

# Coriolanus

## 4.6

*Enter the two tribunes, Sicinius and Brutus*

**SICINIUS**

We hear not of him, neither need we fear him.  
His remedies are tame±±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,  
Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold  
Dissentious numbers pest'ring streets than see  
Our tradesmen singing in their shops and going  
About their functions friendly.

5

*Enter Menenius*

**BRUTUS**

We stood to't in good time. Is this Menenius?

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**SICINIUS**

'Tis he, 'tis he. O, he is grown most kind of late.  
Hail, sir.

**MENENIUS** Hail to you both.

**SICINIUS**

Your Coriolanus is not much missed  
But with his friends. The commonwealth doth stand, 15  
And so would do were he more angry at it.

**MENENIUS**

All's well, and might have been much better if  
He could have temporized.

**SICINIUS** Where is he, hear you?

**MENENIUS** Nay, I hear nothing. 20

His mother and his wife hear nothing from him.

*Enter three or four Citizens*

**ALL THE CITIZENS** *(to the tribunes)*

The gods preserve you both.

**SICINIUS**

Good e'en, our neighbours.

**BRUTUS**

Good e'en to you all, good e'en to you all.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

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

**SICINIUS** Live and thrive. 25

**BRUTUS** Farewell, kind neighbours.  
We wished Coriolanus had loved you as we did.

**ALL THE CITIZENS**  
Now the gods keep you!

**SICINIUS AND BRUTUS** Farewell, farewell.  
*Exeunt Citizens*

**SICINIUS**  
This is a happier and more comely time  
Than when these fellows ran about the streets 30  
Crying confusion.

**BRUTUS** Caius Martius was  
A worthy officer i'th' war, but insolent,  
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,  
Self-loving±±

**SICINIUS** And affecting one sole throne  
Without assistance.

**MENENIUS** I think not so. 35

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

**BRUTUS**  
The gods have well prevented it, and Rome  
Sits safe and still without him.  
*Enter an Aedile*

**AEDILE** Worthy tribunes,  
There is a slave whom we have put in prison 40  
Reports the Volsces, with two several powers,  
Are entered in the Roman territories,  
And with the deepest malice of the war  
Destroy what lies before 'em.

**MENENIUS** 'Tis Aufidius,  
Who, hearing of our Martius' banishment, 45  
Thrusts forth his horns again into the world,  
Which were inshelled when Martius stood for Rome,  
And durst not once peep out.

**SICINIUS** Come, what talk you of Martius?

**BRUTUS** (to the Aedile)  
Go see this rumourer whipped. It cannot be  
The Volsces dare break with us.

<b>MENENIUS</b>	Cannot be?	50
We have record that very well it can, And three examples of the like hath 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.		
<b>SICINIUS</b>	Tell not me.	
I know this cannot be.		
<b>BRUTUS</b>	Not possible.	
<i>Enter a Messenger</i>		
<b>MESSENGER</b>		
The nobles in great earnestness are going All to the senate-house. Some news is come That turns their countenances.		60
<b>SICINIUS</b>	'Tis this slave.	
(To the Aedile) Go whip him fore the people's eyes.±± His raising, Nothing but his report. <i>Exit Aedile</i>		
<b>MESSENGER</b>	Yes, worthy sir,	
The slave's report is seconded, and more, More fearful, is delivered.		
<b>SICINIUS</b>	What more fearful?	65
<b>MESSENGER</b>		
It is spoke freely out of many mouths±± How probable I do not know±±that Martius, Joined with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome, And vows revenge as spacious as between The young'st and oldest thing.		
<b>SICINIUS</b>	This is most likely!	70
<b>BRUTUS</b>		
Raised only that the weaker sort may wish Good Martius home again.		
<b>SICINIUS</b>	The very trick on't.	
<b>MENENIUS</b>	This is unlikely.	
He and Aufidius can no more atone Than violent'st contrariety.		75
<i>Enter another Messenger</i>		

## SECOND MESSENGER

You are sent for to the senate.  
A fearful army, led by Caius Martius  
Associated with Aufidius, rages  
Upon our territories, and have already 80  
O'erborne their way, consumed with fire and took  
What lay before them.

*Enter Cominius*

**COMINIUS** O, you have made good work!

**MENENIUS** What news? What news?

**COMINIUS**  
You have help to ravish your own daughters and 85  
To melt the city leads upon your pates,  
To see your wives dishonoured to your noses.

**MENENIUS** What's the news? What's the news?

**COMINIUS**  
Your temples burneÁd in their cement, and  
Your franchises, whereon you stood, confined 90  
Into an auger's bore.

**MENENIUS** Pray now, your news?  
(*To the tribunes*) You have made fair work, I fear me.  
(*To Cominius*)

Pray, your news.

If Martius should be joined wi'th' Volscians±±

**COMINIUS**  
If? He is their god. He leads them like a thing  
Made by some other deity than nature, 95  
That shapes man better, and they follow him  
Against us brats with no less confidence  
Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,  
Or butchers killing flies.

**MENENIUS** (*to the tribunes*) You have made good work,  
You and your apron-men, you that stood so much 100  
Upon the voice of occupation and  
The breath of garlic-eaters!

**COMINIUS** (*to the tribunes*)  
He'll shake your Rome about your ears.

**MENENIUS**  
As Hercules did shake down mellow fruit.  
(*To the tribunes*) You have made fair work. 105

**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 resists  
Are mocked for valiant ignorance, 110  
And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame him?  
Your enemies and his find something in him.

**MENENIUS** We are all undone unless  
The noble man have mercy.

**COMINIUS** Who shall ask it?  
The tribunes cannot do't, for shame; the people 115  
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  
As those should do that had deserved his hate,  
And therein showed like enemies.

**MENENIUS** 'Tis true. 120  
If he were putting to my house the brand  
That should consume it, I have not the face  
To say 'Beseech you, cease.'  
(*To the tribunes*) You have made fair hands,  
You and your crafts! You have crafted fair!

**COMINIUS** (*to the tribunes*) You have brought 125  
A trembling upon Rome such as was never  
S'incapable of help.

**SICINIUS AND BRUTUS** Say not we brought it.

**MENENIUS** How? Was't we?  
We loved him, but like beasts and cowardly nobles  
Gave way unto your clusters, who did hoot 130  
Him out o'th' city.

**COMINIUS** But I fear  
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 135  
That Rome can make against them.

*Enter a troop of Citizens*

**MENENIUS** Here come the clusters.  
(*To the Citizens*) And is Aufidius with him? You are they  
That made the air unwholesome when you cast

Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at  
Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming, 140  
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.  
If he could burn us all into one coal, 145  
We have deserved it.

**ALL THE CITIZENS** Faith, we hear fearful news.

**FIRST CITIZEN** For mine own part,  
When I said 'banish him' I said 'twas pity.

**SECOND CITIZEN** And so did I. 150

**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.

**COMINIUS**

You're goodly things, you voices.

**MENENIUS** You have made good  
work, 155

You and your cry. Shall's to the Capitol?

**COMINIUS** O, ay, what else?

*Exeunt Menenius and Cominius*

**SICINIUS**

Go, masters, get you home. Be not dismayed.

These are a side that would be glad to have

This true which they so seem to fear. Go home, 160

And show no sign of fear.

**FIRST CITIZEN** The gods be good to us! Come, masters,  
let's home. I ever said we were i'th' wrong when we  
banished him.

**SECOND CITIZEN** So did we all. But come, let's home. 165

*Exeunt Citizens*

**BRUTUS**

I do not like this news.

**SICINIUS** Nor I.

**BRUTUS**

Let's to the Capitol. Would half my wealth

Would buy this for a lie.

**SICINIUS** Pray let's go.

*Exeunt*