

Coriolanus

4.7

Enter Aufidius with his Lieutenant

AUFIDIUS Do they still fly to th' 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,
And you are darkened in this action, sir, 5
Even by your own.

AUFIDIUS I cannot help it now,
Unless by using means I lame the foot
Of our design. He bears himself more prouder,
Even to my person, than I thought he would
When first I did embrace him. Yet his nature 10
In that's no changeling, and I must excuse
What cannot be amended.

LIEUTENANT Yet I wish, sir±±
I mean for your particular±±you had not
Joined in commission with him, but either
Have borne the action of yourself or else 15
To him had left it solely.

AUFIDIUS
I understand thee well, and be thou sure,
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 20
To th' vulgar eye±±that he bears all things fairly
And shows good husbandry for the Volscian state,
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 25
Whene'er we come to our account.

LIEUTENANT

Sir, I beseech you, think you he'll carry Rome?

AUFIDIUS

All places yields to him ere he sits down,
And the nobility of Rome are his.

The senators and patricians love him too. 30
 The tribunes are no soldiers, and their people
 Will be as rash in the repeal as hasty
 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 35
 A noble servant to them, but he could not
 Carry his honours even. Whether 'twas pride,
 Which out of daily fortune ever taints
 The happy man; whether defect of judgement,
 To fail in the disposing of those chances 40
 Which he was lord of; or whether nature,
 Not to be other than one thing, not moving
 From th' casque to th' cushion, but commanding peace
 Even with the same austerity and garb
 As he controlled the war: but one of these±± 45
 As he hath spices of them all±±not all,
 For I dare so far free him±±made him feared,
 So hated, and so banished. But he has a merit
 To choke it in the utt'rance. So our virtues
 Lie in th'interpretation of the time, 50
 And power, unto itself most commendable,
 Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
 T'extol what it hath done.
 One fire drives out one fire, one nail one nail;
 Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail. 55
 Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,
 Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly art thou mine.

Exeunt