

# Coriolanus

## 1.5

*Enter [Roman Soldiers, in retreat, followed by]  
Martius, cursing*

### MARTIUS

All the contagion of the south light on you,  
You shames of Rome! You herd of±±boils and plagues  
Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorred  
Farther than seen, and one infect another  
Against the wind a mile! You souls of geese 5  
That bear the shapes of men, how have you run  
From slaves that apes would beat! Pluto and hell:  
All hurt behind! Backs red, and faces pale  
With flight and agued fear! Mend and charge home,  
Or by the fires of heaven I'll leave the foe 10  
And make my wars on you. Look to't. Come on.  
If you'll stand fast, we'll beat them to their wives,  
As they us to our trenches. Follow.

*[The Romans come forward towards the walls.]  
Another alarum, and [enter the army of the Volsces.]  
Martius beats them back [through] the gates*

So, now the gates are ope. Now prove good seconds.  
'Tis for the followers fortune widens them, 15  
Not for the fliers. Mark me, and do the like.

*He enters the gates*

### FIRST SOLDIER

Foolhardiness! Not I.

### SECOND SOLDIER

Nor I.

*Alarum continues. The gates close, and Martius is  
shut in*

### FIRST SOLDIER

See, they have shut him in.

[THIRD SOLDIER] To th' pot, I warrant him.

*Enter Lartius*

### LARTIUS

What is become of Martius?

[FOURTH SOLDIER] Slain, sir, doubtless.

### FIRST SOLDIER

Following the fliers at the very heels, 20  
With them he enters, who upon the sudden  
Clapped-to their gates. He is himself alone  
To answer all the city.

**LARTIUS** O noble fellow,  
Who sensibly outdares his senseless sword  
And, when it bows, stand'st up! Thou art lost, Martius. 25  
A carbuncle entire, as big as thou art,  
Were not so rich a jewel. Thou wast a soldier  
Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible  
Only in strokes, but with thy grim looks and  
The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds 30  
Thou mad'st thine enemies shake as if the world  
Were feverous and did tremble.

*Enter Martius, bleeding, assaulted by the enemy*

**FIRST SOLDIER** Look, sir.

**LARTIUS** O, 'tis  
Martius!

Let's fetch him off, or make remain alike.

*They fight, and all exeunt into the city*