



Read each myth or legend carefully. Use details from the passage to answer the questions in complete sentences.

## Coriolanus: Rome's Divided Loyalty

Long ago, in the early days of the Roman Republic, the city of Rome often faced dangers from its neighbors. Loyalty to family and country was held above all else.



Gaius Marcius, later called Coriolanus after his victory at Corioli, was one of Rome's bravest generals. He was a fierce warrior, respected for his courage, but also proud and scornful of the common people. His wise and strong mother, Volumnia, often tried to guide him, but his immense pride made him difficult.

During a famine, Coriolanus argued against giving grain to the poor citizens. This angered the people, and he was banished from Rome, the city he had fought to protect. Filled with bitter vengeance, he fled to Rome's old enemies, the Volscians, and offered to lead their army against his homeland.

Coriolanus, now leading the Volscian forces, marched a mighty army toward Rome. The city trembled with fear. The Roman Senate sent respected citizens and priests to beg him to spare Rome, but Coriolanus refused, his heart hardened by exile.



As a last hope, a procession of Roman women, led by his aged mother Volumnia, his wife Virgilia, and his young children, came to his camp.

Volumnia, with tears and a voice full of sorrow and strength, pleaded with her son. She reminded him of his duty to Rome and the shame he would bring upon his family. Her powerful words melted Coriolanus's anger and pride. He knew sparing Rome meant



certain death for him, but he could not resist his mother's plea. He turned his army away, choosing family and country over vengeance, and faced his fate.

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**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

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**(1) Who is the main character in this myth, and what is their role?**

- A Coriolanus, a proud Roman general who attacked his own city.
- B Volumnia, Coriolanus's mother who led the Roman women.
- C Jupiter, the king of the gods who protected Rome.
- D Minerva, the goddess of wisdom who advised the Senate.

**(2) Coriolanus was banished from Rome after a dispute over \_\_\_\_\_ .**

*— continue writing on the lines below*

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**(3) What does the word disdain mean as it is used in the story?**

- A a feeling of strong dislike or disrespect
- B a feeling of great admiration or respect
- C a feeling of deep sadness or regret
- D a feeling of intense fear or worry

**(4) Why did Coriolanus ultimately choose to spare Rome, even though it meant his own death? What does this tell us about the values emphasized in this Roman legend?**

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**(5) What do you think this myth was trying to explain or teach? How does its message connect to something in real life today?**

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