

Coriolanus abbreviated

Act 5, Scene 3.3

Mother to Son

Situation: Shakespeare has Volumnia continue to pour it on her son in what must be literature's most penetrating mother-to-son set of lectures.

VOLUMNIA: He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy. Perhaps thy childishness will move him more than can our reasons. There's no man in the world more bound to 's mother, yet here he lets me chatter like one i' th' stocks.

Volumnia to Coriolanus, No. 4

**Thou hast never in thy life showed thy dear
Mother any sympathy. Say my mere
Request is unjust, and that thy spurn me;
But if it be not so, thou art not just,
And the gods forever more will plague thee,
Denying a mother's duty that must
Be. Let us shame him with our knees: to thee
Surname belongs more pride than pity.
Behold us! This boy, who doth kneel and cry
For his father, dost beg our plea, unrushed,
And with more strength than thou hast to deny
It. Come, daughter, let us go. I am hushed
Until we are no longer led by laws,
Afire; then will I speak a dying cause.**

Coriolanus takes his mother by the hand.

CORIOLANUS: O mother, mother! What have you done? You have won a happy victory to Rome; but for your son, most dangerously you have with him prevailed, if not most mortal to him. But let it come. Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars, I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius, were you in my stead, would you have heard a mother less? Or granted less, Aufidius?

AUFIDIUS: I was moved withal.

CORIOLANUS: But, good sir, what peace you'll make, advise me. For my part, I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you; and pray you, stand to me in this cause.