

The Tragedy of Coriolanus:

Actus Primus. Scena Prima.

Enter a Company of Mutinous Citizens, with Staves, Clubs, and other weapons.

1. Citizen. Before we proceed any further, heere me speake.

All. Speake, speake.

1. Cit. You are all resolu'd rather to dy then to famish?

All. Resolu'd, resolu'd.

1. Cit. First you know, Caius Martius is chiefe enemy to the people.

All. We know't, we know't.

1. Cit. Let vs kill him, and wee'l haue Corne at our own price. Is't a Verdict?

All. No more talking on't; Let it be done, away, away

2. Cit. One word, good Citizens.

1. Cit. We are accounted poore Citizens, the Patricians good; whar Authority surfers one, would releue vs. If they would yeelde vs but the superfluitie while it were wholsome, wee might guesse they releued vs humanely: But they thinke we are too deere, the leanness that afflicts vs, the obiect of our misery, is as an inuentory to particularize their abundance, our sufferance is a gaue to them. Let vs reuenge this with our Pikes, ere we become Rakes. For the Gods know, I speake this in hunger for Bread, not in thirst for Reuenge.

2. Cit. Would you proceede especially against Caius Martius.

All. Against him first: He's a very dog to the Commonalty.

2. Cit. Consider you what Seruices he ha's done for his Country?

1. Cit. Very well, and could bee content to giue him good report for't, but that hee payes himselfe with being proud.

All. Nay, but speake not maliciously.

1. Cit. I say vnto you, what he hath done Famoullie, he did it to that end: though soft conscienc'd men can be content to say it was for his Countrey, he did it to please his Mother, and to be partly proud, which he is, euen to the altitude of his vertue.

2. Cit. What he cannot helpe in his Nature, you account a Vice in him: You must in no way say he is couetous.

1. Cit. If I must not, I neede not be barren of Accusations he hath faults (with surplus) to tyre in repetition.

Shows within. What showts are these? The other side a'th City is risen: why stay we prating heere? To th'Capitoll.

All. Come, come.

1. Cit. Soft, who comes heere?

Enter Menenius Agrippa, one that hath alwayes lou'd the people.

1. Cit. He's one honest enough, wold al the rest wer so.

Men. What work's my Counterimen in hand? Where go you with Bats and Clubs? The matter Speake I pray you.

2. Cit. Our busines is not vnknowne to th' Senat, they haue had inkling this fortnight what we intend to do, w now wee'l shew em in deeds: they say poore Suters haue strong breaths, they shal know we haue strong arms too.

Men. Why Masters, my good Friends, mine honest Neighbours, will you vndo your selues?

2. Cit. We cannot Sir, we are vndone already.

Men. I tell you Friends, most charitable care Haue the Patricians of you for your wants.

Your suffering in this dearth, you may as well Strike at the Hesuen with your stauies, as lift them Against the Roman State, whose course will on The way it takes: cracking ten thousand Curbes Of more strong linke assunder, then can euer Appeare in your impediment. Fog the Dearth, The Gods, not the Patricians make it, and Your knees to them (not armes) must helpe. Alacke, You are transported by Calamity

Tbether, where more attends you, and you slander The Helmes o'th State; who care for you like Fathers, When you curse them, as Enemies.

2. Cit. Care for vs? True indeed, they nere car'd for vs yet. Suffer vs to famish, and their Store-houfes cramm'd with Graine: Make Edicts for Vsurie, to support Vsurers; repeale daily any wholsome Act established against the rich, and prouide more piercing Statutes daily, to chaine vp and restraine the poore. If the Warres eate vs not vppe, they will; and there's all the loue they beare vs.

Men. Either you must Confesse your selues wondrous Malicious, Or be accus'd of Folly. I shall tell you A pretty Tale, it may be you haue heard it, But since it serues my purpose, I will venture To scale't a little more.

2. Citizen. Well,

He heare it Sir: yet you must not thinke To fobbe off our disgrace with a tale: But and't please you deliuer.

Men. There was a time, when all the bodyes members Rebell'd against the Belly; thus accus'd it: That onely like a Gulfe it did remaine

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Shakespeare, William. The Tragedy of Coriolanus. In Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies: published according to the true originall copies. London: Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, 1623. Folger STC 22273 Fo.1 no.19

Shakespeare's First Folio (Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies : published according to the true originall copies. London: Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, 1623) contained thirty-six of Shakespeare's plays. Coriolanus is among the Tragedies. There was no printing of Coriolanus within Shakespeare's lifetime. Without its publication in the First Folio, it would have been lost.

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