



The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries and fifes,
Tabours and cymbals and the shouting Romans,
Make the sun dance. Hark you!

[A shout within]

MENENIUS This is good news:
I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia
Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,
A city full; of tribunes, such as you,
A sea and land full. You have pray'd well to-day:
This morning for ten thousand of your throats
I'd not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy!

[Music still, with shouts]

SICINIUS First, the gods bless you for your tidings; next,
Accept my thankfulness.

Second Messenger Sir, we have all
Great cause to give great thanks.

SICINIUS They are near the city?

Second Messenger Almost at point to enter.

SICINIUS We will meet them,
And help the joy.

[Exeunt]

Scene V

The same. A street near the gate.

[Enter two Senators with VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA,
VALERIA, &c. passing over the stage,
followed by Patricians and others]

First Senator Behold our patroness, the life of Rome!
Call all your tribes together, praise the gods,
And make triumphant fires; strew flowers before them:
Unshout the noise that banish'd Marcius,
Repeal him with the welcome of his mother;
Cry 'Welcome, ladies, welcome!'

All Welcome, ladies, Welcome!

[A flourish with drums and trumpets. Exeunt]

Scene VI

Antium. A public place.

[Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, with Attendants]

AUFIDIUS Go tell the lords o' the city I am here:
Deliver them this paper: having read it,
Bid them repair to the market place; where I,

Even in theirs and in the commons' ears,
Will vouch the truth of it. Him I accuse
The city ports by this hath enter'd and
Intends to appear before the people, hoping
To purge herself with words: dispatch.

[Exeunt Attendants]

[Enter three or four Conspirators of AUFIDIUS' faction]

Most welcome!

First Conspirator How is it with our general?

AUFIDIUS Even so
As with a man by his own alms empoison'd,
And with his charity slain.

Second Conspirator Most noble sir,
If you do hold the same intent wherein
You wish'd us parties, we'll deliver you
Of your great danger.

AUFIDIUS Sir, I cannot tell:
We must proceed as we do find the people.

Third Conspirator The people will remain uncertain whilst
'Twixt you there's difference; but the fall of either
Makes the survivor heir of all.

AUFIDIUS I know it;
And my pretext to strike at him admits
A good construction. I raised him, and I pawn'd
Mine honour for his truth: who being so heighten'd,
He water'd his new plants with dews of flattery,
Seducing so my friends; and, to this end,
He bow'd his nature, never known before
But to be rough, unswayable and free.

Third Conspirator Sir, his stoutness
When he did stand for consul, which he lost
By lack of stooping,--

AUFIDIUS That I would have spoke of:
Being banish'd for't, he came unto my hearth;
Presented to my knife his throat: I took him;
Made him joint-servant with me; gave him way
In all his own desires; nay, let him choose
Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,
My best and freshest men; served his designments
In mine own person; help to reap the fame
Which he did end all his; and took some pride
To do myself this wrong: till, at the last,
I seem'd his follower, not partner, and
He waged me with his countenance, as if
I had been mercenary.

First Conspirator So he did, my lord:
The army marvell'd at it, and, in the last,
When he had carried Rome and that we look'd

For no less spoil than glory,--

AUFIDIUS There was it:
For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him.
At a few drops of women's rheum, which are
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour
Of our great action: therefore shall he die,
And I'll renew me in his fall. But, hark!

[Drums and trumpets sound, with great shouts of
the People]

First Conspirator Your native town you enter'd like a post,
And had no welcomes home: but he returns,
Splitting the air with noise.

Second Conspirator And patient fools,
Whose children he hath slain, their base throats tear
With giving him glory.

Third Conspirator Therefore, at your vantage,
Ere he express himself, or move the people
With what he would say, let him feel your sword,
Which we will second. When he lies along,
After your way his tale pronounced shall bury
His reasons with his body.

AUFIDIUS Say no more:
Here come the lords.

[Enter the Lords of the city]

All The Lords You are most welcome home.

AUFIDIUS I have not deserved it.
But, worthy lords, have you with heed perused
What I have written to you?

Lords We have.

First Lord And grieve to hear't.
What faults he made before the last, I think
Might have found easy fines: but there to end
Where he was to begin and give away
The benefit of our levies, answering us
With our own charge, making a treaty where
There was a yielding,--this admits no excuse.

AUFIDIUS He approaches: you shall hear him.

[Enter CORIOLANUS, marching with drum and
colours; commoners being with him]

CORIOLANUS Hail, lords! I am return'd your soldier,
No more infected with my country's love
Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting
Under your great command. You are to know
That prosperously I have attempted and
With bloody passage led your wars even to
The gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought home

Do more than counterpoise a full third part
The charges of the action. We have made peace
With no less honour to the Antiates
Than shame to the Romans: and we here deliver,
Subscribed by the consuls and patricians,
Together with the seal o' the senate, what
We have compounded on.

AUFIDIUS Read it not, noble lords;
 But tell the traitor, in the high'st degree
 He hath abused your powers.

CORIO LANUS Traitor! how now!

AUFIDIUS Ay, traitor, Marcius!

CORIO LANUS Marcius!

AUFIDIUS Ay, Marcius, Caius Marcius: dost thou think
 I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name
 Coriolanus in Corioli?
 You lords and heads o' the state, perfidiously
 He has betray'd your business, and given up,
 For certain drops of salt, your city Rome,
 I say 'your city,' to his wife and mother;
 Breaking his oath and resolution like
 A twist of rotten silk, never admitting
 Counsel o' the war, but at his nurse's tears
 He whined and roar'd away your victory,
 That pages blush'd at him and men of heart
 Look'd wondering each at other.

CORIO LANUS Hear'st thou, Mars?

AUFIDIUS Name not the god, thou boy of tears!

CORIO LANUS Ha!

AUFIDIUS No more.

CORIO LANUS Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
 Too great for what contains it. Boy! O slave!
 Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever
 I was forced to scold. Your judgments, my grave lords,
 Must give this cur the lie: and his own notion--
 Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him; that
 Must bear my beating to his grave--shall join
 To thrust the lie unto him.

First Lord Peace, both, and hear me speak.

CORIO LANUS Cut me to pieces, Volscas; men and lads,
 Stain all your edges on me. Boy! false hound!
 If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
 That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
 Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli:
 Alone I did it. Boy!

AUFIDIUS Why, noble lords,
 Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,

Which was your shame, by this unholy braggart,
'Fore your own eyes and ears?

All Conspirators Let him die for't.

All The People 'Tear him to pieces.' 'Do it presently.' 'He kill'd
my son.' 'My daughter.' 'He killed my cousin
Marcus.' 'He killed my father.'

Second Lord Peace, ho! no outrage: peace!
The man is noble and his fame folds-in
This orb o' the earth. His last offences to us
Shall have judicious hearing. Stand, Aufidius,
And trouble not the peace.

CORIOLANUS O that I had him,
With six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe,
To use my lawful sword!

AUFIDIUS Insolent villain!

All Conspirators Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!

[The Conspirators draw, and kill CORIOLANUS:
AUFIDIUS stands on his body]

Lords Hold, hold, hold, hold!

AUFIDIUS My noble masters, hear me speak.

First Lord O Tullus,--

Second Lord Thou hast done a deed whereat valour will weep.

Third Lord Tread not upon him. Masters all, be quiet;
Put up your swords.

AUFIDIUS My lords, when you shall know--as in this rage,
Provoked by him, you cannot--the great danger
Which this man's life did owe you, you'll rejoice
That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours
To call me to your senate, I'll deliver
Myself your loyal servant, or endure
Your heaviest censure.

First Lord Bear from hence his body;
And mourn you for him: let him be regarded
As the most noble corse that ever herald
Did follow to his urn.

Second Lord His own impatience
Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame.
Let's make the best of it.

AUFIDIUS My rage is gone;
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up.
Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers; I'll be one.
Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully:
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one,

Which to this hour bewail the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble memory. Assist.

[Exeunt, bearing the body of CORIOLANUS. A dead
march sounded]