

## Coriolanus abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 1

### Pleading

**Situation:** Coriolanus says, as he speaks of Brutus and Sicinius, “These are the tribunes of the people, the tongues o’ th’ common mouth. I despise them.” He proceeds to lecture the Roman Senate over his disdain for the plebeians, believing they have too much influence on public policy. Menenius counsels Coriolanus to soften his criticism of the commoners, but he ignores him.

CORIOLANUS: I say they nourished disobedience, fed the ruin of the state.

BRUTUS: Why, shall the people give one that speaks thus their voice?

CORIOLANUS: I’ll give my reasons, more worthier than their voices.

### Coriolanus to Senators, No. 2

They know the corn’s a gift, they so remiss  
In their duties, ne’er offering service  
For’t. When called to th’ war, even when  
The state’s heart was at risk, they could not seize  
The courage to pass the gates. Even then,  
When they showed some valor, their mutinies  
Spoke not for them. Tell me how this many  
Faced crowd will digest the state’s courtesy?  
They’ll say, “that when the frightened Senate meets,  
They’ll meet to do as we request” is clear!  
Thus, we debase the nature of our seats,  
And let the rabble call our cares fear;  
Which in time will invade our very souls,  
Allowing the crows to peck the eagles.

MENENIUS: Come, enough.

BRUTUS: Enough, with over measure.

CORIOLANUS: No, take more! What may be sworn by, both divine and human, confirms what I end withal!

### Coriolanus to Senators, No. 3

This double worship, where one part disdains  
With cause, and the other with no cause rains  
Downs insults; where wisdom, title cannot  
Conclude but by the yea and nay of those  
Of ignorance, doth neglect actions sought  
To serve them, giving rise to griefs that rose  
From their frivolity. I beseech you:

Pluck out the multitudinous tongue; do  
Not let them lick the sweet, their poison. Less  
Fearful be; your hesitance mangles true  
Judgment and denies the state the wholeness  
That befits it; the Senate having too  
Little power to do good, or use wit  
As it should, for the ill which o'erbears it.

BRUTUS: He has said enough.

SICINIUS: He has spoken like a traitor, and shall answer as traitors do.

CORIOLANUS: What should the people do with these bald tribunes on whom depending; their obedience fails to th' greater bench?