

Coriolanus abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 3

Mother to Daughter

Situation: In a mother to daughter-in-law moment, we are introduced to Martius' mother and his wife. Shakespeare uses this moment to give us a glimpse into his mother's strengths, which are laid out in series of stern suggestions offered to her son late in the play.

VOLUMNIA: I pray you, daughter, sing, or express yourself in a more comfortable sort.

Volumnia to Virgilia

If my son were my husband, I would be
More free to rejoice in the honor he
Won in his absence than to have him near
Me offering his love. When he, my son,
Was a tender-bodied youth, I did fear
To lose him, knowing that such a person
Becomes honor, and one with such a name
Should seek danger where he'd likely find fame.
I sprang in joy as he became strong an'
Proved himself a man. Had I a dozen
Sons, each loved alike, and none less dear than
Martius, I had rather eleven
Die nobly for their country than have one
Indulging in a life of inaction.