rome]*

**Coriolanus.** Come, leave your tears: a brief farewell: the beast  
 With many heads butts me away. Nay, mother,  
 Where is your ancient courage? you were used  
 To say extremity was the trier of spirits; 2525  
 That common chances common men could bear;  
 That when the sea was calm all boats alike  
 Show'd mastership in floating; fortune's blows,  
 When most struck home, being gentle wounded, craves  
 A noble cunning: you were used to load me 2530  
 With precepts that would make invincible  
 The heart that conn'd them.

**Virgilia.** O heavens! O heavens!

**Coriolanus.** Nay! prithee, woman,—

**Volumnia.** Now the red pestilence strike all trades in Rome, 2535  
 And occupations perish!

**Coriolanus.** What, what, what!  
 I shall be loved when I am lack'd. Nay, mother.  
 Resume that spirit, when you were wont to say,  
 If you had been the wife of Hercules, 2540  
 Six of his labours you'd have done, and saved  
 Your husband so much sweat. Cominius,  
 Droop not; adieu. Farewell, my wife, my mother:  
 I'll do well yet. Thou old and true Menenius,  
 Thy tears are salter than a younger man's, 2545  
 And venomous to thine eyes. My sometime general,  
 I have seen thee stem, and thou hast oft beheld  
 Heart-hardening spectacles; tell these sad women  
 'Tis fond to wail inevitable strokes,  
 As 'tis to laugh at 'em. My mother, you wot well 2550  
 My hazards still have been your solace: and  
 Believe't not lightly—though I go alone,  
 Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen  
 Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen—your son  
 Will or exceed the common or be caught 2555  
 With cautelous baits and practise.

**Volumnia.** My first son.  
 Whither wilt thou go? Take good Cominius

With thee awhile: determine on some course,  
More than a wild exposture to each chance  
That starts i' the way before thee. 2560

**Coriolanus.** O the gods!

**Cominius.** 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 2565  
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' the absence of the needer.

**Coriolanus.** Fare ye well: 2570  
Thou hast years upon thee; and thou art too full  
Of the wars' surfeits, to go rove with one  
That's yet unbruised: bring me but out at gate.  
Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and  
My friends of noble touch, when I am forth, 2575  
Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you, come.  
While I remain above the ground, you shall  
Hear from me still, and never of me aught  
But what is like me formerly.

**Menenius Agrippa.** That's worthily 2580  
As any ear can hear. Come, let's not weep.  
If I could shake off but one seven years  
From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,  
I'd with thee every foot.

**Coriolanus.** Give me thy hand: Come. 2585

*[Exeunt]*

*[Enter a Roman and a Volsc, meeting]*

**Roman.** I know you well, sir, and you know  
me: your name, I think, is Adrian. 2665

**Volsc.** It is so, sir: truly, I have forgot you.

**Roman.** I am a Roman; and my services are,  
as you are, against 'em: know you me yet?

**Volsc.** Nicanor? no.

**Roman.** The same, sir. 2670

**Volsc.** You had more beard when I last saw you; but your  
favour is well approved by your tongue. What's the  
news in Rome? I have a note from the Volscian state,  
to find you out there: you have well saved me a  
day's journey. 2675

**Roman.** There hath been in Rome strange insurrections; the  
people against the senators, patricians, and nobles.

**Volsc.** Hath been! is it ended, then? Our state thinks not  
so: they are in a most warlike preparation, and  
hope to come upon them in the heat of their division. 2680

**Roman.** The main blaze of it is past, but a small thing  
would make it flame again: for the nobles receive

so to heart the banishment of that worthy  
Coriolanus, that they are in a ripe aptness to take  
all power from the people and to pluck from them  
their tribunes for ever. This lies glowing, I can  
tell you, and is almost mature for the violent  
breaking out. 2685

**Volsc.** Coriolanus banished!

**Roman.** Banished, sir. 2690

**Volsc.** You will be welcome with this intelligence, Nicanor.

**Roman.** The day serves well for them now. I have heard it  
said, the fittest time to corrupt a man's wife is  
when she's fallen out with her husband. Your noble  
Tullus Aufidius will appear well in these wars, his  
great opposer, Coriolanus, being now in no request  
of his country. 2695

**Volsc.** He cannot choose. I am most fortunate, thus  
accidentally to encounter you: you have ended my  
business, and I will merrily accompany you home. 2700

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

**Volsc.** A most royal one; the centurions and their charges,  
distinctly billeted, already in the entertainment,  
and to be on foot at an hour's warning. 2705

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

**Volsc.** You take my part from me, sir; I have the most cause  
to be glad of yours. 2710

**Roman.** Well, let us go together.

*[Exeunt]*



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## Act IV, Scene 4

### *Antium. Before Aufidius's house.*

*[Enter CORIOLANUS in mean apparel, disguised] [p]and muffled]*

**Coriolanus.** A goodly city is this Antium. City,  
'Tis I that made thy widows: many an heir  
Of these fair edifices 'fore my wars  
Have I heard groan and drop: then know me not,  
Lest that thy wives with spits and boys with stones **2720**  
In puny battle slay me.  
*[Enter a Citizen]*  
Save you, sir.

**Citizen.** And you.

**Coriolanus.** Direct me, if it be your will, **2725**  
Where great Aufidius lies: is he in Antium?

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

**Coriolanus.** Which is his house, beseech you?

**Citizen.** This, here before you. **2730**

**Coriolanus.** Thank you, sir: farewell.  
*[Exit Citizen]*  
O world, thy slippery turns! Friends now fast sworn,  
Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,  
Whose house, whose bed, whose meal, and exercise, **2735**  
Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love  
Unseparable, shall within this hour,  
On a dissension of a doit, break out  
To bitterest enmity: so, fellest foes, **2740**  
Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep,  
To take the one the other, by some chance,  
Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends  
And interjoin their issues. So with me:  
My birth-place hate I, and my love's upon **2745**  
This enemy town. I'll enter: if he slay me,  
He does fair justice; if he give me way,  
I'll do his country service.

*[Exit]*







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## Act IV, Scene 5

*The same. A hall in Aufidius's house.*

*[Music within. Enter a Servingman]*

**First Servingman.** Wine, wine, wine! What service  
is here! I think our fellows are asleep. 2750

*[Exit]*

*[Enter a second Servingman]*

**Second Servingman.** Where's Cotus? my master calls  
for him. Cotus! 2755

*[Exit]*

*[Enter CORIOLANUS]*

**Coriolanus.** A goodly house: the feast smells well; but I  
Appear not like a guest.

*[Re-enter the first Servingman]*

**First Servingman.** What would you have, friend? whence are you?  
Here's no place for you: pray, go to the door.

*[Exit]*

**Coriolanus.** I have deserved no better entertainment,  
In being Coriolanus. 2765

*[Re-enter second Servingman]*

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

**Coriolanus.** Away! 2770

**Second Servingman.** Away! get you away.

**Coriolanus.** Now thou'rt troublesome.

**Second Servingman.** Are you so brave? I'll have you talked with anon.

*[Enter a third Servingman. The first meets him]*

**Third Servingman.** What fellow's this? 2775

**First Servingman.** A strange one as ever I looked on: I cannot get him out of the house: prithee, call my master to him.

*[Retires]*

**Third Servingman.** What have you to do here, fellow? Pray you, avoid the house. 2780

**Coriolanus.** Let me but stand; I will not hurt your hearth.

**Third Servingman.** What are you?

**Coriolanus.** A gentleman.

**Third Servingman.** A marvellous poor one.

**Coriolanus.** True, so I am. 2785

**Third Servingman.** Pray you, poor gentleman, take up some other station; here's no place for you; pray you, avoid: come.

**Coriolanus.** Follow your function, go, and batten on cold bits.

*[Pushes him away]*

**Third Servingman.** What, you will not? Prithee, tell my master what a strange guest he has here. 2790

**Second Servingman.** And I shall.

*[Exit]*

**Third Servingman.** Where dwellest thou?

**Coriolanus.** Under the canopy. 2795

**Third Servingman.** Under the canopy!

**Coriolanus.** Ay.

**Third Servingman.** Where's that?

**Coriolanus.** I' the city of kites and crows.

**Third Servingman.** I' the city of kites and crows! What an ass it is! Then thou dwellest with daws too? 2800

**Coriolanus.** No, I serve not thy master.

**Third Servingman.** How, sir! do you meddle with my master?

**Coriolanus.** Ay; 'tis an honest service than to meddle with thy mistress. Thou pratest, and pratest; serve with thy trencher, hence! 2805

*[Beats him away. Exit third Servingman]*

*[Enter AUFIDIUS with the second Servingman]*

**Tullus Aufidius.** Where is this fellow?

**Second Servingman.** Here, sir: I'd have beaten him like a dog, but for disturbing the lords within. 2810

[Retires]

**Tullus Aufidius.** Whence comest thou? what wouldst thou? thy name?  
Why speak'st not? speak, man: what's thy name?

**Coriolanus.** If, Tullus, 2815  
[Unmuffling]  
Not yet thou knowest me, and, seeing me, dost not  
Think me for the man I am, necessity  
Commands me name myself.

**Tullus Aufidius.** What is thy name? 2820

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

**Tullus Aufidius.** Say, what's thy name?  
Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face  
Bears a command in't; though thy tackle's torn. 2825  
Thou show'st a noble vessel: what's thy name?

**Coriolanus.** Prepare thy brow to frown: know'st  
thou me yet?

**Tullus Aufidius.** I know thee not: thy name?

**Coriolanus.** My name is Caius CORIOLANUS, who hath done 2830  
To thee particularly and to all the Volsces

Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may  
My surname, Coriolanus: the painful service,  
The extreme dangers and the drops of blood  
Shed for my thankless country are requited 2835

But with that surname; a good memory,  
And witness of the malice and displeasure  
Which thou shouldst bear me: only that name remains;  
The cruelty and envy of the people,  
Permitted by our dastard nobles, who 2840

Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest;  
And suffer'd me by the voice of slaves to be  
Whoop'd out of Rome. Now this extremity  
Hath brought me to thy hearth; not out of hope—  
Mistake me not—to save my life, for if 2845

I had fear'd death, of all the men i' the world  
I would have 'voided thee, but in mere spite,  
To be full quit of those my banishers,  
Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast  
A heart of wreak in thee, that wilt revenge 2850  
Thine own particular wrongs and stop those maims  
Of shame seen through thy country, speed  
thee straight,

And make my misery serve thy turn: so use it  
That my revengeful services may prove 2855  
As benefits to thee, for I will fight  
Against my canker'd country with the spleen

Of all the under fiends. But if so be  
Thou darest not this and that to prove more fortunes  
Thou'rt tired, then, in a word, I also am 2860  
Longer to live most weary, and present  
My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice;

Which not to cut would show thee but a fool,  
Since I have ever follow'd thee with hate,  
Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast, 2865

And cannot live but to thy shame, unless  
It be to do thee service.

**Tullus Aufidius.** O CORIOLANUS, CORIOLANUS!

Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart  
A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter 2870  
Should from yond cloud speak divine things,  
And say 'Tis true,' I'd not believe them more  
Than thee, all noble CORIOLANUS. Let me twine  
Mine arms about that body, where against  
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke 2875  
And scarr'd the moon with splinters: here I clip  
The anvil of my sword, and do contest  
As hotly and as nobly with thy love  
As ever in ambitious strength I did  
Contend against thy valour. Know thou first, 2880  
I loved the maid I married; never man  
Sigh'd truer breath; but that I see thee here,  
Thou noble thing! more dances my rapt heart  
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw  
Bestride my threshold. Why, thou Mars! I tell thee, 2885  
We have a power on foot; and I had purpose  
Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn,  
Or lose mine arm fort: thou hast beat me out  
Twelve several times, and I have nightly since  
Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me; 2890  
We have been down together in my sleep,  
Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat,  
And waked half dead with nothing. Worthy CORIOLANUS,  
Had we no quarrel else to Rome, but that  
Thou art thence banish'd, we would muster all 2895  
From twelve to seventy, and pouring war  
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,  
Like a bold flood o'er-bear. O, come, go in,  
And take our friendly senators by the hands;  
Who now are here, taking their leaves of me, 2900  
Who am prepared against your territories,  
Though not for Rome itself.

**Coriolanus.** You bless me, gods!

**Tullus Aufidius.** Therefore, most absolute sir, if thou wilt have

The leading of thine own revenges, take 2905  
The one half of my commission; and set down—  
As best thou art experienced, since thou know'st  
Thy country's strength and weakness,—thine own ways;  
Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,  
Or rudely visit them in parts remote, 2910  
To fright them, ere destroy. But come in:  
Let me commend thee first to those that shall  
Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes!  
And more a friend than e'er an enemy;  
Yet, CORIOLANUS, that was much. Your hand: most welcome! 2915  
*[Exeunt CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS. The two]*  
Servingmen come forward]

**First Servingman.** Here's a strange alteration!

**Second Servingman.** By my hand, I had thought to have stricken him with  
a cudgel; and yet my mind gave me his clothes made a 2920  
false report of him.

**First Servingman.** What an arm he has! he turned me about with his finger and his thumb, as one would set up a top.

**Second Servingman.** Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in him: he had, sir, a kind of face, methought,—I cannot tell how to term it. 2925

**First Servingman.** He had so; looking as it were—would I were hanged, but I thought there was more in him than I could think.

**Second Servingman.** So did I, I'll be sworn: he is simply the rarest man i' the world. 2930

**First Servingman.** I think he is: but a greater soldier than he you wot on.

**Second Servingman.** Who, my master?

**First Servingman.** Nay, it's no matter for that.

**Second Servingman.** Worth six on him.

**First Servingman.** Nay, not so neither: but I take him to be the greater soldier. 2935

**Second Servingman.** Faith, look you, one cannot tell how to say that: for the defence of a town, our general is excellent.

**First Servingman.** Ay, and for an assault too.

*[Re-enter third Servingman]*

**Third Servingman.** O slaves, I can tell you news,— news, you rascals!

**First Servingman.** *[together]* What, what, what? let's partake.

**Second Servingman.** *[together]* What, what, what? let's partake.

**Third Servingman.** I would not be a Roman, of all nations; I had as lieve be a condemned man. 2945

**First Servingman.** *[together]* Wherefore? wherefore?

**Second Servingman.** *[together]* wherefore?

**Third Servingman.** Why, here's he that was wont to thwack our general, Caius CORIOLANUS.

**First Servingman.** Why do you say 'thwack our general '? 2950

**Third Servingman.** I do not say 'thwack our general;' but he was always good enough for him.

**Second Servingman.** Come, we are fellows and friends: he was ever too hard for him; I have heard him say so himself.

**First Servingman.** He was too hard for him directly, to say the troth on't: before Corioli he scotched him and notched him like a carbon ado. 2955

**Second Servingman.** An he had been cannibally given, he might have broiled and eaten him too.

**First Servingman.** But, more of thy news? 2960

**Third Servingman.** Why, he is so made on here within, as if he were son and heir to Mars; set at upper end o' the table; no question asked him by any of the senators, but they stand bald before him: our general himself makes a mistress of him: sanctifies himself with's hand and turns up the white o' the eye to his discourse. But the bottom of the news is that our general is cut i' the middle and but one half of what he was yesterday; for the other has half, by the entreaty and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says, and sowl the porter of Rome gates by the ears: he will mow all down before him, and leave his passage polled. 2965

**Second Servingman.** And he's as like to do't as any man I can imagine.

**Third Servingman.** Do't! he will do't; for, look you, sir, he has as many friends as enemies; which friends, sir, as it were, durst not, look you, sir, show themselves, as we term it, his friends whilst he's in directitude. 2975

**First Servingman.** Directitude! what's that?

**Third Servingman.** But when they shall see, sir, his crest up again, and the man in blood, they will out of their burrows, like conies after rain, and revel all with him. 2980

**First Servingman.** But when goes this forward?

**Third Servingman.** To-morrow; to-day; presently; you shall have the drum struck up this afternoon: 'tis, as it were, a parcel of their feast, and to be executed ere they wipe their lips. 2985

**Second Servingman.** Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing, but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers. 2990

**First Servingman.** Let me have war, say I; it exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible; a getter of more bastard children than war's a destroyer of men. 2995

**Second Servingman.** 'Tis so: and as war, in some sort, may be said to be a ravisher, so it cannot be denied but peace is a great maker of cuckolds.

**First Servingman.** Ay, and it makes men hate one another.

**Third Servingman.** Reason; because they then less need one another. The wars for my money. I hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians. They are rising, they are rising. 3000

**All.** In, in, in, in!

*[Exeunt]*



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## Act IV, Scene 6

### Rome. A public place.

*[Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS]*

**Sicinius Velutus.** We hear not of him, neither need we fear him;  
His remedies are tame i' the present peace  
And quietness of the people, which before  
Were in wild hurry. Here do we make his friends  
Blush that the world goes well, who rather had, 3010  
Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold  
Dissentious numbers pestering streets than see  
Our tradesmen with in their shops and going  
About their functions friendly.

**Junius Brutus.** We stood to't in good time. 3015  
*[Enter MENENIUS]*  
Is this Menenius?

**Sicinius Velutus.** 'Tis he, 'tis he: O, he is grown most kind of late.

**Both Tribunes.** Hail sir!

**Menenius Agrippa.** Hail to you both! 3020

**Sicinius Velutus.** Your Coriolanus  
Is not much miss'd, but with his friends:  
The commonwealth doth stand, and so would do,  
Were he more angry at it.

**Menenius Agrippa.** All's well; and might have been much better, if 3025  
He could have temporized.

**Sicinius Velutus.** Where is he, hear you?

**Menenius Agrippa.** Nay, I hear nothing: his mother and his wife  
Hear nothing from him.

*[Enter three or four Citizens]*

**Citizens.** The gods preserve you both!

**Sicinius Velutus.** God-den, our neighbours.

**Junius Brutus.** God-den to you all, god-den to you all.

**First Citizen.** Ourselves, our wives, and children, on our knees,  
Are bound to pray for you both. 3035

**Sicinius Velutus.** Live, and thrive!

**Junius Brutus.** Farewell, kind neighbours: we wish'd Coriolanus  
Had loved you as we did.

**Citizens.** Now the gods keep you!

**Both Tribunes.** Farewell, farewell. 3040

*[Exeunt Citizens]*

**Sicinius Velutus.** This is a happier and more comely time  
Than when these fellows ran about the streets,  
Crying confusion.

**Junius Brutus.** Caius CORIOLANUS was 3045  
A worthy officer i' the war; but insolent,  
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,  
Self-loving,—

**Sicinius Velutus.** And affecting one sole throne,  
Without assistance. 3050

**Menenius Agrippa.** I think not so.

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

**Junius Brutus.** The gods have well prevented it, and Rome  
Sits safe and still without him. 3055

*[Enter an AEdile]*

**Aedile.** Worthy tribunes,  
There is a slave, whom we have put in prison,  
Reports, the Volsces with two several powers  
Are enter'd in the Roman territories, 3060  
And with the deepest malice of the war  
Destroy what lies before 'em.

**Menenius Agrippa.** 'Tis Aufidius,  
Who, hearing of our CORIOLANUS' banishment,  
Thrusts forth his horns again into the world; 3065  
Which were inshell'd when CORIOLANUS stood for Rome,  
And durst not once peep out.

**Sicinius Velutus.** Come, what talk you  
Of CORIOLANUS?

**Junius Brutus.** Go see this rumourer whipp'd. It cannot be 3070  
The Volsces dare break with us.

**Menenius Agrippa.** Cannot be! 3075  
We have record that very well it can,  
And three examples of the like have been  
Within my age. But reason with the fellow,  
Before you punish him, where he heard this,  
Lest you shall chance to whip your information  
And beat the messenger who bids beware  
Of what is to be dreaded.

**Sicinius Velutus.** Tell not me: 3080  
I know this cannot be.



**Junius Brutus.** Not possible.

*[Enter a Messenger]*

**Messenger.** The nobles in great earnestness are going  
All to the senate-house: some news is come  
That turns their countenances. 3085

**Sicinius Velutus.** 'Tis this slave;—  
Go whip him, 'fore the people's eyes:—his raising;  
Nothing but his report.

**Messenger.** Yes, worthy sir, 3090  
The slave's report is seconded; and more,  
More fearful, is deliver'd.

**Sicinius Velutus.** What more fearful?

**Messenger.** It is spoke freely out of many mouths—  
How probable I do not know—that CORIOLANUS, 3095  
Join'd with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome,  
And vows revenge as spacious as between  
The young'st and oldest thing.

**Sicinius Velutus.** This is most likely!

**Junius Brutus.** Raised only, that the weaker sort may wish 3100  
Good CORIOLANUS home again.

**Sicinius Velutus.** The very trick on't.

**Menenius Agrippa.** This is unlikely:  
He and Aufidius can no more atone  
Than violentest contrariety. 3105

*[Enter a second Messenger]*

**Second Messenger.** You are sent for to the senate:  
A fearful army, led by Caius CORIOLANUS  
Associated with Aufidius, rages  
Upon our territories; and have already 3110  
O'erborne their way, consumed with fire, and took  
What lay before them.

*[Enter COMINIUS]*

**Cominius.** O, you have made good work!

**Menenius Agrippa.** What news? what news? 3115

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

**Menenius Agrippa.** What's the news? what's the news?

**Cominius.** Your temples burned in their cement, and 3120  
Your franchises, whereon you stood, confined  
Into an auger's bore.

**Menenius Agrippa.** Pray now, your news?  
You have made fair work, I fear me.—Pray, your news?—  
If CORIOLANUS should be join'd with Volscians,— 3125

**Cominius.** If!

He is their god: he leads them like a thing  
 Made by some other deity than nature,  
 That shapes man better; and they follow him,  
 Against us brats, with no less confidence **3130**  
 Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,  
 Or butchers killing flies.

**Menenius Agrippa.** You have made good work,  
 You and your apron-men; you that stood so up much  
 on the voice of occupation and **3135**  
 The breath of garlic-eaters!

**Cominius.** He will shake  
 Your Rome about your ears.

**Menenius Agrippa.** As Hercules  
 Did shake down mellow fruit. **3140**  
 You have made fair work!

**Junius Brutus.** But is this true, sir?

**Cominius.** Ay; and you'll look pale  
 Before you find it other. All the regions  
 Do smilingly revolt; and who resist **3145**  
 Are mock'd for valiant ignorance,  
 And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame him?  
 Your enemies and his find something in him.

**Menenius Agrippa.** We are all undone, unless  
 The noble man have mercy. **3150**

**Cominius.** Who shall ask it?  
 The tribunes cannot do't for shame; the people  
 Deserve such pity of him as the wolf  
 Does of the shepherds: for his best friends, if they  
 Should say 'Be good to Rome,' they charged him even **3155**  
 As those should do that had deserved his hate,  
 And therein show'd like enemies.

**Menenius Agrippa.** 'Tis true:  
 If he were putting to my house the brand  
 That should consume it, I have not the face **3160**  
 To say 'Beseech you, cease.' You have made fair hands,  
 You and your crafts! you have crafted fair!

**Cominius.** You have brought  
 A trembling upon Rome, such as was never  
 So incapable of help. **3165**

**Both Tribunes.** Say not we brought it.

**Menenius Agrippa.** How! Was it we? we loved him but, like beasts  
 And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your clusters,  
 Who did hoot him out o' the city.

**Cominius.** But I fear **3170**  
 They'll roar him in again. Tullus Aufidius,  
 The second name of men, obeys his points  
 As if he were his officer: desperation  
 Is all the policy, strength and defence,  
 That Rome can make against them. **3175**

*[Enter a troop of Citizens]*

**Menenius Agrippa.** Here come the clusters.

And is Aufidius with him? You are they  
That made the air unwholesome, when you cast  
Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at 3180  
Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming;  
And not a hair upon a soldier's head  
Which will not prove a whip: as many coxcombs  
As you threw caps up will he tumble down,  
And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter; 3185  
if he could burn us all into one coal,  
We have deserved it.

**Citizens.** Faith, we hear fearful news.

**First Citizen.** For mine own part,  
When I said, banish him, I said 'twas pity. 3190

**Second Citizen.** And so did I.

**Third Citizen.** And so did I; and, to say the truth, so did very  
many of us: that we did, we did for the best; and  
though we willingly consented to his banishment, yet  
it was against our will. 3195

**Cominius.** Ye re goodly things, you voices!

**Menenius Agrippa.** You have made  
Good work, you and your cry! Shall's to the Capitol?

**Cominius.** O, ay, what else?

*[Exeunt COMINIUS and MENENIUS]*

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

**First Citizen.** The gods be good to us! Come, masters, let's home. 3205  
I ever said we were i' the wrong when we banished  
him.

**Second Citizen.** So did we all. But, come, let's home.

*[Exeunt Citizens]*

**Junius Brutus.** I do not like this news. 3210

**Sicinius Velutus.** Nor I.

**Junius Brutus.** Let's to the Capitol. Would half my wealth  
Would buy this for a lie!

**Sicinius Velutus.** Pray, let us go.

*[Exeunt]*



# Coriolanus

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## Act IV, Scene 7

*A camp, at a small distance from Rome.*

*[Enter AUFIDIUS and his Lieutenant]*

**Tullus Aufidius.** Do they still fly to the Roman?

**Lieutenant.** I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but  
Your soldiers use him as the grace 'fore meat,  
Their talk at table, and their thanks at end; 3220  
And you are darken'd in this action, sir,  
Even by your own.

**Tullus Aufidius.** I cannot help it now,  
Unless, by using means, I lame the foot  
Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier, 3225  
Even to my person, than I thought he would  
When first I did embrace him: yet his nature  
In that's no changeling; and I must excuse  
What cannot be amended.

**Lieutenant.** Yet I wish, sir,— 3230  
I mean for your particular,—you had not  
Join'd in commission with him; but either  
Had borne the action of yourself, or else  
To him had left it solely.

**Tullus Aufidius.** I understand thee well; and be thou sure, 3235  
when he shall come to his account, he knows not  
What I can urge against him. Although it seems,  
And so he thinks, and is no less apparent  
To the vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly.  
And shows good husbandry for the Volscian state, 3240  
Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon  
As draw his sword; yet he hath left undone  
That which shall break his neck or hazard mine,  
Whene'er we come to our account.

**Lieutenant.** Sir, I beseech you, think you he'll carry Rome? 3245

**Tullus Aufidius.** All places yield to him ere he sits down;  
And the nobility of Rome are his:  
The senators and patricians love him too:  
The tribunes are no soldiers; and their people  
Will be as rash in the repeal, as hasty 3250  
To expel him thence. I think he'll be to Rome  
As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it  
By sovereignty of nature. First he was

A noble servant to them; but he could not  
Carry his honours even: whether 'twas pride, **3255**  
Which out of daily fortune ever taints  
The happy man; whether defect of judgment,  
To fail in the disposing of those chances  
Which he was lord of; or whether nature, **3260**  
Not to be other than one thing, not moving  
From the casque to the cushion, but commanding peace  
Even with the same austerity and garb  
As he controll'd the war; but one of these—  
As he hath spices of them all, not all, **3265**  
For I dare so far free him—made him fear'd,  
So hated, and so banish'd: but he has a merit,  
To choke it in the utterance. So our virtues  
Lie in the interpretation of the time:  
And power, unto itself most commendable, **3270**  
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair  
To extol what it hath done.  
One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail;  
Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail.  
Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,  
Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly art thou mine. **3275**

*[Exeunt]*

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