

# ***Titus Andronicus***

By William Shakespeare

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## **Characters in the Play**

TITUS ANDRONICUS, a noble Roman general  
LAVINIA, his daughter

His sons:

LUCIUS  
MUTIUS  
MARTIUS  
QUINTUS

YOUNG LUCIUS, his grandson

MARCUS ANDRONICUS, Titus's brother, a Roman tribune  
PUBLIUS, his son

Titus's kinsmen:

SEMPRONIUS  
CAIUS  
VALENTINE

SATURNINUS, elder son of the former Roman emperor, later  
emperor  
BASSIANUS, younger son of the former emperor

TAMORA, Queen of the Goths, later empress  
AARON the Moor, Tamora's lover

Tamora's sons:

ALARBUS  
DEMETRIUS  
CHIRON

AEMILIUS, A Roman nobleman

MESSENGER  
NURSE  
A Roman CAPTAIN  
COUNTRY FELLOW  
FIRST GOTH  
SECOND GOTH

Tribunes, Senators, Romans, Goths, Drummers, Trumpeters,  
Soldiers, Guards, Attendants, a black Child

## ACT 1

### Scene 1

*Flourish. Enter the Tribunes (including Marcus Andronicus) and Senators aloft. And then enter, below, Saturninus and his followers at one door, and Bassianus and his followers at another door, with other Romans, Drums, and Trumpets.*

#### SATURNINUS

Noble patricians, patrons of my right,  
Defend the justice of my cause with arms.  
And countrymen, my loving followers,  
Plead my successive title with your swords.  
I am his firstborn son that was the last  
That wore the imperial diadem of Rome.  
Then let my father's honors live in me,  
Nor wrong mine age with this indignity.

5

#### BASSIANUS

Romans, friends, followers, favorers of my right,  
If ever Bassianus, Caesar's son, 10  
Were gracious in the eyes of royal Rome,  
Keep, then, this passage to the Capitol,  
And suffer not dishonor to approach  
The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate,  
To justice, continence, and nobility; 15  
But let desert in pure election shine,  
And, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice.

10

#### MARCUS, (*aloft, stepping forward and holding up the crown*)

Princes that strive by factions and by friends  
Ambitiously for rule and empery,  
Know that the people of Rome, for whom we stand 20  
A special party, have by common voice,  
In election for the Roman empery,  
Chosen Andronicus, surnamèd Pius  
For many good and great deserts to Rome.  
A nobler man, a braver warrior,  
Lives not this day within the city walls. 25  
He by the Senate is accited home  
From weary wars against the barbarous Goths,  
That with his sons, a terror to our foes,  
Hath yoked a nation strong, trained up in arms.  
Ten years are spent since first he undertook 30  
This cause of Rome, and chastisèd with arms  
Our enemies' pride. Five times he hath returned  
Bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sons  
In coffins from the field.  
And now at last, laden with honor's spoils, 35  
Returns the good Andronicus to Rome,  
Renownèd Titus flourishing in arms.  
Let us entreat, by honor of his name  
Whom worthily you would have now succeed,  
And in the Capitol and Senate's right,

20

25

30

35

40

Whom you pretend to honor and adore,  
That you withdraw you and abate your strength,  
Dismiss your followers and, as suitors should,  
Plead your deserts in peace and humbleness.

45

SATURNINUS

How fair the tribune speaks to calm my thoughts!

BASSIANUS

Marcus Andronicus, so I do affy  
In thy uprightness and integrity,  
And so I love and honor thee and thine,  
Thy noble brother Titus and his sons,  
And her to whom my thoughts are humbled all,  
Gracious Lavinia, Rome's rich ornament,  
That I will here dismiss my loving friends,  
And to my fortunes and the people's favor  
Commit my cause in balance to be weighed.

50

*Bassianus' Soldiers exit.*

SATURNINUS

Friends that have been thus forward in my right,  
I thank you all and here dismiss you all,  
And to the love and favor of my country  
Commit myself, my person, and the cause.

*Saturninus' Soldiers exit.*

Rome, be as just and gracious unto me

60

As I am confident and kind to thee.  
Open the gates and let me in.

BASSIANUS

Tribunes, and me, a poor competitor.

*Flourish. They exit to go up into the Senate House.  
The Tribunes and Senators exit from the upper stage.*

*Enter a Captain.*

CAPTAIN

Romans, make way! The good Andronicus,  
Patron of virtue, Rome's best champion,  
Successful in the battles that he fights,  
With honor and with fortune is returned  
From where he circumscribèd with his sword  
And brought to yoke the enemies of Rome.

65

*Sound drums and trumpets, and then enter two of Titus' sons (Lucius and Mutius) and then two men bearing a coffin covered with black, then two other sons (Martius and Quintus), then Titus Andronicus, and then Tamora the Queen of Goths and her sons Alarbus, Chiron and Demetrius, with Aaron the Moor, and others as many as can be, then set down the coffin, and Titus speaks.*

TITUS

Hail Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds!  
Lo, as the bark that hath discharged his fraught  
Returns with precious lading to the bay  
From whence at first she weighed her anchorage,  
Cometh Andronicus, bound with laurel boughs,  
To resalute his country with his tears,

70

75

Tears of true joy for his return to Rome.  
Thou great defender of this Capitol,  
Stand gracious to the rites that we intend.  
Romans, of five-and-twenty valiant sons,  
Half of the number that King Priam had, 80  
Behold the poor remains alive and dead.  
These that survive let Rome reward with love;  
These that I bring unto their latest home,  
With burial amongst their ancestors.  
Here Goths have given me leave to sheathe my sword. 85  
Titus, unkind and careless of thine own,  
Why suffer'st thou thy sons unburied yet  
To hover on the dreadful shore of Styx?  
Make way to lay them by their brethren.

*They open the tomb.*

There greet in silence, as the dead are wont,  
And sleep in peace, slain in your country's wars. 90  
O sacred receptacle of my joys,  
Sweet cell of virtue and nobility,  
How many sons hast thou of mine in store  
That thou wilt never render to me more? 95

LUCIUS

Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths,  
That we may hew his limbs and on a pile,  
*Ad manes fratrum*, sacrifice his flesh  
Before this earthy prison of their bones,  
That so the shadows be not unpeased,  
Nor we disturbed with prodigies on Earth.

TITUS

I give him you, the noblest that survives,  
The eldest son of this distressed queen.

TAMORA

Stay, Roman brethren!—Gracious conqueror,  
Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed, 105  
A mother's tears in passion for her son.  
And if thy sons were ever dear to thee,  
O think my son to be as dear to me.  
Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome  
To beautify thy triumphs and return 110  
Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke,  
But must my sons be slaughtered in the streets  
For valiant doings in their country's cause?  
O, if to fight for king and commonweal  
Were piety in thine, it is in these! 115

*She kneels.*

Andronicus, stain not thy tomb with blood.  
Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?  
Draw near them then in being merciful.  
Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.  
Thrice-noble Titus, spare my first-born son. 120

TITUS

Patient yourself, madam, and pardon me.  
These are their brethren whom your Goths beheld  
Alive and dead, and for their brethren slain  
Religiously they ask a sacrifice.  
To this your son is marked, and die he must,

T' appease their groaning shadows that are gone.

LUCIUS

Away with him, and make a fire straight,  
And with our swords upon a pile of wood  
Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consumed.

*Exit Titus' sons with Alarbus.*

TAMORA, *rising and speaking aside to her sons*

O cruel, irreligious piety! 130

CHIRON, *aside to Tamora and Demetrius*

Was never Scythia half so barbarous!

DEMETRIUS, *aside to Tamora and Chiron*

Oppose not Scythia to ambitious Rome!

Alarbus goes to rest and we survive

To tremble under Titus' threat'ning look.

Then, madam, stand resolved, but hope withal 135

The selfsame gods that armed the Queen of Troy

With opportunity of sharp revenge

Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent

May favor Tamora the Queen of Goths

(When Goths were Goths, and Tamora was queen) 140

To quit the bloody wrongs upon her foes.

*Enter the sons of Andronicus again with bloody swords.*

LUCIUS

See, lord and father, how we have performed  
Our Roman rites. Alarbus' limbs are lopped,  
And entrails feed the sacrificing fire,  
Whose smoke like incense doth perfume the sky. 145  
Remaineth naught but to inter our brethren,  
And with loud larums welcome them to Rome.

TITUS

Let it be so. And let Andronicus  
Make this his latest farewell to their souls.

*Sound trumpets, and lay the coffin in the tomb.*

In peace and honor rest you here, my sons, 150  
Rome's readiest champions, repose you here in rest,  
Secure from worldly chances and mishaps.  
Here lurks no treason, here no envy swells,  
Here grow no damnèd drugs; here are no storms,  
No noise, but silence and eternal sleep. 155  
In peace and honor rest you here, my sons.

*Enter Lavinia.*

LAVINIA

In peace and honor live Lord Titus long;  
My noble lord and father, live in fame.

*She kneels.*

Lo, at this tomb my tributary tears  
I render for my brethren's obsequies, 160  
And at thy feet I kneel, with tears of joy  
Shed on this earth for thy return to Rome.  
O bless me here with thy victorious hand,  
Whose fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud.

TITUS

Kind Rome, that hast thus lovingly reserved  
The cordial of mine age to glad my heart!—  
Lavinia, live, outlive thy father's days  
And fame's eternal date, for virtue's praise.

165

*Lavinia rises.*

*Enter Marcus Andronicus, carrying a white robe.*  
*Enter aloft Saturninus, Bassianus, Tribunes, Senators,  
and Guards.*

MARCUS

Long live Lord Titus, my belovèd brother,  
Gracious triumper in the eyes of Rome.

170

TITUS

Thanks, gentle tribune, noble brother Marcus.

MARCUS

And welcome, nephews, from successful wars—  
You that survive, and you that sleep in fame.  
Fair lords, your fortunes are alike in all,  
That in your country's service drew your swords;      175  
But safer triumph is this funeral pomp,  
That hath aspired to Solon's happiness,  
And triumphs over chance in honor's bed.—  
Titus Andronicus, the people of Rome,  
Whose friend in justice thou hast ever been,      180  
Send thee by me, their tribune and their trust,  
This pallament of white and spotless hue,  
And name thee in election for the empire  
With these our late deceasèd emperor's sons.  
Be *candidatus*, then, and put it on      185  
And help to set a head on headless Rome.

TITUS

A better head her glorious body fits  
Than his that shakes for age and feebleness.  
*To Tribunes and Senators aloft.* What, should I don  
this robe and trouble you?      190

Be chosen with proclamations today,  
Tomorrow yield up rule, resign my life,  
And set abroad new business for you all?  
Rome, I have been thy soldier forty years,  
And led my country's strength successfully,      195  
And buried one and twenty valiant sons,  
Knighted in field, slain manfully in arms,  
In right and service of their noble country.  
Give me a staff of honor for mine age,  
But not a scepter to control the world.      200  
Upright he held it, lords, that held it last.

MARCUS

Titus, thou shalt obtain and ask the empery.

SATURNINUS

Proud and ambitious tribune, canst thou tell?

TITUS Patience, Prince Saturninus.

SATURNINUS Romans, do me right.

205

Patricians, draw your swords and sheathe them not  
Till Saturninus be Rome's emperor.—

	Andronicus, would thou were shipped to hell Rather than rob me of the people's hearts.	
LUCIUS	Proud Saturnine, interrupter of the good That noble-minded Titus means to thee.	210
TITUS	Content thee, prince. I will restore to thee The people's hearts and wean them from themselves.	
BASSIANUS	Andronicus, I do not flatter thee, But honor thee, and will do till I die. My faction if thou strengthen with thy friends, I will most thankful be, and thanks, to men Of noble minds, is honorable meed.	215
TITUS	People of Rome, and people's tribunes here, I ask your voices and your suffrages. Will you bestow them friendly on Andronicus?	220
TRIBUNES	To gratify the good Andronicus And gratulate his safe return to Rome, The people will accept whom he admits.	
TITUS	Tribunes, I thank you, and this suit I make: That you create our emperor's eldest son, Lord Saturnine, whose virtues will, I hope, Reflect on Rome as Titan's rays on Earth And ripen justice in this commonweal. Then, if you will elect by my advice,	225
	Crown him and say "Long live our emperor."	230
MARCUS	With voices and applause of every sort, Patricians and plebeians, we create Lord Saturninus Rome's great emperor, And say "Long live our Emperor Saturnine."	235
	<i>A long flourish till Saturninus, Bassianus, and Guards come down.</i>	
SATURNINUS	Titus Andronicus, for thy favors done To us in our election this day, I give thee thanks in part of thy deserts, And will with deeds requite thy gentleness. And for an onset, Titus, to advance Thy name and honorable family, Lavinia will I make my empress, Rome's royal mistress, mistress of my heart, And in the sacred Pantheon her espouse. Tell me, Andronicus, doth this motion please thee?	240
TITUS	It doth, my worthy lord, and in this match I hold me highly honored of your Grace; And here in sight of Rome to Saturnine, King and commander of our commonweal, The wide world's emperor, do I consecrate My sword, my chariot, and my prisoners, Presents well worthy Rome's imperious lord.	245
		250

	Receive them, then, the tribute that I owe, Mine honor's ensigns humbled at thy feet.	
SATURNINUS		
	Thanks, noble Titus, father of my life.	255
	How proud I am of thee and of thy gifts Rome shall record.—And when I do forget The least of these unspeakable deserts, Romans, forget your fealty to me.	
TITUS, <i>to Tamora</i>		
	Now, madam, are you prisoner to an emperor, To him that for your honor and your state Will use you nobly, and your followers.	260
SATURNINUS, <i>aside</i>		
	A goodly lady, trust me, of the hue That I would choose, were I to choose anew.— Clear up, fair queen, that cloudy countenance. Though chance of war hath wrought this change of cheer,	265
	Thou com'st not to be made a scorn in Rome. Princely shall be thy usage every way. Rest on my word, and let not discontent Daunt all your hopes. Madam, he comforts you Can make you greater than the Queen of Goths.— Lavinia, you are not displeased with this?	270
LAVINIA		
	Not I, my lord, sith true nobility Warrants these words in princely courtesy.	275
SATURNINUS		
	Thanks, sweet Lavinia.—Romans, let us go. Ransomless here we set our prisoners free. Proclaim our honors, lords, with trump and drum.	
	<i>Flourish. Saturninus and his Guards exit, with Drums and Trumpets. Tribunes and Senators exit aloft.</i>	
BASSIANUS		
	Lord Titus, by your leave, this maid is mine.	
TITUS		
	How, sir? Are you in earnest then, my lord?	280
BASSIANUS		
	Ay, noble Titus, and resolved wthal To do myself this reason and this right.	
	<i>Bassianus takes Lavinia by the arm.</i>	
MARCUS		
	<i>Suum cuique</i> is our Roman justice. This prince in justice seizeth but his own.	
LUCIUS		
	And that he will and shall, if Lucius live!	285
TITUS		
	Traitors, avaunt! Where is the Emperor's guard?	
	<i>Enter Saturninus and his Guards.</i>	
	Treason, my lord. Lavinia is surprised.	
SATURNINUS		
	Surprised? By whom?	
BASSIANUS		
	By him that justly may Bear his betrothed from all the world away.	290



Dost overshone the gallant'st dames of Rome,  
If thou be pleased with this my sudden choice,  
Behold, I choose thee, Tamora, for my bride,  
And will create thee Emperess of Rome. 325

Speak, Queen of Goths, dost thou applaud my  
choice?

And here I swear by all the Roman gods,  
Sith priest and holy water are so near,  
And tapers burn so bright, and everything  
In readiness for Hymenaeus stand,  
I will not resalute the streets of Rome  
Or climb my palace till from forth this place  
I lead espoused my bride along with me. 330

TAMORA

And here in sight of heaven to Rome I swear,  
If Saturnine advance the Queen of Goths,  
She will a handmaid be to his desires,  
A loving nurse, a mother to his youth.

SATURNINUS

Ascend, fair queen, to Pantheon.—Lords, accompany 340  
Your noble emperor and his lovely bride,  
Sent by the heavens for Prince Saturnine,  
Whose wisdom hath her fortune conquerèd.  
There shall we consummate our spousal rites.

*All but Titus exit.*

TITUS

I am not bid to wait upon this bride. 345  
Titus, when wert thou wont to walk alone,  
Dishonored thus and challengèd of wrongs?

*Enter Marcus and Titus' sons Lucius, Martius,  
and Quintus.*

MARCUS

O Titus, see! O, see what thou hast done!  
In a bad quarrel slain a virtuous son.

TITUS

No, foolish tribune, no; no son of mine, 350  
Nor thou, nor these confederates in the deed  
That hath dishonored all our family.  
Unworthy brother and unworthy sons!

LUCIUS

But let us give him burial as becomes,  
Give Mutius burial with our brethren. 355

TITUS

Traitors, away! He rests not in this tomb.  
This monument five hundred years hath stood,  
Which I have sumptuously reedified.  
Here none but soldiers and Rome's servitors  
Repose in fame, none basely slain in brawls. 360  
Bury him where you can. He comes not here.

MARCUS

My lord, this is impiety in you.  
My nephew Mutius' deeds do plead for him.  
He must be buried with his brethren.

MARTIUS

And shall, or him we will accompany.

365

TITUS

"And shall"? What villain was it spake that word?

MARTIUS

He that would vouch it in any place but here.

TITUS

What, would you bury him in my despite?

MARCUS

No, noble Titus, but entreat of thee

To pardon Mutius and to bury him.

370

TITUS

Marcus, even thou hast struck upon my crest,

And with these boys mine honor thou hast wounded.

My foes I do repute you every one.

So trouble me no more, but get you gone.

QUINTUS

He is not with himself; let us withdraw.

375

MARTIUS

Not I, till Mutius' bones be burièd.

*The brother (Marcus) and the sons  
(Lucius, Martius, and Quintus) kneel.*

MARCUS

Brother, for in that name doth nature plead—

MARTIUS

Father, and in that name doth nature speak—

TITUS

Speak thou no more, if all the rest will speed.

MARCUS

Renownèd Titus, more than half my soul—

380

LUCIUS

Dear father, soul and substance of us all—

MARCUS

Suffer thy brother Marcus to inter

His noble nephew here in virtue's nest,

That died in honor and Lavinia's cause.

Thou art a Roman; be not barbarous.

385

The Greeks upon advice did bury Ajax,

That slew himself, and wise Laertes' son

Did graciously plead for his funerals.

Let not young Mutius, then, that was thy joy,

Be barred his entrance here.

390

TITUS Rise, Marcus, rise.

*They rise.*

The dismal'st day is this that e'er I saw,

To be dishonored by my sons in Rome.

Well, bury him, and bury me the next.

*They put Mutius in the tomb.*

LUCIUS

There lie thy bones, sweet Mutius, with thy friends',

395

Till we with trophies do adorn thy tomb.

*They all except Titus kneel and say:*

No man shed tears for noble Mutius.

He lives in fame, that died in virtue's cause.

*All but Marcus and Titus exit.*

MARCUS

My lord, to step out of these dreary dumps,  
How comes it that the subtle Queen of Goths  
Is of a sudden thus advanced in Rome?

400

TITUS

I know not, Marcus, but I know it is.  
Whether by device or no, the heavens can tell.  
Is she not then beholding to the man  
That brought her for this high good turn so far?  
Yes, and will nobly him remunerate.

405

*Flourish. Enter the Emperor Saturninus, Tamora  
and her two sons, with Aaron the Moor, Drums and  
Trumpets, at one door. Enter at the other door  
Bassianus and Lavinia, with Lucius, Martius, and  
Quintus, and others.*

SATURNINUS

So, Bassianus, you have played your prize.  
God give you joy, sir, of your gallant bride.

BASSIANUS

And you of yours, my lord. I say no more,  
Nor wish no less, and so I take my leave.

410

SATURNINUS

Traitor, if Rome have law or we have power,  
Thou and thy faction shall repent this rape.

BASSIANUS

"Rape" call you it, my lord, to seize my own,  
My true betrothèd love and now my wife?  
But let the laws of Rome determine all.  
Meanwhile am I possessed of that is mine.

415

SATURNINUS

'Tis good, sir, you are very short with us.  
But if we live, we'll be as sharp with you.

BASSIANUS

My lord, what I have done, as best I may,  
Answer I must, and shall do with my life.  
Only thus much I give your Grace to know:  
By all the duties that I owe to Rome,  
This noble gentleman, Lord Titus here,  
Is in opinion and in honor wronged,  
That in the rescue of Lavinia

420

With his own hand did slay his youngest son,  
In zeal to you, and highly moved to wrath  
To be controlled in that he frankly gave.  
Receive him then to favor, Saturnine,  
That hath expressed himself in all his deeds

425

A father and a friend to thee and Rome.

430

TITUS

Prince Bassianus, leave to plead my deeds.  
'Tis thou, and those, that have dishonored me.  
Rome and the righteous heavens be my judge  
How I have loved and honored Saturnine. *He kneels.* 435

TAMORA, to *Saturninus*

My worthy lord, if ever Tamora  
Were gracious in those princely eyes of thine,

Then hear me speak indifferently for all,  
And at my suit, sweet, pardon what is past.

SATURNINUS

What, madam, be dishonored openly, 440  
And basely put it up without revenge?

TAMORA

Not so, my lord; the gods of Rome forbend  
I should be author to dishonor you.  
But on mine honor dare I undertake  
For good Lord Titus' innocence in all, 445  
Whose fury not dissembled speaks his griefs.

Then at my suit look graciously on him.  
Lose not so noble a friend on vain suppose,  
Nor with sour looks afflict his gentle heart.  
*Aside to Saturninus.* My lord, be ruled by me; be 450  
won at last.

Dissemble all your griefs and discontents.  
You are but newly planted in your throne.  
Lest, then, the people, and patricians too,  
Upon a just survey take Titus' part 455  
And so supplant you for ingratitude,  
Which Rome reputes to be a heinous sin.  
Yield at entreats, and then let me alone.  
I'll find a day to massacre them all  
And raze their faction and their family, 460  
The cruel father and his traitorous sons,  
To whom I sued for my dear son's life,  
And make them know what 'tis to let a queen  
Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain.  
*Aloud.* Come, come, sweet emperor.—Come, 465  
Andronicus.—

Take up this good old man, and cheer the heart  
That dies in tempest of thy angry frown.

SATURNINUS

Rise, Titus, rise. My empress hath prevailed.

TITUS, *rising*

I thank your Majesty and her, my lord. 470  
These words, these looks, infuse new life in me.

TAMORA

Titus, I am incorporate in Rome,  
A Roman now adopted happily,  
And must advise the Emperor for his good.  
This day all quarrels die, Andronicus.— 475  
And let it be mine honor, good my lord,  
That I have reconciled your friends and you.—  
For you, Prince Bassianus, I have passed  
My word and promise to the Emperor  
That you will be more mild and tractable.—  
And fear not, lords—and you, Lavinia. 480  
By my advice, all humbled on your knees,  
You shall ask pardon of his Majesty.

*Marcus, Lavinia, Lucius, Martius, and Quintus kneel.*

LUCIUS

We do, and vow to heaven and to his Highness  
That what we did was mildly as we might, 485  
Tend'reng our sister's honor and our own.

MARCUS

That on mine honor here do I protest.

SATURNINUS

Away, and talk not; trouble us no more.

TAMORA

Nay, nay, sweet emperor, we must all be friends.

The tribune and his nephews kneel for grace.

490

I will not be denied. Sweetheart, look back.

SATURNINUS

Marcus, for thy sake, and thy brother's here,

And at my lovely Tamora's entreats,

I do remit these young men's heinous faults.

Stand up.

*They rise.* 495

Lavinia, though you left me like a churl,

I found a friend, and sure as death I swore

I would not part a bachelor from the priest.

Come, if the Emperor's court can feast two brides,

You are my guest, Lavinia, and your friends.—

500

This day shall be a love-day, Tamora.

TITUS

Tomorrow, an it please your Majesty

To hunt the panther and the hart with me,

With horn and hound we'll give your Grace *bonjour*.

SATURNINUS

Be it so, Titus, and gramercy too.

505

*Sound trumpets. All but Aaron exit.*

## ACT 2

### Scene 1

AARON

Now climbeth Tamora Olympus' top,  
Safe out of Fortune's shot, and sits aloft,  
Secure of thunder's crack or lightning flash,  
Advanced above pale Envy's threat'ning reach.  
As when the golden sun salutes the morn      5  
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,  
Gallops the zodiac in his glistering coach  
And overlooks the highest-peering hills,  
So Tamora.  
Upon her wit doth earthly honor wait,      10  
And virtue stoops and trembles at her frown.  
Then, Aaron, arm thy heart and fit thy thoughts  
To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress,  
And mount her pitch whom thou in triumph long  
Hast prisoner held, fettered in amorous chains      15  
And faster bound to Aaron's charming eyes  
Than is Prometheus tied to Caucasus.  
Away with slavish weeds and servile thoughts!  
I will be bright, and shine in pearl and gold  
To wait upon this new-made empress.      20  
To wait, said I? To wanton with this queen,  
This goddess, this Semiramis, this nymph,  
This siren that will charm Rome's Saturnine  
And see his shipwreck and his commonweal's.  
Holla! What storm is this?      25

*Enter Chiron and Demetrius, braving.*

DEMETRIUS

Chiron, thy years wants wit, thy wits wants edge  
And manners, to intrude where I am graced,  
And may, for aught thou knowest, affected be.

CHIRON

Demetrius, thou dost overween in all,  
And so in this, to bear me down with braves.      30  
'Tis not the difference of a year or two  
Makes me less gracious or thee more fortunate.  
I am as able and as fit as thou  
To serve and to deserve my mistress' grace,  
And that my sword upon thee shall approve      35  
And plead my passions for Lavinia's love.

AARON, *aside*

Clubs, clubs! These lovers will not keep the peace.

DEMETRIUS, *to Chiron*

Why, boy, although our mother, unadvised,  
Gave you a dancing rapier by your side,  
Are you so desperate grown to threat your friends?      40  
Go to. Have your lath glued within your sheath  
Till you know better how to handle it.

CHIRON

Meanwhile, sir, with the little skill I have,  
Full well shalt thou perceive how much I dare.

DEMETRIUS

Ay, boy, grow you so brave?

*They draw.* 45

AARON Why, how now, lords?

So near the Emperor's palace dare you draw  
And maintain such a quarrel openly?  
Full well I wot the ground of all this grudge.  
I would not for a million of gold  
The cause were known to them it most concerns,  
Nor would your noble mother for much more  
Be so dishonored in the court of Rome.  
For shame, put up.

50

DEMETRIUS Not I, till I have sheathed

55

My rapier in his bosom, and withal  
Thrust those reproachful speeches down his throat  
That he hath breathed in my dishonor here.

CHIRON

For that I am prepared and full resolved,  
Foul-spoken coward, that thund'rest with thy tongue  
And with thy weapon nothing dar'st perform.

60

AARON Away, I say!

Now by the gods that warlike Goths adore,  
This petty brabble will undo us all.  
Why, lords, and think you not how dangerous  
It is to jet upon a prince's right?  
What, is Lavinia then become so loose  
Or Bassianus so degenerate  
That for her love such quarrels may be broached  
Without controlment, justice, or revenge?  
Young lords, beware! And should the Empress know  
This discord's ground, the music would not please.

65

70

CHIRON

I care not, I, knew she and all the world.  
I love Lavinia more than all the world.

DEMETRIUS

Youngling, learn thou to make some meaner choice.  
Lavinia is thine elder brother's hope.

75

AARON

Why, are you mad? Or know you not in Rome  
How furious and impatient they be,  
And cannot brook competitors in love?  
I tell you, lords, you do but plot your deaths  
By this device.

80

CHIRON Aaron, a thousand deaths

Would I propose to achieve her whom I love.

AARON

To achieve her how?

DEMETRIUS Why makes thou it so strange?

85

She is a woman, therefore may be wooed;  
She is a woman, therefore may be won;  
She is Lavinia, therefore must be loved.  
What, man, more water glideth by the mill  
Than wots the miller of, and easy it is  
Of a cut loaf to steal a shive, we know.

90

	Though Bassianus be the Emperor's brother, Better than he have worn Vulcan's badge.	
AARON, <i>aside</i>	Ay, and as good as Saturninus may.	
DEMETRIUS	Then why should he despair that knows to court it With words, fair looks, and liberality?	95
	What, hast not thou full often struck a doe And borne her cleanly by the keeper's nose?	
AARON	Why, then, it seems some certain snatch or so Would serve your turns.	100
CHIRON	Ay, so the turn were served.	
DEMETRIUS	Aaron, thou hast hit it.	
AARON	Would you had hit it too!	
	Then should not we be tired with this ado. Why, hark you, hark you! And are you such fools To square for this? Would it offend you then That both should speed?	105
CHIRON	Faith, not me.	
DEMETRIUS	Nor me, so I were one.	
AARON	For shame, be friends, and join for that you jar. 'Tis policy and stratagem must do That you affect, and so must you resolve That what you cannot as you would achieve, You must perforce accomplish as you may. Take this of me: Lucrece was not more chaste Than this Lavinia, Bassianus' love.	110
	A speedier course than ling'ring languishment Must we pursue, and I have found the path. My lords, a solemn hunting is in hand; There will the lovely Roman ladies troop.	115
	The forest walks are wide and spacious, And many unfrequented plots there are, Fitted by kind for rape and villainy. Single you thither then this dainty doe, And strike her home by force, if not by words.	120
	This way, or not at all, stand you in hope. Come, come, our empress, with her sacred wit To villainy and vengeance consecrate, Will we acquaint withal what we intend, And she shall file our engines with advice	125
	That will not suffer you to square yourselves, But to your wishes' height advance you both. The Emperor's court is like the house of Fame, The palace full of tongues, of eyes, and ears;	130
	The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull. There speak and strike, brave boys, and take your turns.	135
	There serve your lust, shadowed from heaven's eye, And revel in Lavinia's treasury.	
CHIRON	Thy counsel, lad, smells of no cowardice.	140

DEMETRIUS

*Sit fas aut nefas,* till I find the stream  
To cool this heat, a charm to calm these fits,  
*Per Stygia, per manes vehor.*

*They exit.*

Scene 2

*Enter Titus Andronicus and his three sons, and  
Marcus, making a noise with hounds and horns.*

TITUS

The hunt is up, the moon is bright and gray,  
The fields are fragrant, and the woods are green.  
Uncouple here, and let us make a bay  
And wake the Emperor and his lovely bride,  
And rouse the Prince, and ring a hunter's peal, 5  
That all the court may echo with the noise.  
Sons, let it be your charge, as it is ours,  
To attend the Emperor's person carefully.  
I have been troubled in my sleep this night,  
But dawning day new comfort hath inspired. 10

*Here a cry of hounds, and wind horns in a peal. Then  
enter Saturninus, Tamora, Bassianus, Lavinia, Chiron,  
Demetrius, and their Attendants.*

TITUS

Many good morrows to your Majesty;—  
Madam, to you as many, and as good.—  
I promisèd your Grace a hunter's peal.

SATURNINUS

And you have rung it lustily, my lords—  
Somewhat too early for new-married ladies. 15

BASSIANUS

Lavinia, how say you?

LAVINIA I say no.

I have been broad awake two hours and more.

SATURNINUS

Come on, then. Horse and chariots let us have,  
And to our sport. (*To Tamora*) Madam, now shall 20  
you see  
Our Roman hunting.

MARCUS I have dogs, my lord,

Will rouse the proudest panther in the chase  
And climb the highest promontory top. 25

TITUS

And I have horse will follow where the game  
Makes way and runs like swallows o'er the plain.

DEMETRIUS, *aside to Chiron*

Chiron, we hunt not, we, with horse nor hound,  
But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground.

*They exit.*

Scene 3

*Enter Aaron, alone, carrying a bag of gold.*

AARON

He that had wit would think that I had none,  
To bury so much gold under a tree  
And never after to inherit it.  
Let him that thinks of me so abjectly  
Know that this gold must coin a stratagem      5  
Which, cunningly effected, will beget  
A very excellent piece of villainy.      *He hides the bag.*  
And so repose, sweet gold, for their unrest  
That have their alms out of the Empress' chest.

*Enter Tamora alone to Aaron the Moor.*

TAMORA

My lovely Aaron, wherefore look'st thou sad,      10  
When everything doth make a gleeful boast?  
The birds chant melody on every bush,  
The snakes lies rollèd in the cheerful sun,  
The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind  
And make a checkered shadow on the ground.      15  
Under their sweet shade, Aaron, let us sit,  
And whilst the babbling echo mocks the hounds,  
Replying shrilly to the well-tuned horns,  
As if a double hunt were heard at once,  
Let us sit down and mark their yellowing noise.      20  
And after conflict such as was supposed  
The wand'ring prince and Dido once enjoyed  
When with a happy storm they were surprised,  
And curtained with a counsel-keeping cave,  
We may, each wreathèd in the other's arms,      25  
Our pastimes done, possess a golden slumber,  
Whiles hounds and horns and sweet melodious birds  
Be unto us as is a nurse's song  
Of lullaby to bring her babe asleep.

AARON

Madam, though Venus govern your desires,      30  
Saturn is dominator over mine.  
What signifies my deadly standing eye,  
My silence, and my cloudy melancholy,  
My fleece of woolly hair that now uncurls  
Even as an adder when she doth unroll      35  
To do some fatal execution?  
No, madam, these are no venereal signs.  
Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand,  
Blood and revenge are hammering in my head.  
Hark, Tamora, the empress of my soul,      40  
Which never hopes more heaven than rests in thee,  
This is the day of doom for Bassianus.  
His Philomel must lose her tongue today,  
Thy sons make pillage of her chastity  
And wash their hands in Bassianus' blood.      45

*He takes out a paper.*

Seest thou this letter? Take it up, I pray thee,  
And give the King this fatal-plotted scroll.

*He hands her the paper.*

Now, question me no more. We are espied.

Here comes a parcel of our hopeful booty,  
Which dreads not yet their lives' destruction.

50

*Enter Bassianus and Lavinia.*

TAMORA

Ah, my sweet Moor, sweeter to me than life!

AARON

No more, great empress. Bassianus comes.  
Be cross with him, and I'll go fetch thy sons  
To back thy quarrels, whatsoe'er they be.

*He exits.*

BASSIANUS

Who have we here? Rome's royal empress,  
Unfurnished of her well-beseeming troop?  
Or is it Dian, habited like her,  
Who hath abandonèd her holy groves  
To see the general hunting in this forest?

55

TAMORA

Saucy controller of my private steps,  
Had I the power that some say Dian had,  
Thy temples should be planted presently  
With horns, as was Acteon's, and the hounds  
Should drive upon thy new-transformèd limbs,  
Unmannerly intruder as thou art.

65

LAVINIA

Under your patience, gentle empress,  
'Tis thought you have a goodly gift in horning,  
And to be doubted that your Moor and you  
Are singled forth to try experiments.  
Jove shield your husband from his hounds today!  
'Tis pity they should take him for a stag.

70

BASSIANUS

Believe me, queen, your swarthy Cimmerian  
Doth make your honor of his body's hue,  
Spotted, detested, and abominable.  
Why are you sequestered from all your train,  
Dismounted from your snow-white goodly steed,  
And wandered hither to an obscure plot,  
Accompanied but with a barbarous Moor,  
If foul desire had not conducted you?

75

LAVINIA

And being intercepted in your sport,  
Great reason that my noble lord be rated  
For sauciness.—I pray you, let us hence,  
And let her joy her raven-colored love.  
This valley fits the purpose passing well.

80

BASSIANUS

The King my brother shall have notice of this.

85

LAVINIA

Ay, for these slips have made him noted long.  
Good king to be so mightily abused!

TAMORA

Why, I have patience to endure all this.

*Enter Chiron and Demetrius.*

DEMETRIUS

How now, dear sovereign and our gracious mother,  
Why doth your Highness look so pale and wan?

90

TAMORA

Have I not reason, think you, to look pale?  
These two have ticed me hither to this place,  
A barren, detested vale you see it is;  
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,  
Overcome with moss and baleful mistletoe.

95

Here never shines the sun, here nothing breeds,  
Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven.

And when they showed me this abhorred pit,  
They told me, here at dead time of the night  
A thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes,  
Ten thousand swelling toads, as many urchins,  
Would make such fearful and confusèd cries

100

As any mortal body hearing it  
Should straight fall mad, or else die suddenly.

No sooner had they told this hellish tale  
But straight they told me they would bind me here

105

Unto the body of a dismal yew

And leave me to this miserable death.

And then they called me foul adulteress,  
Lascivious Goth, and all the bitterest terms

110

That ever ear did hear to such effect.

And had you not by wondrous fortune come,  
This vengeance on me had they executed.  
Revenge it as you love your mother's life,  
Or be you not henceforth called my children.

115

DEMETRIUS, *drawing his dagger*

This is a witness that I am thy son.

CHIRON, *drawing his dagger*

And this for me, struck home to show my strength.

*They stab Bassianus.*

LAVINIA

Ay, come, Semiramis, nay, barbarous Tamora,  
For no name fits thy nature but thy own!

TAMORA

Give me the poniard! You shall know, my boys,  
Your mother's hand shall right your mother's wrong.

120

DEMETRIUS

Stay, madam, here is more belongs to her.  
First thrash the corn, then after burn the straw.  
This minion stood upon her chastity,  
Upon her nuptial vow, her loyalty,

125

And with that painted hope braves your mightiness;  
And shall she carry this unto her grave?

CHIRON

And if she do, I would I were an eunuch!  
Drag hence her husband to some secret hole,  
And make his dead trunk pillow to our lust.

130

TAMORA

But when you have the honey you desire,  
Let not this wasp outlive, us both to sting.

CHIRON

I warrant you, madam, we will make that sure.—  
Come, mistress, now perforce we will enjoy  
That nice-preservèd honesty of yours.

135

LAVINIA

O Tamora, thou bearest a woman's face—

TAMORA

I will not hear her speak. Away with her.

LAVINIA

Sweet lords, entreat her hear me but a word.

DEMETRIUS, *to Tamora*

Listen, fair madam. Let it be your glory  
To see her tears, but be your heart to them  
As unrelenting flint to drops of rain.

140

LAVINIA

When did the tiger's young ones teach the dam?  
O, do not learn her wrath; she taught it thee.  
The milk thou suck'st from her did turn to marble.  
Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny.  
Yet every mother breeds not sons alike.

*To Chiron.* Do thou entreat her show a woman's pity.

145

CHIRON

What, wouldest thou have me prove myself a bastard?

LAVINIA

'Tis true; the raven doth not hatch a lark.  
Yet have I heard—O, could I find it now!—  
The lion, moved with pity, did endure  
To have his princely paws pared all away.  
Some say that ravens foster forlorn children,  
The whilst their own birds famish in their nests.  
O, be to me, though thy hard heart say no,

150

Nothing so kind, but something pitiful.

TAMORA

I know not what it means.—Away with her.

LAVINIA

O, let me teach thee! For my father's sake,  
That gave thee life when well he might have slain thee,  
Be not obdurate; open thy deaf ears.

160

TAMORA

Hadst thou in person ne'er offended me,  
Even for his sake am I pitiless.—  
Remember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain  
To save your brother from the sacrifice,  
But fierce Andronicus would not relent.  
Therefore away with her, and use her as you will;  
The worse to her, the better loved of me.

165

LAVINIA

O Tamora, be called a gentle queen,  
And with thine own hands kill me in this place!  
For 'tis not life that I have begged so long;  
Poor I was slain when Bassianus died.

170

TAMORA

What begg'st thou, then? Fond woman, let me go!

LAVINIA

'Tis present death I beg, and one thing more  
That womanhood denies my tongue to tell.



MARTIUS

Why dost not comfort me and help me out  
From this unhallowed and bloodstainèd hole?

210

QUINTUS

I am surprisèd with an uncouth fear.  
A chilling sweat o'erruns my trembling joints.  
My heart suspects more than mine eye can see.

MARTIUS

To prove thou hast a true-divining heart,  
Aaron and thou look down into this den  
And see a fearful sight of blood and death.

215

QUINTUS

Aaron is gone, and my compassionate heart  
Will not permit mine eyes once to behold  
The thing whereat it trembles by surmise.  
O, tell me who it is, for ne'er till now  
Was I a child to fear I know not what.

220

MARTIUS

Lord Bassianus lies berayed in blood,  
All on a heap, like to a slaughtered lamb,  
In this detested, dark, blood-drinking pit.

225

QUINTUS

If it be dark, how dost thou know 'tis he?

MARTIUS

Upon his bloody finger he doth wear  
A precious ring that lightens all this hole,  
Which like a taper in some monument  
Doth shine upon the dead man's earthy cheeks  
And shows the ragged entrails of this pit.  
So pale did shine the moon on Pyramus  
When he by night lay bathed in maiden blood.  
O, brother, help me with thy fainting hand—  
If fear hath made thee faint as me it hath—  
Out of this fell devouring receptacle,  
As hateful as Cocytus' misty mouth.

230

QUINTUS, *reaching into the pit*

Reach me thy hand, that I may help thee out,  
Or, wanting strength to do thee so much good,  
I may be plucked into the swallowing womb  
Of this deep pit, poor Bassianus' grave.

235

*He pulls Martius' hand.*

I have no strength to pluck thee to the brink.

MARTIUS

Nor I no strength to climb without thy help.

QUINTUS

Thy hand once more. I will not loose again  
Till thou art here aloft or I below.  
Thou canst not come to me. I come to thee.

240

245

*He falls in.*

*Enter the Emperor Saturninus, with Attendants,  
and Aaron the Moor.*

SATURNINUS

Along with me! I'll see what hole is here  
And what he is that now is leapt into it.—

Say, who art thou that lately didst descend  
Into this gaping hollow of the earth? 250

MARTIUS

The unhappy sons of old Andronicus,  
Brought hither in a most unlucky hour  
To find thy brother Bassianus dead.

SATURNINUS

My brother dead! I know thou dost but jest.  
He and his lady both are at the lodge 255  
Upon the north side of this pleasant chase.  
'Tis not an hour since I left them there.

MARTIUS

We know not where you left them all alive,  
But, out alas, here have we found him dead.

*Enter Tamora, Titus Andronicus, and Lucius.*

TAMORA Where is my lord the King? 260

SATURNINUS

Here, Tamora, though grieved with killing grief.

TAMORA

Where is thy brother Bassianus?

SATURNINUS

Now to the bottom dost thou search my wound.  
Poor Bassianus here lies murderèd.

TAMORA

Then all too late I bring this fatal writ,  
The complot of this timeless tragedy,  
And wonder greatly that man's face can fold  
In pleasing smiles such murderous tyranny.

*She giveth Saturnine a letter.*

SATURNINUS (*reads the letter*):

*An if we miss to meet him handsomely,  
Sweet huntsman—Bassianus 'tis we mean—  
Do thou so much as dig the grave for him;  
Thou know'st our meaning. Look for thy reward  
Among the nettles at the elder tree  
Which overshades the mouth of that same pit  
Where we decreed to bury Bassianus.* 270  
*Do this, and purchase us thy lasting friends.*  
O Tamora, was ever heard the like?  
This is the pit, and this the elder tree.—  
Look, sirs, if you can find the huntsman out  
That should have murdered Bassianus here. 280

AARON

My gracious lord, here is the bag of gold.

SATURNINUS, *to Titus*

Two of thy whelps, fell curs of bloody kind,  
Have here bereft my brother of his life.—  
Sirs, drag them from the pit unto the prison.  
There let them bide until we have devised 285  
Some never-heard-of torturing pain for them.

TAMORA

What, are they in this pit? O wondrous thing!  
How easily murder is discoverèd.

*Attendants pull Quintus, Martius, and*

*the body of Bassianus from the pit.*

TITUS, *kneeling*

High Emperor, upon my feeble knee  
I beg this boon with tears not lightly shed,                   290  
That this fell fault of my accursèd sons—  
Accursèd if the faults be proved in them—

SATURNINUS

If it be proved! You see it is apparent.  
Who found this letter? Tamora, was it you?

TAMORA

Andronicus himself did take it up.                   295

TITUS

I did, my lord, yet let me be their bail,  
For by my father's reverend tomb I vow  
They shall be ready at your Highness' will  
To answer their suspicion with their lives.

SATURNINUS

Thou shalt not bail them. See thou follow me.—                   300  
Some bring the murdered body, some the murderers.  
Let them not speak a word. The guilt is plain.  
For, by my soul, were there worse end than death,  
That end upon them should be executed.

TAMORA

Andronicus, I will entreat the King.                   305  
Fear not thy sons; they shall do well enough.

TITUS, *rising*

Come, Lucius, come. Stay not to talk with them.

*They exit, with Attendants leading Martius and Quintus and bearing the body of Bassianus.*

#### Scene 4

*Enter the Empress' sons, Demetrius and Chiron,  
with Lavinia, her hands cut off, and her tongue cut out,  
and ravished.*

DEMETRIUS

So, now go tell, an if thy tongue can speak,  
Who 'twas that cut thy tongue and ravished thee.

CHIRON

Write down thy mind; bewray thy meaning so,  
An if thy stumps will let thee play the scribe.

DEMETRIUS

See how with signs and tokens she can scrawl.                   5

CHIRON, *to Lavinia*

Go home. Call for sweet water; wash thy hands.

DEMETRIUS

She hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash;  
And so let's leave her to her silent walks.

CHIRON

An 'twere my cause, I should go hang myself.

DEMETRIUS

If thou hadst hands to help thee knit the cord.                   10

*Chiron and Demetrius exit.*

*Enter Marcus from hunting.*

MARCUS

Who is this? My niece, that flies away so fast?—  
Cousin, a word. Where is your husband?  
If I do dream, would all my wealth would wake me.  
If I do wake, some planet strike me down  
That I may slumber an eternal sleep. 15

Speak, gentle niece. What stern ungentle hands  
Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare  
Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments  
Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in,  
And might not gain so great a happiness 20

As half thy love? Why dost not speak to me?  
Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,  
Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind,  
Doth rise and fall between thy rosèd lips,  
Coming and going with thy honey breath. 25

But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee,  
And lest thou shouldst detect him cut thy tongue.  
Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame,  
And notwithstanding all this loss of blood,  
As from a conduit with three issuing spouts, 30

Yet do thy cheeks look red as Titan's face,  
Blushing to be encountered with a cloud.  
Shall I speak for thee, shall I say 'tis so?  
O, that I knew thy heart, and knew the beast,  
That I might rail at him to ease my mind. 35

Sorrow concealèd, like an oven stopped,  
Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is.  
Fair Philomela, why she but lost her tongue,  
And in a tedious sampler sewed her mind;  
But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee. 40

A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,  
And he hath cut those pretty fingers off  
That could have better sewed than Philomel.  
O, had the monster seen those lily hands  
Tremble like aspen leaves upon a lute 45

And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,  
He would not then have touched them for his life.  
Or had he heard the heavenly harmony  
Which that sweet tongue hath made,  
He would have dropped his knife and fell asleep, 50

As Cerberus at the Thracian poet's feet.  
Come, let us go and make thy father blind,  
For such a sight will blind a father's eye.  
One hour's storm will drown the fragrant meads;  
What will whole months of tears thy father's eyes? 55

Do not draw back, for we will mourn with thee.  
O, could our mourning ease thy misery!

*They exit.*

## ACT 3

### Scene 1

*Enter the Judges and Senators with Titus' two sons (Quintus and Martius) bound, passing on the stage to the place of execution, and Titus going before, pleading.*

TITUS

Hear me, grave fathers; noble tribunes, stay.  
For pity of mine age, whose youth was spent  
In dangerous wars whilst you securely slept;  
For all my blood in Rome's great quarrel shed,  
For all the frosty nights that I have watched, 5  
And for these bitter tears which now you see,  
Filling the agèd wrinkles in my cheeks,  
Be pitiful to my condemnèd sons,  
Whose souls is not corrupted as 'tis thought.  
For two-and-twenty sons I never wept 10  
Because they died in honor's lofty bed.

*Andronicus lieth down, and the Judges pass by him.*

*They exit with the prisoners as Titus continues speaking.*

For these, tribunes, in the dust I write  
My heart's deep languor and my soul's sad tears.  
Let my tears stanch the earth's dry appetite.  
My sons' sweet blood will make it shame and blush. 15  
O Earth, I will befriend thee more with rain  
That shall distil from these two ancient ruins  
Than youthful April shall with all his showers.  
In summer's drought I'll drop upon thee still;  
In winter with warm tears I'll melt the snow 20  
And keep eternal springtime on thy face,  
So thou refuse to drink my dear sons' blood.

*Enter Lucius with his weapon drawn.*

O reverend tribunes, O gentle agèd men,  
Unbind my sons, reverse the doom of death,  
And let me say, that never wept before, 25  
My tears are now prevailing orators.

LUCIUS

O noble father, you lament in vain.  
The Tribunes hear you not; no man is by,  
And you recount your sorrows to a stone.

TITUS

Ah, Lucius, for thy brothers let me plead.— 30  
Grave tribunes, once more I entreat of you—

LUCIUS

My gracious lord, no tribune hears you speak.

TITUS

Why, 'tis no matter, man. If they did hear,  
They would not mark me; if they did mark,  
They would not pity me. Yet plead I must, 35  
And bootless unto them.

Therefore I tell my sorrows to the stones,  
Who, though they cannot answer my distress,  
Yet in some sort they are better than the Tribunes,  
For that they will not intercept my tale. 40  
When I do weep, they humbly at my feet  
Receive my tears and seem to weep with me,  
And were they but attirèd in grave weeds,  
Rome could afford no tribunes like to these.  
A stone is soft as wax, tribunes more hard than  
stones; 45  
A stone is silent and offendeth not,  
And tribunes with their tongues doom men to death.  
But wherefore stand'st thou with thy weapon drawn?  
**LUCIUS**  
To rescue my two brothers from their death,  
For which attempt the Judges have pronounced  
My everlasting doom of banishment. 50  
**TITUS, *rising***  
O happy man, they have befriended thee!  
Why, foolish Lucius, dost thou not perceive  
That Rome is but a wilderness of tigers? 55  
Tigers must prey, and Rome affords no prey  
But me and mine. How happy art thou then  
From these devourers to be banishèd.  
But who comes with our brother Marcus here?

*Enter Marcus with Lavinia.*

**MARCUS**  
Titus, prepare thy agèd eyes to weep,  
Or, if not so, thy noble heart to break.  
I bring consuming sorrow to thine age. 60  
**TITUS**  
Will it consume me? Let me see it, then.  
**MARCUS**  
This was thy daughter.  
**TITUS** Why, Marcus, so she is. 65  
**LUCIUS** Ay me, this object kills me!  
**TITUS**  
Faint-hearted boy, arise and look upon her.—  
Speak, Lavinia. What accursèd hand  
Hath made thee handless in thy father's sight?  
What fool hath added water to the sea  
Or brought a faggot to bright-burning Troy? 70  
My grief was at the height before thou cam'st,  
And now like Nilus it disdaineth bounds.—  
Give me a sword. I'll chop off my hands too,  
For they have fought for Rome and all in vain;  
And they have nursed this woe in feeding life; 75  
In bootless prayer have they been held up,  
And they have served me to effectless use.  
Now all the service I require of them  
Is that the one will help to cut the other.—  
'Tis well, Lavinia, that thou hast no hands,  
For hands to do Rome service is but vain. 80

LUCIUS

Speak, gentle sister. Who hath martyred thee?

MARCUS

O, that delightful engine of her thoughts,  
That blabbed them with such pleasing eloquence,  
Is torn from forth that pretty hollow cage  
Where, like a sweet melodious bird, it sung  
Sweet varied notes, enchanting every ear.

85

TITUS

O, say thou for her who hath done this deed!

MARCUS

O, thus I found her straying in the park,  
Seeking to hide herself as doth the deer  
That hath received some unrecuring wound.

90

TITUS

It was my dear, and he that wounded her  
Hath hurt me more than had he killed me dead.  
For now I stand as one upon a rock,  
Environed with a wilderness of sea,  
Who marks the waxing tide grow wave by wave,  
Expecting ever when some envious surge  
Will in his brinish bowels swallow him.

95

This way to death my wretched sons are gone;  
Here stands my other son a banished man,  
And here my brother, weeping at my woes.  
But that which gives my soul the greatest spurn  
Is dear Lavinia, dearer than my soul.

100

Had I but seen thy picture in this plight  
It would have madded me. What shall I do,  
Now I behold thy lively body so?  
Thou hast no hands to wipe away thy tears,  
Nor tongue to tell me who hath martyred thee.

105

Thy husband he is dead, and for his death  
Thy brothers are condemned, and dead by this.—  
Look, Marcus!—Ah, son Lucius, look on her!  
When I did name her brothers, then fresh tears  
Stood on her cheeks as doth the honeydew  
Upon a gathered lily almost withered.

110

115

MARCUS

Perchance she weeps because they killed her husband,  
Perchance because she knows them innocent.

TITUS

If they did kill thy husband, then be joyful,  
Because the law hath ta'en revenge on them.—  
No, no, they would not do so foul a deed.

120

Witness the sorrow that their sister makes.—

Gentle Lavinia, let me kiss thy lips,  
Or make some sign how I may do thee ease.  
Shall thy good uncle and thy brother Lucius  
And thou and I sit round about some fountain,  
Looking all downwards to behold our cheeks,  
How they are stained like meadows yet not dry  
With miry slime left on them by a flood?

125

And in the fountain shall we gaze so long  
Till the fresh taste be taken from that clearness  
And made a brine pit with our bitter tears?

130

Or shall we cut away our hands like thine?  
Or shall we bite our tongues and in dumb shows  
Pass the remainder of our hateful days?  
What shall we do? Let us that have our tongues      135  
Plot some device of further misery  
To make us wondered at in time to come.

LUCIUS  
Sweet father, cease your tears, for at your grief  
See how my wretched sister sobs and weeps.

MARCUS  
Patience, dear niece.—Good Titus, dry thine eyes.      140

TITUS  
Ah, Marcus, Marcus! Brother, well I wot  
Thy napkin cannot drink a tear of mine,  
For thou, poor man, hast drowned it with thine own.

LUCIUS  
Ah, my Lavinia, I will wipe thy cheeks.

TITUS  
Mark, Marcus, mark. I understand her signs.      145  
Had she a tongue to speak, now would she say  
That to her brother which I said to thee.  
His napkin, with his true tears all bewet,  
Can do no service on her sorrowful cheeks.  
O, what a sympathy of woe is this,      150  
As far from help as limbo is from bliss.

*Enter Aaron the Moor alone.*

AARON  
Titus Andronicus, my lord the Emperor  
Sends thee this word, that if thou love thy sons,  
Let Marcus, Lucius, or thyself, old Titus,  
Or any one of you, chop off your hand      155  
And send it to the King; he for the same  
Will send thee hither both thy sons alive,  
And that shall be the ransom for their fault.

TITUS  
O gracious emperor! O gentle Aaron!  
Did ever raven sing so like a lark,      160  
That gives sweet tidings of the sun's uprise?  
With all my heart I'll send the Emperor my hand.  
Good Aaron, wilt thou help to chop it off?

LUCIUS  
Stay, father, for that noble hand of thine,  
That hath thrown down so many enemies,      165  
Shall not be sent. My hand will serve the turn.  
My youth can better spare my blood than you,  
And therefore mine shall save my brothers' lives.

MARCUS  
Which of your hands hath not defended Rome  
And reared aloft the bloody battleax,      170  
Writing destruction on the enemy's castle?  
O, none of both but are of high desert.  
My hand hath been but idle; let it serve  
To ransom my two nephews from their death.  
Then have I kept it to a worthy end.      175

AARON

Nay, come, agree whose hand shall go along,  
For fear they die before their pardon come.

MARCUS

My hand shall go.

LUCIUS By heaven, it shall not go!

TITUS

Sirs, strive no more. Such withered herbs as these  
Are meet for plucking up, and therefore mine.

180

LUCIUS

Sweet father, if I shall be thought thy son,  
Let me redeem my brothers both from death.

MARCUS

And for our father's sake and mother's care,  
Now let me show a brother's love to thee.

185

TITUS

Agree between you. I will spare my hand.

LUCIUS Then I'll go fetch an ax.

MARCUS But I will use the ax. *Lucius and Marcus exit.*

TITUS

Come hither, Aaron. I'll deceive them both.

Lend me thy hand, and I will give thee mine.

190

AARON, *aside*

If that be called deceit, I will be honest

And never whilst I live deceive men so.

But I'll deceive you in another sort,

And that you'll say ere half an hour pass.

*He cuts off Titus' hand.*

*Enter Lucius and Marcus again.*

TITUS

Now stay your strife. What shall be is dispatched.—

195

Good Aaron, give his Majesty my hand.

Tell him it was a hand that warded him

From thousand dangers. Bid him bury it.

More hath it merited; that let it have.

As for my sons, say I account of them

200

As jewels purchased at an easy price,

And yet dear, too, because I bought mine own.

AARON

I go, Andronicus, and for thy hand

Look by and by to have thy sons with thee.

*Aside.* Their heads, I mean. O, how this villainy

205

Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it!

Let fools do good and fair men call for grace;

Aaron will have his soul black like his face.

*He exits.*

TITUS

O, here I lift this one hand up to heaven,

And bow this feeble ruin to the earth.

*He kneels.* 210

If any power pities wretched tears,

To that I call. (*Lavinia kneels.*) What, wouldst thou

kneel with me?

Do, then, dear heart, for heaven shall hear our

prayers,

215

Or with our sighs we'll breathe the welkin dim  
And stain the sun with fog, as sometime clouds  
When they do hug him in their melting bosoms.

MARCUS

O brother, speak with possibility,  
And do not break into these deep extremes.

220

TITUS

Is not my sorrow deep, having no bottom?  
Then be my passions bottomless with them.

MARCUS

But yet let reason govern thy lament.

TITUS

If there were reason for these miseries,  
Then into limits could I bind my woes.  
When heaven doth weep, doth not the Earth o'erflow?  
If the winds rage, doth not the sea wax mad,  
Threat'ning the welkin with his big-swoll'n face?  
And wilt thou have a reason for this coil?

225

I am the sea. Hark how her sighs doth flow!

230

She is the weeping welkin, I the Earth.

Then must my sea be movèd with her sighs;  
Then must my Earth with her continual tears  
Become a deluge, overflowed and drowned,  
For why my bowels cannot hide her woes

235

But like a drunkard must I vomit them.

Then give me leave, for losers will have leave  
To ease their stomachs with their bitter tongues.

*Enter a Messenger with two heads and a hand.*

MESSENGER

Worthy Andronicus, ill art thou repaid  
For that good hand thou sent'st the Emperor.  
Here are the heads of thy two noble sons,  
And here's thy hand in scorn to thee sent back.  
Thy grief their sports, thy resolution mocked,  
That woe is me to think upon thy woes  
More than remembrance of my father's death.

240

*He exits.*

MARCUS

Now let hot Etna cool in Sicily,  
And be my heart an everburning hell!  
These miseries are more than may be borne.  
To weep with them that weep doth ease some deal,  
But sorrow flouted at is double death.

250

LUCIUS

Ah, that this sight should make so deep a wound  
And yet detested life not shrink thereat!  
That ever death should let life bear his name,  
Where life hath no more interest but to breathe.

*Lavinia kisses Titus.*

MARCUS

Alas, poor heart, that kiss is comfortless  
As frozen water to a starvèd snake.

255

TITUS

When will this fearful slumber have an end?

MARCUS

Now farewell, flatt'ry; die, Andronicus.  
Thou dost not slumber. See thy two sons' heads,  
Thy warlike hand, thy mangled daughter here,      260  
Thy other banished son with this dear sight  
Struck pale and bloodless; and thy brother, I,  
Even like a stony image cold and numb.  
Ah, now no more will I control thy griefs.  
Rent off thy silver hair, thy other hand,      265  
Gnawing with thy teeth, and be this dismal sight  
The closing up of our most wretched eyes.  
Now is a time to storm. Why art thou still?

TITUS Ha, ha, ha!

MARCUS

Why dost thou laugh? It fits not with this hour.      270  
*Titus and Lavinia rise.*

TITUS

Why, I have not another tear to shed.  
Besides, this sorrow is an enemy  
And would usurp upon my wat'ry eyes  
And make them blind with tributary tears.  
Then which way shall I find Revenge's cave?      275  
For these two heads do seem to speak to me  
And threat me I shall never come to bliss  
Till all these mischiefs be returned again  
Even in their throats that hath committed them.  
Come, let me see what task I have to do.      280  
You heavy people, circle me about  
That I may turn me to each one of you  
And swear unto my soul to right your wrongs.  
The vow is made. Come, brother, take a head,  
And in this hand the other will I bear.—      285  
And, Lavinia, thou shalt be employed in these arms.  
Bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy  
teeth.—  
As for thee, boy, go get thee from my sight.  
Thou art an exile, and thou must not stay.      290  
Hie to the Goths and raise an army there.  
And if you love me, as I think you do,  
Let's kiss and part, for we have much to do.

*All but Lucius exit.*

LUCIUS

Farewell, Andronicus, my noble father,  
The woefull'st man that ever lived in Rome.      295  
Farewell, proud Rome, till Lucius come again.  
He loves his pledges dearer than his life.  
Farewell, Lavinia, my noble sister.  
O, would thou wert as thou tofore hast been!  
But now nor Lucius nor Lavinia lives      300  
But in oblivion and hateful griefs.  
If Lucius live he will requite your wrongs  
And make proud Saturnine and his empress  
Beg at the gates like Tarquin and his queen.  
Now will I to the Goths and raise a power      305  
To be revenged on Rome and Saturnine.

*Lucius exits.*

Scene 2  
*A banquet. Enter Titus Andronicus, Marcus, Lavinia,  
and the boy Young Lucius, with Servants.*

TITUS

So, so. Now sit, and look you eat no more  
Than will preserve just so much strength in us  
As will revenge these bitter woes of ours.  
Marcus, unknit that sorrow-wreathen knot.  
Thy niece and I, poor creatures, want our hands       5  
And cannot passionate our tenfold grief  
With folded arms. This poor right hand of mine  
Is left to tyrannize upon my breast,  
Who, when my heart, all mad with misery,  
Beats in this hollow prison of my flesh,       10  
Then thus I thump it down.—  
Thou map of woe, that thus dost talk in signs,  
When thy poor heart beats with outrageous beating,  
Thou canst not strike it thus to make it still.  
Wound it with sighing, girl, kill it with groans;       15  
Or get some little knife between thy teeth  
And just against thy heart make thou a hole,  
That all the tears that thy poor eyes let fall  
May run into that sink and, soaking in,  
Drown the lamenting fool in sea-salt tears.       20

MARCUS

Fie, brother, fie! Teach her not thus to lay  
Such violent hands upon her tender life.

TITUS

How now! Has sorrow made thee dote already?  
Why, Marcus, no man should be mad but I.  
What violent hands can she lay on her life?       25  
Ah, wherefore dost thou urge the name of hands,  
To bid Aeneas tell the tale twice o'er  
How Troy was burnt and he made miserable?  
O, handle not the theme, to talk of hands,  
Lest we remember still that we have none.—       30  
Fie, fie, how frantically I square my talk,  
As if we should forget we had no hands  
If Marcus did not name the word of hands!  
Come, let's fall to, and, gentle girl, eat this.  
Here is no drink!—Hark, Marcus, what she says.       35  
I can interpret all her martyred signs.  
She says she drinks no other drink but tears  
Brewed with her sorrow, mashed upon her cheeks.—  
Speechless complainer, I will learn thy thought.  
In thy dumb action will I be as perfect       40  
As begging hermits in their holy prayers.  
Thou shalt not sigh, nor hold thy stumps to heaven,  
Nor wink, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make a sign,  
But I of these will wrest an alphabet  
And by still practice learn to know thy meaning.       45

YOUNG LUCIUS, *weeping*

Good grandsire, leave these bitter deep laments.  
Make my aunt merry with some pleasing tale.

MARCUS

Alas, the tender boy, in passion moved,  
Doth weep to see his grandsire's heaviness.

TITUS

Peace, tender sapling. Thou art made of tears,                   50  
And tears will quickly melt thy life away.

*Marcus strikes the dish with a knife.*

What dost thou strike at, Marcus, with thy knife?

MARCUS

At that that I have killed, my lord, a fly.

TITUS

Out on thee, murderer! Thou kill'st my heart.

Mine eyes are cloyed with view of tyranny;                   55

A deed of death done on the innocent

Becomes not Titus' brother. Get thee gone.

I see thou art not for my company.

MARCUS

Alas, my lord, I have but killed a fly.

TITUS

"But"? How if that fly had a father and mother?                   60

How would he hang his slender gilded wings

And buzz lamenting doings in the air!

Poor harmless fly,

That, with his pretty buzzing melody,

Came here to make us merry! And thou hast killed                   65  
him.

MARCUS

Pardon me, sir. It was a black, ill-favored fly,

Like to the Empress' Moor. Therefore I killed him.

TITUS O, O, O!

Then pardon me for reprehending thee,                   70

For thou hast done a charitable deed.

Give me thy knife. I will insult on him,

Flattering myself as if it were the Moor

Come hither purposely to poison me.

There's for thyself, and that's for Tamora.                   75

Ah, sirrah!

Yet I think we are not brought so low

But that between us we can kill a fly

That comes in likeness of a coal-black Moor.

MARCUS

Alas, poor man, grief has so wrought on him

He takes false shadows for true substances.                   80

TITUS

Come, take away.—Lavinia, go with me.

I'll to thy closet and go read with thee

Sad stories chancèd in the times of old.—

Come, boy, and go with me. Thy sight is young,                   85

And thou shalt read when mine begin to dazzle.

*They exit.*

## ACT 4

### Scene 1

*Enter Lucius' son and Lavinia running after him, and  
the boy flies from her with his books under his arm.  
Enter Titus and Marcus.*

YOUNG LUCIUS

Help, grandsire, help! My aunt Lavinia  
Follows me everywhere, I know not why.—  
Good uncle Marcus, see how swift she comes!—  
Alas, sweet aunt, I know not what you mean.

MARCUS

Stand by me, Lucius. Do not fear thine aunt.

5

TITUS

She loves thee, boy, too well to do thee harm.

YOUNG LUCIUS

Ay, when my father was in Rome she did.

MARCUS

What means my niece Lavinia by these signs?

TITUS

Fear her not, Lucius. Somewhat doth she mean.  
See, Lucius, see, how much she makes of thee.  
Somewhither would she have thee go with her.  
Ah, boy, Cornelia never with more care  
Read to her sons than she hath read to thee  
Sweet poetry and Tully's *Orator*.

10

MARCUS

Canst thou not guess wherefore she plies thee thus?

15

YOUNG LUCIUS

My lord, I know not, I, nor can I guess,  
Unless some fit or frenzy do possess her;  
For I have heard my grandsire say full oft,  
Extremity of griefs would make men mad,  
And I have read that Hecuba of Troy  
Ran mad for sorrow. That made me to fear,  
Although, my lord, I know my noble aunt  
Loves me as dear as e'er my mother did,  
And would not but in fury fright my youth,  
Which made me down to throw my books and fly,  
Causeless, perhaps.—But pardon me, sweet aunt.  
And, madam, if my uncle Marcus go,  
I will most willingly attend your Ladyship.

20

25

MARCUS Lucius, I will.

TITUS

How now, Lavinia?—Marcus, what means this?  
Some book there is that she desires to see.—  
Which is it, girl, of these?—Open them, boy.—  
*To Lavinia.* But thou art deeper read and better  
skilled.

30

Come and take choice of all my library,  
And so beguile thy sorrow till the heavens  
Reveal the damned contriver of this deed.—

35

Why lifts she up her arms in sequence thus?

MARCUS

I think she means that there were more than one  
Confederate in the fact. Ay, more there was,  
Or else to heaven she heaves them for revenge.

40

TITUS

Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?

YOUNG LUCIUS

Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's *Metamorphosis*.  
My mother gave it me.

MARCUS For love of her that's gone,  
Perhaps, she culled it from among the rest.

45

TITUS

Soft! So busily she turns the leaves.  
Help her! What would she find?—Lavinia, shall I read?  
This is the tragic tale of Philomel,  
And treats of Tereus' treason and his rape.  
And rape, I fear, was root of thy annoy.

50

MARCUS

See, brother, see! Note how she quotes the leaves.

TITUS

Lavinia, wert thou thus surprised, sweet girl,  
Ravished and wronged as Philomela was,  
Forced in the ruthless, vast, and gloomy woods?  
See, see! Ay, such a place there is where we did hunt—  
O, had we never, never hunted there!—  
Patterned by that the poet here describes,  
By nature made for murders and for rapes.

55

MARCUS

O, why should nature build so foul a den,  
Unless the gods delight in tragedies?

60

TITUS

Give signs, sweet girl, for here are none but friends,  
What Roman lord it was durst do the deed.  
Or slunk not Saturnine, as Tarquin erst,  
That left the camp to sin in Lucrece' bed?

65

MARCUS

Sit down, sweet niece.—Brother, sit down by me.

*They sit.*

Apollo, Pallas, Jove, or Mercury  
Inspire me, that I may this treason find.—  
My lord, look here.—Look here, Lavinia.

*He writes his name with his staff and guides it  
with feet and mouth.*

This sandy plot is plain; guide, if thou canst,  
This after me. I have writ my name  
Without the help of any hand at all.  
Cursed be that heart that forced us to this shift!  
Write thou, good niece, and here display at last  
What God will have discovered for revenge.  
Heaven guide thy pen to print thy sorrows plain,  
That we may know the traitors and the truth.

70

75

*She takes the staff in her mouth, and guides it  
with her stumps and writes.*

O, do you read, my lord, what she hath writ?

TITUS		
	"Stuprum. Chiron, Demetrius."	
MARCUS		
	What, what! The lustful sons of Tamora	80
	Performers of this heinous, bloody deed?	
TITUS	<i>Magni Dominator poli,</i>	
	<i>Tam lensus audis scelera, tam lensus vides?</i>	
MARCUS		
	O, calm thee, gentle lord, although I know	
	There is enough written upon this earth	85
	To stir a mutiny in the mildest thoughts	
	And arm the minds of infants to exclaims.	
	My lord, kneel down with me.—Lavinia, kneel.—	
	And kneel, sweet boy, the Roman Hector's hope,	
	<i>They all kneel.</i>	
	And swear with me—as, with the woeful fere	90
	And father of that chaste dishonored dame,	
	Lord Junius Brutus swore for Lucrece' rape—	
	That we will prosecute by good advice	
	Mortal revenge upon these traitorous Goths,	
	And see their blood or die with this reproach.	95
	<i>They rise.</i>	
TITUS		
	'Tis sure enough, an you knew how.	
	But if you hunt these bearwhelps, then beware;	
	The dam will wake an if she wind you once.	
	She's with the lion deeply still in league,	
	And lulls him whilst she playeth on her back;	100
	And when he sleeps will she do what she list.	
	You are a young huntsman, Marcus; let alone.	
	And come, I will go get a leaf of brass,	
	And with a gad of steel will write these words,	
	And lay it by. The angry northern wind	105
	Will blow these sands like Sibyl's leaves abroad,	
	And where's our lesson then?—Boy, what say you?	
YOUNG LUCIUS		
	I say, my lord, that if I were a man,	
	Their mother's bedchamber should not be safe	
	For these base bondmen to the yoke of Rome.	110
MARCUS		
	Ay, that's my boy! Thy father hath full oft	
	For his ungrateful country done the like.	
YOUNG LUCIUS		
	And, uncle, so will I, an if I live.	
TITUS		
	Come, go with me into mine armory.	
	Lucius, I'll fit thee, and withal my boy	115
	Shall carry from me to the Empress' sons	
	Presents that I intend to send them both.	
	Come, come. Thou 'lt do my message, wilt thou not?	
YOUNG LUCIUS		
	Ay, with my dagger in their bosoms, grandsire.	
TITUS		
	No, boy, not so. I'll teach thee another course.—	120
	Lavinia, come.—Marcus, look to my house.	
	Lucius and I'll go brave it at the court;	

Ay, marry, will we, sir, and we'll be waited on.

*All but Marcus exit.*

MARCUS

O heavens, can you hear a good man groan  
And not relent, or not compassion him?  
Marcus, attend him in his ecstasy,  
That hath more scars of sorrow in his heart  
Than foemen's marks upon his battered shield,  
But yet so just that he will not revenge.  
Revenge the heavens for old Andronicus!

125

130

*He exits.*

### Scene 2

*Enter Aaron, Chiron, and Demetrius at one door, and at  
the other door young Lucius and another, with a bundle  
of weapons and verses writ upon them.*

CHIRON

Demetrius, here's the son of Lucius.  
He hath some message to deliver us.

AARON

Ay, some mad message from his mad grandfather.

YOUNG LUCIUS

My lords, with all the humbleness I may,  
I greet your Honors from Andronicus—  
*Aside.* And pray the Roman gods confound you both.

5

DEMETRIUS

Gramercy, lovely Lucius. What's the news?

YOUNG LUCIUS, *aside*

That you are both deciphered, that's the news,  
For villains marked with rape.—May it please you,  
My grandsire, well advised, hath sent by me  
The goodliest weapons of his armory  
To gratify your honorable youth,  
The hope of Rome; for so he bid me say,  
And so I do, and with his gifts present  
Your Lordships, that, whenever you have need,  
You may be armèd and appointed well,  
And so I leave you both—(*aside*) like bloody villains.

10

15

*He exits, with Attendant.*

DEMETRIUS

What's here? A scroll, and written round about.

Let's see:

*He reads:* “*Integer vitae, scelerisque purus,*  
*Non eget Mauri iaculis, nec arcu.*”

20

CHIRON

O, 'tis a verse in Horace; I know it well.  
I read it in the grammar long ago.

AARON

Ay, just; a verse in Horace; right, you have it.

*Aside.* Now, what a thing it is to be an ass!

25

Here's no sound jest. The old man hath found their  
guilt

And sends them weapons wrapped about with lines  
That wound, beyond their feeling, to the quick.

But were our witty empress well afoot,

30

She would applaud Andronicus' conceit.  
But let her rest in her unrest awhile.—  
And now, young lords, was 't not a happy star  
Led us to Rome, strangers, and, more than so,  
Captives, to be advancèd to this height? 35  
It did me good before the palace gate  
To brave the tribune in his brother's hearing.

DEMETRIUS  
But me more good to see so great a lord  
Basely insinuate and send us gifts.

AARON  
Had he not reason, Lord Demetrius? 40  
Did you not use his daughter very friendly?

DEMETRIUS  
I would we had a thousand Roman dames  
At such a bay, by turn to serve our lust.

CHIRON  
A charitable wish, and full of love!

AARON  
Here lacks but your mother for to say amen. 45

CHIRON  
And that would she, for twenty thousand more.

DEMETRIUS  
Come, let us go and pray to all the gods  
For our belovèd mother in her pains.

AARON, *aside*  
Pray to the devils; the gods have given us over.  
*Trumpets sound offstage.*

DEMETRIUS  
Why do the Emperor's trumpets flourish thus? 50

CHIRON  
Belike for joy the Emperor hath a son.

DEMETRIUS Soft, who comes here?

*Enter Nurse, with a blackamoor child in her arms.*

NURSE Good morrow, lords.  
O, tell me, did you see Aaron the Moor?

AARON  
Well, more or less, or ne'er a whit at all, 55  
Here Aaron is. And what with Aaron now?

NURSE  
O, gentle Aaron, we are all undone!  
Now help, or woe betide thee evermore.

AARON  
Why, what a caterwauling dost thou keep!  
What dost thou wrap and fumble in thy arms? 60

NURSE  
O, that which I would hide from heaven's eye,  
Our empress' shame and stately Rome's disgrace.  
She is delivered, lords, she is delivered.

AARON To whom?

NURSE I mean, she is brought abed. 65

AARON  
Well, God give her good rest. What hath he sent her?

NURSE A devil.

AARON

Why, then she is the devil's dam. A joyful issue!

NURSE

A joyless, dismal, black, and sorrowful issue!

Here is the babe, as loathsome as a toad 70

Amongst the fair-faced breeders of our clime.

The Empress sends it thee, thy stamp, thy seal,

And bids thee christen it with thy dagger's point.

AARON

Zounds, you whore, is black so base a hue?

To the baby. Sweet blowse, you are a beauteous 75  
blossom, sure.

DEMETRIUS Villain, what hast thou done?

AARON That which thou canst not undo.

CHIRON Thou hast undone our mother.

AARON Villain, I have done thy mother. 80

DEMETRIUS

And therein, hellish dog, thou hast undone her.

Woe to her chance, and damned her loathèd choice!

Accursed the offspring of so foul a fiend!

CHIRON It shall not live.

AARON It shall not die. 85

NURSE

Aaron, it must. The mother wills it so.

AARON

What, must it, nurse? Then let no man but I

Do execution on my flesh and blood.

DEMETRIUS

I'll broach the tadpole on my rapier's point.

Nurse, give it me. My sword shall soon dispatch it. 90

AARON, *taking the baby*

Sooner this sword shall plow thy bowels up!

Stay, murderous villains, will you kill your brother?

Now, by the burning tapers of the sky

That shone so brightly when this boy was got,

He dies upon my scimitar's sharp point 95

That touches this my firstborn son and heir.

I tell you, younglings, not Enceladus

With all his threat'ning band of Typhon's brood,

Nor great Alcides, nor the god of war

Shall seize this prey out of his father's hands. 100

What, what, you sanguine, shallow-hearted boys,

You white-limed walls, you alehouse painted signs!

Coal-black is better than another hue

In that it scorns to bear another hue;

For all the water in the ocean 105

Can never turn the swan's black legs to white,

Although she lave them hourly in the flood.

Tell the Empress from me, I am of age

To keep mine own, excuse it how she can.

DEMETRIUS

Wilt thou betray thy noble mistress thus? 110

AARON

My mistress is my mistress, this myself,

The vigor and the picture of my youth.

This before all the world do I prefer;

	This maugre all the world will I keep safe, Or some of you shall smoke for it in Rome.	115
DEMETRIUS	By this our mother is forever shamed.	
CHIRON	Rome will despise her for this foul escape.	
NURSE	The Emperor in his rage will doom her death.	
CHIRON	I blush to think upon this ignominy.	
AARON	Why, there's the privilege your beauty bears. Fie, treacherous hue, that will betray with blushing The close enacts and counsels of thy heart. Here's a young lad framed of another leer. Look how the black slave smiles upon the father, As who should say "Old lad, I am thine own." He is your brother, lords, sensibly fed Of that self blood that first gave life to you, And from that womb where you imprisoned were He is enfranchisèd and come to light. Nay, he is your brother by the surer side, Although my seal be stampèd in his face.	120 125 130
NURSE	Aaron, what shall I say unto the Empress?	
DEMETRIUS	Advise thee, Aaron, what is to be done, And we will all subscribe to thy advice. Save thou the child, so we may all be safe.	135
AARON	Then sit we down, and let us all consult. My son and I will have the wind of you. Keep there. Now talk at pleasure of your safety.	
DEMETRIUS, <i>to the Nurse</i>	How many women saw this child of his?	
AARON	Why, so, brave lords! When we join in league, I am a lamb; but if you brave the Moor, The chafèd boar, the mountain lioness, The ocean swells not so as Aaron storms. <i>To the Nurse.</i> But say again, how many saw the child?	140 145
NURSE	Cornelia the midwife and myself, And no one else but the delivered Empress.	
AARON	The Empress, the midwife, and yourself. Two may keep counsel when the third's away. Go to the Empress; tell her this I said.	150
	<i>He kills her.</i>	
	"Wheak, wheak!" So cries a pig preparèd to the spit.	
DEMETRIUS	What mean'st thou, Aaron? Wherefore didst thou this?	
AARON	O Lord, sir, 'tis a deed of policy. Shall she live to betray this guilt of ours,	

A long-tongued babbling gossip? No, lords, no. 155  
And now be it known to you my full intent:  
Not far one Muliteus my countryman  
His wife but yesternight was brought to bed.  
His child is like to her, fair as you are.  
Go pack with him, and give the mother gold, 160  
And tell them both the circumstance of all,  
And how by this their child shall be advanced  
And be receivèd for the Emperor's heir,  
And substituted in the place of mine,  
To calm this tempest whirling in the court; 165  
And let the Emperor dandle him for his own.  
Hark you, lords, you see I have given her physic,  
*indicating the Nurse*  
And you must needs bestow her funeral.  
The fields are near, and you are gallant grooms.  
This done, see that you take no longer days, 170  
But send the midwife presently to me.  
The midwife and the nurse well made away,  
Then let the ladies tattle what they please.

CHIRON

Aaron, I see thou wilt not trust the air  
With secrets.

DEMETRIUS For this care of Tamora,  
Herself and hers are highly bound to

*Demetrius and Chiron exit,  
carrying the Nurse's body.*

AARON

Now to the Goths, as swift as swallow flies,  
There to dispose this treasure in mine arms  
And secretly to greet the Empress' friends.—  
Come on, you thick-lipped slave, I'll bear you hence,  
For it is you that puts us to our shifts.  
I'll make you feed on berries and on roots,  
And feed on curds and whey, and suck the goat,  
And cabin in a cave, and bring you up  
To be a warrior and command a camp.

*He exits with the baby.*

### Scene 3

*Enter Titus, old Marcus, his son Publius, young  
Lucius, and other gentlemen (Caius and Sempronius)  
with bows, and Titus bears the arrows with letters on  
the ends of them.*

TITUS

Come, Marcus, come. Kinsmen, this is the way.—  
Sir boy, let me see your archery.  
Look you draw home enough and 'tis there straight.—  
*Terras Astraea reliquit.*  
Be you remembered, Marcus, she's gone, she's fled  
Sirs, take you to your tools. You, cousins, shall  
Go sound the ocean and cast your nets;  
Happily you may catch her in the sea;  
Yet there's as little justice as at land.  
No; Publius and Sempronius, you must do it.

'Tis you must dig with mattock and with spade, And pierce the inmost center of the Earth. Then, when you come to Pluto's region, I pray you, deliver him this petition. Tell him it is for justice and for aid, And that it comes from old Andronicus, Shaken with sorrows in ungrateful Rome. Ah, Rome! Well, well, I made thee miserable What time I threw the people's suffrages On him that thus doth tyrannize o'er me. Go, get you gone, and pray be careful all, And leave you not a man-of-war unsearched. This wicked emperor may have shipped her hence, And, kinsmen, then we may go pipe for justice.	15
IARCUS	
O Publius, is not this a heavy case To see thy noble uncle thus distract?	20
UBLIUS	
Therefore, my lords, it highly us concerns By day and night t' attend him carefully, And feed his humor kindly as we may, Till time beget some careful remedy.	30
IARCUS	
Kinsmen, his sorrows are past remedy But ...	
Join with the Goths, and with revengeful war Take wreak on Rome for this ingratitude, And vengeance on the traitor Saturnine.	35
ITUS	
Publius, how now? How now, my masters? What, have you met with her?	
UBLIUS	
No, my good lord, but Pluto sends you word, If you will have Revenge from hell, you shall. Marry, for Justice, she is so employed, He thinks, with Jove in heaven, or somewhere else, So that perforce you must needs stay a time.	40
ITUS	
He doth me wrong to feed me with delays. I'll dive into the burning lake below And pull her out of Acheron by the heels. Marcus, we are but shrubs, no cedars we, No big-boned men framed of the Cyclops' size, But metal, Marcus, steel to the very back, Yet wrung with wrongs more than our backs can bear;	45
And sith there's no justice in Earth nor hell, We will solicit heaven and move the gods To send down Justice for to wreak our wrongs. Come, to this gear. You are a good archer, Marcus.	50
<i>He gives them the arrows.</i>	
"Ad Jovem," that's for you;—here, "Ad Apollinem";— "Ad Martem," that's for myself;— Here, boy, "to Pallas";—here, "to Mercury";— "To Saturn," Caius—not to Saturnine! You were as good to shoot against the wind.	55

To it, boy!—Marcus, loose when I bid. Of my word, I have written to effect; There's not a god left unsolicited.	60
MARCUS Kinsmen, shoot all your shafts into the court. We will afflict the Emperor in his pride.	
TITUS Now, masters, draw. ( <i>They shoot.</i> ) O, well said, Lucius!	65
Good boy, in Virgo's lap! Give it Pallas.	
MARCUS My lord, I aim a mile beyond the moon. Your letter is with Jupiter by this.	
TITUS Ha, ha! Publius, Publius, what hast thou done? See, see, thou hast shot off one of Taurus' horns!	70
MARCUS This was the sport, my lord; when Publius shot, The Bull, being galled, gave Aries such a knock That down fell both the Ram's horns in the court, And who should find them but the Empress' villain?      75 She laughed and told the Moor he should not choose But give them to his master for a present.	
TITUS Why, there it goes. God give his Lordship joy!	
<i>Enter a country fellow with a basket and two pigeons in it.</i>	
News, news from heaven! Marcus, the post is come.—	80
Sirrah, what tidings? Have you any letters? Shall I have Justice? What says Jupiter?	
COUNTRY FELLOW Ho, the gibbet-maker? He says that he hath taken them down again, for the man must not be hanged till the next week.	85
TITUS But what says Jupiter, I ask thee?	
COUNTRY FELLOW Alas, sir, I know not Jubiter; I never drank with him in all my life.	
TITUS Why, villain, art not thou the carrier?	
COUNTRY FELLOW Ay, of my pigeons, sir; nothing else.	90
TITUS Why, didst thou not come from heaven?	
COUNTRY FELLOW From heaven? Alas, sir, I never came there. God forbid I should be so bold to press to heaven in my young days. Why, I am going with my pigeons to the tribunal plebs, to take up a matter of brawl betwixt my uncle and one of the Emperal's men.	95
MARCUS, <i>to Titus</i> Why, sir, that is as fit as can be to serve for your oration; and let him deliver the pigeons to the Emperor from you.	100
TITUS Tell me, can you deliver an oration to the Emperor with a grace?	
COUNTRY FELLOW Nay, truly, sir, I could never say grace in all my life.	

TITUS

Sirrah, come hither. Make no more ado,  
But give your pigeons to the Emperor.  
By me thou shalt have justice at his hands.  
Hold, hold; meanwhile here's money for thy  
charges.—Give me pen and ink.—Sirrah, can you  
with a grace deliver up a supplication?

105

110  
*He writes.*

COUNTRY FELLOW Ay, sir.

TITUS Then here is a supplication for you, and when  
you come to him, at the first approach you must  
kneel, then kiss his foot, then deliver up your pigeons,  
and then look for your reward. I'll be at  
hand, sir. See you do it bravely.

115  
*He hands him a paper.*

COUNTRY FELLOW I warrant you, sir. Let me alone.

TITUS

Sirrah, hast thou a knife? Come, let me see it.—

*He takes the knife and gives it to Marcus.*

Here, Marcus, fold it in the oration,  
For thou hast made it like an humble suppliant.—  
And when thou hast given it to the Emperor,  
Knock at my door and tell me what he says.

120

COUNTRY FELLOW God be with you, sir. I will.

*He exits.*

TITUS Come, Marcus, let us go.—Publius, follow me.

*They exit.*

#### Scene 4

*Enter Emperor Saturninus and Empress Tamora  
and her two sons Chiron and Demetrius, with  
Attendants. The Emperor brings the arrows in his  
hand that Titus shot at him.*

SATURNINUS

Why, lords, what wrongs are these! Was ever seen  
An emperor in Rome thus overborne,  
Troubled, confronted thus, and for the extent  
Of equal justice, used in such contempt?  
My lords, you know, as know the mighty gods,  
However these disturbers of our peace  
Buzz in the people's ears, there naught hath passed  
But even with law against the willful sons  
Of old Andronicus. And what an if  
His sorrows have so overwhelmed his wits?  
Shall we be thus afflicted in his wreaks,  
His fits, his frenzy, and his bitterness?  
And now he writes to heaven for his redress!  
See, here's "to Jove," and this "to Mercury,"  
This "to Apollo," this to the god of war.  
Sweet scrolls to fly about the streets of Rome!  
What's this but libeling against the Senate  
And blazoning our injustice everywhere?  
A goodly humor is it not, my lords?  
As who would say, in Rome no justice were.  
But if I live, his feignèd ecstasies

5

10

15

20

Shall be no shelter to these outrages,  
But he and his shall know that justice lives  
In Saturninus' health, whom, if he sleep,  
He'll so awake as he in fury shall  
Cut off the proud'st conspirator that lives.

TAMORA

My gracious lord, my lovely Saturnine,  
Lord of my life, commander of my thoughts,  
Calm thee, and bear the faults of Titus' age,  
Th' effects of sorrow for his valiant sons,      30  
Whose loss hath pierced him deep and scarred his  
heart,  
And rather comfort his distressèd plight  
Than prosecute the meanest or the best  
For these contempts. (*Aside.*) Why, thus it shall      35  
become  
High-witted Tamora to gloze with all.  
But, Titus, I have touched thee to the quick.  
Thy lifeblood out, if Aaron now be wise,  
Then is all safe, the anchor in the port.      40

### *Enter Country Fellow.*

How now, good fellow, wouldst thou speak with us?  
COUNTRY FELLOW Yea, forsooth, an your Mistresship be  
emperial.

TAMORA

EMPEROR  
Empress I am, but yonder sits the Emperor.  
COUNTRY FELLOW 'Tis he!—God and Saint Stephen  
give you good e'en. I have brought you a letter and  
a couple of pigeons here.

*Saturninus reads the letter.*

SATURNINUS

Go, take him away, and hang him presently.  
COUNTRY FELLOW How much money must I have?  
TAMORA Come, sirrah, you must be hanged.  
COUNTRY FELLOW Hanged! By 'r Lady, then I have  
brought up a neck to a fair end.

*He exits with Attendants.*

SATURNINUS

Despiteful and intolerable wrongs!  
Shall I endure this monstrous villainy?  
I know from whence this same device proceeds. 55  
May this be borne?—as if his traitorous sons,  
That died by law for murder of our brother,  
Have by my means been butchered wrongfully!  
Go, drag the villain hither by the hair.  
Nor age nor honor shall shape privilege. 60  
For this proud mock, I'll be thy slaughterman,  
Sly, frantic wretch, that holp'st to make me great  
In hope thyself should govern Rome and me.

*Enter nuntius, Aemilius.*

SATURNINUS What news with thee, Aemilius?

AEMILIUS

Arm, my lords! Rome never had more cause. 65  
The Goths have gathered head, and with a power  
Of high-resolvèd men bent to the spoil,  
They hither march amain under conduct  
Of Lucius, son to old Andronicus,  
Who threats, in course of this revenge, to do 70  
As much as ever Coriolanus did.

SATURNINUS

Is warlike Lucius general of the Goths?  
These tidings nip me, and I hang the head  
As flowers with frost or grass beat down with storms.  
Ay, now begins our sorrows to approach. 75  
'Tis he the common people love so much.  
Myself hath often heard them say,  
When I have walkèd like a private man,  
That Lucius' banishment was wrongfully,  
And they have wished that Lucius were their emperor. 80

TAMORA

Why should you fear? Is not your city strong?

SATURNINUS

Ay, but the citizens favor Lucius  
And will revolt from me to succor him.

TAMORA

King, be thy thoughts imperious like thy name.  
Is the sun dimmed that gnats do fly in it? 85  
The eagle suffers little birds to sing  
And is not careful what they mean thereby,  
Knowing that with the shadow of his wings  
He can at pleasure stint their melody.  
Even so mayst thou the giddy men of Rome. 90  
Then cheer thy spirit, for know, thou emperor,  
I will enchant the old Andronicus  
With words more sweet and yet more dangerous  
Than baits to fish or honey-stalks to sheep,  
Whenas the one is wounded with the bait, 95  
The other rotted with delicious feed.

SATURNINUS

But he will not entreat his son for us.

TAMORA

If Tamora entreat him, then he will,  
For I can smooth and fill his agèd ears  
With golden promises, that were his heart 100  
Almost impregnable, his old ears deaf,  
Yet should both ear and heart obey my tongue.  
*To Aemilius.* Go thou before to be our ambassador.  
Say that the Emperor requests a parley  
Of warlike Lucius, and appoint the meeting  
Even at his father's house, the old Andronicus. 105

SATURNINUS

Aemilius, do this message honorably,  
And if he stand in hostage for his safety,  
Bid him demand what pledge will please him best.

AEMILIUS

Your bidding shall I do effectually. 110  
*He exits.*

TAMORA

Now will I to that old Andronicus  
And temper him with all the art I have  
To pluck proud Lucius from the warlike Goths.  
And now, sweet emperor, be blithe again,  
And bury all thy fear in my devices.

115

SATURNINUS

Then go successantly, and plead to him.

*They exit.*

## ACT 5

### Scene 1

*Flourish. Enter Lucius with an army of Goths, with Drums and Soldiers.*

LUCIUS

Approvèd warriors and my faithful friends,  
I have receivèd letters from great Rome  
Which signifies what hate they bear their emperor  
And how desirous of our sight they are.  
Therefore, great lords, be as your titles witness,      5  
Imperious, and impatient of your wrongs,  
And wherein Rome hath done you any scathe,  
Let him make treble satisfaction.

FIRST GOTH

Brave slip sprung from the great Andronicus,  
Whose name was once our terror, now our comfort,      10  
Whose high exploits and honorable deeds  
Ingrateful Rome requites with foul contempt,  
Be bold in us. We'll follow where thou lead'st,  
Like stinging bees in hottest summer's day  
Led by their master to the flowered fields,      15  
And be avenged on cursèd Tamora.

GOTHS

And as he saith, so say we all with him.

LUCIUS

I humbly thank him, and I thank you all.  
But who comes here, led by a lusty Goth?

*Enter a Goth, leading of Aaron with his child in his arms.*

SECOND GOTH

Renownèd Lucius, from our troops I strayed      20  
To gaze upon a ruinous monastery,  
And as I earnestly did fix mine eye  
Upon the wasted building, suddenly  
I heard a child cry underneath a wall.  
I made unto the noise, when soon I heard      25  
The crying babe controlled with this discourse:  
“Peace, tawny slave, half me and half thy dame!  
Did not thy hue bewray whose brat thou art,  
Had nature lent thee but thy mother's look,  
Villain, thou mightst have been an emperor.      30  
But where the bull and cow are both milk white,  
They never do beget a coal-black calf.  
Peace, villain, peace!”—even thus he rates the babe—  
“For I must bear thee to a trusty Goth  
Who, when he knows thou art the Empress' babe,      35  
Will hold thee dearly for thy mother's sake.”  
With this, my weapon drawn, I rushed upon him,  
Surprised him suddenly, and brought him hither  
To use as you think needful of the man.

LUCIUS		
O worthy Goth, this is the incarnate devil That robbed Andronicus of his good hand; This is the pearl that pleased your empress' eye; And here's the base fruit of her burning lust.— Say, wall-eyed slave, whither wouldst thou convey This growing image of thy fiendlike face?	40	
Why dost not speak? What, deaf? Not a word?— A halter, soldiers! Hang him on this tree, And by his side his fruit of bastardy.	45	
AARON		
Touch not the boy. He is of royal blood.		
LUCIUS		
Too like the sire for ever being good. First hang the child, that he may see it sprawl, A sight to vex the father's soul withal. Get me a ladder.	50	
<i>A ladder is brought, which Aaron is made to climb.</i>		
AARON	Lucius, save the child	
And bear it from me to the Empress.	55	
If thou do this, I'll show thee wondrous things That highly may advantage thee to hear. If thou wilt not, befall what may befall, I'll speak no more but "Vengeance rot you all!"		
LUCIUS		
Say on, and if it please me which thou speak'st, Thy child shall live, and I will see it nourished.	60	
AARON		
And if it please thee? Why, assure thee, Lucius, 'Twill vex thy soul to hear what I shall speak; For I must talk of murders, rapes, and massacres, Acts of black night, abominable deeds,	65	
Complots of mischief, treason, villainies, Ruthful to hear, yet piteously performed. And this shall all be buried in my death, Unless thou swear to me my child shall live.		
LUCIUS		
Tell on thy mind. I say thy child shall live.	70	
AARON		
Swear that he shall, and then I will begin.		
LUCIUS		
Who should I swear by? Thou believest no god. That granted, how canst thou believe an oath?		
AARON		
What if I do not? As indeed I do not. Yet, for I know thou art religious	75	
And hast a thing within thee callèd conscience, With twenty popish tricks and ceremonies Which I have seen thee careful to observe, Therefore I urge thy oath; for that I know		
An idiot holds his bauble for a god	80	
And keeps the oath which by that god he swears, To that I'll urge him. Therefore thou shalt vow By that same god, what god soe'er it be That thou adorest and hast in reverence,		
To save my boy, to nourish and bring him up,	85	

Or else I will discover naught to thee.  
**LUCIUS**  
Even by my god I swear to thee I will.  
**AARON**  
First know thou, I begot him on the Empress.  
**LUCIUS**  
O, most insatiate and luxurious woman!  
**AARON**  
Tut, Lucius, this was but a deed of charity  
To that which thou shalt hear of me anon.  
'Twas her two sons that murdered Bassianus.  
They cut thy sister's tongue, and ravished her,  
And cut her hands, and trimmed her as thou sawest.  
**LUCIUS**  
O detestable villain, call'st thou that trimming?  
**AARON**  
Why, she was washed, and cut, and trimmed; and  
'twas  
Trim sport for them which had the doing of it.  
**LUCIUS**  
O, barbarous beastly villains, like thyself!  
**AARON**  
Indeed, I was their tutor to instruct them.  
That coddling spirit had they from their mother,  
As sure a card as ever won the set;  
That bloody mind I think they learned of me,  
As true a dog as ever fought at head.  
Well, let my deeds be witness of my worth.  
I trained thy brethren to that guileful hole  
Where the dead corpse of Bassianus lay.  
I wrote the letter that thy father found,  
And hid the gold within that letter mentioned,  
Confederate with the Queen and her two sons.  
And what not done that thou hast cause to rue,  
Wherein I had no stroke of mischief in it?  
I played the cheater for thy father's hand,  
And, when I had it, drew myself apart  
And almost broke my heart with extreme laughter.  
I pried me through the crevice of a wall  
When, for his hand, he had his two sons' heads,  
Beheld his tears, and laughed so heartily  
That both mine eyes were rainy like to his.  
And when I told the Empress of this sport,  
She sounded almost at my pleasing tale,  
And for my tidings gave me twenty kisses.  
**GOTH**  
What, canst thou say all this and never blush?  
**AARON**  
Ay, like a black dog, as the saying is.  
**LUCIUS**  
Art thou not sorry for these heinous deeds?  
**AARON**  
Ay, that I had not done a thousand more.  
Even now I curse the day—and yet, I think,  
Few come within the compass of my curse—  
Wherein I did not some notorious ill.

As kill a man, or else devise his death; 130  
Ravish a maid or plot the way to do it;  
Accuse some innocent and forswear myself;  
Set deadly enmity between two friends;  
Make poor men's cattle break their necks;  
Set fire on barns and haystacks in the night, 135  
And bid the owners quench them with their tears.  
Oft have I digged up dead men from their graves  
And set them upright at their dear friends' door,  
Even when their sorrows almost was forgot,  
And on their skins, as on the bark of trees, 140  
Have with my knife carvèd in Roman letters  
"Let not your sorrow die, though I am dead."  
But I have done a thousand dreadful things  
As willingly as one would kill a fly,  
And nothing grieves me heartily indeed 145  
But that I cannot do ten thousand more.

LUCIUS

Bring down the devil, for he must not die  
So sweet a death as hanging presently.

*Aaron is brought down from the ladder.*

AARON

If there be devils, would I were a devil,  
To live and burn in everlasting fire, 150  
So I might have your company in hell  
But to torment you with my bitter tongue.

LUCIUS

Sirs, stop his mouth, and let him speak no more.

*Enter Aemilius.*

GOTH

My lord, there is a messenger from Rome  
Desires to be admitted to your presence. 155

LUCIUS Let him come near. *Aemilius comes forward.*

Welcome, Aemilius. What's the news from Rome?

AEMILIUS

Lord Lucius, and you princes of the Goths,  
The Roman Emperor greets you all by me;  
And, for he understands you are in arms, 160  
He craves a parley at your father's house,  
Willing you to demand your hostages,  
And they shall be immediately delivered.

GOTH What says our general?

LUCIUS

Aemilius, let the Emperor give his pledges  
Unto my father and my uncle Marcus, 165  
And we will come. March away.

*They exit.*

Scene 2

*Enter Tamora and her two sons, disguised.*

TAMORA

Thus, in this strange and sad habiliment  
I will encounter with Andronicus

And say I am Revenge, sent from below  
To join with him and right his heinous wrongs.  
Knock at his study, where they say he keeps  
To ruminate strange plots of dire revenge.  
Tell him Revenge is come to join with him  
And work confusion on his enemies.

5

*They knock, and Titus (above) opens his study door.*

TITUS

Who doth molest my contemplation?  
Is it your trick to make me ope the door,  
That so my sad decrees may fly away  
And all my study be to no effect?  
You are deceived, for what I mean to do,  
See here, in bloody lines I have set down,  
And what is written shall be executed.

15

TAMORA

Titus, I am come to talk with thee.

TITUS

No, not a word. How can I grace my talk,  
Wanting a hand to give it action?  
Thou hast the odds of me; therefore, no more.

TAMORA

If thou didst know me, thou wouldest talk with me.

20

TITUS

I am not mad. I know thee well enough.  
Witness this wretched stump; witness these crimson  
lines;  
Witness these trenches made by grief and care;  
Witness the tiring day and heavy night;  
Witness all sorrow that I know thee well  
For our proud empress, mighty Tamora.  
Is not thy coming for my other hand?

25

TAMORA

Know, thou sad man, I am not Tamora.  
She is thy enemy, and I thy friend.  
I am Revenge, sent from th' infernal kingdom  
To ease the gnawing vulture of thy mind  
By working wreakful vengeance on thy foes.  
Come down and welcome me to this world's light.  
Confer with me of murder and of death.  
There's not a hollow cave or lurking-place,  
No vast obscurity or misty vale  
Where bloody murder or detested rape  
Can couch for fear but I will find them out,  
And in their ears tell them my dreadful name,  
Revenge, which makes the foul offender quake.

30

35

40

TITUS

Art thou Revenge? And art thou sent to me  
To be a torment to mine enemies?

TAMORA

I am. Therefore come down and welcome me.

TITUS

Do me some service ere I come to thee.  
Lo, by thy side, where Rape and Murder stands,

45

Now give some surance that thou art Revenge:  
Stab them, or tear them on thy chariot wheels,  
And then I'll come and be thy wagoner,  
And whirl along with thee about the globe,      50  
Provide thee two proper palfreys, black as jet,  
To hale thy vengeful wagon swift away,  
And find out murderers in their guilty caves.  
And when thy car is loaden with their heads,  
I will dismount and by thy wagon wheel      55  
Trot like a servile footman all day long,  
Even from Hyperion's rising in the east  
Until his very downfall in the sea.  
And day by day I'll do this heavy task,  
So thou destroy Rapine and Murder there.      60

TAMORA

These are my ministers and come with me.

TITUS

Are they thy ministers? What are they called?

TAMORA

Rape and Murder; therefore callèd so  
'Cause they take vengeance of such kind of men.

TITUS

Good Lord, how like the Empress' sons they are,      65  
And you the Empress! But we worldly men  
Have miserable, mad, mistaking eyes.  
O sweet Revenge, now do I come to thee,  
And if one arm's embracement will content thee,  
I will embrace thee in it by and by.      70

*He exits above.*

TAMORA

This closing with him fits his lunacy.  
Whate'er I forge to feed his brainsick humors,  
Do you uphold and maintain in your speeches,  
For now he firmly takes me for Revenge;  
And, being credulous in this mad thought,      75  
I'll make him send for Lucius his son;  
And whilst I at a banquet hold him sure,  
I'll find some cunning practice out of hand  
To scatter and disperse the giddy Goths,  
Or, at the least, make them his enemies.      80

See, here he comes, and I must ply my theme.

*Enter Titus.*

TITUS

Long have I been forlorn, and all for thee.  
Welcome, dread Fury, to my woeful house.—  
Rapine and Murder, you are welcome too.  
How like the Empress and her sons you are!      85  
Well are you fitted, had you but a Moor.  
Could not all hell afford you such a devil?  
For well I wot the Empress never wags  
But in her company there is a Moor;  
And, would you represent our queen aright,      90  
It were convenient you had such a devil.  
But welcome as you are. What shall we do?

TAMORA		
What wouldst thou have us do, Andronicus?		
DEMETRIUS		
Show me a murderer; I'll deal with him.		
CHIRON		
Show me a villain that hath done a rape,	95	
And I am sent to be revenged on him.		
TAMORA		
Show me a thousand that hath done thee wrong,		
And I will be revengèd on them all.		
TITUS, <i>to Demetrius</i>		
Look round about the wicked streets of Rome,		
And when thou findst a man that's like thyself,	100	
Good Murder, stab him; he's a murderer.		
<i>To Chiron.</i> Go thou with him, and when it is thy		
hap		
To find another that is like to thee,		
Good Rapine, stab him; he is a ravisher.	105	
<i>To Tamora.</i> Go thou with them; and in the		
Emperor's court		
There is a queen attended by a Moor.		
Well shalt thou know her by thine own proportion,		
For up and down she doth resemble thee.	110	
I pray thee, do on them some violent death.		
They have been violent to me and mine.		
TAMORA		
Well hast thou lessoned us; this shall we do.		
But would it please thee, good Andronicus,		
To send for Lucius, thy thrice-valiant son,	115	
Who leads towards Rome a band of warlike Goths,		
And bid him come and banquet at thy house?		
When he is here, even at thy solemn feast,		
I will bring in the Empress and her sons,		
The Emperor himself, and all thy foes,	120	
And at thy mercy shall they stoop and kneel,		
And on them shalt thou ease thy angry heart.		
What says Andronicus to this device?		
TITUS, <i>(calling)</i>		
Marcus, my brother, 'tis sad Titus calls.		
<i>Enter Marcus.</i>		
Go, gentle Marcus, to thy nephew Lucius.	125	
Thou shalt inquire him out among the Goths.		
Bid him repair to me and bring with him		
Some of the chiefest princes of the Goths.		
Bid him encamp his soldiers where they are.		
Tell him the Emperor and the Empress too	130	
Feast at my house, and he shall feast with them.		
This do thou for my love, and so let him,		
As he regards his agèd father's life.		
MARCUS		
This will I do, and soon return again.		<i>Marcus exits.</i>
TAMORA		
Now will I hence about thy business	135	
And take my ministers along with me.		

TITUS

Nay, nay, let Rape and Murder stay with me,  
Or else I'll call my brother back again  
And cleave to no revenge but Lucius.

TAMORA, *aside to Chiron and Demetrius*

What say you, boys? Will you abide with him  
Whiles I go tell my lord the Emperor  
How I have governed our determined jest?  
Yield to his humor, smooth and speak him fair,  
And tarry with him till I turn again.

140

TITUS, *aside*

I knew them all, though they supposed me mad,  
And will o'erreach them in their own devices—  
A pair of cursèd hellhounds and their dam!

DEMETRIUS, *aside to Tamora*

Madam, depart at pleasure. Leave us here.

TAMORA

Farewell, Andronicus. Revenge now goes  
To lay a complot to betray thy foes.

150

TITUS

I know thou dost; and, sweet Revenge, farewell.

*Tamora exits.*

CHIRON

Tell us, old man, how shall we be employed?

TITUS

Tut, I have work enough for you to do.—  
Publius, come hither; Caius, and Valentine.

*Publius, Caius, and Valentine enter.*

PUBLIUS What is your will?

155

TITUS Know you these two?

PUBLIUS

The Empress' sons, I take them—Chiron, Demetrius.

TITUS

Fie, Publius, fie, thou art too much deceived.  
The one is Murder, and Rape is the other's name;  
And therefore bind them, gentle Publius.  
Caius and Valentine, lay hands on them.  
Oft have you heard me wish for such an hour,  
And now I find it. Therefore bind them sure,  
And stop their mouths if they begin to cry.

160

*Titus exits.*

CHIRON

Villains, forbear! We are the Empress' sons.

165

PUBLIUS

And therefore do we what we are commanded.—  
Stop close their mouths; let them not speak a word.  
Is he sure bound? Look that you bind them fast.

*Enter Titus Andronicus with a knife, and Lavinia  
with a basin.*

TITUS

Come, come, Lavinia. Look, thy foes are bound.—

Sirs, stop their mouths. Let them not speak to me,

170

But let them hear what fearful words I utter.—  
 O villains, Chiron and Demetrius!  
 Here stands the spring whom you have stained with  
     mud,  
 This goodly summer with your winter mixed.                          175  
 You killed her husband, and for that vile fault  
 Two of her brothers were condemned to death,  
 My hand cut off and made a merry jest,  
 Both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that more dear  
 Than hands or tongue, her spotless chastity,  
 Inhuman traitors, you constrained and forced.                          180  
 What would you say if I should let you speak?  
 Villains, for shame you could not beg for grace.  
 Hark, wretches, how I mean to martyr you.  
 This one hand yet is left to cut your throats,  
 Whiles that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold  
 The basin that receives your guilty blood.                                  185  
 You know your mother means to feast with me,  
 And calls herself Revenge, and thinks me mad.  
 Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust,  
 And with your blood and it I'll make a paste,  
 And of the paste a coffin I will rear,  
 And make two pasties of your shameful heads,  
 And bid that strumpet, your unhallowed dam,  
 Like to the earth swallow her own increase.                                  195  
 This is the feast that I have bid her to,  
 And this the banquet she shall surfeit on;  
 For worse than Philomel you used my daughter,  
 And worse than Procne I will be revenged.  
 And now prepare your throats.—Lavinia, come,                          200  
 Receive the blood.    *He cuts their throats.*  
     And when that they are dead,  
     Let me go grind their bones to powder small,  
     And with this hateful liquor temper it,  
     And in that paste let their vile heads be baked.                          205  
     Come, come, be everyone officious  
     To make this banquet, which I wish may prove  
     More stern and bloody than the Centaurs' feast.  
     So. Now bring them in, for I'll play the cook  
     And see them ready against their mother comes.                          210  
     *They exit, carrying the dead bodies.*

### Scene 3

*Enter Lucius, Marcus, and the Goths, with Aaron,  
 Guards, and an Attendant carrying the baby.*

LUCIUS

Uncle Marcus, since 'tis my father's mind  
 That I repair to Rome, I am content.

FIRST GOTH

And ours with thine, befall what fortune will.

LUCIUS

Good uncle, take you in this barbarous Moor,  
 This ravenous tiger, this accursèd devil.                                  5  
 Let him receive no sust'nance. Fetter him  
 Till he be brought unto the Empress' face

For testimony of her foul proceedings.  
And see the ambush of our friends be strong.  
I fear the Emperor means no good to us.

10

AARON

Some devil whisper curses in my ear  
And prompt me that my tongue may utter forth  
The venomous malice of my swelling heart.

LUCIUS

Away, inhuman dog, unhallowed slave!—  
Sirs, help our uncle to convey him in.

15

*Sound trumpets.*

The trumpets show the Emperor is at hand.

*Guards and Aaron exit.*

*Enter Emperor Saturninus and Empress Tamora  
with Aemilius, Tribunes, Attendants, and others.*

SATURNINUS

What, hath the firmament more suns than one?

LUCIUS

What boots it thee to call thyself a sun?

MARCUS

Rome's emperor, and nephew, break the parle.

These quarrels must be quietly debated.

20

The feast is ready which the careful Titus

Hath ordained to an honorable end,

For peace, for love, for league and good to Rome.

Please you therefore draw nigh and take your places.

SATURNINUS Marcus, we will.

25

*Trumpets sounding, enter Titus like a cook, placing the  
dishes, with young Lucius and others, and Lavinia  
with a veil over her face.*

TITUS

Welcome, my lord;—welcome, dread queen;—  
Welcome, you warlike Goths;—welcome, Lucius;—  
And welcome, all. Although the cheer be poor,  
'Twill fill your stomachs. Please you eat of it.

*They begin to eat.*

SATURNINUS

Why art thou thus attired, Andronicus?

30

TITUS

Because I would be sure to have all well  
To entertain your Highness and your empress.

TAMORA

We are beholding to you, good Andronicus.

TITUS

An if your Highness knew my heart, you were.—

My lord the Emperor, resolve me this:

35

Was it well done of rash Virginius

To slay his daughter with his own right hand

Because she was enforced, stained, and deflowered?

SATURNINUS It was, Andronicus.

TITUS Your reason, mighty lord?

40

SATURNINUS

Because the girl should not survive her shame,  
And by her presence still renew his sorrows.

TITUS

A reason mighty, strong, and effectual;  
A pattern, precedent, and lively warrant  
For me, most wretched, to perform the like.  
Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee,  
And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die.

45

*He kills Lavinia.*

SATURNINUS

What hast thou done, unnatural and unkind?

TITUS

Killed her for whom my tears have made me blind.  
I am as woeful as Virginius was,  
And have a thousand times more cause than he  
To do this outrage, and it now is done.

50

SATURNINUS

What, was she ravished? Tell who did the deed.

TITUS

Will 't please you eat?—Will 't please your Highness  
feed?

55

TAMORA

Why hast thou slain thine only daughter thus?

TITUS

Not I; 'twas Chiron and Demetrius.  
They ravished her and cut away her tongue,  
And they, 'twas they, that did her all this wrong.

SATURNINUS

Go fetch them hither to us presently.

60

TITUS

Why, there they are, both bakèd in this pie,  
Whereof their mother daintily hath fed,  
Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred.  
'Tis true, 'tis true! Witness my knife's sharp point.

*He stabs the Empress.*

SATURNINUS

Die, frantic wretch, for this accursèd deed.

65

*He kills Titus.*

LUCIUS

Can the son's eye behold his father bleed?

*He kills Saturninus.*

There's meed for meed, death for a deadly deed.

*A great tumult. Lucius, Marcus, and  
others go aloft to the upper stage.*

MARCUS

You sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome,  
By uproars severed as a flight of fowl  
Scattered by winds and high tempestuous gusts,  
O, let me teach you how to knit again  
This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,  
These broken limbs again into one body,  
Lest Rome herself be bane unto herself,  
And she whom mighty kingdoms curtsy to,  
Like a forlorn and desperate castaway,  
Do shameful execution on herself.

70

75

But if my frosty signs and chaps of age,  
Grave witnesses of true experience,  
Cannot induce you to attend my words, 80

*He turns to Lucius.*

Speak, Rome's dear friend, as erst our ancestor,  
When with his solemn tongue he did discourse  
To lovesick Dido's sad-attending ear  
The story of that baleful burning night  
When subtle Greeks surprised King Priam's Troy. 85

Tell us what Simon hath bewitched our ears,  
Or who hath brought the fatal engine in  
That gives our Troy, our Rome, the civil wound.—  
My heart is not compact of flint nor steel,  
Nor can I utter all our bitter grief, 90

But floods of tears will drown my oratory  
And break my utterance even in the time  
When it should move you to attend me most  
And force you to commiseration.

Here's Rome's young captain. Let him tell the tale, 95  
While I stand by and weep to hear him speak.

LUCIUS

Then, gracious auditory, be it known to you  
That Chiron and the damned Demetrius  
Were they that murderèd our emperor's brother,  
And they it were that ravishèd our sister. 100

For their fell faults our brothers were beheaded,  
Our father's tears despised, and basely cozened  
Of that true hand that fought Rome's quarrel out  
And sent her enemies unto the grave;

Lastly, myself unkindly banishèd, 105  
The gates shut on me, and turned weeping out  
To beg relief among Rome's enemies,  
Who drowned their enmity in my true tears  
And oped their arms to embrace me as a friend.

I am the turned-forth, be it known to you,  
That have preserved her welfare in my blood  
And from her bosom took the enemy's point,  
Sheathing the steel in my advent'rous body.

Alas, you know I am no vaunter, I;  
My scars can witness, dumb although they are, 115  
That my report is just and full of truth.  
But soft, methinks I do digress too much,  
Citing my worthless praise. O, pardon me,  
For when no friends are by, men praise themselves.

MARCUS

Now is my turn to speak. Behold the child. 120  
Of this was Tamora deliverèd,  
The issue of an irreligious Moor,  
Chief architect and plotter of these woes.  
The villain is alive in Titus' house,

And as he is to witness, this is true. 125

Now judge what cause had Titus to revenge  
These wrongs unspeakable, past patience,  
Or more than any living man could bear.  
Now have you heard the truth. What say you,

Romans? 130

Have we done aught amiss? Show us wherein,  
And from the place where you behold us pleading,  
The poor remainder of Andronici  
Will, hand in hand, all headlong hurl ourselves,  
And on the ragged stones beat forth our souls,  
And make a mutual closure of our house.  
Speak, Romans, speak, and if you say we shall,  
Lo, hand in hand, Lucius and I will fall.

135

AEMILIUS

Come, come, thou reverend man of Rome,  
And bring our emperor gently in thy hand,  
Lucius our emperor, for well I know  
The common voice do cry it shall be so.

140

ROMANS

Lucius, all hail, Rome's royal emperor!

MARCUS, *to Attendants*

Go, go into old Titus' sorrowful house,  
And hither hale that misbelieving Moor  
To be adjudged some direful slaught'ring death  
As punishment for his most wicked life.

145

*Attendants exit. Lucius and Marcus  
come down from the upper stage.*

ROMANS

Lucius, all hail, Rome's gracious governor!

LUCIUS

Thanks, gentle Romans. May I govern so  
To heal Rome's harms and wipe away her woe!  
But, gentle people, give me aim awhile,  
For nature puts me to a heavy task.  
Stand all aloof, but, uncle, draw you near  
To shed obsequious tears upon this trunk.

150

*He kisses Titus.*

O, take this warm kiss on thy pale cold lips,  
These sorrowful drops upon thy bloodstained face,  
The last true duties of thy noble son.

155

MARCUS

Tear for tear, and loving kiss for kiss,  
Thy brother Marcus tenders on thy lips.

*He kisses Titus.*

O, were the sum of these that I should pay  
Countless and infinite, yet would I pay them.

160

LUCIUS, *to Young Lucius*

Come hither, boy. Come, come, and learn of us  
To melt in showers. Thy grandsire loved thee well.  
Many a time he danced thee on his knee,  
Sung thee asleep, his loving breast thy pillow;  
Many a story hath he told to thee,  
And bid thee bear his pretty tales in mind  
And talk of them when he was dead and gone.

165

MARCUS

How many thousand times hath these poor lips,  
When they were living, warmed themselves on thine!  
O, now, sweet boy, give them their latest kiss.  
Bid him farewell; commit him to the grave.  
Do them that kindness, and take leave of them.

170

YOUNG LUCIUS

O grandsire, grandsire, ev'n with all my heart  
Would I were dead so you did live again!

175

*He kisses Titus.*

O Lord, I cannot speak to him for weeping.  
My tears will choke me if I ope my mouth.

*Enter Aaron with Guards.*

ROMAN

You sad Andronici, have done with woes.  
Give sentence on this execrable wretch  
That hath been breeder of these dire events.

180

LUCIUS

Set him breast-deep in earth and famish him.  
There let him stand and rave and cry for food.  
If anyone relieves or pities him,  
For the offense he dies. This is our doom.  
Some stay to see him fastened in the earth.

185

AARON

Ah, why should wrath be mute and fury dumb?  
I am no baby, I, that with base prayers  
I should repent the evils I have done.  
Ten thousand worse than ever yet I did  
Would I perform, if I might have my will.  
If one good deed in all my life I did,  
I do repent it from my very soul.

190

*Aaron is led off by Guards.*

LUCIUS

Some loving friends convey the Emperor hence,  
And give him burial in his fathers' grave.  
My father and Lavinia shall forthwith  
Be closèd in our household's monument.  
As for that ravenous tiger, Tamora,  
No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weed;  
No mournful bell shall ring her burial;  
But throw her forth to beasts and birds to prey.  
Her life was beastly and devoid of pity,  
And being dead, let birds on her take pity.

195

200

*They exit, carrying the dead bodies.*