

Coriolanus

4.5

Music plays. Enter a Servingman

FIRST SERVINGMAN Wine, wine, wine! What service is here? I think our fellows are asleep.

[Exit]

Enter a Second Servingman

SECOND SERVINGMAN Where's Cotus? My master calls for him. Cotus!

Exit

Enter Coriolanus, as before

CORIO LANUS A goodly house. The feast 5
Smells well, but I appear not like a guest.

Enter the First Servingman

FIRST SERVINGMAN What would you have, friend? Whence are you? Here's no place for you. Pray go to the door.

Exit

CORIO LANUS

I have deserved no better entertainment
In being Coriolanus. 10

Enter Second Servingman

SECOND SERVINGMAN Whence are you, sir? Has the porter his eyes in his head, that he gives entrance to such companions? Pray get you out.

CORIO LANUS Away!

SECOND SERVINGMAN Away? Get you away. 15

CORIO LANUS Now thou'rt troublesome.

SECOND SERVINGMAN Are you so brave? I'll have you talked with anon.

Enter Third Servingman. The First meets him

THIRD SERVINGMAN What fellow's this?

FIRST SERVINGMAN A strange one as ever I looked on. I 20
cannot get him out o'th' house. Prithee, call my master to him.

THIRD SERVINGMAN (to Coriolanus) What have you to do here, fellow? Pray you, avoid the house.

CORIO LANUS

Let me but stand. I will not hurt your hearth. 25

THIRD SERVINGMAN What are you?

CORIO LANUS A gentleman.

THIRD SERVINGMAN A marvellous poor one.

CORIO LANUS True, so I am.

THIRD SERVINGMAN Pray you, poor gentleman, take up
some other station. Here's no place for you. Pray you,
avoid. Come.

CORIO LANUS

Follow your function. Go and batten on cold bits.

He pushes him away from him

THIRD SERVINGMAN What, you will not?±±Prithee tell my
master what a strange guest he has here. 35

SECOND SERVINGMAN And I shall.

Exit Second Servingman

THIRD SERVINGMAN Where dwell'st thou?

CORIO LANUS Under the canopy.

THIRD SERVINGMAN Under the canopy?

CORIO LANUS Ay. 40

THIRD SERVINGMAN Where's that?

CORIO LANUS I'th' city of kites and crows.

THIRD SERVINGMAN I'th' city of kites and crows? What an
ass it is! Then thou dwell'st with daws, too?

CORIO LANUS No, I serve not thy master. 45

THIRD SERVINGMAN How, sir? Do you meddle with my
master?

CORIO LANUS Ay, 'tis an honest service than to meddle
with thy mistress. Thou prat'st and prat'st. Serve with
thy trencher. Hence! 50

He beats him away.

Enter Aufidius, with the Second Servingman

AUFIDIUS Where is this fellow?

SECOND SERVINGMAN Here, sir. I'd have beaten him like a
dog but for disturbing the lords within.

[The Servingmen stand aside]

AUFIDIUS

Whence com'st thou? What wouldst thou? Thy name?

Why speak'st not? Speak, man. What's thy name?

CORIO LANUS *[unmuffling his head]* If, Tullus, 55

Not yet thou know'st me, and seeing me dost not
Think me for the man I am, necessity

Commands me name myself.

AUFIDIUS What is thy name?

CORIOLANUS

A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears
And harsh in sound to thine.

AUFIDIUS Say, what's thy name? 60

Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face
Bears a command in't. Though thy tackle's torn,
Thou show'st a noble vessel. What's thy name?

CORIOLANUS

Prepare thy brow to frown. Know'st thou me yet?

AUFIDIUS I know thee not. Thy name? 65

CORIOLANUS

My name is Caius Martius, who hath done
To thee particularly, and to all the Volsces,
Great hurt and mischief. Thereto witness may
My surname Coriolanus. The painful service,
The extreme dangers, and the drops of blood 70
Shed for my thankless country, are requited
But with that surname±±a good memory
And witness of the malice and displeasure
Which thou shouldst bear me. Only that name
remains.

The cruelty and envy of the people, 75
Permitted by our dastard nobles, who
Have all forsook me, hath devoured the rest,
And suffered me by th' voice of slaves to be
Whooped out of Rome. Now this extremity
Hath brought me to thy hearth. Not out of hope±± 80

Mistake me not±±to save my life, for if
I had feared death, of all the men i'th' world
I would have 'voided thee, but in mere spite
To be full quit of those my banishers
Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast 85
A heart of wreak in thee, that wilt revenge
Thine own particular wrongs and stop those maims
Of shame seen through thy country, speed thee
straight,

And make my misery serve thy turn. So use it
That my revengeful services may prove 90

As benefits to thee; for I will fight
 Against my cankered country with the spleen
 Of all the under-fiends. But if so be
 Thou dar'st not this, and that to prove more fortunes
 Thou'rt tired, then, in a word, I also am 95
 Longer to live most weary, and present
 My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice,
 Which not to cut would show thee but a fool,
 Since I have ever followed thee with hate,
 Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast, 100
 And cannot live but to thy shame unless
 It be to do thee service.

AUFIDIUS O Martius, Martius!
 Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart
 A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter
 Should from yon cloud speak divine things 105
 And say ` 'Tis true', I'd not believe them more
 Than thee, all-noble Martius. Let me twine
 Mine arms about that body whereagainst
 My graineÁd ash an hundred times hath broke,
 And scarred the moon with splinters.
(He embraces Coriolanus)

Here I clip 110
 The anvil of my sword, and do contest
 As hotly and as nobly with thy love
 As ever in ambitious strength I did
 Contend against thy valour. Know thou first,
 I loved the maid I married; never man 115
 Sighed truer breath. But that I see thee here,
 Thou noble thing, more dances my rapt heart
 Than when I first my wedded mistress saw
 Bestride my threshold. Why, thou Mars, I tell thee
 We have a power on foot, and I had purpose 120
 Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn,
 Or lose mine arm for't. Thou hast beat me out
 Twelve several times, and I have nightly since
 Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me±±
 We have been down together in my sleep, 125
 Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat±±

And waked half dead with nothing. Worthy Martius,
Had we no other quarrel else to Rome but that
Thou art thence banished, we would muster all
From twelve to seventy, and, pouring war 130
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,
Like a bold flood o'erbear't. O, come, go in,
And take our friendly senators by th' hands
Who now are here taking their leaves of me,
Who am prepared against your territories, 135
Though not for Rome itself.

CORIOLANUS You bless me, gods.

AUFIDIUS

Therefore, most absolute sir, if thou wilt have
The leading of thine own revenges, take
Th'one half of my commission and set down±±
As best thou art experienced, since thou know'st 140
Thy country's strength and weakness±±thine own ways:
Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,
Or rudely visit them in parts remote
To fright them ere destroy. But come in.
Let me commend thee first to those that shall 145
Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes!
And more a friend than ere an enemy;
Yet, Martius, that was much. Your hand. Most
welcome!

Exeunt

[The two Servingmen come forward]

FIRST SERVINGMAN Here's a strange alteration!

SECOND SERVINGMAN By my hand, I had thought to have 150
strucken him with a cudgel, and yet my mind gave me
his clothes made a false report of him.

FIRST SERVINGMAN What an arm he has! He turned me
about with his finger and his thumb as one would set
up a top. 155

SECOND SERVINGMAN Nay, I knew by his face that there
was something in him. He had, sir, a kind of face,
methought±±I cannot tell how to term it.

FIRST SERVINGMAN He had so, looking, as it were±±would
I were hanged but I thought there was more in him 160
than I could think.

SECOND SERVINGMAN So did I, I'll be sworn. He is simply
the rarest man i'th' world.

FIRST SERVINGMAN I think he is yet a greater soldier than
he you wot on. 165

SECOND SERVINGMAN Who, my master?

FIRST SERVINGMAN Nay, it's no matter for that.

SECOND SERVINGMAN Worth six on him.

FIRST SERVINGMAN Nay, not so, neither; but I take him
to be the greater soldier. 170

SECOND SERVINGMAN Faith, look you, one cannot tell how
to say that. For the defence of a town our general is
excellent.

FIRST SERVINGMAN Ay, and for an assault too.

Enter the Third Servingman

THIRD SERVINGMAN O, slaves, I can tell you news±±news, 175
you rascals!

FIRST AND SECOND SERVINGMEN What, what, what? Let's
partake.

THIRD SERVINGMAN I would not be a Roman of all nations.
I had as lief be a condemned man. 180

FIRST AND SECOND SERVINGMEN Wherefore? Wherefore?

THIRD SERVINGMAN Why, here's he that was wont to
thwack our general, Caius Martius.

FIRST SERVINGMAN Why do you say `thwack our general'?

THIRD SERVINGMAN I do not say `thwack our general'; but 185
he was always good enough for him.

SECOND SERVINGMAN Come, we are fellows and friends. He
was ever too hard for him. I have heard him say so
himself.

FIRST SERVINGMAN He was too hard for him directly. To 190
say the truth on't, before Corioles he scotched him and
notched him like a carbonado.

SECOND SERVINGMAN An he had been cannibally given, he
might have broiled and eaten him too.

FIRST SERVINGMAN But more of thy news! 195

THIRD SERVINGMAN Why, he is so made on here within
as if he were son and heir to Mars; set at upper end
o'th' table, no question asked him by any of the senators
but they stand bald before him. Our general himself
makes a mistress of him, sanctifies himself with's hand, 200

and turns up the white o'th' eye to his discourse. But the bottom of the news is, our general is cut i'th' middle, and but one half of what he was yesterday, for the other has half by the entreaty and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says, and sowl the porter of 205 Rome gates by th' ears. He will mow all down before him, and leave his passage polled.

SECOND SERVINGMAN And he's as like to do't as any man I can imagine.

THIRD SERVINGMAN Do't? He will do't; for look you, sir, 210 he has as many friends as enemies; which friends, sir, as it were durst not±±look you, sir±±show themselves, as we term it, his friends whilst he's in dejectitude.

FIRST SERVINGMAN Dejectitude? What's that?

THIRD SERVINGMAN But when they shall see, sir, his crest 215 up again and the man in blood, they will out of their burrows like conies after rain, and revel all with him.

FIRST SERVINGMAN But when goes this forward?

THIRD SERVINGMAN Tomorrow, today, presently. You shall have the drum struck up this afternoon. 'Tis as it were 220 a parcel of their feast, and to be executed ere they wipe their lips.

SECOND SERVINGMAN Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers. 225

FIRST SERVINGMAN Let me have war, say I. It exceeds peace as far as day does night. It's sprightly walking, audible and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible; a getter of more bastard children than war's a destroyer of men. 230

SECOND SERVINGMAN 'Tis so, and as war in some sort may be said to be a ravisher, so it cannot be denied but peace is a great maker of cuckolds.

FIRST SERVINGMAN Ay, and it makes men hate one another. 235

THIRD SERVINGMAN Reason; because they then less need one another. The wars for my money. I hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians.

[A sound within]

They are rising, they are rising.

FIRST AND SECOND SERVINGMEN <i>Exeunt</i>	In, in, in, in.	240
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