

Shakespeare's Dysfunctional Families

Week 5

Henry IV Part One

Act 3 Scene 2. London. The palace.

Prince Henry) Hal answers his father's summons to the Palace – the episode parodied by Falstaff in 2.4 is now enacted for real.

Hollow Crown: Palace intro. 53.34min.

→ 1.00.26

Enter KING HENRY IV, PRINCE HENRY, and others

KING HENRY IV

Lords, give us leave; the Prince of Wales and I
Must have some **private conference**; but be near at hand,
For we shall presently have need of you.

Exeunt Lords

I know not whether **God will have it so**,
For **some displeasing service** I have done,
That, in his **secret doom**, out of my blood
He'll breed **revengement and a scourge** for me;
But thou dost in thy passages of life
Make me believe that **thou art only mark'd**
For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven
To punish my mistreadings. Tell me else,
Could such inordinate and **low desires**,
Such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts,¹
Such barren pleasures, **rude** society,
As thou art match'd withal and **grafted to**,²
Accompany **the greatness of thy blood**
And **hold their level** with **thy princely heart**a?

PRINCE HENRY

So please your majesty, I would I could
Quit all offences with as clear excuse
As well as I am doubtless **I can purge**
Myself of many I am charged withal:
Yet such extenuation let me beg,³
As, in reproof of **many tales** devised,

¹ **attempts**: escapades.

² **match'd withal**: associated with

³ **extenuation**: mitigation

which oft the ear of greatness needs must hear,
 By smiling pick-thanks and base news-mongers,⁴
 I may, for some things true, wherein my youth
 Hath faulty wander'd and irregular,
 Find pardon on my true submission.

KING HENRY IV

God pardon thee! yet let me wonder, Harry,
 At thy affections, which do hold a wing
 Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors.
 Thy place in council thou hast rudely lost,
 Which by thy younger brother is supplied,⁵
 And art almost an alien to the hearts
 Of all the court and princes of my blood:
 The hope and expectation of thy time⁶
 Is ruin'd, and the soul of every man
 Prophetically doth forethink thy fall.
 Had I so lavish of my presence been,
 So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,
 So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
 Had still kept loyal to possession
 And left me in reputeless banishment,
 A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.
 By being seldom seen, I could not stir
 But like a comet I was wonder'd at;
 That men would tell their children 'This is he;'
 Others would say 'Where, which is Bolingbroke?'
 And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,⁷
 And dress'd myself in such humility
 That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
 Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,
 Even in the presence of the crowned king.
 Thus did I keep my person fresh and new;
 My presence, like a robe pontifical,
 Ne'er seen but wonder'd at: and so my state,
 Seldom but sumptuous, showed like a feast
 And won by rareness such solemnity.
 The skipping king,⁸ he ambled up and down
 With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,⁹

⁴ **pick-thanks**: sycophantic informers

⁵ i.e. John of Lancaster.

⁶ **of thy time**: for your life

⁷ **I stole all courtesy from heaven**: I took on a manner of almost godlike graciousness

⁸ **The skipping king** – i.e. King Richard II whom Bolingbroke supplanted.

⁹ **rash**: superficial; **bavin** is brushwood that is easily kindled but quickly burns up

Soon kindled and soon burnt; **carded his state**,¹⁰
Mingled his royalty with capering fools,
 Had his **great name profaned** with their scorns
 And gave his countenance,¹¹ against his name,
 To laugh at gibing boys and **stand the push**
Of every beardless vain comparative,¹²
 Grew a companion to the common streets,
Enfeoff'd himself to popularity;¹³
 That, being daily **swallow'd** by men's eyes,
 They **surfeited with honey** and began
 To **loathe the taste** of sweetness, whereof a little
 More than a little is by much too much.
 So when he had occasion to be seen,
 He was but **as the cuckoo is in June**,
Heard, not regarded; seen, but with such eyes
 As, sick and **blunted with community**,
 Afford **no extraordinary gaze**,
 Such as is bent on **sun-like majesty**
 When it **shines seldom** in admiring eyes;
 But rather **drowzed** and hung their eyelids down,
Slept in his face¹⁴ and render'd such aspect
 As cloudy¹⁵ men use to their adversaries,
 Being **with his presence glutt'd, gorged and full**.
And in that very line,¹⁶ Harry, **standest thou**;
 For thou has **lost thy princely privilege**
With vile participation: not an eye
 But is **a-weary of thy common sight**,
Save mine, which hath desired to see thee more;
 Which now doth that I would not have it do,
Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.

PRINCE HENRY

I shall hereafter, my thrice gracious lord,
Be more myself.¹⁷

KING HENRY IV

¹⁰ **carded his state**: debased his dignity

¹¹ **countenance**: authority

¹² **comparative**: one who mocks another with derisive comparisons

¹³ **Enfeoff'd**: (under the feudal system) give (someone) freehold property or land in exchange for their pledged service; committed

¹⁴ **face**: presence

¹⁵ **cloudy**: sullen

¹⁶ **line**: category, class

¹⁷ **more myself**: behave as my birth and position suggest I should

For all the world
 As thou art to this hour was Richard then
 When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh,
 And even as I was then is Percy now.¹⁸
 Now, by my sceptre and my soul to boot,
 He hath more worthy interest to the state¹⁹
 Than thou the shadow of succession;²⁰
 For of no right, nor colour like to right,²¹
 He doth fill fields with harness in the realm,
 Turns head against the lion's armed jaws,²²
 And, being no more in debt to years than thou,
 Leads ancient lords and reverend bishops on
 To bloody battles and to bruising arms.²³
 What never-dying honour hath he got
 Against renowned Douglas! whose high deeds,
 Whose hot incursions and great name in arms
 Holds from all soldiers chief majority
 And military title capital²⁴
 Through all the kingdoms that acknowledge Christ:
 Thrice hath this Hotspur, Mars in swathing clothes,
 This infant warrior, in his enterprises
 Discomfited great Douglas, ta'en him once,
 Enlarged him and made a friend of him,
 To fill the mouth of deep defiance up²⁵
 And shake the peace and safety of our throne.
 And what say you to this? Percy, Northumberland,
 The Archbishop's grace of York, Douglas, Mortimer,
 Capitulate against us and are up.
 But wherefore do I tell these news to thee?
 Why, Harry, do I tell thee of my foes,
 Which art my near'st and dearest enemy?
 Thou that art like enough, through vassal fear,²⁶
 Base inclination and the start of spleen²⁷
 To fight against me under Percy's pay,
 To dog his heels and curtsy at his frowns,
 To show how much thou art degenerate.

¹⁸ **Percy** – i.e. Harry Percy [aka 'Hotspur'].

¹⁹ **worthy interest**: valid claim

²⁰ **the shadow of succession**: a poor imitation of a successor

²¹ **colour like to**: semblance of

²² **Turns head**: leads an army

²³ **bruising arms**: injurious weapons

²⁴ **chief majority// And military title capital**: the reputation for martial pre-eminence

²⁵ **To fill the mouth of deep defiance up**: to complete the number of those opposing us

²⁶ **vassal**: base, reprehensible

²⁷ **start of spleen**: fit of bad temper

PRINCE HENRY

Do not think so; **you shall not find it so**:
 And **God forgive them** that so much have sway'd
 Your majesty's good thoughts away from me!
I will redeem all this **on Percy's head**
 And in the closing of some **glorious day**²⁸
 Be bold to tell you that **I am your son**;
 When I will **wear a garment all of blood**
 And **stain my favours**²⁹ in a bloody mask,
 Which, **wash'd away, shall scour my shame with it**:
 And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,³⁰
 That **this same child of honour and renown**,
This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,
 And **your unthought-of Harry** chance to meet.
For every honour sitting on his helm,
Would they were multitudes, and on my head
My shames redoubled! for the time will come,
 That I shall make **this northern youth** exchange
 His **glorious deeds for my indignities**.
 Percy is **but my factor**, good my lord,
 To **engross up glorious deeds on my behalf**;
 And I will call him to so **strict account**,
 That he shall **render every glory up**,
 Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,³¹
 Or **I will tear the reckoning** from his heart.³²
 This, **in the name of God**, I promise here:
 The which **if He be pleased** I shall perform,
 I do beseech your majesty may **salve**
The long-grown wounds of my intemperance:³³
If not, the end of life cancels all bands;³⁴
 And I will die a hundred thousand deaths
 Ere break the smallest parcel of this **vow**.³⁵

KING HENRY IV

A hundred thousand rebels die in this:
Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust herein.....³⁶

²⁸ **closing of some glorious day**: triumphant end of some battle

²⁹ **favours**: features

³⁰ **lights**: dawns

³¹ **the slightest worship of his time**: the smallest honour he has gained in his lifetime

³² **from his heart**: i.e. by his death

³³ **intemperance**: lack of self control

³⁴ **bands**: bonds, promises

³⁵ **parcel**: portion

³⁶ **charge and sovereign trust**: command and royal responsibility

Macbeth

Macbeth has distinguished himself in battle against King Duncan's enemies and has been rewarded with a new title – Thane of Cawdor. Three witches have spoken with Macbeth and assured him that he will be "king hereafter". After the defeat of the rebels Duncan honours Macbeth by visiting him as a guest at his castle. Lady Macbeth, Macbeth's wife, however, sees an opportunity to exploit the situation by persuading her husband to murder Duncan and seize the throne for himself.³⁷

Maternal power in *Macbeth* is not embodied in the figure of a particular mother (as it is in *Coriolanus*); it is diffused throughout the play, evoked primarily by the figures of the witches and Lady Macbeth. Largely through Macbeth's relationship to them, the play become (like *Coriolanus*) a representation of primitive fears about male identity and autonomy itself, about those looming female presences who threaten to control one's actions and one's mind, to constitute one's very self, even at a distance [Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 130-31.]

Act 1 Scene 7

[Hautboys and torches. Enter a Sewer, and divers] [p]Servants with dishes and service, and pass over the stage. Then enter MACBETH]

While King Duncan is the principal guest at an offstage banquet, in an important soliloquy Macbeth is troubled by the task that his wife has imposed upon him and concludes:

I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.
[Enter LADY MACBETH]
How now! what news?

[Lady Macbeth](#). He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

[Macbeth](#). Hath he ask'd for me?

³⁷ Is Macbeth a member of Duncan's Family...? Duncan calls Macbeth his "valiant cousin" (1.4 - though "cousin" is ambiguous); at the end of 1.4 Duncan refers to him as "a peerless kinsman" and Macbeth himself acknowledges "First, as I am his kinsman... (1.7).

Lady Macbeth. Know you not he has?

Macbeth. We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady Macbeth. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afraid
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i' the adage?³⁸

Macbeth. Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

Lady Macbeth. What beast was't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

Macbeth. If we should fail?

Lady Macbeth. We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason

³⁸ 'The cat would eat the fish but will not get her feet wet'.

A limbeck only: when in **swinish** sleep
 Their drenched natures lie **as in a death**,
 What cannot you and I perform upon
 The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
 Of our great quell?

Macbeth. **Bring forth men-children only;**
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
 When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
 Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,
 That they have done't?

Lady Macbeth. **Who dares receive it other,**
 As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
 Upon his death?

Macbeth. I am settled, and bend up
 Each corporal agent to **this terrible feat.**
 Away, and **mock the time with fairest show:**
 False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

[Exeunt]

Act 2 Scene 2

Having killed Duncan, instead of leaving the daggers with the guards to implicate them in the murder, Macbeth still holds them.

Macbeth. I'll go no more:
 I am **afraid to think** what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.

Lady Macbeth. **Infirm of purpose!**
 Give me the daggers: **the sleeping and the dead**
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
 I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;
 For it must seem their guilt.

Act 3 Scene 4

The Banquet scene and the appearance of the ghost of Banquo.

... **Are you a man?**

Macbeth. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
 Which might appal the devil.

Lady Macbeth. O proper stuff!
 This is **the very painting of your fear:**
 This is the **air-drawn dagger** which, you said,

Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,
 Impostors to true fear, would well become
 A woman's story at a winter's fire,
 Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
 Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
 You look but on a stool.

.....

Macbeth. What man dare, I dare:
 Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
 The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
 Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
 Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
 And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
 If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
 The baby of a girl]. Hence, horrible shadow!
 Unreal mockery, hence!
 [GHOST OF BANQUO vanishes]
 Why, so: being gone,
 I am a man again. Pray you, sit still....

CORIOLANUS

*Famine in Rome is causing unrest between the common people and the patricians (the aristocratic ruling class of Rome). The people particularly resent the arrogant **Caius Martius**, son of Volumnia, who makes no secret of the fact that he despises them. The citizens rise up against the patricians, whom they suspect of hoarding corn for themselves.*

*War with the neighbouring Volscians halts the rioting, however, as Rome has need of Martius' military prowess.³⁹ In the battle for the town of **Corioli**, Caius Martius leads the Roman army with such spectacular bravery that he is honoured with the title '**CORIOLANUS**'.*

Back in Rome, the patricians urge MARTIUS to seek the consulship (the highest elected office). Reluctantly, he agrees to make the necessary public display of humility in order to win the favour of the citizens, but once again – provoked by the Citizens' two Tribunes – his inability to mask his contempt turns them against him.

³⁹ For the satisfaction of pedants such as myself I use **Martius'** rather than **Martius's** because I was always taught that that additional 's' in the possessive is not required with classical and biblical names.

In the opening lines of 1.1 the Citizens are inclined to focus their resentment for the lack of corn on the person of Caius Martius whose arrogance towards them is deeply resented:

Second Citizen. Would you proceed especially against Caius MARTIUS?

All. Against him first: **he's a very dog to the commonalty**.

Second Citizen. Consider you what **services he has done for his country?**

First Citizen. Very well; and could be content to give him good report for't, but that **he pays himself with being proud**.

Second Citizen. Nay, but speak not maliciously.

First Citizen. I say unto you, what he hath done famously, he did it to that end: **though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country he did it to please his mother** and to be **partly proud**; which he is, even till the altitude of his virtue.

Act 3 Scene 2. A room in MARTIUS'S house.

By this time Martius has been awarded the honorary name of 'Coriolanus' and has ambitions to become one of two consuls who carry great influence in the governance of the Republic.

However, it was traditional that in order to become consul the candidate should present himself to the ordinary people of Rome and ask for their 'voices' – i.e. their 'votes' – in order to approve the choice.

The tradition required that the candidate should present himself to the people in a public place wearing the 'gown of humility', show them the scars he has received in battle fighting on Rome's behalf and ask for their 'voices'.

This scene is entirely Shakespeare's and has no basis in Plutarch.

Enter MARTIUS with Patricians

MARTIUS

Let them **pull all about mine ears**, present me
Death on the wheel or at wild horses' heels,
 Or pile **ten hills on the Tarpeian rock**,
 That the precipitation might down stretch
 Below the beam of sight, **yet will I still**
Be thus to them.

A Patrician

You do the nobler.

MARTIUS

I muse my mother

Does not approve me further, who was wont
 To call them woollen vassals, things created
 To buy and sell with groats, to show bare heads
 In congregations, to yawn, be still and wonder,
 When one but of my ordinance stood up
 To speak of peace or war.

Enter VOLUMNIA

I talk of you:

Why did you wish me milder? would you have me
 False to my nature? **Rather say I play
 The man I am.**

VOLUMNIA

O, sir, sir, sir,
 I would have had you put your power well on,
 Before you had worn it out.

MARTIUS

Let go.

VOLUMNIA

You might have been enough the man you are,
 With striving less to be so; lesser had been
 The thwartings of your dispositions,⁴⁰ if
 You had not show'd them how ye were disposed
 Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

MARTIUS

Let them hang.

A Patrician

Ay, and burn too.

Enter MENENIUS and Senators

MENENIUS

Come, come, you have been too rough, something too rough;
 You must return and mend it.

First Senator

⁴⁰ **thwartings**: New Cambridge has 'checkings'.

There's no remedy;
Unless, by **not so doing**, **our good city**
Cleave in the midst, and perish.

VOLUMNIA

Pray, be counsell'd:
I have a heart as little apt as yours,
But yet a brain that **leads my use of anger**
To better vantage.

MENENIUS

Well said, noble woman?
 Before he should thus **stoop to the herd**, but that
 The **violent fit o' the time** craves it as **physic**
For the whole state, I would put mine armour on,
 Which I can scarcely bear.

MARTIUS

What must I do?

MENENIUS

Return to the tribunes.

MARTIUS

Well, **what then? what then?**

MENENIUS

Repent what you have spoke.

MARTIUS

For them! **I cannot do it to the gods;**
Must I then do't to them?

VOLUMNIA

You are **too absolute;**
 Though therein you can **never be too noble,**
 But **when extremities** speak. **I have heard you say,**
Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,
I' the war do grow together: grant that, and tell me,
In peace what each of them by the other lose,
 That they **combine not there.**

MARTIUS

Tush, tush!

MENENIUS

A good demand.

VOLUMNIA

If it be honour in your wars **to seem**
The same you are not, which, for your **best ends**,
 You adopt your **policy**, **how is it less or worse**,
 That it shall hold **companionship in peace**
With honour, **as in war**, since that **to both**
It stands in like request?⁴¹

MARTIUS

Why **force** you this?

VOLUMNIA

Because that now it lies you on to speak
 To the people; **not by your own instruction**,⁴²
 Nor by the **matter which your heart** prompts you,
 But with such **words that are but rooted in**
Your tongue, though but **bastards** and syllables
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth,⁴³
 Now, this **no more dishonours you** at all
 Than **to take in a town with gentle words**,
 Which else would **put you to your fortune** and
 The **hazard of much blood**.
I would dissemble with my nature where
My fortunes and **my friends at stake** required
I should do so in honour: I am in this,
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles;
 And you will rather show our general louts
 How you can frown than spend a fawn upon 'em,
 For the inheritance⁴⁴ of their loves and **safeguard**
Of what that want might ruin.

MENENIUS

Noble lady!
 Come, go with us; speak fair: you may **salve** so,
 Not what is dangerous present, but the loss
 Of what is past.⁴⁵

VOLUMNIA

⁴¹ **like request**: equally necessary

⁴² **instruction**: convictions

⁴³ **bastards and syllables/ Of no allowance to your bosom's truth**: illegitimate words that do not correspond to what you feel

⁴⁴ **inheritance**: acquisition, obtaining

⁴⁵ **what is past**: i.e. the consulship

I prithee now, my son,
 Go to them, with **this bonnet in thy hand**;
 And thus far having stretch'd it⁴⁶--here be with them--
Thy knee bussing the stones--for in such **business**
Action is eloquence, and **the eyes of the ignorant**
More learned than the ears--**waving thy head**,⁴⁷
 Which often, **thus**, correcting thy stout heart,
 Now humble⁴⁸ as the **ripest mulberry**
That will not hold the handling: or say to them,
 Thou art **their soldier**, and being **bred in broils**
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,
 Were **fit for thee to use as they to claim**,
 In **asking their good loves**, but thou wilt frame
 Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs,⁴⁹ so far
 As thou hast power and person.⁵⁰

MENENIUS

This but done,
 Even as she speaks, why, their hearts were yours;
 For **they have pardons**, **being ask'd**, **as free**
As words to little purpose.

VOLUMNIA

Prithee now,
Go, and be ruled: although I know thou hadst rather
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf
Than flatter him in a bower. Here is Cominius.

Enter COMINIUS [Cominius is consul and commander-in-chief of the army]

COMINIUS

I have been i' the market-place; and, sir, 'tis fit
 You make **strong party**,⁵¹ or defend yourself
 By **calmness** or by **absence**: all's in anger.

MENENIUS

Only fair speech.

COMINIUS

⁴⁶ **stretch'd it**: extended it in a gesture of obedience

⁴⁷ **waving thy head**: bowing on all sides

⁴⁸ **humble**: yielding

⁴⁹ **theirs**: to suit their wishes

⁵⁰ **power and person**: ability and personal authority

⁵¹ **party**: of supporters

I think 'twill serve, if he
Can thereto frame his spirit.

VOLUMNIA

He must, and will
Prithee now, say you will, and go about it.

MARTIUS

Must I go show them my unbarbed sconce?
Must I with base tongue give my noble heart
A lie that it must bear? Well, I will do't:
Yet, were there but this single plot to lose,⁵²
This mould of Marcius, they to dust should grind it
And throw't against the wind. To the market-place!
You have put me now to such a part which never
I shall discharge to the life.

COMINIUS

Come, come, we'll prompt you.

VOLUMNIA

I prithee now, sweet son, as thou hast said
My praises made thee first a soldier, so,
To have my praise for this, perform a part
Thou hast not done before.

MARTIUS

Well, I must do't:
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit! my throat of war be turn'd,
Which quired with my drum, into a pipe
Small as an eunuch, or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep! the smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight! a beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my arm'd knees,
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath received an alms! I will not do't,
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth
And by my body's action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.

VOLUMNIA

At thy choice, then:
To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour

⁵² single plot: i.e. of earth – his body

Than thou of them. **Come all to ruin**; let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear
 Thy dangerous stoutness,⁵³ for I mock at death
 With as big heart as thou. **Do as thou list**
Thy valiantness was mine, **thou suck'dst it from me**,
But owe thy pride thyself.

MARTIUS

Pray, be content:
Mother, I am going to the market-place;
Chide me no more. I'll **mountebank their loves**,
 Cog⁵⁴ their hearts from them, and come home beloved
 Of all the trades in Rome. **Look, I am going**:
 Commend me to my wife. **I'll return consul**;
 Or **never trust** to what my tongue can do
 I' **the way of flattery** further.

VOLUMNIA

Do your will.

Exit

COMINIUS

Away! the tribunes do attend you: **arm yourself**
To answer mildly; for they are prepared
 With accusations, as I hear, more strong
 Than are upon you yet.

MARTIUS

The word is '**mildly**.' Pray you, let us go:
 Let them accuse me by invention, **I**
Will answer in mine honour.

MENENIUS

Ay, but mildly.

MARTIUS

Well, mildly be it then. **Mildly!**

Exeunt

Antony and Cleopatra

⁵³ **rather feel thy pride than fear/ Thy dangerous stoutness**: experience the consequences of your pride rather than confront your dangerous obstinacy

⁵⁴ **cog**: wheedle

Mark Antony is a powerful leader and renowned soldier who had been instrumental in overthrowing the conspirators who had murdered Julius Caesar. Subsequently he was one of the three men who emerged to form a Second Triumvirate – with Octavius Caesar and Lepidus. Lepidus is represented by Shakespeare as being relatively weak and having much less influence than Antony and Octavius.

Antony has been despatched to Egypt – a client state owing allegiance to Rome – but has fallen under the spell of its seductive and alluring queen, Cleopatra. Antony has made a political marriage with Caesar's sister, Octavia, who now comes to Rome in order to mediate between her husband and brother.

Act 3 Scene 6

SCENE VI. Rome. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's house.

Shakespeare closely follows Plutarch in this scene using Sir Tomas North's 'Englising' (pub. 1603).⁵⁵

Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, AGRIPPA, and MECAENAS [followers of Caesar]

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Contemning Rome, he has done all this, and more,
 In Alexandria: here's the manner of 't:
 I' the market-place, on a tribunal silver'd,
 Cleopatra and himself in chairs of gold
 Were publicly enthroned: at the feet sat
 Caesarion, whom they call my father's son,
 And all the unlawful issue that their lust
 Since then hath made between them. Unto her
 He gave the stablishment of Egypt; made her
 Of lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia,
 Absolute queen.

MECAENAS

This in the public eye?

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

I' the common show-place, where they exercise.
 His sons he there proclaim'd the kings of kings:
 Great Media, Parthia, and Armenia.
 He gave to Alexander; to Ptolemy he assign'd
 Syria, Cilicia, and Phoenicia: she
 In the habiliments of the goddess Isis
 That day appear'd; and oft before gave audience,
 As 'tis reported, so.

⁵⁵ It is clear that Shakespeare used this edition as his vocabulary and phrasing closely follow North on many occasions. For example, see Arden footnote to 3.6.25-31 below.

MECAENAS

Let Rome be thus Inform'd.

AGRIPPA

Who, **queasy with his insolence**
Already, will their good thoughts call from him.

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

The people know it; and have now received
His accusations.

AGRIPPA

Who does he accuse?

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Caesar: and that, having in Sicily

Sextus Pompeius spoil'd, we had not rated him
His part o' the isle: then does he say, he lent me
Some shipping unrestored: lastly, he frets
That **Lepidus** of the triumvirate
Should be deposed; and, being, that we detain
All his revenue.

AGRIPPA

Sir, this should be answer'd.

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

'Tis done already, and the messenger gone.
I have told him, **Lepidus was grown too cruel;**
That he his high authority abused,
And did deserve his change: **for what I have conquer'd,**
I grant him part; but then, in his Armenia,
And other of his conquer'd kingdoms, I
Demand the like.

MECAENAS

He'll never yield to that.

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Nor must not then be yielded to in this.

Enter OCTAVIA with her train

OCTAVIA

Hail, Caesar, and my lord! hail, most dear Caesar!

31 Caesar ... revenue 'The chiefest poyntes of his accusations ... were these: First, that having spoyled Sextus Pompeius in Sicile, he did not give him his parte of the Ile. Secondly, that he did deteyne in his hands the shippes he lent him to make that warre. Thirdly, that having put Lepidus their companion and triumvirate out of his part of the Empire, and having deprived him of all honors: he retayned for him selfe the lands and revenues thereof, which had bene assigned unto him for his part' (North, 291).
... plundered: 'to strip (persons)

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

That ever I should call thee castaway!

OCTAVIA

You have not call'd me so, nor have you cause.

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Why have you stol'n upon us thus! You come not
 Like Caesar's sister: the wife of Antony
 Should have an army for an usher, and
 The neighs of horse to tell of her approach
 Long ere she did appear; the trees by the way
 Should have borne men; and expectation fainted,
 Longing for what it had not; nay, the dust
 Should have ascended to the roof of heaven,
 Raised by your populous troops: but you are come
 A market-maid to Rome; and have prevented
 The ostentation of our love, which, left unshown,
 Is often left unloved; we should have met you
 By sea and land; supplying every stage
 With an augmented greeting.

OCTAVIA

Good my lord,
 To come thus was I not constrain'd, but did
 On my free will. My lord, Mark Antony,
 Hearing that you prepared for war, acquainted
 My grieved ear withal; whereon, I begg'd
 His pardon for return.

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Which soon he granted,
 Being an obstruct 'tween his lust and him.

OCTAVIA

Do not say so, my lord.

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

I have eyes upon him,⁵⁶
 And his affairs come to me on the wind.
 Where is he now?

OCTAVIA

My lord, in Athens.

⁵⁶ 'I have eyes upon him' – i.e. Caesar's spies report Antony's behaviour back to Rome..

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

No, my most wronged sister; Cleopatra
 Hath nodded him to her. He hath given his empire
 Up to a whore; who now are levying
 The kings o' the earth for war; he hath assembled
 Bocchus, the king of Libya; Archelaus,
 Of Cappadocia; Philadelphos, king
 Of Paphlagonia; the Thracian king, Adallas;
 King Malchus of Arabia; King of Pont;
 Herod of Jewry; Mithridates, king
 Of Comagene; Polemon and Amyntas,
 The kings of Mede and Lycaonia,
 With a more larger list of sceptres.

OCTAVIA

Ay me, most wretched,
 That have my heart parted betwixt two friends
 That do afflict each other!

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Welcome hither:
 Your letters did withhold our breaking forth;
 Till we perceived, both how you were wrong led,
 And we in negligent danger. Cheer your heart;
 Be you not troubled with the time, which drives
 O'er your content these strong necessities;
 But let determined things to destiny
 Hold unbewail'd their way. Welcome to Rome;
 Nothing more dear to me. You are abused
 Beyond the mark of thought: and the high gods,
 To do you justice, make them ministers
 Of us and those that love you. Best of comfort;
 And ever welcome to us.

AGRIPPA

Welcome, lady.

MECAENAS

Welcome, dear madam.
 Each heart in Rome does love and pity you:
 Only the adulterous Antony, most large
 In his abominations, turns you off;
 And gives his potent regiment⁵⁷ to a trull,
 That noises it against us.

⁵⁷ **regiment**: authority

OCTAVIA

Is it so, sir?

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Most certain. Sister, **welcome**: pray you,
Be ever known to **patience**: my dear'st sister!

Exeunt