

# Coriolanus

## 3.3

*Enter Sicinius and Brutus*

**BRUTUS**

In this point charge him home: that he affects  
Tyrannical power. If he evade us there,  
Enforce him with his envy to the people,  
And that the spoil got on the Antiats  
Was ne'er distributed.

*Enter an Aedile*

What, will he come?

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**AEDILE**

He's coming.

**BRUTUS** How accompanied?

**AEDILE**

With old Menenius, and those senators  
That always favoured him.

**SICINIUS** Have you a catalogue  
Of all the voices that we have procured,  
Set down by th' poll?

**AEDILE** I have, 'tis ready.

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**SICINIUS**

Have you collected them by tribes?

**AEDILE**

I have.

**SICINIUS**

Assemble presently the people hither,  
And when they hear me say `It shall be so  
I'th' right and strength o'th' commons', be it either  
For death, for fine, or banishment, then let them, 15  
If I say `Fine', cry `Fine!', if `Death', cry `Death!',  
Insisting on the old prerogative  
And power i'th' truth o'th' cause.

**AEDILE**

I shall inform them.

**BRUTUS**

And when such time they have begun to cry,  
Let them not cease, but with a din confused 20  
Enforce the present execution  
Of what we chance to sentence.

**AEDILE** Very well.

**SICINIUS**

Make them be strong, and ready for this hint  
When we shall hap to give't them.

**BRUTUS** *[to the Aedile]* Go about it.

*[Exit Aedile]*

Put him to choler straight. He hath been used 25  
Ever to conquer and to have his worth  
Of contradiction. Being once chafed, he cannot  
Be reined again to temperance. Then he speaks  
What's in his heart, and that is there which looks  
With us to break his neck. 30

*Enter Coriolanus, Menenius, and Cominius, with  
other [Senators and Patricians]*

**SICINIUS** Well, here he comes.

**MENENIUS** *(to Coriolanus)* Calmly, I do beseech you.

**CORIOLANUS**

Ay, as an hostler that for th' poorest piece  
Will bear the knave by th' volume.±±Th'honoured  
gods

Keep Rome in safety and the chairs of justice 35  
Supplied with worthy men, plant love among's,  
Throng our large temples with the shows of peace,  
And not our streets with war!

**FIRST SENATOR** Amen, amen.

**MENENIUS** A noble wish. 40

*Enter the Aedile with the Citizens*

**SICINIUS**

Draw near, ye people.

**AEDILE** List to your tribunes. Audience!

Peace, I say.

**CORIOLANUS** First, hear me speak.

**SICINIUS AND BRUTUS** Well, say.±±Peace ho!

**CORIOLANUS**

Shall I be charged no further than this present?  
Must all determine here?

**SICINIUS** I do demand

If you submit you to the people's voices, 45  
Allow their officers, and are content  
To suffer lawful censure for such faults

As shall be proved upon you.

**CORIO LANUS** I am content.

**MENENIUS**

Lo, citizens, he says he is content.

The warlike service he has done, consider. Think 50

Upon the wounds his body bears, which show

Like graves i'th' holy churchyard.

**CORIO LANUS** Scratches with briers,

Scars to move laughter only.

**MENENIUS** Consider further

That when he speaks not like a citizen,

You find him like a soldier. Do not take 55

His rougher accents for malicious sounds,

But, as I say, such as become a soldier

Rather than envy you.

**COMINIUS** Well, well, no more.

**CORIO LANUS** What is the matter 60

That, being passed for consul with full voice,

I am so dishonoured that the very hour

You take it off again?

**SICINIUS** Answer to us.

**CORIO LANUS** Say, then. 'Tis true I ought so. 65

**SICINIUS**

We charge you that you have contrived to take

From Rome all seasoned office, and to wind

Yourself into a power tyrannical,

For which you are a traitor to the people.

**CORIO LANUS**

How, traitor?

**MENENIUS** Nay, temperately±±your promise. 70

**CORIO LANUS**

The fires i'th' lowest hell fold in the people!

Call me their traitor, thou injurious tribune?

Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths,

In thy hands clutched as many millions, in

Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say 75

`Thou liest' unto thee with a voice as free

As I do pray the gods.

**SICINIUS** Mark you this, people?

**ALL [THE CITIZENS]** To th' rock, to th' rock with him!

**SICINIUS** Peace! 80  
 We need not put new matter to his charge.  
 What you have seen him do and heard him speak,  
 Beating your officers, cursing yourselves,  
 Opposing laws with strokes, and here defying  
 Those whose great power must try him±± 85  
 Even this, so criminal and in such capital kind,  
 Deserves th'extremest death.

**BRUTUS** But since he hath  
 Served well for Rome±±

**CORIOLANUS** What do you prate of service?

**BRUTUS**  
 I talk of that that know it.

**CORIOLANUS** You?

**MENENIUS**  
 Is this the promise that you made your mother? 90

**COMINIUS**  
 Know, I pray you±±

**CORIOLANUS** I'll know no further.  
 Let them pronounce the steep Tarpeian death,  
 Vagabond exile, flaying, pent to linger  
 But with a grain a day, I would not buy  
 Their mercy at the price of one fair word, 95  
 Nor check my courage for what they can give  
 To have't with saying `Good morrow'.

**SICINIUS** For that he has,  
 As much as in him lies, from time to time  
 Inveighed against the people, seeking means  
 To pluck away their power, as now at last 100  
 Given hostile strokes, and that not in the presence  
 Of dreaded justice, but on the ministers  
 That doth distribute it, in the name o'th' people,  
 And in the power of us the tribunes, we  
 E'en from this instant banish him our city 105  
 In peril of precipitation  
 From off the rock Tarpeian, never more  
 To enter our Rome gates. I'th' people's name  
 I say it shall be so.

**ALL [THE CITIZENS]** It shall be so,  
 It shall be so. Let him away. He's banished, 110

And it shall be so.

**COMINIUS**

Hear me, my masters and my common friends.

**SICINIUS**

He's sentenced. No more hearing.

**COMINIUS**

Let me speak.

I have been consul, and can show for Rome

Her enemies' marks upon me. I do love 115

My country's good with a respect more tender,

More holy and profound, than mine own life,

My dear wife's estimate, her womb's increase,

And treasure of my loins. Then if I would

Speak that±±

**SICINIUS**

We know your drift. Speak what? 120

**BRUTUS**

There's no more to be said, but he is banished,

As enemy to the people and his country.

It shall be so.

**ALL [THE CITIZENS]**

It shall be so, it shall be so.

**CORIOLANUS**

You common cry of curs, whose breath I hate

As reek o'th' rotten fens, whose loves I prize 125

As the dead carcasses of unburied men

That do corrupt my air: I banish you.

And here remain with your uncertainty.

Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts;

Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes, 130

Fan you into despair! Have the power still

To banish your defenders, till at length

Your ignorance±±which finds not till it feels±±

Making but reservation of yourselves,

Still your own foes, deliver you 135

As most abated captives to some nation

That won you without blows! Despising

For you the city, thus I turn my back.

There is a world elsewhere.

*Exeunt Coriolanus, Cominius, and Menenius,  
with the rest of the Patricians. The Citizens  
all shout, and throw up their caps*

**AEDILE**

The people's enemy is gone, is gone. 140  
**ALL THE CITIZENS**

Our enemy is banished, he is gone. Hoo-oo!  
**SICINIUS**

Go see him out at gates, and follow him  
As he hath followed you, with all despite.  
Give him deserved vexation. Let a guard  
Attend us through the city. 145

**ALL THE CITIZENS**  
Come, come, let's see him out at gates. Come.  
The gods preserve our noble tribunes! Come.  
*Exeunt*