



Coriolanus

- To print this text, [click here](#)
- To save this text, go to your browser's **File** menu, then select **Save As**

Act V, Scene 1

Rome. A public place.

[Enter MENENIUS, COMINIUS, SICINIUS, BRUTUS,] [p]and others]

Menenius Agrippa. No, I'll not go: you hear what he hath said
Which was sometime his general; who loved him 3280
In a most dear particular. He call'd me father:
But what o' that? Go, you that banish'd him;
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee
The way into his mercy: nay, if he coy'd
To hear Cominius speak, I'll keep at home. 3285

Cominius. He would not seem to know me.

Menenius Agrippa. Do you hear?

Cominius. Yet one time he did call me by my name:
I urged our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. Coriolanus 3290
He would not answer to: forbad all names;
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
Till he had forged himself a name o' the fire
Of burning Rome.

Menenius Agrippa. Why, so: you have made good work!
A pair of tribunes that have rack'd for Rome, 3295
To make coals cheap,—a noble memory!

Cominius. I minded him how royal 'twas to pardon
When it was less expected: he replied, 3300
It was a bare petition of a state
To one whom they had punish'd.

Menenius Agrippa. Very well:
Could he say less?

Cominius. I offer'd to awaken his regard
For's private friends: his answer to me was, 3305
He could not stay to pick them in a pile
Of noisome musty chaff: he said 'twas folly,
For one poor grain or two, to leave unburnt,
And still to nose the offence.

Menenius Agrippa. For one poor grain or two! 3310
I am one of those; his mother, wife, his child,
And this brave fellow too, we are the grains:

You are the musty chaff; and you are smelt
Above the moon: we must be burnt for you.

Sicinius Velutus. Nay, pray, be patient: if you refuse your aid 3315

In this so never-needed help, yet do not
Upbraid's with our distress. But, sure, if you
Would be your country's pleader, your good tongue,
More than the instant army we can make,
Might stop our countryman. 3320

Menenius Agrippa. No, I'll not meddle.

Sicinius Velutus. Pray you, go to him.

Menenius Agrippa. What should I do?

Junius Brutus. Only make trial what your love can do
For Rome, towards CORIOLANUS. 3325

Menenius Agrippa. Well, and say that CORIOLANUS
Return me, as Cominius is return'd,
Unheard; what then?
But as a discontented friend, grief-shot
With his unkindness? say't be so? 3330

Sicinius Velutus. Yet your good will
must have that thanks from Rome, after the measure
As you intended well.

Menenius Agrippa. I'll undertake 't:
I think he'll hear me. Yet, to bite his lip 3335
And hum at good Cominius, much unhearts me.
He was not taken well; he had not dined:
The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then
We pout upon the morning, are unapt
To give or to forgive; but when we have stuff'd 3340
These and these conveyances of our blood
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
Than in our priest-like fasts: therefore I'll watch him
Till he be dieted to my request,
And then I'll set upon him. 3345

Junius Brutus. You know the very road into his kindness,
And cannot lose your way.

Menenius Agrippa. Good faith, I'll prove him,
Speed how it will. I shall ere long have knowledge
Of my success. 3350

[Exit]

Cominius. He'll never hear him.

Sicinius Velutus. Not?

Cominius. I tell you, he does sit in gold, his eye 3355
Red as 'twould burn Rome; and his injury
The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him;
'Twas very faintly he said 'Rise;' dismiss'd me
Thus, with his speechless hand: what he would do,
He sent in writing after me; what he would not,
Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions: 3360
So that all hope is vain.

Unless his noble mother, and his wife;
Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him
For mercy to his country. Therefore, let's hence,
And with our fair entreaties haste them on.

3365

[Exeunt]

Program code and database © 2003-2018 [George Mason University](http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org).
All texts are public domain.



Coriolanus

- To print this text, [click here](#)
- To save this text, go to your browser's **File** menu, then select **Save As**

Act V, Scene 2

Entrance of the Volscian camp before Rome.

Two Sentinels on guard.

[Enter to them, MENENIUS]

First Senator. Stay: whence are you?

Second Senator. Stand, and go back. 3370

Menenius Agrippa. You guard like men; 'tis well: but, by your leave,
I am an officer of state, and come
To speak with Coriolanus.

First Senator. From whence?

Menenius Agrippa. From Rome. 3375

First Senator. You may not pass, you must return: our general
Will no more hear from thence.

Second Senator. You'll see your Rome embraced with fire before
You'll speak with Coriolanus.

Menenius Agrippa. Good my friends, 3380
If you have heard your general talk of Rome,
And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks,
My name hath touch'd your ears it is Menenius.

First Senator. Be it so; go back: the virtue of your name
Is not here passable. 3385

Menenius Agrippa. I tell thee, fellow,
The general is my lover: I have been
The book of his good acts, whence men have read
His name unparallel'd, haply amplified; 3390
For I have ever verified my friends,

Of whom he's chief, with all the size that verity
Would without lapsing suffer: nay, sometimes,
Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground,
I have tumbled past the throw; and in his praise
Have almost stamp'd the leasing: therefore, fellow, 3395
I must have leave to pass.

First Senator. Faith, sir, if you had told as many lies in his
behalf as you have uttered words in your own, you
should not pass here; no, though it were as virtuous
to lie as to live chastely. Therefore, go back. 3400

Menenius Agrippa. Prithee, fellow, remember my name is Menenius, always factionary on the party of your general.

Second Senator. Howsoever you have been his liar, as you say you have, I am one that, telling true under him, must say, you cannot pass. Therefore, go back. 3405

Menenius Agrippa. Has he dined, canst thou tell? for I would not speak with him till after dinner.

First Senator. You are a Roman, are you?

Menenius Agrippa. I am, as thy general is.

First Senator. Then you should hate Rome, as he does. Can you, when you have pushed out your gates the very defender of them, and, in a violent popular ignorance, given your enemy your shield, think to front his revenges with the easy groans of old women, the virginal palms of your daughters, or with the palsied intercession of such a decayed dotant as you seem to be? Can you think to blow out the intended fire your city is ready to flame in, with such weak breath as this? No, you are deceived; therefore, back to Rome, and prepare for your execution: you are condemned, our general has sworn you out of reprieve and pardon. 3410
3415
3420

Menenius Agrippa. Sirrah, if thy captain knew I were here, he would use me with estimation.

Second Senator. Come, my captain knows you not. 3425

Menenius Agrippa. I mean, thy general.

First Senator. My general cares not for you. Back, I say, go; lest I let forth your half-pint of blood; back,—that's the utmost of your having: back.

Menenius Agrippa. Nay, but, fellow, fellow,— 3430

[Enter CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS]

Coriolanus. What's the matter?

Menenius Agrippa. Now, you companion, I'll say an errand for you: You shall know now that I am in estimation; you shall perceive that a Jack guardant cannot office me from my son Coriolanus: guess, but by my entertainment with him, if thou standest not i' the state of hanging, or of some death more long in spectatorship, and crueller in suffering; behold now presently, and swoon for what's to come upon thee. 3435
3440

[To CORIOLANUS]

The glorious gods sit in hourly synod about thy particular prosperity, and love thee no worse than thy old father Menenius does! O my son, my son! thou art preparing fire for us; look thee, here's water to quench it. I was hardly moved to come to thee; but being assured none but myself could move thee, I have been blown out of your gates with sighs; and conjure thee to pardon Rome, and thy petitionary countrymen. The good gods assuage thy 3445
3450

wrath, and turn the dregs of it upon this varlet here,—this, who, like a block, hath denied my access to thee.

Coriolanus. Away!

Menenius Agrippa. How! away!

3455

Coriolanus. Wife, mother, child, I know not. My affairs

Are servanted to others: though I owe

My revenge properly, my remission lies

In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,

Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison, rather

Than pity note how much. Therefore, be gone.

3460

Mine ears against your suits are stronger than

Your gates against my force. Yet, for I loved thee,

Take this along; I writ it for thy sake

[Gives a letter]

3465

And would have rent it. Another word, Menenius,

I will not hear thee speak. This man, Aufidius,

Was my beloved in Rome: yet thou behold'st!

Tullus Aufidius. You keep a constant temper.

[Exeunt CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS]

First Senator. Now, sir, is your name Menenius?

Second Senator. 'Tis a spell, you see, of much power: you know the way home again.

First Senator. Do you hear how we are shent for keeping your greatness back?

3475

Second Senator. What cause, do you think, I have to swoon?

Menenius Agrippa. I neither care for the world nor your general: for

such things as you, I can scarce think there's any,

ye're so slight. He that hath a will to die by

himself fears it not from another: let your general

do his worst. For you, be that you are, long; and

your misery increase with your age! I say to you,

as I was said to, Away!

3480

[Exit]

First Senator. A noble fellow, I warrant him.

3485

Second Senator. The worthy fellow is our general: he's the rock, the oak not to be wind-shaken.

[Exeunt]



Coriolanus

- To print this text, [click here](#)
- To save this text, go to your browser's **File** menu, then select **Save As**

Act V, Scene 3

The tent of Coriolanus.

[Enter CORIOLANUS, AUFIDIUS, and others]

Coriolanus. We will before the walls of Rome tomorrow
Set down our host. My partner in this action,
You must report to the Volscian lords, how plainly
I have borne this business. 3490

Tullus Aufidius. Only their ends
You have respected; stopp'd your ears against 3495
The general suit of Rome; never admitted
A private whisper, no, not with such friends
That thought them sure of you.

Coriolanus. This last old man,
Whom with a crack'd heart I have sent to Rome, 3500
Loved me above the measure of a father;
Nay, godded me, indeed. Their latest refuge
Was to send him; for whose old love I have,
Though I show'd sourly to him, once more offer'd

The first conditions, which they did refuse 3505
And cannot now accept; to grace him only
That thought he could do more, a very little
I have yielded to: fresh embassies and suits,
Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter
Will I lend ear to. Ha! what shout is this? 3510

[Shout within]

Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow
In the same time 'tis made? I will not. 3515
[Enter in mourning habits, VIRGILIA, VOLUMNIA,]
leading young CORIOLANUS, VALERIA, and Attendants]

My wife comes foremost; then the honour'd mould
Wherein this trunk was framed, and in her hand
The grandchild to her blood. But, out, affection!
All bond and privilege of nature, break! 3520
Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.

What is that curt'sy worth? or those doves' eyes,
Which can make gods forsworn? I melt, and am not
Of stronger earth than others. My mother bows;
As if Olympus to a molehill should 3525

In supplication nod: and my young boy
Hath an aspect of intercession, which
Great nature cries 'Deny not.' let the Volsces
Plough Rome and harrow Italy: I'll never
Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand, 3530

As if a man were author of himself
And knew no other kin.

Virgilia. My lord and husband!

Coriolanus. These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome.

Virgilia. The sorrow that delivers us thus changed
Makes you think so. 3535

Coriolanus. Like a dull actor now,
I have forgot my part, and I am out,
Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,
Forgive my tyranny; but do not say
For that 'Forgive our Romans.' O, a kiss 3540
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 3545
Leave unsaluted: sink, my knee, i' the earth;
[Kneels]
Of thy deep duty more impression show
Than that of common sons.

Volumnia. O, stand up blest! 3550
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]

Coriolanus. What is this?
Your knees to me? to your corrected son?
Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach
Fillip the stars; then let the mutinous winds
Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun; 3560
Murdering impossibility, to make
What cannot be, slight work.

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

Coriolanus. The noble sister of Publicola, 3565
The moon of Rome, chaste as the icicle
That's curdied by the frost from purest snow
And hangs on Dian's temple: dear Valeria!

Volumnia. This is a poor epitome of yours,
Which by the interpretation of full time 3570
May show like all yourself.

Coriolanus. 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' the wars 3575
Like a great sea-mark, standing every flaw,
And saving those that eye thee!

Volumnia. Your knee, sirrah.

Coriolanus. That's my brave boy!

Volumnia. Even he, your wife, this lady, and myself,
Are suitors to you. 3580

Coriolanus. I beseech you, peace:
Or, if you'd ask, remember this before:
The thing I have forsworn to grant may never
Be held by you denials. Do not bid me 3585
Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate
Again with Rome's mechanics: tell me not
Wherein I seem unnatural: desire not
To ally my rages and revenges with
Your colder reasons. 3590

Volumnia. O, no more, no more!
You have said you will not grant us any thing;
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 3595
May hang upon your hardness: therefore hear us.

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

Volumnia. Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment
And state of bodies would bewray what life 3600
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself
How more unfortunate than all living women
Are we come hither: since that thy sight,
which should
Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance 3605
with comforts,
Constrains them weep and shake with fear and sorrow;
Making the mother, wife and child to see
The son, the husband and the father tearing
His country's bowels out. And to poor we 3610
Thine enmity's most capital: thou barr'st us
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
That all but we enjoy; for how can we,
Alas, how can we for our country pray.
Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory, 3615
Whereto we are bound? alack, or we must lose
The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,
Our comfort in the country. We must find
An evident calamity, though we had
Our wish, which side should win: for either thou 3620
Must, as a foreign recreant, be led
With manacles thorough our streets, or else
triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,
And bear the palm for having bravely shed
Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son, 3625
I purpose not to wait on fortune till
These wars determine: if I cannot persuade thee
Rather to show a noble grace to both parts
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread— 3630
Trust to't, thou shalt not—on thy mother's womb,
That brought thee to this world.

Virgilia. Ay, and mine,
That brought you forth this boy, to keep your name
Living to time. 3635

Young Coriolanus. A' shall not tread on me;
I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight.

Coriolanus. Not of a woman's tenderness to be,
Requires nor child nor woman's face to see.
I have sat too long.

3640

[Rising]

Volumnia. Nay, go not from us thus.
If it were so that our request did tend
To save the Romans, thereby to destroy
The Volsces whom you serve, you might condemn us,
As poisonous of your honour: no; our suit
Is that you reconcile them: while the Volsces
May say 'This mercy we have show'd;' the Romans,
'This we received;' and each in either side
Give the all-hail to thee and cry 'Be blest
For making up this peace!' Thou know'st, great son,
The end of war's uncertain, but this certain,
That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit
Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name,
Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses;
Whose chronicle thus writ: 'The man was noble,
But with his last attempt he wiped it out;
Destroy'd his country, and his name remains
To the 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' the 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' the 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, ladies; let us shame him with our knees.
To his surname Coriolanus 'longs more pride
Than pity to our prayers. Down: an end;
This is the last: so we will home to Rome,
And die among our neighbours. Nay, behold 's:
This boy, that cannot tell what he would have
But kneels and holds up bands 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.

3645

3650

3655

3660

3665

3670

3675

3680

3685

3690

[He holds her by the hand, silent]

Coriolanus. O mother, mother! 3695
 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, 3700
 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 3705
 A mother less? or granted less, Aufidius?

Tullus Aufidius. I was moved withal.

Coriolanus. I dare be sworn you were:
 And, sir, it is no little thing to make
 Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir, 3710
 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!

Tullus Aufidius. [*Aside*] I am glad thou hast set thy mercy and
 thy honour 3715
 At difference in thee: out of that I'll work
 Myself a former fortune.

[*The Ladies make signs to CORIOLANUS*]

Coriolanus. Ay, by and by;
 [*To VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, &c*] 3720
 But we will drink together; and you shall bear
 A better witness back than words, which we,
 On like conditions, will have counter-seal'd.
 Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve
 To have a temple built you: all the swords 3725
 In Italy, and her confederate arms,
 Could not have made this peace.

[*Exeunt*]



Coriolanus

- To print this text, [click here](#)
- To save this text, go to your browser's **File** menu, then select **Save As**

Act V, Scene 4

Rome. A public place.

[Enter MENENIUS and SICINIUS]

Menenius Agrippa. See you yond coign o' the Capitol, yond corner-stone? 3730

Sicinius Velutus. Why, what of that?

Menenius Agrippa. If it be possible for you to displace it with your little finger, there is some hope the ladies of Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with him. 3735
But I say there is no hope in't: our throats are sentenced and stay upon execution.

Sicinius Velutus. Is't possible that so short a time can alter the condition of a man!

Menenius Agrippa. There is differency between a grub and a butterfly; yet your butterfly was a grub. This CORIOLANUS is grown from man to dragon: he has wings; he's more than a creeping thing. 3740

Sicinius Velutus. He loved his mother dearly.

Menenius Agrippa. So did he me: and he no more remembers his mother now than an eight-year-old horse. The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes: when he walks, he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks before his treading: he is able to pierce a corslet with his eye; talks like a knell, and his hum is a battery. He sits in his state, as a thing made for Alexander. What he bids be done is finished with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in. 3745

Sicinius Velutus. Yes, mercy, if you report him truly. 3750

Menenius Agrippa. I paint him in the character. Mark what mercy his mother shall bring from him: there is no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger; that shall our poor city find: and all this is long of you. 3755

Sicinius Velutus. The gods be good unto us! 3760

Menenius Agrippa. No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us. When we banished him, we respected not them; and, he returning to break our necks, they respect not us.

[Enter a Messenger]

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

3770

[Enter a second Messenger]

Sicinius Velutus. What's the news?

Second Messenger. Good news, good news; the ladies have prevail'd,
The Volscians are dislodged, and CORIOLANUS gone:
A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,
No, not the expulsion of the Tarquins.

3775

Sicinius Velutus. Friend,
Art thou certain this is true? is it most certain?

Second Messenger. As certain as I know the sun is fire:
Where have you lurk'd, that you make doubt of it?
Ne'er through an arch so hurried the blown tide,
As the recomforted through the gates. Why, hark you!
[Trumpets; hautboys; drums beat; all together]
The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries and fifes,
Tabours and cymbals and the shouting Romans,
Make the sun dance. Hark you!

3780

3785

[A shout within]

Menenius Agrippa. This is good news:
I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia
Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,
A city full; of tribunes, such as you,
A sea and land full. You have pray'd well to-day:
This morning for ten thousand of your throats
I'd not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy!

3790

[Music still, with shouts]

Sicinius Velutus. First, the gods bless you for your tidings; next,
Accept my thankfulness.

Second Messenger. Sir, we have all
Great cause to give great thanks.

Sicinius Velutus. They are near the city?

3800

Second Messenger. Almost at point to enter.

Sicinius Velutus. We will meet them,
And help the joy.

[Exeunt]



Coriolanus

- To print this text, [click here](#)
- To save this text, go to your browser's **File** menu, then select **Save As**

Act V, Scene 5

The same. A street near the gate.

[Enter two Senators with VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA,] [p]VALERIA, &c. passing over the stage, [p]followed by Patricians and others]

First Senator. Behold our patroness, the life of Rome!

Call all your tribes together, praise the gods,

And make triumphant fires; strew flowers before them:

3810

Unshout the noise that banish'd CORIOLANUS,

Repeal him with the welcome of his mother;

Cry 'Welcome, ladies, welcome!'

All. Welcome, ladies, Welcome!

[A flourish with drums and trumpets. Exeunt]



Coriolanus

- To print this text, [click here](#)
- To save this text, go to your browser's **File** menu, then select **Save As**

Act V, Scene 6

Antium. A public place.

[Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, with Attendants]

Tullus Aufidius. Go tell the lords o' the city I am here:

Deliver them this paper: having read it,
Bid them repair to the market place; where I,
Even in theirs and in the commons' ears, 3820
Will vouch the truth of it. Him I accuse
The city ports by this hath enter'd and
Intends to appear before the people, hoping
To purge herself with words: dispatch.

[Exeunt Attendants] 3825

[Enter three or four Conspirators of AUFIDIUS' faction]
Most welcome!

First Conspirator. How is it with our general?

Tullus Aufidius. Even so
As with a man by his own alms empoison'd, 3830
And with his charity slain.

Second Conspirator. Most noble sir,
If you do hold the same intent wherein
You wish'd us parties, we'll deliver you
Of your great danger. 3835

Tullus Aufidius. Sir, I cannot tell:
We must proceed as we do find the people.

Third Conspirator. The people will remain uncertain whilst
'Twixt you there's difference; but the fall of either
Makes the survivor heir of all. 3840

Tullus Aufidius. I know it;
And my pretext to strike at him admits
A good construction. I raised him, and I pawn'd
Mine honour for his truth: who being so heighten'd,
He water'd his new plants with dews of flattery, 3845
Seducing so my friends; and, to this end,
He bow'd his nature, never known before
But to be rough, unswayable and free.

Third Conspirator. Sir, his stoutness
When he did stand for consul, which he lost 3850
By lack of stooping,—

Tullus Aufidius. That I would have spoke of:
 Being banish'd for't, he came unto my hearth;
 Presented to my knife his throat: I took him;
 Made him joint-servant with me; gave him way **3855**
 In all his own desires; nay, let him choose
 Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,
 My best and freshest men; served his designments
 In mine own person; help to reap the fame
 Which he did end all his; and took some pride **3860**
 To do myself this wrong: till, at the last,
 I seem'd his follower, not partner, and
 He waged me with his countenance, as if
 I had been mercenary.

First Conspirator. So he did, my lord: **3865**
 The army marvell'd at it, and, in the last,
 When he had carried Rome and that we look'd
 For no less spoil than glory,—

Tullus Aufidius. There was it:
 For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him. **3870**
 At a few drops of women's rheum, which are
 As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour
 Of our great action: therefore shall he die,
 And I'll renew me in his fall. But, hark!
[Drums and trumpets sound, with great shouts of] **3875**
the People]

First Conspirator. Your native town you enter'd like a post,
 And had no welcomes home: but he returns,
 Splitting the air with noise.

Second Conspirator. And patient fools, **3880**
 Whose children he hath slain, their base throats tear
 With giving him glory.

Third Conspirator. Therefore, at your vantage,
 Ere he express himself, or move the people
 With what he would say, let him feel your sword, **3885**
 Which we will second. When he lies along,
 After your way his tale pronounced shall bury
 His reasons with his body.

Tullus Aufidius. Say no more:
 Here come the lords. **3890**

[Enter the Lords of the city]

All Lords. You are most welcome home.

Tullus Aufidius. I have not deserved it.
 But, worthy lords, have you with heed perused
 What I have written to you? **3895**

All 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 **3900**
 The benefit of our levies, answering us
 With our own charge, making a treaty where
 There was a yielding,—this admits no excuse.

Tullus Aufidius. He approaches: you shall hear him.
[Enter CORIOLANUS, marching with drum and] 3905
colours; commoners being with him]

Coriolanus. Hail, lords! I am return'd your soldier,
 No more infected with my country's love
 Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting 3910
 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
 Do more than counterpoise a full third part 3915
 The charges of the action. We have made peace
 With no less honour to the Antiates
 Than shame to the Romans: and we here deliver,
 Subscribed by the consuls and patricians,
 Together with the seal o' the senate, what
 We have compounded on. 3920

Tullus Aufidius. Read it not, noble lords;
 But tell the traitor, in the high'st degree
 He hath abused your powers.

Coriolanus. Traitor! how now!

Tullus Aufidius. Ay, traitor, CORIOLANUS! 3925

Coriolanus. CORIOLANUS!

Tullus Aufidius. Ay, CORIOLANUS, Caius CORIOLANUS: dost thou think
 I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name
 Coriolanus in Corioli? 3930
 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 3935
 A twist of rotten silk, never admitting
 Counsel o' the war, but at his nurse's tears
 He whined and roar'd away your victory,
 That pages blush'd at him and men of heart
 Look'd wondering each at other.

Coriolanus. Hear'st thou, Mars? 3940

Tullus Aufidius. Name not the god, thou boy of tears!

Coriolanus. Ha!

Tullus Aufidius. No more.

Coriolanus. Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
 Too great for what contains it. Boy! O slave! 3945
 Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever
 I was forced to scold. Your judgments, 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 3950
 To thrust the lie unto him.

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

Coriolanus. 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, **3955**
 That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
 Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli:
 Alone I did it. Boy!

Tullus Aufidius. Why, noble lords,
 Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune, **3960**
 Which was your shame, by this unholy braggart,
 'Fore your own eyes and ears?

All Conspirators. Let him die for't.

All The People. 'Tear him to pieces.' 'Do it presently.' 'He kill'd
 my son.' 'My daughter.' 'He killed my cousin **3965**
 Marcus.' 'He killed my father.'

Second 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, **3970**
 And trouble not the peace.

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

Tullus Aufidius. Insolent villain! **3975**

All Conspirators. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!
[The Conspirators draw, and kill CORIOLANUS:]
 AUFIDIUS stands on his body]

All Lords. Hold, hold, hold, hold!

Tullus Aufidius. My noble masters, hear me speak. **3980**

First Lord. O Tullus,—

Second Lord. Thou hast done a deed whereat valour will weep.

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

Tullus Aufidius. My lords, when you shall know—as in this rage, **3985**
 Provoked 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
 Myself your loyal servant, or endure **3990**
 Your heaviest censure.

First Lord. Bear from hence his body;
 And mourn you for him: let him be regarded
 As the most noble corse that ever herald
 Did follow to his urn. **3995**

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

Tullus Aufidius. My rage is gone;

And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up.

4000

Help, three o' the 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,

4005

Yet he shall have a noble memory. Assist.

[Exeunt, bearing the body of CORIOLANUS. A dead march sounded]

Program code and database © 2003-2018 [George Mason University](#).
All texts are public domain.