

Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses; 144  
Whose chronicle thus writ: 'The man was noble,  
But with his last attempt he wip'd it out,  
Destroy'd his country, and his name remains  
To the ensuing age abhorr'd.' Speak to me,  
son! 148

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 152  
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: 156

Perhaps thy childishness will move him more  
Than can our reasons. There is 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 160

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, 165  
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, 172  
And die among our neighbours. Nay, behold us.

This boy, that cannot tell what he would have,  
But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship,

Does reason our petition with more strength 176  
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, 181  
And then I'll speak a little.

Cor. [Holding VOLUMNIA by the hand, silent.]  
O, mother, mother,

What have you done? Behold! the heavens do  
ope,

The gods look down, and this unnatural scene  
They laugh at. O my mother! mother! O! 185

You have won a happy victory to Rome;  
But, for your son, believe it, O! believe it,

Most dangerously you have with him pre-  
vail'd, 188

If not most mortal to him. But let it come.  
Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,

I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufi-  
dius,

Were you in my stead, would you have heard  
A mother less, or granted less, Aufidius? 193

Auf. I was mov'd withal.

Cor. I dare be sworn you were:

And, sir, it is no little thing to make  
Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir,

What peace you'll make, advise me: for my  
part, 197

I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you; and pray  
you,

Stand to me in this cause. O mother! wife!  
Auf. [Aside.] I am glad thou hast set thy

mercy and thy honour 200  
At difference in thee: out of that I'll work  
Myself a former fortune.

[The ladies make signs to CORIOLANUS.  
Cor. Ay, by and by;

But we will drink together; and you shall bear  
A better witness back than words, which we, 204

On like conditions, would have counter-seal'd.  
Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve

To have a temple built you: all the swords  
In Italy, and her confederate arms, 208

Could not have made this peace. [Exeunt.]

#### SCENE IV.—Rome. A Public Place.

Enter MENENIUS and SICINIUS.

Men. See you yond coign o' the Capitol, yond  
corner-stone?

Sic. Why, what of that? 3

Men. 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. But I say, there is no hope  
in't. Our throats are sentenced and stay upon  
execution. 9

Sic. Is't possible that so short a time can  
alter the condition of a man?

Men. There is difference between a grub and  
a butterfly; yet your butterfly was a grub. This  
Marcius is grown from man to dragon: he has

wings; he's more than a creeping thing. 16

Sic. He loved his mother dearly.

Men. So did he me; and he no more remem-  
bers 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.

Sic. Yes, mercy, if you report him truly. 28

Men. 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. 33

Sic. The gods be good unto us!

Men. 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.

Mess. Sir, if you'd save your life, fly to your  
house:

The plebeians have got your fellow-trioun, 40  
And hale him up and down; all swearing, if  
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home,  
They'll give him death by inches.

Enter a second Messenger.

Sic. What's the news?  
Sec. Mess. Good news, good news! 42

have prevail'd, 44  
The Volscians are dislodg'd, and Marcius gone.  
A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,

No, not the expulsion of the Tarquins.

Sic. Friend,  
Art thou certain this is true? is it most certain? 48

Sec. Mess. 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 recomfited through the gates. Why,  
hark you! 52

[Trumpets and hautboys sounded, and drums  
beaten, all together. Shouting also within.

The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries, and fifes,  
Tabors, and cymbals, and the shouting Romans,  
Make the sundance. Hark you! [A shout within.

Men. This is good news:  
I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia 56

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: 59

This morning for ten thousand of your throats  
I'd not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy!

[Music still and shouts.]

Sic. First, the gods bless you for your tidings;  
next,

Accept my thankfulness. Sir, we have all  
Great cause to give great thanks.

Sic. They are near the city? 64

Sec. Mess. Almost at point to enter.

Sic. We will meet them,  
And help the joy. [Going.]

Enter the Ladies, accompanied by Senators,  
Patricians, and People. They pass over the  
stage.

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

Call all your tribes together, praise the gods, 68  
And make triumphant fires; strew flowers before  
them:

Unshout the noise that banish'd Marcius;  
Repeal him with the welcome of his mother;

Cry, 'Welcome, ladies, welcome!'

All. Welcome, ladies, 72

Welcome! [A flourish with drums and  
trumpets. Exeunt.]

#### SCENE V.—Corioli. A Public Place.

Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, with Attendants.

Auf. 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, 4

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 himself with words: dispatch. 8

[Exeunt Attendants.]

Enter three or four Conspirators of AUFIDIUS'  
faction.

Most welcome!  
First Con. How is it with our general?

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

Sec. Con. Most noble sir, 12

If you do hold the same intent wherein  
You wish'd us parties, we'll deliver you  
Of your great danger.

Auf. Sir, I cannot tell:  
We must proceed as we do find the people. 16

Third Con. The people will remain uncertain  
whilst

'Twixt you there's difference; but the fall of  
either

Makes the survivor heir of all.

Auf. I know it;  
And my pretext to strike at him admits 20

A good construction. I rais'd 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,

Seducing so my friends; and, to this end, 24

He bow'd his nature, never known before  
But to be rough, unswayable, and free.

Third Con. Sir, his stoutness  
When he did stand for consul, which he lost 28

By lack of stooping,—

Auf. 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

In all his own desires; nay, let him choose 33

Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,  
My best and freshest men; serv'd his design-  
ments

In mine own person; help to reap the fame 36

Which he did end all his; and took some pride  
To do myself this wrong: till, at the last,

I seem'd his follower, not partner; and 40

He wag'd me with his countenance, as if  
I had been mercenary.

First Con. So he did, my lord:  
The army marvell'd at it; and, in the last,

When we had carried Rome, and that we look'd  
For no less spoil than glory,—

Auf. There was it; 44

For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him.  
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, 48

And I'll renew me in his fall. But, hark!  
[Drums and trumpets sound, with  
great shouts of the People.]

First Con. Your native town you enter'd  
like a post,

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And had no welcomes home; but he returns,  
Splitting the air with noise.

*Sec. Con.* And patient fools, 52  
Whose children he hath slain, their base throats  
tear  
With giving him glory.

*Third Con.* Therefore, at your vantage,  
Ere he express himself, or move the people  
With what he would say, let him feel your  
sword, 56

Which we will second. When he lies along,  
After your way his tale pronounc'd shall bury  
His reasons with his body.

*Auf.* Say no more:  
Here come the lords.

*Enter the Lords of the city.*

*Lords.* You are most welcome home.

*Auf.* I have not deserv'd it.  
But, worthy lords, have you with heed perus'd  
What I have written to you?

*Lords.* We have.

*First Lord.* And grieve to hear 't.  
What faults he made before the last, I think 64  
Might have found easy fines; but there to end  
Where he was to begin, and give away  
The benefit of our levies, answering us  
With our own charge, making a treaty where 68  
There was a yielding, this admits no excuse.  
*Auf.* He approaches: you shall hear him.

*Enter CORIOLANUS, with drums and colours; a  
crowd of Citizens with him.*

*Cor.* Hail, lords! I am return'd your soldier;  
No more infected with my country's love 72  
Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting  
Under your great command. You are to know,  
That prosperously I have attempted and  
With bloody passage led your wars even to 76  
The gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought  
home

Do more than counterpoise a full third part  
The charges of the action. We have made peace  
With no less honour to the Antiates 80  
Than shame to the Romans; and we here  
deliver,

Subscrib'd by the consuls and patricians,  
Together with the seal o' the senate, what  
We have compounded on.

*Auf.* Read it not, noble lords; 84  
But tell the traitor in the highest degree  
He hath abus'd your powers.

*Cor.* Traitor! How now?

*Auf.* Ay, traitor, Marcius.

*Cor.* Marcius!

*Auf.* Ay, Marcius, Caius Marcius. Dost thou  
think 88  
I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name  
Coriolanus in Corioli?

You lords and heads of the state, perfidiously  
He has betray'd your business, and given up, 92  
For certain drops of salt, your city Rome,  
I say 'your city,' to his wife and mother;  
Breaking his oath and resolution like  
A twist of rotten silk, never admitting 96

Counsel o' the war, but at his nurse's tears  
He whin'd and roar'd away your victory,  
That pages blush'd at him, and men of heart  
Look'd wondering each at other.

*Cor.* Hear'st thou, Mars? 100  
*Auf.* Name not the god, thou boy of tears.

*Cor.* No more.

*Cor.* Measureless liar, thou hast made my  
heart

Too great for what contains it. Boy! O slave!  
Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever 105  
I was forc'd 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 108

Must bear my beating to his grave—shall join  
To thrust the lie unto him.

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

*Cor.* Cut me to pieces, Volsces; men and 112

lads,  
Stain all your edges on me. Boy! False hound!  
If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,  
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I  
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli: 116  
Alone I did it. Boy!

*Auf.* Why, noble lords,  
Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,  
Which was your shame, by this unholy brag-  
gart,

'Fore your own eyes and ears?

*Conspirators.* Let him die for 't. 120

*All the People.* Tear him to pieces.—Do it  
presently.—He killed my son.—My daughter.  
—He killed my cousin Marcus.—He killed my  
father. 124

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

*Cor.* O! that I had him, 129  
With six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe,  
To use my lawful sword!

*Auf.* Insolent villain!

*Conspirators.* Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!

[AUFIDIUS and the Conspirators draw,  
and kill CORIOLANUS, who falls: AU-  
FIDIUS stands on his body.]

*Lords.* Hold, hold, hold, hold! 132

*Auf.* My noble masters, hear me speak.

*First Lord.* O Tullus!

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

*Third Lord.* Tread not upon him. Masters  
all, be quiet.

Put up your swords. 136

*Auf.* My lords, when you shall know,—as in  
this rage,

Provok'd by him, you cannot,—the great danger  
Which this man's life did owe you, you'll rejoice  
That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours  
To call me to your senate, I'll deliver 141  
Myself your loyal servant, or endure  
Your heaviest censure.

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*First Lord.* Bear from hence his body;  
And mourn you for him! Let him be regarded  
As the most noble corse that ever herald 145  
Did follow to his urn.

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

*Auf.* My rage is gone, 148  
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up:

Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers; I'll be one,  
Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully;  
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he  
Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one, 153  
Which to this hour bewail the injury,  
Yet he shall have a noble memory.  
Assist.

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