

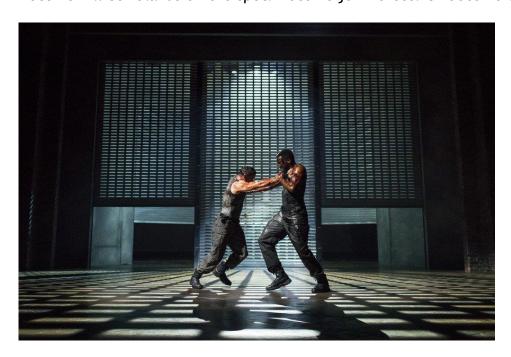
## FAVOURITE SHAKESPEARE MONOLOGUES & DUOLOGUES OF PROFESSIONAL ACTORS

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## James Corrigan

My favourite Shakespeare duologue is the "balcony" scene of *Romeo & Juliet* - it's gorgeous watching an entire audience beam as two young people fall in love (we always manage to momentarily forget the ending when watching this scene). The Ben/Bea duologue at the end of Act 4, Scene 1 of *Much Ado About Nothing* will always be exhilarating - with the finest admission of love you'll see. And lago's subtle manipulation of *Othello* in Act 3, Scene 3 is masterful. BUT I'm going to go with one which I imagine some people haven't chosen: Act 4, Scene 5 of *Coriolanus*.

Coriolanus and Aufidius are mortal enemies. Coriolanus (Rome's greatest soldier) wants to erase Aufidius (The Volsces' greatest soldier) and his people. . . and vice versa. They had a battle almost to the death earlier in the play which Coriolanus wins (pictured). It's humiliating for Aufidius and he vows to kill Coriolanus the next time he sees him. Fast forward a short time and Coriolanus, recently banished from Rome, suddenly shows up at Aufidius' house! Coriolanus offers to join forces with Aufidius to burn Rome to the ground. Does he kill Coriolanus on the spot? Does he join forces? Or does he do both?



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It's such an incredibly exciting scene in a play that is often very talky and political. Two of the most violent, dangerous men in history, with such deep-rooted hatred for each other, suddenly meet face to face in a domestic location.

When I played Aufidius, I could feel the tension in the room. It was electric. Because the play isn't as well known as others, the vast majority of people had no idea what was coming. That was fun to play with. It's also (surprisingly) a tremendously funny scene. Shakespeare is firing on all cylinders here in his building of tension and release for darkly comic effect. One big lesson this scene taught me as an actor was to do the unexpected. Aufidius, in particular, is a gift of a part because he's so unpredictable - which is what we all aim for as actors. Playing with pauses, inappropriate laughter, and deliberately undermining some of the loftiness of the situation all help to create something more exciting and, strangely, more real.



Act 4, Scene 5 of *Coriolanus* available here: http://shakespeare.mit.edu/coriolanus/coriolanus.4.5.html

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