

Coriolanus abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 3

Pride

Situation: With an attempt at humility, Coriolanus enters the Roman Forum where one citizen says, “You have deserved nobly of your country, and you have not deserved noble.” Another citizen says, “You have not indeed loved the common people,” to which the first adds “We hope to find you our friend, and therefore give you our voices heartily.” To his credit, Coriolanus remains silent.

CORIOLANUS: I will make much of your voices, and so trouble you no further.

BOTH: The gods give you joy, sir, heartily!

They exit.

Coriolanus to himself

Most sweet voices! Better it is to die;
Better to be alone and starve than fly
To those for that which we do deserve. Why
In this humble toga should I stand here
And beg to every Rob and Dick that cry
Testaments, needlessly? Custom says we're
To do it. If we did that which custom
Wills, the unswept dust of past time and some
Of history's errors would be too highly
Heaped for truth to o'erpeer. Rather than play
The fool, let high office and honor be
Bestowed on one who would thus do. This day
I've suffered their voices and am half through;
One part endured, the other will I do.

Three citizens enter.

CORIOLANUS: Your voices! Indeed, I would be consul.

SIXTH CITIZEN: He has done nobly, and cannot go without any honest man's voice.

SEVENTH CITIZEN: Therefore let him be consul.

ALL: Amen, amen. God save thee, noble consul!

They exit.

CORIOLANUS: Worthy voices!