

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

A line-by-line translation

## Act 1, Scene 1

## Shakespeare

*The Tomb of the ANDRONICI appearing; the Tribunes and Senators aloft. Enter, below, from one side, SATURNINUS and his Followers; and, from the other side, BASSIANUS and his Followers; with drum and colours*

## 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:  
5 I am his first-born son, that was the last  
That wore the imperial diadem of Rome;  
Then let my father's honours live in me,  
Nor wrong mine age with this indignity.

## BASSIANUS

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

*Enter MARCUS ANDRONICUS, aloft, with the crown*

## MARCUS ANDRONICUS

Princes, that strive by factions and by friends  
Ambitiously for rule and empery,  
20 Know that the people of Rome, for whom we stand  
A special party, have, by common voice,  
In election for the Roman empery,  
Chosen Andronicus, surnamed Pius  
For many good and great deserts to Rome:  
25 A nobler man, a braver warrior,  
Lives not this day within the city walls:  
He by the senate is accit'd home  
From weary wars against the barbarous Goths;  
That, with his sons, a terror to our foes,  
30 Hath yoked a nation strong, train'd up in arms.  
Ten years are spent since first he undertook  
This cause of Rome and chastised with arms  
Our enemies' pride: five times he hath return'd  
Bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sons  
35 In coffins from the field;  
And now at last, laden with horror's spoils,  
Returns the good Andronicus to Rome,  
Renowned Titus, flourishing in arms.  
Let us entreat, by honour of his name,  
40 Whom worthily you would have now succeed.  
And in the Capitol and senate's right,  
Whom you pretend to honour and adore,  
That you withdraw you and abate your strength;  
Dismiss your followers and, as suitors should,  
45 Plead your deserts in peace and humbleness.

## SATURNINUS

How fair the tribune speaks to calm my thoughts!

## Shakescleare Translation

*The scene opens on the tomb of the Andronici family, surrounded by Tribunes <sup>1</sup> and Senators. SATURNINUS and a crowd of supporters enter from one side; from another side, BASSIANUS and his supporters enter with ceremonial flags and drums.*

## SATURNINUS

Noble patricians <sup>2</sup>, since you support my right to rule, defend my just cause with weapons. And countrymen, my loyal followers, fight for my inheritance with your swords: I am the first-born son of the last emperor, so let me take the crown and don't make me lower myself to ask for it.

## BASSIANUS

Romans, friends, followers, supporters of my right to rule--if Bassianus, Caesar's son <sup>3</sup>, ever had a good reputation in the eyes of royal Rome, then block this man's path. Don't let dishonor approach the imperial throne, where there should be only virtue, justice, restraint, and nobility. Instead, elect someone who deserves it, and Romans, fight for your right to freely choose your own emperor.

*MARCUS ANDRONICUS enters, holding the crown.*

## MARCUS ANDRONICUS

Ambitious princes, fighting each other to become emperor! The people of Rome, whom I have been elected to represent, have voted and chosen Andronicus--called "Andronicus Pius" for all his great deeds, since there's no nobler man or braver warrior in all of Rome--as their new emperor. The Senate has summoned him home from the war against the barbaric Goths <sup>4</sup>. With his sons, he defeated a strong nation that trains its warriors from their birth. It's been ten years since he first went to war and punished our enemies' pride with his weapons; he's come back five times, bearing the dead bodies of his brave sons. And now at last, bringing prizes won during war, the famous Titus Andronicus returns to Rome in triumph. Let us ask you--out of respect for the late emperor, the Capitol, and the Senate, which you claim to honor--that you back down, dismiss your followers, and make your case peacefully and humbly.

## SATURNINUS

The tribune speaks well, and calms me down.

<sup>1</sup> "Tribune" is the term for an elected official in ancient Rome.

<sup>2</sup> "Patricians" are the aristocrats or noblemen of Rome.

<sup>3</sup> "Caesar" is the title used by Roman emperors. Bassianus is the second son of the late emperor, and thus Saturninus's brother.

<sup>4</sup> The "Goths" were an East Germanic people who fought a series of wars with Rome in the declining years of the empire.

**BASSIANUS**

Marcus Andronicus, so I do ally  
 In thy uprightness and integrity,  
 And so I love and honour thee and thine,  
 50 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  
 55 Commit my cause in balance to be weigh'd.

*Exeunt the followers of BASSIANUS*

**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.

*Exeunt the followers of SATURNINUS*

**SATURNINUS**

60 Rome, be as just and gracious unto me  
 As I am confident and kind to thee.  
 Open the gates, and let me in.

**BASSIANUS**

65 Tribunes, and me, a poor competitor.

*Flourish. SATURNINUS and BASSIANUS go up into the Capitol*

*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 honour and with fortune is return'd  
 70 From where he circumscribed with his sword,  
 And brought to yoke, the enemies of Rome.

*Drums and trumpets sounded. Enter MARTIUS and MUTIUS; After them, two Men bearing a coffin covered with black; then LUCIUS and QUINTUS. After them, TITUS ANDRONICUS; and then TAMORA, with ALARBUS, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, AARON, and other Goths, prisoners; Soldiers and people following. The Bearers set down the coffin, and TITUS speaks*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Hail, Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds!  
 Lo, as the bark, that hath discharged her fraught,  
 Returns with precious jading to the bay  
 75 From whence at first she weigh'd her anchorage,  
 Cometh Andronicus, bound with laurel boughs,  
 To re-salute his country with his tears,  
 Tears of true joy for his return to Rome.  
 Thou great defender of this Capitol,  
 80 Stand gracious to the rites that we intend!  
 Romans, of five and twenty valiant sons,  
 Half of the number that King Priam had,  
 Behold the poor remains, alive and dead!  
 These that survive let Rome reward with love;  
 85 These that I bring unto their latest home,  
 With burial amongst their ancestors:  
 Here Goths have given me leave to sheathe my sword.  
 Titus, unkind and careless of thine own,  
 Why suffer'st thou thy sons, unburied yet,  
 90 To hover on the dreadful shore of Styx?  
 Make way to lay them by their brethren.

*The tomb is opened*

**BASSIANUS**

Marcus Andronicus, I have much respect for your honesty  
 and integrity. And I have so much love and honor for you  
 and your family--your noble brother Titus and his sons, and  
 lovely Lavinia, the object of my affections--that I will  
 dismiss my followers, and let the people decide my fate.

*BASSIANUS's followers exit.*

**SATURNINUS**

Friends and supporters: I thank you and dismiss you all,  
 relying only on the love and respect of my country to judge  
 my cause.

*SATURNINUS's followers exit.*

**SATURNINUS**

Rome, be as fair and gracious to me as I've been  
 straightforward and kind to you. Open the gates, and let me  
 in.

**BASSIANUS**

Tribunes, let me—a poor competitor—in, too.

*Sound of trumpets. SATURNINUS and BASSIANUS go up  
 into the Capitol.*

*A CAPTAIN enters.*

**CAPTAIN**

Romans, make way: the good Andronicus, model of virtue,  
 Rome's best champion, victorious in battle, returns from  
 the wars with honor and good fortune, having defeated and  
 captured our enemies.

*Drums and trumpets. MARTIUS and MUTIUS enter; after them, two men carrying a coffin covered with black; then LUCIUS and QUINTUS. After them, TITUS ANDRONICUS; and then TAMORA, with ALARBUS, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, AARON, and other Goth prisoners; with soldiers and other people following. The men set down the coffin, and TITUS speaks.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Hail Rome, victorious even in your mourning clothes! Like  
 the ship returned home with treasures from abroad,  
 Andronicus comes crowned with laurels of victory, to re-  
 salute his country with tears--tears of true joy--for his  
 return. Jupiter Capitolinus <sup>5</sup>, defender of the city, accept  
 our offering! Romans, these men are all that's left of my  
 twenty-five sons (half the number that King Priam <sup>6</sup> had).  
 Look at them! The ones who are still alive deserve your love  
 and gratitude; the ones who are dead I will bury with their  
 ancestors. Here, for once, I'm putting down my sword.  
 Titus, you've been unkind and careless to your own  
 children. Why do you allow your unburied sons to remain  
 on the shores of the Styx <sup>7</sup>? Make way, so that I can bury  
 them with their brothers.

*The tomb is opened.*

<sup>5</sup> In the original text, Titus refers to Rome's patron god simply as "thou." Jupiter, as king of the gods, was the chief deity for Romans. The most important temple in ancient Rome was situated on Capitoline Hill, was the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

<sup>6</sup> "King Priam" was king of Troy during the Trojan War, and famously had fifty sons (and quite a few daughters, as well).

<sup>7</sup> The "Styx," in Greek mythology, is the river on the border between earth and the underworld.

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

**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,  
95 Before this earthy prison of their bones;  
That so the shadows be not unappeased,  
Nor we disturb'd with prodigies on earth.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**TAMORA**

100 Stay, Roman brethren! Gracious conqueror,  
Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed,  
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!  
105 Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome,  
To beautify thy triumphs and return,  
Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke,  
But must my sons be slaughter'd in the streets,  
For valiant doings in their country's cause?  
110 O, if to fight for king and commonweal  
Were piety in thine, it is in these.  
Andronicus, stain not thy tomb with blood:  
Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?  
Draw near them then in being merciful:  
115 Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge:  
Thrice noble Titus, spare my first-born son.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Patient yourself, madam, and pardon me.  
These are their brethren, whom you Goths beheld  
Alive and dead, and for their brethren slain  
120 Religiously they ask a sacrifice:  
To this your son is mark'd, and die he must,  
To 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,  
125 Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consumed.

*Exeunt LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS, and MUTIUS, with ALARBUS*

**TAMORA**

O cruel, irreligious piety!

**CHIRON**

Was ever Scythia half so barbarous?

**DEMETRIUS**

Oppose not Scythia to ambitious Rome.  
130 Alarbus goes to rest; and we survive  
To tremble under Titus' threatening looks.  
Then, madam, stand resolved, but hope withal  
The self-same gods that arm'd the Queen of Troy  
With opportunity of sharp revenge  
135 Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent,  
May favor Tamora, the Queen of Goths--  
When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen--  
To quit the bloody wrongs upon her foes.

There you can speak to each other in silence, as the dead  
do, and sleep in peace, you who died fighting for your  
country. Oh, sacred home of my children, of virtue and  
nobility, you have taken so many of my sons but will never  
return any to me.

**LUCIUS**

Give us the highest-ranking Goth prisoner, so that we can  
cut his limbs and for the spirits of our brothers sacrifice him  
in front of this tomb: that way their spirits will be at rest and  
they won't haunt us.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I give you the noblest of my prisoners, the eldest son of this  
defeated queen.

**TAMORA**

Stop, Roman friends! Gracious conqueror, victorious Titus,  
pity the tears I shed, for they're a mother's tears for her son.  
If you ever loved your sons, imagine that I love my son just  
as much! Isn't it enough that we're brought to Rome, to add  
to your triumph, as your prisoners? Do you also have to  
slaughter my sons in the streets, just because they fought to  
protect their homeland? If your sons were brave to fight for  
their country, then mine were as well. Andronicus, don't  
stain your tomb with blood: don't you want to be like a  
god? Be like a god in being merciful, for sweet mercy is the  
truest sign of nobility. Noble Titus, let my first-born son live.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Calm yourself, madam, and forgive me. These are their  
brothers, who you saw alive and dead, and for their dead  
brothers they ask a religious sacrifice. Your son must die, to  
satisfy the ghosts of the dead.

**LUCIUS**

Take him away! And build a fire: let's cut him to pieces with  
our swords on a pile of wood, until he's consumed by the  
flames.

*LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS, and MUTIUS exit with  
ALARBUS.*

**TAMORA**

Oh, cruel, irreligious faith!

**CHIRON**

Were the [Scythians](#) ever so barbaric?

**DEMETRIUS**

Ambitious Rome is no better than Scythia. Alarbus is dead,  
and we live only as Titus's prisoners. Then, madam, prepare  
for death. But don't give up hope that the gods --who gave  
the Queen of Troy opportunity to take revenge on the  
Thracian tyrant [in](#) his tent--might favor Tamora, the  
Queen of Goths (when you were still queen and we were  
still Goths, that is) to give them what they deserve.

[8](#) The "Scythians" were an ancient  
Siberian nomadic tribe notorious for  
their ferocity in battle.

[9](#) The "sharp revenge" mentioned  
here is that of Hecuba--King Priam's  
wife and the vanquished queen of  
Troy. She took revenge on the Greek  
who murdered her son by stabbing  
out his eyes.

Re-enter LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS and MUTIUS, with their swords bloody

**LUCIUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

145 Let it be so; and let Andronicus  
Make this his latest farewell to their souls.

*Trumpets sounded, and the coffin laid in the tomb*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

150 In peace and honour rest you here, my sons;  
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 damned grudges; here are no storms,  
No noise, but silence and eternal sleep:  
In peace and honour rest you here, my sons!

*Enter LAVINIA*

**LAVINIA**

155 In peace and honour live Lord Titus long;  
My noble lord and father, live in fame!  
Lo, at this tomb my tributary tears  
I render, for my brethren's obsequies;  
And at thy feet I kneel, with tears of joy,  
160 Shed on the earth, for thy return to Rome:  
O, bless me here with thy victorious hand,  
Whose fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

*Enter, below, MARCUS ANDRONICUS and Tribunes; re-enter SATURNINUS and BASSIANUS, attended*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Long live Lord Titus, my beloved brother,  
Gracious triumpher in the eyes of Rome!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Thanks, gentle tribune, noble brother Marcus.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

170 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:  
But safer triumph is this funeral pomp,  
175 That hath aspired to Solon's happiness  
And triumphs over chance in honour's bed.  
Titus Andronicus, the people of Rome,  
Whose friend in justice thou hast ever been,  
Send thee by me, their tribune and their trust,  
180 This palliament of white and spotless hue;  
And name thee in election for the empire,  
With these our late-deceased emperor's sons:  
Be candidatus then, and put it on,  
And help to set a head on headless Rome.

LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS and MUTIUS re-enter, with bloody swords.

**LUCIUS**

See, lord and father, how we've done our Roman sacrifice:  
Alarbus's limbs are cut off and his innards feed the fire as  
the smoke perfumes the sky. There's nothing else to do but  
bury our brothers and welcome them to Rome with  
celebration.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Let it be so, but first Andronicus will say a last goodbye to  
their souls.

*Trumpets sound as the coffin is laid in the tomb.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Rest in peace and honor here, my sons: you were always  
ready to serve Rome, so rest here safe from any more  
suffering. Here there's no treason, no jealousy, no grudges.  
Here are no storms, no noise, but just silence and eternal  
sleep: rest in peace and honor here, my sons!

*LAVINIA enters.*

**LAVINIA**

Lord Titus, my noble lord and father, may you live forever in  
peace, honor, and good reputation! I cry at this tomb for my  
brothers, and I kneel at your feet with tears of joy for your  
return to Rome. Oh, bless me with your victorious hand,  
applauded by Rome's best citizens!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Kind Rome, you have given me this sweet medicine to make  
my heart happy again. Lavinia, live: outlive your father, and  
may everyone remember your virtue after you're gone.

*MARCUS ANDRONICUS and Tribunes enter; SATURNINUS  
and BASSIANUS re-enter, with servants and followers.*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Long live Lord Titus, my beloved brother, gracious victor in  
the eyes of Rome!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Thanks, kind tribune, noble brother Marcus.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

And welcome, nephews, from successful wars--both you  
who survived and you that died. Lords, everyone who  
fought for his country is equal in our eyes. Your dead sons'  
funeral is a greater triumph than the happiness we who  
survive enjoy, for they have achieved the honor and  
security Solon<sup>10</sup> praised. But Titus Andronicus, the people  
of Rome--you've always been their friend--have sent me,  
their tribune, to give you this white palliament<sup>11</sup> and tell  
you that they have elected you as their emperor. Be  
candidatus<sup>12</sup> with the sons of our late emperor, then, and  
put it on, helping to set a head on headless Rome<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> The ancient greek philosopher "Solon" taught that no one can be counted secure and happy until death. Those who have had good fortune might yet suffer greatly.

<sup>11</sup> A "palliament" is long white robe--in this case, the ceremonial garment of the emperor.

<sup>12</sup> "Candidatus" is Latin for "candidate for Roman office."

<sup>13</sup> "Headless Rome" means simply that Rome is without a leader, and Titus must take on that role. Notice, though, how many times severed body parts have been mentioned in

*this first scene. The repetition is preparing the audience for the gore to come.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

185 A better head her glorious body fits  
Than his that shakes for age and feebleness:  
What should I don this robe, and trouble you?  
Be chosen with proclamations to-day,  
To-morrow yield up rule, resign my life,  
190 And set abroad new business for you all?  
Rome, I have been thy soldier forty years,  
And led my country's strength successfully,  
And buried one and twenty valiant sons,  
Knighted in field, slain manfully in arms,  
195 In right and service of their noble country:  
Give me a staff of honour for mine age,  
But not a sceptre to control the world:  
Upright he held it, lords, that held it last.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Titus, thou shalt obtain and ask the empery.

**SATURNINUS**

200 Proud and ambitious tribune, canst thou tell?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Patience, Prince Saturninus.

**SATURNINUS**

Romans, do me right:  
Patricians, draw your swords: and sheathe them not  
Till Saturninus be Rome's emperor.  
205 Andronicus, would thou wert shipp'd 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!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

210 Content thee, prince; I will restore to thee  
The people's hearts, and wean them from themselves.

**BASSIANUS**

215 Andronicus, I do not flatter thee,  
But honour 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 honourable meed.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

People of Rome, and people's tribunes here,  
I ask your voices and your suffrages:  
Will you bestow them friendly on Andronicus?

**TRIBUNES**

220 To gratify the good Andronicus,  
And gratulate his safe return to Rome,  
The people will accept whom he admits.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

225 Tribunes, I thank you: and this suit I make,  
That you create your 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,  
Crown him and say "Long live our emperor!"

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Her glorious body could do with a better head, one that doesn't shake with age and weakness. Why should I put on this robe, and trouble you? If you choose me today, tomorrow I'll die, and you'll have to go about the whole business again. Rome, I have been your soldier for forty years, led my country's army successfully, and buried twenty-one brave sons, killed fighting for their country. Give me a staff of honor in my old age, but not a scepter to control the world: the last one who held it was stronger than I am.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Titus, you will be emperor if you ask for it.

**SATURNINUS**

Proud and ambitious tribune, how can you tell?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Calm down, Prince Saturninus.

**SATURNINUS**

Romans, do the right thing: patricians, draw your swords, and don't put them away until Saturninus is Rome's emperor. Andronicus, I'd rather you were shipped to hell than steal the people's love from me!

**LUCIUS**

Proud Saturnine, you're getting in your own way--Titus is trying to do you a favor!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

It will be all right, prince; I'll make the people love you again.

**BASSIANUS**

Andronicus, I say without flattery that I respect you, and will do so until I die. If you give me your support, I'll be thankful to you; and thanks is good food for honorable men.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

People of Rome, and their representatives here, I ask for your voices and your votes: will you let Andronicus choose the next emperor?

**TRIBUNES**

To please the good Andronicus, and celebrate his safe return to Rome, the people will accept whom he recommends.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Tribunes, thank you: I ask you to elect the emperor's eldest son, Lord Saturnine. I hope his virtues will shine on Rome like the sun, ripening justice in our country. So if you will elect him on my recommendation, crown him and say "Long live our emperor!"

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

230 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!'

*A long flourish till they come down*

**SATURNINUS**

Titus Andronicus, for thy favors done  
To us in our election this day,  
235 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 honourable family,  
Lavinia will I make my empress,  
240 Rome's royal mistress, mistress of my heart,  
And in the sacred Pantheon her espouse:  
Tell me, Andronicus, doth this motion please thee?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

It doth, my worthy lord; and in this match  
I hold me highly honour'd of your grace:  
245 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 imperial lord:  
250 Receive them then, the tribute that I owe,  
Mine honour's ensigns humbled at thy feet.

**SATURNINUS**

Thanks, noble Titus, father of my life!  
How proud I am of thee and of thy gifts  
Rome shall record, and when I do forget  
255 The least of these unspeakable deserts,  
Romans, forget your fealty to me.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

[To TAMORA] Now, madam, are you prisoner to  
an emperor;  
To him that, for your honour and your state,  
260 Will use you nobly and your followers.

**SATURNINUS**

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 comest 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.  
270 Lavinia, you are not displeas'd with this?

**LAVINIA**

Not I, my lord; sith true nobility  
Warrants these words in princely courtesy.

**SATURNINUS**

Thanks, sweet Lavinia. Romans, let us go;  
Ransomless here we set our prisoners free:  
275 Proclaim our honours, lords, with trump and drum.

*Flourish. SATURNINUS courts TAMORA in dumb show*

**BASSIANUS**

Lord Titus, by your leave, this maid is mine.

*Seizing LAVINIA*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

With the voices of us all--patricians and plebeians<sup>14</sup>--we  
elect Lord Saturninus as Rome's great emperor, and say  
"Long live our Emperor Saturnine!"

<sup>14</sup> "Plebeians" are the common (as opposed to the noble patricians).

*A long trumpet sounds until they come downstage.*

**SATURNINUS**

Titus Andronicus, I thank you for the favor you've done me,  
and in return will show my gratitude with actions. To bring  
your family up in the world, I'll marry your daughter Lavinia  
in the holy Pantheon<sup>15</sup> and make her Rome's empress and  
mistress of my heart. Tell me, Andronicus, does this please  
you?

<sup>15</sup> The Pantheon is a Roman temple. It still stands today, though it is now a Roman Catholic Church.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

It does, my worthy lord; you honor me with this match. And  
here in front of all Rome, I give to you my sword, my  
chariot, and my prisoners, presents worthy of Rome's  
imperial lord: take them then, as the tribute I owe you.

**SATURNINUS**

Thanks, noble Titus, father of my life! Rome will know how  
proud I am of you and your gifts, and when I forget the least  
of them, Romans, forget your loyalty to me.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

[To TAMORA] Now, madam, you're the prisoner of an  
emperor; out of respect for your honor and rank, he'll treat  
you and your followers well.

**SATURNINUS**

A lovely lady, trust me; of the sort that I would choose, if I  
could choose again. Don't make that sad face, beautiful  
queen: although you've been defeated in war, you aren't in  
Rome to be humiliated. You'll be treated like a queen in  
every way. Trust me, and don't let grief blight your hopes:  
madam, the man that comforts you can make you greater  
than the Queen of Goths. Lavinia, aren't you angry about  
this?

**LAVINIA**

Not I, my lord; a king should speak nobly and courteously.

**SATURNINUS**

Thanks, sweet Lavinia. Romans, let us go; we set these  
prisoners free without ransom. Celebrate our honor, lords,  
with trumpets and drums.

*Trumpets are heard. SATURNINUS flirts with TAMORA in the background.*

**BASSIANUS**

Lord Titus, with all due respect, this girl is mine.

*BASSIANUS seizes LAVINIA.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

How, sir! are you in earnest then, my lord?

**BASSIANUS**

280 Ay, noble Titus; and resolved withal  
To do myself this reason and this right.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

'Suum cuique' is our Roman justice:  
This prince in justice seizeth but his own.

**LUCIUS**

And that he will, and shall, if Lucius live.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

285 Traitors, avaunt! Where is the emperor's guard?  
Treason, my lord! Lavinia is surprised!

**SATURNINUS**

Surprised! by whom?

**BASSIANUS**

By him that justly may  
Bear his betroth'd from all the world away.  
290

*Exeunt BASSIANUS and MARCUS with LAVINIA*

**MUTIUS**

Brothers, help to convey her hence away,  
And with my sword I'll keep this door safe.

*Exeunt LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Follow, my lord, and I'll soon bring her back.

**MUTIUS**

295 My lord, you pass not here.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

What, villain boy!  
Barr'st me my way in Rome?

*Stabbing MUTIUS*

**MUTIUS**

300 Help, Lucius, help!

*Dies*

*During the fray, SATURNINUS, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON and  
AARON go out and re-enter, above*

*Re-enter LUCIUS*

**LUCIUS**

My lord, you are unjust, and, more than so,  
In wrongful quarrel you have slain your son.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Nor thou, nor he, are any sons of mine;  
My sons would never so dishonour me:  
305 Traitor, restore Lavinia to the emperor.

**LUCIUS**

Dead, if you will; but not to be his wife,  
That is another's lawful promised love.

*Exit*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

How could this be, sir? Are you serious, my lord?

**BASSIANUS**

Yes, noble Titus; and I'm prepared to fight for her.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

"To each his own" is our Roman law; this prince takes what  
is his by right.

**LUCIUS**

And that he will, and shall, if Lucius is alive to fight for it.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Traitors, stop! Where are the emperor's guards? Treason,  
my lord! Lavinia is taken!

**SATURNINUS**

Taken! By whom?

**BASSIANUS**

By her betrothed, who can justly take her away from all the  
world.

*BASSIANUS and MARCUS exit with LAVINIA.*

**MUTIUS**

Brothers, help me take her away, and I'll guard this door  
with my sword.

*LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS exit.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

*[To SATURNINUS]* Come with me, my lord, and I'll bring her  
back soon.

**MUTIUS**

My lord, you can't pass me.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

What, stupid boy! You stand in my way in Rome?

*TITUS stabs MUTIUS.*

**MUTIUS**

Help, Lucius, help!

*MUTIUS dies.*

*During the fight, SATURNINUS, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS,  
CHIRON and AARON go out and re-enter, observing from  
above.*

*LUCIUS re-enters.*

**LUCIUS**

My lord, you are wrong, and, more than that, you've killed  
your own son.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

He's no son of mine, and nor are you: my sons would never  
dishonor me like this. Traitor, give Lavinia to the emperor.

**LUCIUS**

I'll give her to you dead, if you want; but she'll never be his  
wife. She is lawfully betrothed to another.

*LUCIUS exits.*



**SATURNINUS**

No, Titus, no; the emperor needs her not,  
 310 Nor her, nor thee, nor any of thy stock:  
 I'll trust, by leisure, him that mocks me once;  
 Thee never, nor thy traitorous haughty sons,  
 Confederates all thus to dishonour me.  
 Was there none else in Rome to make a stale,  
 315 But Saturnine? Full well, Andronicus,  
 Agree these deeds with that proud brag of thine,  
 That said'st I begg'd the empire at thy hands.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O monstrous! what reproachful words are these?

**SATURNINUS**

But go thy ways; go, give that changing piece  
 320 To him that flourish'd for her with his sword  
 A valiant son-in-law thou shalt enjoy;  
 One fit to bandy with thy lawless sons,  
 To ruffle in the commonwealth of Rome.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

These words are razors to my wounded heart.

**SATURNINUS**

And therefore, lovely Tamora, queen of Goths,  
 That like the stately Phoebe 'mongst her nymphs  
 Dost overshine the gallant'st dames of Rome,  
 If thou be pleased with this my sudden choice,  
 Behold, I choose thee, Tamora, for my bride,  
 330 And will create thee empress of Rome,  
 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 every thing  
 335 In readiness for Hymenaeus stand,  
 I will not re-salute the streets of Rome,  
 Or climb my palace, till from forth this place  
 I lead espoused my bride along with me.

**TAMORA**

And here, in sight of heaven, to Rome I swear,  
 340 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, Pantheon. Lords, accompany  
 Your noble emperor and his lovely bride,  
 345 Sent by the heavens for Prince Saturnine,  
 Whose wisdom hath her fortune conquered:  
 There shall we consummate our spousal rites.

*Exeunt all but TITUS*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I am not bid to wait upon this bride.  
 Titus, when wert thou wont to walk alone,  
 350 Dishonour'd thus, and challenged of wrongs?

*Re-enter MARCUS, LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**SATURNINUS**

No, Titus, no; the emperor doesn't need her, nor you, nor  
 any of your family. I might learn to trust a man again after  
 he made fun of me once; but I'll never trust you, nor your  
 traitorous and proud sons, since you all planned together to  
 dishonor me. Wasn't there anyone else in Rome that you  
 could mock other than Saturnine? This stunt perfectly  
 matches your ridiculous brag that I begged you to give me  
 the empire.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, monstrous! Why are you saying these cruel things to  
 me?

**SATURNINUS**

But go away; go give your silly daughter to the man who  
 waved his sword around for her. You'll have a brave son-in-  
 law, one fit to squabble with your law-breaking sons,  
 disturbing the peace in Rome.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

These words cut my wounded heart like knives.

**SATURNINUS**

And so, lovely Tamora, Queen of Goths--that, like Phoebe<sup>16</sup>  
 among her nymphs, outshines all the loveliest women  
 of Rome--if you accept my sudden proposal, I choose you,  
 Tamora, for my wife, and will make you empress of Rome.  
 Say something, Queen of Goths, do you approve of my  
 choice? And I promise by all the Roman gods, since we have  
 the priest, the holy water, and the candles here already, I  
 won't go out into the streets of Rome or to my palace until  
 we're married.

<sup>16</sup> "Phoebe" is the Roman goddess of the moon.

**TAMORA**

And here, by heaven, I swear to Rome that if Saturnine  
 marries the Queen of Goths, she will be a servant to his  
 desires, a loving nurse, and a mother to his youth.

**SATURNINUS**

Come up, my fair queen, and let's go to the Pantheon.  
 Lords, come with your noble emperor and his lovely bride,  
 sent from heaven to Prince Saturnine, who has wisely  
 looked past her misfortune--there we will be married.

*All but TITUS exit.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I am not asked to go with them. Titus, when was the last  
 time you walked alone, dishonored and accused of doing  
 wrong?

*MARCUS, LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS re-enter.*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, Titus, see, oh, see what you have done! In a rash fight  
 you've killed a virtuous son.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

No, foolish tribune, no; he was no son of mine, nor are you,  
 nor these, who participated in dishonoring our family.  
 Unworthy brother, and unworthy sons!



**LUCIUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

370 'And shall!' what villain was it that spake  
that word?

**QUINTUS**

He that would vouch it in any place but here.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

What, would you bury him in my despite?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

375 No, noble Titus, but entreat of thee  
To pardon Mutius and to bury him.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Marcus, even thou hast struck upon my crest,  
And, with these boys, mine honour thou hast wounded:  
My foes I do repute you every one;  
So, trouble me no more, but get you gone.

**MARTIUS**

380 He is not with himself; let us withdraw.

**QUINTUS**

Not I, till Mutius' bones be buried.

*MARCUS and the Sons of TITUS kneel*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Brother, for in that name doth nature plead,--

**QUINTUS**

Father, and in that name doth nature speak,--

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Renowned Titus, more than half my soul,--

**LUCIUS**

Dear father, soul and substance of us all,--

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

390 Suffer thy brother Marcus to inter  
His noble nephew here in virtue's nest,  
That died in honour and Lavinia's cause.  
Thou art a Roman; be not barbarous:  
The Greeks upon advice did bury Ajax  
That slew himself; and wise Laertes' son  
Did graciously plead for his funerals:  
395

**LUCIUS**

But at least let us bury him, as we should; give Mutius burial  
with our brothers.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Traitors, go away! He won't rest in this tomb: this  
monument has stood for five hundred years, and I have  
restored it at great expense, and only Rome's soldiers and  
servants are buried here in here, not those killed in low  
street fights. Bury him wherever you want, since he won't  
be buried here.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My lord, this is not fair. My nephew Mutius did something  
honorable; he must be buried with his brothers.

**MARTIUS**

And he shall, or we'll go with him to the grave.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

"And shall!" What villain said that?

**QUINTUS**

He that would fight for it in any place less holy than here.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

What, would you bury him here without my permission?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

No, noble Titus, but we beg you to pardon Mutius and bury  
him.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Marcus, even you are against me; and with these boys,  
you've wounded my honor. You're all my enemies, so don't  
bother me anymore, but go away.

**MARTIUS**

He is not himself; let's go.

**QUINTUS**

I won't go until we've buried Mutius.

*MARCUS and the sons of TITUS kneel.*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Brother, for that word reminds you of the natural ties  
between us--

**QUINTUS**

Father, and in that word nature speaks too--

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Don't say anything else, if this is going where I think it is.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Famous Titus, more than half my soul--

**LUCIUS**

Dear father, soul and body of us all--

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Let your brother Marcus bury his noble nephew here with  
honor, since he died for Lavinia's cause. You are a Roman;  
don't be uncivilized. The Greeks buried Ajax <sup>17</sup>, although  
he killed himself, after wise Laertes' son <sup>18</sup> begged for a  
funeral: so don't let young Mutius, who you loved, be  
prevented from joining his brothers.

<sup>17</sup> In early modern England, people who committed suicide were typically denied burial in a church graveyard. However, Marcus gives the example of "Ajax"--a character in Homer's *Illiad*--who committed suicide, and was allowed an honorable funeral.

Let not young Mutius, then, that was thy joy  
Be barr'd his entrance here.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Rise, Marcus, rise.  
The dismall'st day is this that e'er I saw,  
To be dishonour'd by my sons in Rome!  
400 Well, bury him, and bury me the next.

*MUTIUS is put into the tomb*

**LUCIUS**

There lie thy bones, sweet Mutius, with thy friends,  
Till we with trophies do adorn thy tomb.

**ALL**

*[Kneeling]* No man shed tears for noble Mutius;  
He lives in fame that died in virtue's cause.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

405 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?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

*Flourish. Re-enter, from one side, SATURNINUS attended, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON and AARON; from the other, BASSIANUS, LAVINIA, and others*

**SATURNINUS**

So, Bassianus, you have play'd your prize:  
God give you joy, sir, of your gallant bride!

**BASSIANUS**

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

**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,  
420 My truth-betrothed love and now my wife?  
But let the laws of Rome determine all;  
Meanwhile I am possess'd of that is mine.

**SATURNINUS**

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

**BASSIANUS**

425 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,  
430 Is in opinion and in honour wrong'd;  
That in the rescue of Lavinia  
With his own hand did slay his youngest son,  
In zeal to you and highly moved to wrath  
To be controll'd in that he frankly gave:  
435 Receive him, then, to favor, Saturnine,  
That hath express'd himself in all his deeds

<sup>18</sup> "Laertes's son" is Odysseus, the Greek hero who famously took ten years to make it home to Ithaca from the Trojan War.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Get up, Marcus, get up. This is the saddest day I ever saw, to be dishonored by my sons in Rome! Well, bury him, and bury me next.

*MUTIUS is put into the tomb.*

**LUCIUS**

Lie there, sweet Mutius, with your friends, until we cover your tomb with trophies won in battle.

**ALL**

*[Kneeling]* Let no one cry for noble Mutius, since the person who dies fighting for what's right will live forever in memory.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My lord, to leave these sad thoughts behind: how did it happen that the clever Queen of Goths is suddenly our empress?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I don't know, Marcus; but I know it's happened, and whether by some trickery or not, only the heavens can tell. But shouldn't she feel grateful to the man who has raised her so high? Yes, and she'll respond in kind.

*Trumpets. SATURNINUS enters from one side with servants, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON and AARON; from the other, BASSIANUS, LAVINIA, and others.*

**SATURNINUS**

So, Bassianus, you have won your prize. God make you happy with your lovely bride!

**BASSIANUS**

And you with yours, my lord! I have nothing else to say, and don't wish you any less, so I'll go now.

**SATURNINUS**

Traitor, if there's law in Rome or if we have power, you and your brothers will regret this rape.

**BASSIANUS**

You call it rape, my lord, to take my own, my true love and fiancée and now my wife? But let the law of Rome take its course; in the meantime, I have what is mine.

**SATURNINUS**

All right, sir, you are very rude to us. But, if we live, you might find that I can be as sharp with you.

**BASSIANUS**

My lord, I'll answer for what I've done, with my life if I must. But I'll just say this: I swear by my duty to Rome that this noble gentleman, Lord Titus here, has suffered a wrong at your hands. In the rescue of Lavinia, he killed his youngest son out of loyalty to you and in anger at being forced to go back on his word. Favor him, then, Saturnine, since he's proven himself in everything he does to be a father and friend to you and Rome.

A father and a friend to thee and Rome.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Prince Bassianus, leave to plead my deeds:  
'Tis thou and those that have dishonour'd me.  
440 Rome and the righteous heavens be my judge,  
How I have loved and honour'd Saturnine!

**TAMORA**

My worthy lord, if ever Tamora  
Were gracious in those princely eyes of thine,  
Then hear me speak in indifferently for all;  
445 And at my suit, sweet, pardon what is past.

**SATURNINUS**

What, madam! be dishonour'd openly,  
And basely put it up without revenge?

**TAMORA**

Not so, my lord; the gods of Rome forbend  
I should be author to dishonour you!  
450 But on mine honour dare I undertake  
For good Lord Titus' innocence in all;  
Whose fury not dissembled speaks his griefs:  
Then, at my suit, look graciously on him;  
Lose not so noble a friend on vain suppose,  
455 Nor with sour looks afflict his gentle heart.  
*[Aside to SATURNINUS]*  
be won at last;  
Dissemble all your griefs and discontents:  
460 You are but newly planted in your throne;  
Lest, then, the people, and patricians too,  
Upon a just survey, take Titus' part,  
And so supplant you for ingratitude,  
Which Rome reputes to be a heinous sin,  
465 Yield at entreats; and then let me alone:  
I'll find a day to massacre them all  
And raze their faction and their family,  
The cruel father and his traitorous sons,  
To whom I sued for my dear son's life,  
470 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, Andronicus;  
475 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 prevail'd.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I thank your majesty, and her, my lord:  
480 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;  
485 And let it be mine honour, good my lord,  
That I have reconciled your friends and you.  
For you, Prince Bassianus, I have pass'd  
My word and promise to the emperor,  
That you will be more mild and tractable.  
490 And fear not lords, and you, Lavinia;  
By my advice, all humbled on your knees,  
You shall ask pardon of his majesty.

**LUCIUS**

We do, and vow to heaven and to his highness,  
That what we did was mildly as we might,  
495 Tendering our sister's honour and our own.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Prince Bassianus, I can defend myself without your help; it's  
you and your friends who have dishonored me. Rome and  
heaven above know my love and loyalty to Saturnine!

**TAMORA**

My worthy lord, if you ever loved Tamora, then let me speak  
as a neutral party. At my request, sweetheart, forgive what's  
in the past.

**SATURNINUS**

What, madam! Can I put up with these insults?

**TAMORA**

Of course not, my lord; the gods of Rome forbid that I would  
urge you to do anything dishonorable! But I vouch for good  
Lord Titus's innocence in everything; you can see his grief  
on his face. Then, at my request, forgive him. Don't lose a  
noble friend out of suspicion, or hurt his soft heart with  
angry looks.

*[So only SATURNINUS can hear]* Listen to me: hide what  
you're feeling. You just took the throne--so, unless you want  
the people and patricians to take Titus's side, and unseat  
you for not being grateful to him (and Romans hate  
ingratitude), forgive him. And then let me work: I'll find a  
day to kill them all. I'll destroy their faction and family, the  
cruel father and his traitorous sons--to whom I begged for  
my son's life. I'll make them know what happens to those  
who let a queen kneel in the streets and beg in vain.

*[To all]* Come, come, sweet emperor; come, Andronicus.  
Raise up this good old man, and cheer him up, since he's  
miserable when you frown at him.

**SATURNINUS**

Rise, Titus, rise; my empress has convinced me.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I thank your majesty, and her, my lord. These words and  
looks of forgiveness give new life to me.

**TAMORA**

Titus, I am now a Roman, and must give the emperor good  
advice. Let's forget all our past quarrels today, Andronicus;  
and let it be my chief accomplishment that I've brought you  
all back together. For you, Prince Bassianus, I have  
promised the emperor that you'll be more mild and  
obedient in the future. And don't be afraid, lords, and you,  
Lavinia: take my advice, kneel down, and ask his majesty  
for forgiveness.

**LUCIUS**

*[Kneeling]* We do, and promise heaven and his highness,  
that we were as moderate as we could be, when our sister's  
honor and our own was at stake.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

That, on mine honour, here I do 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;  
500 I will not be denied: sweet heart, 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.  
Lavinia, though you left me like a churl,  
505 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.  
This day shall be a love-day, Tamora.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

510 To-morrow, 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.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

*[Kneeling]* I vow that too, on my honor.

**SATURNINUS**

Go away, and be quiet; don't bother us anymore.

**TAMORA**

No, no, sweet emperor; we must all be friends. The tribune  
and his nephews kneel for forgiveness. I won't be denied:  
sweetheart, look at them.

**SATURNINUS**

Marcus, for the sake of you and your brother, and because  
Tamora begs me, I forgive these young men's crimes  
against me. Stand up. Lavinia, though you left me harshly, I  
would not have found my love if you hadn't: I swore that I  
wouldn't walk away from the priest without a wife. Come, if  
the emperor's court will celebrate two brides, you'll be my  
guest, Lavinia, and your family. This day will be a love-day,  
Tamora.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Tomorrow, if your majesty likes, we can go hunting for  
panther and deer. We'll wake you with the sounds of our  
dogs and horns.

**SATURNINUS**

We will come, Titus, and many thanks to you.

*Trumpets. All exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter AARON*

**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 threatening reach.  
5 As when the golden sun salutes the morn,  
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,  
Gallops the zodiac in his glistening coach,  
And overlooks the highest-peering hills;  
So Tamora:  
10 Upon her wit doth earthly honour wait,  
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  
15 Hast prisoner held, fetter'd in amorous chains  
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,  
20 To wait upon this new-made empress.  
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.  
25 Holloa! what storm is this?

*Enter DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, braving*

**DEMETRIUS**

Chiron, thy years want wit, thy wit wants edge,  
And manners, to intrude where I am graced;

### Shakescleare Translation

*AARON enters.*

**AARON**

So now Tamora is as high as Olympus <sup>1</sup>, safe from  
misfortune and jealousy. She's safe from both thunder's  
crack and lightning's flash, having ascended farther than  
envy can reach. She's like the golden sun that greets the  
morning, and, having crowned the ocean with its beams,  
gallops across the sky in a glittering coach and looks down  
on even the highest hills. Honorable and virtuous men wait  
for her words, and tremble when she frowns. Then, Aaron,  
arm your heart and make your thoughts fit to go to the top  
with your imperial mistress--since she's been your prisoner  
in love for a long time, bound to you with tighter chains  
that Prometheus <sup>2</sup> was tied to that rock in the Caucasus.  
Cast away poor clothing and low thoughts! I will be bright,  
shining in pearl and gold, when I serve this new-made  
empress. Did I say serve? I meant that I'll play with this  
queen, this goddess, this Semiramis <sup>3</sup>, this nymph, this  
siren <sup>4</sup>, that will charm Rome's Saturnine, and lead him to  
his ruin. But what's all this noise?

*DEMETRIUS and CHIRON enter, fighting.*

**DEMETRIUS**

Chiron, you're young and stupid, and you don't have what it  
takes to get in my way and intrude where I'm welcome.

<sup>1</sup> Mount "Olympus" is the highest mountain in Greece, and in mythology it is the home of the gods.

<sup>2</sup> "Prometheus" stole fire from the gods and gave it to humanity, and for this transgression he was chained to a rock in the Caucasus, where his liver was eaten every day by an eagle. So, this is a rather grim image to describe a love affair.

<sup>3</sup> Semiramis was the wife of the legendary King Nimrod of Assyria, and is famed for her bravery, cruelty, and for cheating on her husband.

<sup>4</sup> Sirens are mythical creatures who, with their beautiful voices, lure sailors to shipwreck on the island they inhabit.

And may, for aught thou know'st, affected be.

**CHIRON**

Demetrius, thou dost over-ween in all;  
 30 And so in this, to bear me down with braves.  
 '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;  
 35 And that my sword upon thee shall approve,  
 And plead my passions for Lavinia's love.

**AARON**

*[Aside]* Clubs, clubs! these lovers will not keep  
 the peace.

**DEMETRIUS**

Why, boy, although our mother, unadvised,  
 40 Gave you a dancing-rapier by your side,  
 Are you so desperate grown, to threat your friends?  
 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,  
 45 Full well shalt thou perceive how much I dare.

**DEMETRIUS**

Ay, boy, grow ye so brave?

*They draw*

**AARON**

*[Coming forward]* Why, how now, lords!  
 So near the emperor's palace dare you draw,  
 50 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  
 55 Be so dishonour'd in the court of Rome.  
 For shame, put up.

**DEMETRIUS**

Not I, till I have sheathed  
 My rapier in his bosom and withal  
 Thrust these reproachful speeches down his throat  
 60 That he hath breathed in my dishonour here.

**CHIRON**

For that I am prepared and full resolved.  
 Foul-spoken coward, that thunder'st with thy tongue,  
 And with thy weapon nothing darest perform!

**AARON**

Away, I say!  
 65 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,  
 70 Or Bassianus so degenerate,  
 That for her love such quarrels may be broach'd  
 Without controlment, justice, or revenge?  
 Young lords, beware! and should the empress know  
 This discord's ground, the music would not please.

**CHIRON**

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

**CHIRON**

Demetrius, you've always been arrogant, and it's no  
 different in this. You're only a year or two older than me,  
 and that doesn't make you any better. I'm as fit as you to  
 serve my mistress and make her love me. And I'll prove it  
 with my sword, to show how much I want Lavinia's love.

**AARON**

*[To himself]* I'll have to call the guards; these lovers will  
 start fighting each other soon.

**DEMETRIUS**

Why, boy, ever since our mother gave you a toy sword  
 you've been desperate to start brandishing it around. Give it  
 to me; I'll glue it to its sheath until you know how to handle  
 it.

**CHIRON**

Before that, sir, I'll use the little skill I have to show you how  
 ready I am to use it.

**DEMETRIUS**

What, boy, are you so brave now?

*They draw their swords.*

**AARON**

*[Coming forward]* What's this, lords? How can you openly  
 draw your swords so close to the emperor's palace? I know  
 why you're fighting: I wouldn't take a million gold coins to  
 let them know why. Your noble mother wouldn't take so  
 much more to let you dishonor her in Rome. For God's sake,  
 put your swords away.

**DEMETRIUS**

I won't, not until I've stabbed him and thrown his insulting  
 words back down his throat.

**CHIRON**

I'm prepared for that. You coward, talking about what you  
 don't dare to do yourself!

**AARON**

Put it away, I say! This stupid fight will ruin us all. Lords,  
 haven't you thought how dangerous it is to try to seduce a  
 prince's wife? Is Lavinia so loose, or Bassianus so corrupt,  
 that you can fight over her love without bringing disaster on  
 your heads? Young lords, watch yourselves! If the empress  
 knew about this, she wouldn't be happy.

**CHIRON**

I don't care if she or anyone else knows it: I love Lavinia  
 more than all the world.

**DEMETRIUS**

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

**AARON**

Why, are ye mad? or know ye not, in Rome  
80 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.

**CHIRON**

Aaron, a thousand deaths  
85 Would I propose to achieve her whom I love.

**AARON**

To achieve her! how?

**DEMETRIUS**

Why makest thou it so strange?  
She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;  
She is a woman, therefore may be won;  
90 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:  
Though Bassianus be the emperor's brother.  
95 Better than he have worn Vulcan's badge.

**AARON**

*[Aside]* Ay, and as good as Saturninus may.

**DEMETRIUS**

Then why should he despair that knows to court it  
With words, fair looks and liberality?  
What, hast not thou full often struck a doe,  
100 And borne her cleanly by the keeper's nose?

**AARON**

Why, then, it seems, some certain snatch or so  
Would serve your turns.

**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 ye, hark ye! and are you such fools  
To square for this? would it offend you, then  
That both should speed?

**CHIRON**

110 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,  
115 You must perforce accomplish as you may.  
Take this of me: Lucrece was not more chaste  
Than this Lavinia, Bassianus' love.

**DEMETRIUS**

Young man, choose someone else: Lavinia is your elder  
brother's choice.

**AARON**

What, are you crazy? Don't you know how jealous Romans  
are of their competitors in love? I tell you, lords, you're  
going to get yourselves killed.

**CHIRON**

Aaron, I'd die a thousand times to have her.

**AARON**

To have her! How?

**DEMETRIUS**

Why do you sound so surprised? She is a woman, so can be  
wooed; she's a woman, and so can be won; she is Lavinia,  
so she must be loved. You know what I mean, man: more  
water goes by the mill than the miller knows about, and it's  
a simple thing to steal a slice of a loaf of bread. Bassianus is  
the emperor's brother, but greater men than him have been  
cheated on by their wives.

**AARON**

*[To himself]* True—even a man as great as Saturninus can be  
cheated.

**DEMETRIUS**

Then, it should be no problem for a man who knows how to  
flirt with a woman, seeming generous and charming. What,  
haven't you often killed a deer right under her owner's  
nose?

**AARON**

Why, then it seems a quick hunt <sup>5</sup> would serve your  
purposes.

**CHIRON**

Yes, if that would do it.

**DEMETRIUS**

Aaron, you're right on point there.

**AARON**

I wish you were as sharp! Then we wouldn't be making all  
this fuss. Why--listen to me!--are you fighting each other  
over her? Would you be offended if you both succeeded?

**CHIRON**

No, not me.

**DEMETRIUS**

Nor I, as long as I got what I wanted.

**AARON**

Well, then why don't you work together: if you want her,  
you'll need a plan. You must decide that if you can't have it  
as you would ideally want, then you will have it however  
you can. Take my word for it: Lavinia, Bassianus's love, is as  
chaste as Lucrece <sup>6</sup>. We have to find a quicker way than  
trying to persuade her, since that will never work, and I  
have just the path in mind. My lords, tomorrow we're all

<sup>5</sup> Aaron's lewd metaphor here ("some certain snatch or so") implies that if the brothers could only have sex with Lavinia once or twice, it would satisfy their desire for her.

<sup>6</sup> "Lucrece," a virtuous Roman woman, was raped by Tarquin after she refused his advances. Her name, along with that of the similarly abused

A speedier course than lingering languishment  
 120 Must we pursue, and I have found the path.  
 My lords, a solemn hunting is in hand;  
 There will the lovely Roman ladies troop:  
 The forest walks are wide and spacious;  
 And many unfrequented plots there are  
 125 Fitted by kind for rape and villany:  
 Single you thither then this dainty doe,  
 And strike her home by force, if not by words:  
 This way, or not at all, stand you in hope.  
 Come, come, our empress, with her sacred wit  
 130 To villany and vengeance consecrate,  
 Will we acquaint with all that we intend;  
 And she shall file our engines with advice,  
 That will not suffer you to square yourselves,  
 But to your wishes' height advance you both.  
 135 The emperor's court is like the house of Fame,  
 The palace full of tongues, of eyes, and ears:  
 The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull;  
 There speak, and strike, brave boys, and take  
 your turns;  
 140 There serve your lusts, shadow'd from heaven's eye,  
 And revel in Lavinia's treasury.

**CHIRON**

Thy counsel, lad, smells of no cowardice.

**DEMETRIUS**

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

*Exeunt*

going hunting, and the lovely Roman ladies will come along: the forest paths are wide and spacious, and there are many isolated places fit for rape and other crimes. Bring this pretty doe there alone, and take her by force, if not by words: this is your only hope. Come on, and let's tell our empress our villainous and vengeful plans; all her energy is devoted to revenge. She will improve on our plans [7](#) with her advice, and will make sure you don't mess up those plans by fighting amongst yourselves. You'll both get what you want. The emperor's palace is as full of tongues, eyes, and ears as the House of Fame [8](#); you'll have no privacy there. But the woods are pitiless, dreadful, and hear nothing; that's where you can do what you want, brave boys, and take your turns with Lavinia. There you can satisfy your lusts in the shadows, where heaven can't see, and enjoy the treasures of her body.

**CHIRON**

Your advice is good, friend.

**DEMETRIUS**

Whether it's right or wrong, I must have her: until I find the stream to cool my heat, or some medicine to calm me down, I live in hell.

*All exit.*

*Philomel, appear frequently in this play.*

[7](#) In the original text, "file our engines" plays on a multiple meanings for "engine." The word can mean "machine," "instrument of torture," and "plot." Tamora will "file" or sharpen their tools for torture, which are nothing but their own evil plans.

[8](#) The House of Fame appears in Ovid's "Metamorphoses" (which shows up again and again in this play) as a place filled with echoing rumor. In Chaucer's "House of Fame," Fame herself has countless eyes, ears, and tongues.

## Act 2, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter TITUS ANDRONICUS, with Hunters, & c., MARCUS, LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

The hunt is up, the morn is bright and grey,  
 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  
 5 And rouse the prince and ring a hunter's peal,  
 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,  
 10 But dawning day new comfort hath inspired.

*A cry of hounds and horns, winded in a peal. Enter SATURNINUS, TAMORA, BASSIANUS, LAVINIA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, and Attendants*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Many good morrows to your majesty;  
 Madam, to you as many and as good:  
 I promised your grace a hunter's peal.

**SATURNINUS**

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

**BASSIANUS**

Lavinia, how say you?

### Shakescleare Translation

*MARCUS, LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS, and TITUS ANDRONICUS enter, with hunters and other servants.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

It's time to hunt--the morning is bright and gray, the fields are sweet-smelling, and the trees are in bloom. Let's separate here and make some noise to wake up the emperor and his lovely bride; we'll make enough sound to wake up the prince too, and the whole court. Sons, make sure you watch the emperor carefully, as I will. I had a bad night's sleep, but felt better when I woke up.

*A loud noise of dogs barking and horns. SATURNINUS, TAMORA, BASSIANUS, LAVINIA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, and servants enter.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Good morning, your majesty; and madam, good morning to you, too. I promised that I would wake you up with the sound of the hunt.

**SATURNINUS**

And you have made quite a noise, my lord--somewhat too early for ladies who just got married.

**BASSIANUS**

Lavinia, what do you think?



**LAVINIA**

I say, no;  
I have been broad awake two hours and more.

**SATURNINUS**

20 Come on, then; horse and chariots let us have,  
And to our sport.  
[To TAMORA]  
Madam, now shall ye see  
25 Our Roman hunting.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

I have dogs, my lord,  
Will rouse the proudest panther in the chase,  
And climb the highest promontory top.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**DEMETRIUS**

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

*Exeunt*

**LAVINIA**

I disagree; I've been awake for more than two hours  
already.

**SATURNINUS**

Come on, then; let's get our horses and chariots and begin  
the hunt.

[To TAMORA] Madam, now you'll see our Roman hunting.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

I have dogs, my lord, that can outrun the proudest panther  
in the chase, and climb the highest tops of the mountains.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

And I have horses that will follow wherever the prey goes,  
flying like swallows over the open field.

**DEMETRIUS**

Chiron, we don't hunt with horses or dogs—but hope to  
catch a dainty doe, nonetheless.

*All exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter AARON, with 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  
5 Know that this gold must coin a stratagem,  
Which, cunningly effected, will beget  
A very excellent piece of villany:  
And so repose, sweet gold, for their unrest

*Hides the gold*

That have their alms out of the empress' chest.

*Enter TAMORA*

**TAMORA**

10 My lovely Aaron, wherefore look'st thou sad,  
When every thing doth make a gleeful boast?  
The birds chant melody on every bush,  
The snake lies rolled in the cheerful sun,  
The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind  
15 And make a chequer'd shadow on the ground:  
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,  
20 Let us sit down and mark their yelping noise;  
And, after conflict such as was supposed  
The wandering prince and Dido once enjoy'd,  
When with a happy storm they were surprised  
And curtain'd with a counsel-keeping cave,  
25 We may, each wreathed in the other's arms,  
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 .

### Shakescleare Translation

*AARON enters, with a bag of gold.*

**AARON**


A smart man would think it's stupid to bury so much gold  
under a tree and never use it. But I would tell him that I do  
this for a plot: which, when it comes to pass, will make for  
some excellent wickedness. So rest there, sweet gold, and  
cause unrest.


*AARON hides the gold.*

and take revenge on the empress's enemies.

*TAMORA enters.*

**TAMORA**

My lovely Aaron, why do you look sad when everything is so  
beautiful? The birds are singing, the snake sleeps under the  
cheerful sun, and the green leaves enjoy the cooling wind,  
which makes a shadow on the ground. Let's sit down in the  
shade, Aaron, and while sounds of the noisy hunt move  
through the wood, the echoes replying to the horns' call as  
if two hunts were happening at once, we'll stay here and  
listen. We'll be like Dido and her wandering prince , who  
took shelter in a cave during a storm. I can imagine what  
they go up to in there, all alone. After our lovers' sport, we'll  
have a glorious nap. As we rest in each other's arms, the  
sounds of the hunt and the songs of sweet birds will lull us  
to sleep.

 Tamora refers to the story of Dido, Queen of Carthage, and Aeneas. In Virgil's account in the "Aeneid," the two were hunting when a storm forced them to take refuge in a nearby cave. There, they slept together for the first time. Their love story, however, did not end happily. Aeneas sailed away from Carthage without telling Dido of his plans, and she committed suicide.

**AARON**

30 Madam, though Venus govern your desires,  
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

35 Even as an adder when she doth unroll  
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.

40 Hark Tamora, the empress of my soul,  
Which never hopes more heaven than rests in thee,  
This is the day of doom for Bassianus:  
His Philomel must lose her tongue to-day,  
Thy sons make pillage of her chastity

45 And wash their hands in Bassianus' blood.  
Seest thou this letter? take it up, I pray thee,  
And give the king this fatal plotted scroll.  
Now question me no more; we are espied;  
Here comes a parcel of our hopeful booty,

50 Which dreads not yet their lives' destruction.

**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, whatsoever they be.

55

*Exit**Enter BASSIANUS and LAVINIA***BASSIANUS**

Who have we here? Rome's royal empress,  
Unfurnish'd of her well-beseeming troop?  
Or is it Dian, habited like her,  
Who hath abandoned her holy groves

60 To see the general hunting in this forest?

**TAMORA**

Saucy controller of our private steps!  
Had I the power that some say Dian had,  
Thy temples should be planted presently  
With horns, as was Actaeon's; and the hounds

65 Should drive upon thy new-transformed limbs,  
Unmannerly intruder as thou art!

**LAVINIA**

Under your patience, gentle empress,  
'Tis thought you have a goodly gift in horning;  
And to be doubted that your Moor and you

70 Are singled forth to try experiments:  
Jove shield your husband from his hounds to-day!  
'Tis pity they should take him for a stag.

**BASSIANUS**


Believe me, queen, your swarthy Cimmerian  
Doth make your honour of his body's hue,  
Spotted, detested, and abominable.


75 Why are you sequester'd from all your train,  
Dismounted from your snow-white goodly steed.  
And wander'd hither to an obscure plot,  
Accompanied but with a barbarous Moor,  
If foul desire had not conducted you?

**LAVINIA**

And, being intercepted in your sport,  
Great reason that my noble lord be rated


**AARON**

Madam, while the goddess Venus makes you think of love,  
the god Saturn makes me think of destruction and death.  
My angry looks, my silence, my sad mood, and my hair that  
uncurls like a snake uncoiling itself to strike, have nothing  
to do with sexual desire. Instead, they show that I'm  
planning to take vengeance: revenge and blood are all I can  
think of. Listen, Tamora--empress of my soul, since I don't  
hope for salvation after death--Bassianus will die today. His  
Philomel  must lose her tongue, for your sons plan to  
rape her and wash their hands in his blood. See this letter?  
[Gives it to her] Take it, and give it to the king. Don't ask me  
anymore; someone has seen us. Here come our victims,  
although they don't know it yet.

 "Philomel" is a character in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. She is raped by her brother-in-law, Tereus, who then cuts out her tongue so that she can't reveal who attacked her.

**TAMORA**


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


 "Moor" was a generic Elizabethan term for an African or dark-skinned person.

**AARON**


No more, great empress; Bassianus is here. Find some  
reason to argue with him; meanwhile, I'll go get your sons  
so they can take revenge for you.


*AARON exits.**BASSIANUS and LAVINIA enter.***BASSIANUS**

Who have we here? Rome's royal empress, all alone with no  
servants? Or is it the goddess Diana  who has left her  
holy groves to come see the hunt?


 In Greco-Roman mythology, Diana is the goddess of the hunt. Groves of oak trees are sacred to her, as are deer. Remember that Lavinia has been referred to as a doe, or female deer.


**TAMORA**

How dare you intrude on me like this! If I had Diana's  
powers, I'd put horns on your head like Actaeon's , and  
let the dogs tear you to pieces for disturbing my privacy!


 In Ovid, Actaeon is a hunter who accidentally sees Diana bathing. As a punishment, she transforms him into a stag and sets his own hunting dogs on him.


**LAVINIA**

Oh, but gentle empress, we know you have a talent for  
horning . And I'm sure you and your Moor are here  
together: I hope your husband's dogs don't take him for a  
stag.

 By "horning," Lavinia means cuckolding--i.e. putting horns on her husband by cheating on him--since Tamora has been having an extramarital affair with Aaron.

**BASSIANUS**

Believe me, queen, your swarthy Cimmerian  is turning  
you as black as him, disgusting and hateful. Why did you  
sneak away from all your servants, get off your snowy white  
horse, and wander to this isolated forest clearing,  
accompanied only by a barbaric Moor--if your foul desires  
didn't bring you here?

 The Cimmerians were an ancient nomadic people of Asia Minor. They were associated with darkness because their land was far from the sun.

**LAVINIA**

And, since we've caught you in the act, my noble lord has  
good reason to talk to you like this.

For sauciness. I pray you, let us hence,  
And let her joy her raven-colour'd love;  
85 This valley fits the purpose passing well.

**BASSIANUS**

The king my brother shall have note of this.

**LAVINIA**

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

**TAMORA**

90 Why have I patience to endure all this?

*Enter DEMETRIUS and CHIRON*

**DEMETRIUS**

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

**TAMORA**

Have I not reason, think you, to look pale?  
These two have 'ticed me hither to this place:  
95 A barren detested vale, you see it is;  
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,  
O'ercome with moss and baleful mistletoe:  
Here never shines the sun; here nothing breeds,  
Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven:  
100 And when they show'd 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,  
105 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  
Unto the body of a dismal yew,  
110 And leave me to this miserable death:  
And then they call'd me foul adulteress,  
Lascivious Goth, and all the bitterest terms  
That ever ear did hear to such effect:  
And, had you not by wondrous fortune come,  
115 This vengeance on me had they executed.  
Revenge it, as you love your mother's life,  
Or be ye not henceforth call'd my children.

**DEMETRIUS**

This is a witness that I am thy son.

*Stabs BASSIANUS*

**CHIRON**

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

*Also stabs BASSIANUS, who dies*

**LAVINIA**

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

**TAMORA**

125 Give me thy poniard; you shall know, my boys  
Your mother's hand shall right your mother's wrong.

**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,  
130 And with that painted hope braves your mightiness:  
And shall she carry this unto her grave?

[*To BASSIANUS*] Let's go, and let her enjoy her raven-  
colored lover; this ugly valley is perfect for her purposes.

**BASSIANUS**

The king, my brother, will know about this.

**LAVINIA**

Yes, for people have noticed that you keep slipping away.  
The good king has been tricked one too many times!

**TAMORA**

Why do I have the patience to listen to you?

*DEMETRIUS and CHIRON enter.*

**DEMETRIUS**

What's the matter, dear queen and beloved mother? Why  
do you look so pale?

**TAMORA**

Don't you think I have reason to look pale? These two lured  
me to this isolated valley--a foul place, as you can see,  
where the trees are bare even in the summer, covered in  
moss and mistletoe <sup>8</sup>, where the sun never shines and  
nothing lives but owls and ravens--and showed me this  
horrible pit in the ground. They told me that, at night, it's  
filled with a thousand demons, snakes toads, and goblins,  
who make such awful noise that anyone hearing it would go  
mad or fall dead. No sooner had they said this, but they  
added that they would tie me here to a tree and leave me to  
a miserable death. Then they called me a foul adulteress,  
lustful Goth, and all the worst insults you've ever heard. If  
you hadn't come to rescue me, they would have killed me.  
Take revenge, as you love your mother, or never call  
yourself my children again.

<sup>8</sup> Mistletoe did not yet have its  
association with Christmas and  
kissing. Instead, it was known as a  
parasite.

**DEMETRIUS**

I'll show you that I'm your son.

*DEMETRIUS stabs BASSIANUS.*

**CHIRON**

And take this, too, to show my strength.

*CHIRON also stabs BASSIANUS, who dies.*

**LAVINIA**

Oh, Semiramis <sup>9</sup>--no, barbaric Tamora--for there's no  
better name to fit your barbaric nature than your own!

<sup>9</sup> Remember that Semiramis was  
the cruel wife of Nimrod, King of  
Babylon.

**TAMORA**

[*To Demetrius*] Give me your knife; you'll see, my boys, that  
your mother's own hand will take revenge.

**DEMETRIUS**

Stop, madam; we have more plans for her. Don't burn the  
straw until you've thrashed the corn <sup>10</sup>. This girl acts like a  
chaste lady and puts herself above you, parading her  
faithfulness in her marriage; do you want her to die with  
that satisfaction?

<sup>10</sup> When one "thrashes" or beats  
corn, the grain and seeds are  
separated from the husks. To "thrash  
in a woman's barn" was also slang at  
the time for having sex.

**CHIRON**

An 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.

**TAMORA**

135 But when ye have the honey ye 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-preserved honesty of yours.

**LAVINIA**

140 O Tamora! thou bear'st 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**

145 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.

**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'dst from her did turn to marble;  
 Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny.  
 150 Yet every mother breeds not sons alike:  
 [To CHIRON]  
 Do thou entreat her show a woman pity.

**CHIRON**

What, wouldst thou have me prove myself a bastard?

**LAVINIA**

155 '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,  
 160 The whilst their own birds famish in their nests:  
 O, be to me, though thy hard heart say no,  
 Nothing so kind, but something pitiful!

**TAMORA**

I know not what it means; away with her!

**LAVINIA**

165 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.


**TAMORA**


Hadst thou in person ne'er offended me,  
 Even for his sake am I pitiless.  
 170 Remember, boys, I pour'd 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.

**LAVINIA**

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

**CHIRON**

And if she does, I'd rather be a eunuch . Drag her  
 husband to some secret hole, and we'll rape her on his  
 dead body.

 A "eunuch" is a castrated man.

**TAMORA**

But when you have the honey you want, don't let the wasp  
 live to sting us.

**CHIRON**

I promise you, madam, we'll make sure of that. Come,  
 mistress, now we'll enjoy that "honesty" of yours that  
 you're so anxious to preserve.

**LAVINIA**

Oh, Tamora! You have the face of a woman--

**TAMORA**

I will not listen to her speak; take her away!

**LAVINIA**

Sweet lords, just let me say one thing to her.

**DEMETRIUS**

Listen, dear madam; it's your glory to see her cry. Let her  
 tears fall like rain on your heart of stone.

**LAVINIA**

Since when did the tiger's cubs teach their mother? Oh,  
 don't teach her how to be angry; she taught you how--the  
 milk you sucked from her turned to marble, and even at her  
 breast you learned cruelty. But not every mother breeds the  
 same sons--

[To CHIRON] Beg her to show me a woman's pity.

**CHIRON**

What, and show myself a bastard? I'm my mother's son.

**LAVINIA**

It's true; a raven can't give birth to a lark. But I've heard--  
 oh, if only this could happen now!--that the lion has cut off  
 his claws for pity, and that ravens have cared for orphaned  
 children while their own birds starved in their nests. Oh, be  
 to me--although your hard heart says no--if not as kind,  
 then at least a bit merciful!

**TAMORA**

I don't know what she means; take her away!

**LAVINIA**

Oh, let me explain myself! For my father's sake--since he  
 didn't kill you when he might have done so--listen to me.

**TAMORA**

Even if you had never offended me yourself (which you  
 have), I'm merciless for his sake. Remember, boys, how I  
 begged and cried in vain to save your brother from the  
 sacrifice, but fierce Andronicus would not show pity. So  
 take her away, and do whatever you want with her: the  
 worse you treat her, the more I'll love you.

**LAVINIA**

Oh, Tamora, be a gentle queen, and kill me with your own  
 hands in this place! For it isn't my life that I've been begging  
 for--I was killed when Bassianus died.

**TAMORA**

What begg'st thou, then? fond woman, let me go.

**LAVINIA**

180 'Tis present death I beg; and one thing more  
That womanhood denies my tongue to tell:  
O, keep me from their worse than killing lust,  
And tumble me into some loathsome pit,  
Where never man's eye may behold my body:  
185 Do this, and be a charitable murderer.

**TAMORA**

So should I rob my sweet sons of their fee:  
No, let them satisfy their lust on thee.

**DEMETRIUS**

Away! for thou hast stay'd us here too long.

**LAVINIA**

No grace? no womanhood? Ah, beastly creature!  
190 The blot and enemy to our general name!  
Confusion fall--

**CHIRON**

Nay, then I'll stop your mouth. Bring thou her husband:  
This is the hole where Aaron bid us hide him.

*DEMETRIUS throws the body of BASSIANUS into the pit; then exeunt  
DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, dragging off LAVINIA*

**TAMORA**

195 Farewell, my sons: see that you make her sure.  
Ne'er let my heart know merry cheer indeed,  
Till all the Andronici be made away.  
Now will I hence to seek my lovely Moor,  
And let my spleenful sons this trull deflow'r.

*Exit*

*Re-enter AARON, with QUINTUS and MARTIUS*

**AARON**

200 Come on, my lords, the better foot before:  
Straight will I bring you to the loathsome pit  
Where I espied the panther fast asleep.

**QUINTUS**

My sight is very dull, whate'er it bodes.

**MARTIUS**

And mine, I promise you; were't not for shame,  
205 Well could I leave our sport to sleep awhile.

*Falls into the pit*

**QUINTUS**

What art thou fall'n? What subtle hole is this,  
Whose mouth is cover'd with rude-growing briars,  
Upon whose leaves are drops of new-shed blood  
210 As fresh as morning dew distill'd on flowers?  
A very fatal place it seems to me.  
Speak, brother, hast thou hurt thee with the fall?

**MARTIUS**

O brother, with the dismall'st object hurt  
That ever eye with sight made heart lament!

**AARON**

215 *[Aside]* Now will I fetch the king to find them here,  
That he thereby may give a likely guess

**TAMORA**

What are you asking for, then? Stupid girl, let me go.

**LAVINIA**

It's death now that I beg for--and one thing more, that I can  
barely speak for modesty's sake. Oh, keep me from their  
lust, which is worse than killing me, and throw me into  
some loathsome pit where no one will ever see my body. Do  
this, and be a charitable murderer.

**TAMORA**

But if I did that, I would rob my sweet sons of their reward.  
No, I'll let them satisfy their lust with you.

**DEMETRIUS**

Come on! You've kept us here too long.

**LAVINIA**

No pity? No womanhood? Oh, foul creature, a blot on the  
name of all women! May you--

**CHIRON**

No, then I'll stop you from talking anymore.

*[To DEMETRIUS]* Bring her husband's body; this is the hole  
where Aaron told us to throw him.

*DEMETRIUS throws the body of BASSIANUS into the pit;  
then DEMETRIUS and CHIRON exit, dragging off LAVINIA.*

**TAMORA**

Goodbye, my sons; make sure she isn't a threat to us. I'll  
never be happy until all the Andronici family are dead. Now  
I'll go find my lovely Moor, and let my angry sons enjoy their  
prize.

*TAMORA exits.*

*AARON re-enters with QUINTUS and MARTIUS.*

**AARON**

Come on, my lords, quickly: I'll bring you to the foul pit  
where I saw a panther fast asleep.

**QUINTUS**

My eyelids are very heavy, whatever that means.

**MARTIUS**

And mine, too; if I weren't embarrassed to do so, I would  
stop hunting and sleep for a bit.

*MARTIUS falls into the pit.*

**QUINTUS**

Where have you fallen? What sort of hole is this, covered in  
branches with blood on their leaves like the morning dew  
on flowers? It seems like a very deadly place to me. Tell me,  
brother, did you hurt yourself when you fell?

**MARTIUS**

Oh, brother, I've seen something that hurt me worse than  
anything I've seen before!

**AARON**

*[To himself]* Now I'll bring the king, who, when he finds  
them here, will assume that they killed his brother.

How these were they that made away his brother.

*Exit*

**MARTIUS**

220 Why dost not comfort me, and help me out  
From this unhallowed and blood-stained hole?

**QUINTUS**

I am surprised with an uncouth fear;  
A chilling sweat o'er-runs my trembling joints:  
My heart suspects more than mine eye can see.

**MARTIUS**

225 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.

**QUINTUS**

230 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 how it is; for ne'er till now  
Was I a child to fear I know not what.

**MARTIUS**

Lord Bassianus lies embrewed here,  
All on a heap, like to a slaughter'd lamb,  
In this detested, dark, blood-drinking pit.

**QUINTUS**

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

**MARTIUS**

240 Upon his bloody finger he doth wear  
A precious ring, that lightens all the hole,  
Which, like a taper in some monument,  
Doth shine upon the dead man's earthy cheeks,  
And shows the ragged entrails of the 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--  
245 Out of this fell devouring receptacle,  
As hateful as Cocytus' misty mouth.

**QUINTUS**

250 Reach me thy hand, that I may help thee out;  
Or, wanting strength to do thee so much good,  
I may be pluck'd into the swallowing womb  
Of this deep pit, poor Bassianus' grave.  
I have no strength to pluck thee to the brink.

**MARTIUS**

Nor I no strength to climb without thy help.

**QUINTUS**

255 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.

*Falls in*

*Enter SATURNINUS with AARON*

**SATURNINUS**

260 Along with me: I'll see what hole is here,  
And what he is that now is leap'd into it.  
Say who art thou that lately didst descend  
Into this gaping hollow of the earth?

*AARON exits.*

**MARTIUS**

Why don't you help me out of this horrible blood-stained hole?

**QUINTUS**

I am paralyzed with fear; I feel a cold sweat all over my body, and my heart suspects more than I can see at the moment.

**MARTIUS**

You're right to be afraid: if you and Aaron look into this hole, you'll see blood and death.

**QUINTUS**

Aaron is gone; I'm afraid to look at the thing I fear. Oh, tell me when you see; before now I was never so childish as to fear something I couldn't see.

**MARTIUS**

Lord Bassianus lies here like a slaughtered lamb, in this horrible, dark, blood-soaked pit.

**QUINTUS**

If it's dark, how do you know it's him?

**MARTIUS**

He wears a ring on his bloody finger that lights the hole like a flaming candle in a tomb, shining on his cheeks and showing the disgusting insides of the pit. The moon shined like that on [Pyramus](#)<sup>12</sup>, covered in a maiden's blood at night. Oh, brother, help me out of here with your weak hand--if fear has made you weak too, as it has me--so that I can get out of this foul hole, as horrible as the mouth of [Cocytus](#)<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> The reference to the "moon on Pyramus" in the original text alludes again to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*--Pyramus is covered in the blood of his lover, Thisbe, when she stabs herself after finding his dead body one night.

<sup>13</sup> "Cocytus" is one of the rivers of Hades, the mythological underworld.

**QUINTUS**

Give me your hand, so that I can help you. Or, if I don't have the strength to lift you out, I'll fall into this pit (this womb that swallows instead of giving life and has become Bassianus's grave) with you. I don't have enough strength to pull you to the top.

**MARTIUS**

And I don't have the strength to climb without your help.

**QUINTUS**

Give me your hand again; I won't let go until you're up here or I'm down there. You can't come to me--I'll come to you.

*QUINTUS falls in the pit.*

*SATURNINUS enters with AARON.*

**SATURNINUS**

Come follow me; I'll see what kind of hole this is, and who just leaped into it.

*[Calling down into the hole]* Who are you down there, who just jumped in?

**MARTIUS**

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

**SATURNINUS**

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

**MARTIUS**

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

*Re-enter TAMORA, with Attendants; TITUS ANDRONICUS, and Lucius*

**TAMORA**

Where is my lord the king?

**SATURNINUS**

Here, Tamora, though grieved with killing grief.

**TAMORA**

Where is thy brother Bassianus?

**SATURNINUS**

275 Now to the bottom dost thou search my wound:  
Poor Bassianus here lies murdered.

**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 SATURNINUS a letter*

**SATURNINUS**

280 *[Reads]* '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  
285 Which overshades the mouth of that same pit  
Where we decreed to bury Bassianus.  
Do this, and purchase us thy lasting friends.'  
O Tamora! was ever heard the like?  
This is the pit, and this the elder-tree.  
290 Look, sirs, if you can find the huntsman out  
That should have murdered Bassianus here.

**AARON**

My gracious lord, here is the bag of gold.

**SATURNINUS**

*[To TITUS]* Two of thy whelps, fell curs of  
bloody kind,  
295 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  
Some never-heard-of torturing pain for them.

**TAMORA**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

High emperor, upon my feeble knee  
I beg this boon, with tears not lightly shed,  
That this fell fault of my accursed sons,  
Accursed if the fault be proved in them,--

**MARTIUS**

The unlucky son of old Andronicus, who stumbling on this  
hole has found the dead body of your brother Bassianus.

**SATURNINUS**

My brother dead! I know you must be joking--he and his  
wife are both back at the lodge on the north side of the  
forest; I saw them an hour ago.

**MARTIUS**

We don't know where you left him alive. But out here--God  
forbid--we found him dead.

*TAMORA re-enters with servants, TITUS ANDRONICUS, and  
LUCIUS.*

**TAMORA**

Where is my lord, the king?

**SATURNINUS**

Here, Tamora, although greatly distressed.

**TAMORA**

Where is your brother Bassianus?

**SATURNINUS**

Now you've hit on the subject of my suffering: poor  
Bassianus lies in this hole, murdered.

**TAMORA**

Then I'm too late in showing you this letter, which reveals  
the whole plot! I'm shocked that people can smile and be  
so murderous.

*She gives SATURNINUS a letter.*

**SATURNINUS**

*[Reads]* "And if we fail to meet him on the hunt--meaning  
Bassianus--just dig the grave for him: you understand us.  
Your money is buried by the elder-tree near the same pit  
where we decided to bury Bassianus. If you do this, we'll be  
your friends for life."

*[To TAMORA]* Oh, Tamora! Have you ever heard anything  
like this? This is the pit, and this is the elder-tree.

*[To servants]* Find the hunter that planned to murder  
Bassianus here!

**AARON**

My gracious lord, here's the bag of gold.

**SATURNINUS**

*[To TITUS]* Two of your sons, bloody dogs, have killed my  
brother here. Drag them from the pit and put them in  
prison, and leave them there until I've invented some  
previously unheard-of torture for them.

**TAMORA**

What, are they in this pit? Oh, it's amazing how easy it is to  
solve murders!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Mighty emperor, I beg on my knees with tears not easily  
shed. If this foul crime of my cursed sons--cursed if they're  
guilty of it--



**SATURNINUS**

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

**TAMORA**

Andronicus himself did take it up.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I did, my lord: yet let me be their bail;  
For, by my father's reverend tomb, I vow  
310 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.  
Some bring the murder'd body, some the murderers:  
Let them not speak a word; the guilt is plain;  
315 For, by my soul, were there worse end than death,  
That end upon them should be executed.

**TAMORA**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, Lucius, come; stay not to talk with them.  
320

*Exeunt*

**SATURNINUS**

*If they're guilty! It's obvious that they are. Who found this letter? Tamora, was it you?*

**TAMORA**

Andronicus himself found it in the woods.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I did, my lord. But let me bail them, and by my father's honored grave, I promise I'll produce them for the trial.

**SATURNINUS**

You won't bail them; follow me. Someone bring the dead body, and someone bring the murderers. Don't let them speak; their guilt is obvious. By God, if there were some worse fate than death, I'd punish them that way.

**TAMORA**

Andronicus, I'll advocate for you with the king. Don't worry for your sons; they'll be all right.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, Lucius; don't stay to talk with them.

*All exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 4

### Shakespeare

*Enter DEMETRIUS and CHIRON with LAVINIA, ravished; her hands cut off, and her tongue cut out*

**DEMETRIUS**

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

**CHIRON**

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

**DEMETRIUS**

5 See, how with signs and tokens she can scrawl.

**CHIRON**

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 case, I should go hang myself.

**DEMETRIUS**

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

*Exeunt DEMETRIUS and CHIRON*

*Enter MARCUS*

### Shakesclare Translation

*DEMETRIUS and CHIRON enter with LAVINIA, raped; her hands have been cut off and her tongue cut out.*

**DEMETRIUS**

So, now go try to tell what happened--if your tongue can speak, say who cut out your tongue and raped you.

**CHIRON**

Write it down and explain yourself that way--if you can write with those stumps.

**DEMETRIUS**

See, she can say what she means by gesturing at us.

**CHIRON**

Go home, ask for sweet water to wash your hands.

**DEMETRIUS**

She has no tongue to speak and no hands to wash, so let's leave her to walk alone in silence.

**CHIRON**

If it were me, I'd hang myself.

**DEMETRIUS**

If you had hands to help you tie the knot.

*DEMETRIUS and CHIRON exit.*

*MARCUS enters.*

**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!  
 15 If I do wake, some planet strike me down,  
 That I may slumber in eternal sleep!  
 Speak, gentle niece, what stern ungentle hands  
 Have lopp'd and hew'd and made thy body bare  
 Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments,  
 20 Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in,  
 And might not gain so great a happiness  
 As have thy love? Why dost not speak to me?  
 Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,  
 Like to a bubbling fountain stirr'd with wind,  
 25 Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips,  
 Coming and going with thy honey breath.  
 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!  
 30 And, notwithstanding all this loss of blood,  
 As from a conduit with three issuing spouts,  
 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?  
 35 O, that I knew thy heart; and knew the beast,  
 That I might rail at him, to ease my mind!  
 Sorrow concealed, like an oven stopp'd,  
 Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is.  
 Fair Philomela, she but lost her tongue,  
 40 And in a tedious sampler sew'd her mind:  
 But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee;  
 A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,  
 And he hath cut those pretty fingers off,  
 That could have better sew'd than Philomel.  
 45 O, had the monster seen those lily hands  
 Tremble, like aspen-leaves, upon a lute,  
 And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,  
 He would not then have touch'd them for his life!  
 Or, had he heard the heavenly harmony  
 50 Which that sweet tongue hath made,  
 He would have dropp'd his knife, and fell asleep  
 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:  
 55 One hour's storm will drown the fragrant meads;  
 What will whole months of tears thy father's eyes?  
 Do not draw back, for we will mourn with thee  
 O, could our mourning ease thy misery!

*Exeunt*

**MARCUS**

Who is this? [Sees LAVINIA] My niece, running away from me  
 so fast! Cousin, wait; where's your husband? If I'm  
 dreaming, I would give everything I own to wake up from  
 this nightmare! And if I did wake up, I'd want to die rather  
 than see this. Tell me, sweet niece, who has cut off those  
 two branches, your arms, which kings have desired to sleep  
 in, and thought there could be no greater happiness than to  
 have your love? Why don't you speak to me? Oh, a red river  
 of blood falls from your lips like a fountain, stirred by the  
 wind of your sweet breath. Surely some Tereus <sup>1</sup> has  
 raped you, and, to stop you from naming him, has cut out  
 your tongue. Ah, now you turn away your face, ashamed,  
 and you blush--although you've lost so much blood already  
 from three different spouts. Your cheeks are as red as the  
 sun, that blushes when hidden by a cloud. Can I speak for  
 you? Can I say that I have it right? Oh, I wish I knew what  
 was in your heart--and that I knew the beast who did this,  
 so that I could vent my rage at him. Unexpressed sorrow  
 burns the heart to ashes. Fair Philomela just lost her  
 tongue, and sewed a picture of what was done to her; but,  
 lovely niece, that method won't work for you, since a more  
 cunning Tereus has cut off those pretty fingers that could  
 have sewed better than Philomel. Oh, if the monster had  
 seen those white hands play the lute <sup>2</sup> and make the  
 strings themselves want to kiss them, he would not have  
 touched them were his life at stake! Or if he'd heard the  
 sweet music of your voice, he would have dropped his knife  
 and fallen asleep like Cerberus at the feet of the Thracian  
 poet <sup>3</sup>. Come with me, let's find your father, and make  
 him blind--for such a sight would blind any father's eye with  
 tears. An hour of rain can drown a meadow; what will whole  
 months of tears do to your father's eyes? Don't move away,  
 but come with me, for we'll mourn with you. Oh, if only our  
 mourning could ease your misery!

*They both exit.*

<sup>1</sup> Remember that Tereus is the character from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* who rapes Philomel.

<sup>2</sup> The "lute" was a popular instrument in Elizabethan England, and is similar to a small guitar.

<sup>3</sup> "Cerberus" is the three-headed dog that guards the gate to Hades. The "Thracian poet," Orpheus, charmed him to sleep by playing his harp.

## Act 3, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter Judges, Senators and Tribunes, with MARTIUS and QUINTUS, bound, passing on to the place of execution; TITUS going before, pleading*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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;  
 5 For all the frosty nights that I have watch'd;  
 And for these bitter tears, which now you see  
 Filling the aged wrinkles in my cheeks;  
 Be pitiful to my condemned sons,  
 Whose souls are not corrupted as 'tis thought.  
 10 For two and twenty sons I never wept,  
 Because they died in honour's lofty bed.

### Shakescleare Translation

*Judges, Senators and Tribunes enter with MARTIUS and QUINTUS, in chains, heading to the place of execution. Titus follows them, pleading.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Listen to me, respected men! Noble tribunes, wait! Take pity on me--for my lost youth, which I spent in dangerous wars while you slept securely at home; for all the blood I've spilled for Rome; for all the cold nights when I stayed up guarding the camp; for the bitter tears that now run down my wrinkled cheeks--and have mercy on my sons, who are more innocent than you think. I never cried for my twenty-two sons who died before, because they died with honor.

*Lieth down; the Judges, & c., pass by him, and Exeunt*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

For these, 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;  
15 My sons' sweet blood will make it shame and blush.  
O earth, I will befriend thee more with rain,  
That shall distil from these two ancient urns,  
Than youthful April shall with all his showers:  
In summer's drought I'll drop upon thee still;  
20 In winter with warm tears I'll melt the snow  
And keep eternal spring-time on thy face,  
So thou refuse to drink my dear sons' blood.

*Enter LUCIUS, with his sword drawn*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O reverend tribunes! O gentle, aged men!  
Unbind my sons, reverse the doom of death;  
25 And let me say, that never wept before,  
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 ANDRONICUS**

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

**LUCIUS**

My gracious lord, no tribune hears you speak.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, tis no matter, man; if they did hear,  
They would not mark me, or if they did mark,  
35 They would not pity me, yet plead I must;  
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 attired in grave weeds,  
Rome could afford no tribune like to these.  
A stone is soft as wax,--tribunes more hard than  
45 stones;  
A stone is silent, and offendeth not,  
And tribunes with their tongues doom men to death.

*Rises*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

But wherefore stand'st thou with thy weapon drawn?

**LUCIUS**

50 To rescue my two brothers from their death:  
For which attempt the judges have pronounced  
My everlasting doom of banishment.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O happy man! they have befriended thee.  
Why, foolish Lucius, dost thou not perceive  
55 That Rome is but a wilderness of tigers?  
Tigers must prey, and Rome affords no prey  
But me and mine: how happy art thou, then,  
From these devourers to be banished!  
But who comes with our brother Marcus here?

*Enter MARCUS and LAVINIA*

*TITUS lies down on the ground; the Judges, Tribunes, and others pass by him and exit.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

But for these sons, tribunes, I cry so that my tears write my sorrow in the dust, quenching the earth's thirst. The sweet blood of my sons will make it blush with shame. Oh earth, if you refuse to drink the blood of my dear sons, I'll give you more rain from my ancient eyes than you ever got in April. In the drought of summer I'll rain on you still, and in winter I'll melt the snow with my warm tears and make it eternally spring, if you refuse to drink my dear sons' blood.

*LUCIUS enters with his sword drawn.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, powerful tribunes! Oh, merciful old men! Release my sons, take back the sentence of death, and let me say--a man who never cried before--that my tears moved you.

**LUCIUS**

Oh, noble father, there's no point going on like this, for the tribunes can't hear. No one is here, and you're only talking to the stones.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Ah, Lucius, let me plead for your brothers. Honorable tribunes, I beg you once again--

**LUCIUS**

My gracious lord, none of the tribunes can hear you.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, it doesn't matter if they hear me, man, for they wouldn't listen to me--or if they did listen, they wouldn't have mercy. But I have to beg nonetheless. So I tell my sorrows to the stones, which--although they can't answer me--in some ways are better than the tribunes. For they don't interrupt my story; when I cry, they seem to cry with me, as my tears trickle down the stones. If they were dressed in mourning clothes, there would be no better tribunes in Rome. A stone is soft as wax, when tribunes are harder than stones. A stone is silent, and never offends, while tribunes doom men to death when they speak.

*TITUS stands up.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

But why are you standing with your weapon drawn?

**LUCIUS**

To rescue my two brothers from their death sentence--and for that, the judges have banished me from Rome for life.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, happy man! They've done you a favor--foolish Lucius, don't you see that Rome is just a wilderness of tigers? Tigers must kill, and there's no better prey than me and my family. You're fortunate, then, to be banished from this place. But who comes here with my brother Marcus?

*MARCUS and LAVINIA enter.*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

60 Titus, prepare thy aged eyes to weep;  
Or, if not so, thy noble heart to break:  
I bring consuming sorrow to thine age.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Will it consume me? let me see it, then.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

This was thy daughter.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

65 Why, Marcus, so she is.

**LUCIUS**

Ay me, this object kills me!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Faint-hearted boy, arise, and look upon her.  
Speak, Lavinia, what accursed hand  
Hath made thee handless in thy father's sight?  
70 What fool hath added water to the sea,  
Or brought a faggot to bright-burning Troy?  
My grief was at the height before thou camest,  
And now like Nilus, it disdaineth bounds.  
Give me a sword, I'll chop off my hands too;  
75 For they have fought for Rome, and all in vain;  
And they have nursed this woe, in feeding life;  
In bootless prayer have they been held up,  
And they have served me to effectless use:  
Now all the service I require of them  
80 Is that the one will help to cut the other.  
'Tis well, Lavinia, that thou hast no hands;  
For hands, to do Rome service, are but vain.

**LUCIUS**

Speak, gentle sister, who hath martyr'd thee?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

O, that delightful engine of her thoughts  
85 That blabb'd 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!

**LUCIUS**

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

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

It was my deer; and he that wounded her  
Hath hurt me more than had he killed me dead:  
95 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.  
100 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.  
105 Had I but seen thy picture in this plight,  
It would have maddened 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 martyr'd thee:  
110 Thy husband he is dead: and for his death  
Thy brothers are condemn'd, and dead by this.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Titus, prepare your eyes to weep; or, if you don't cry, for your noble heart to break. I bring all-consuming sorrow to you in your old age.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Will sorrow consume me? Let me see it, then.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

This was your daughter.


**TITUS ANDRONICUS**


Why, Marcus, so she is.

**LUCIUS**

Oh, this sight kills me!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Faint-hearted boy, get up and look at her. Speak, Lavinia, and tell us what hand has made you handless? What fool has added water to the sea, or brought another torch to burning Troy? For my grief was already at its height before you came, and now like Nilus , overflows all bounds. Give me a sword and I'll chop off my hands too, for they have fought for Rome in vain and kept me alive to suffer; I've held them up in prayer, and they've been no use at all. So now all I ask is that one will do me the favor of cutting off the other. It's good that you have no hands, Lavinia, since hands are useless in doing any service for Rome.

 "Nilus" is the god of the Nile river in Egypt, which floods every year.

**LUCIUS**

Tell us, sweet sister: who did this to you?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, her tongue--that spoke her thoughts so pleasingly--is torn from her mouth, where it sung like a sweet songbird in a pretty cage, enchanting everyone!

**LUCIUS**

Oh, then speak for her--who did this?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

She was already like this when I found her. She was wandering in the park trying to hide herself, like a deer that's received a death wound.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

It was my deer, and whoever wounded her has hurt me worse than if he'd killed me. It's as if I'm standing on a rock surrounded by the sea, watching the tide surge and expecting that each wave will be the one that drowns me. My poor sons are sent to death; my other son is banished; my brother cries for our misfortune. But dear Lavinia--more precious than my soul--gives me the greatest suffering. If I had just seen a picture of you like this, I would have gone mad; what can I do now that I see it in real life? You have no hands to wipe away your tears or tongue to tell me who did this to you; your husband is dead, and your brothers are condemned to death for killing him. Look, Marcus! Oh, Lucius, look at her! When I mentioned her brothers, new tears appeared on her cheeks like honeydew on an almost-withered flower.

Look, Marcus! ah, son Lucius, look on her!  
When I did name her brothers, then fresh tears  
Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey-dew  
115 Upon a gather'd lily almost wither'd.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Perchance she weeps because they kill'd her husband;  
Perchance because she knows them innocent.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

If they did kill thy husband, then be joyful  
Because the law hath ta'en revenge on them.  
120 No, no, they would not do so foul a deed;  
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,  
125 And thou, and I, sit round about some fountain,  
Looking all downwards to behold our cheeks  
How they are stain'd, as meadows, yet not dry,  
With miry slime left on them by a flood?  
And in the fountain shall we gaze so long  
130 Till the fresh taste be taken from that clearness,  
And made a brine-pit with our bitter tears?  
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?  
135 What shall we do? let us, that have our tongues,  
Plot some deuce of further misery,  
To make us wonder'd at in time to come.

**LUCIUS**

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

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Ah, Marcus, Marcus! brother, well I wot  
Thy napkin cannot drink a tear of mine,  
For thou, poor man, hast drown'd it with thine own.

**LUCIUS**

Ah, my Lavinia, I will wipe thy cheeks.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

145 Mark, Marcus, mark! I understand her signs:  
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.  
150 O, what a sympathy of woe is this,  
As far from help as Limbo is from bliss!

*Enter AARON*

**AARON**

Titus Andronicus, my lord the emperor  
Sends thee this word,--that, if thou love thy sons,  
Let Marcus, Lucius, or thyself, old Titus,  
155 Or any one of you, chop off your hand,  
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 ANDRONICUS**

O gracious emperor! O gentle Aaron!  
160 Did ever raven sing so like a lark,  
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?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Perhaps she cries because they killed her husband, or  
perhaps because she knows they're innocent.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

If they did kill your husband, then you should be pleased  
that they've been brought to justice. But no, no, they  
wouldn't do something so awful; look how sad their sister  
looks. Sweet Lavinia, let me kiss your lips. Or give some sign  
to tell me how I can help: should your uncle, your brother  
Lucius, and I sit around a fountain and weep, so that we see  
the reflection of our tear-streaked cheeks, like a meadow  
streaked with slime after a flood? And should we look into  
the fountain so long that its fresh water turns salty from our  
tears? Or should we cut off our own hands, like yours? Or  
should we stop speaking, and spend the rest of our hateful  
lives miming at each other? What should we do? Let those  
of us that still have our tongues plan how to be so  
miserable that future ages will marvel at us.

**LUCIUS**

Sweet father, stop crying; for, seeing you cry, look how my  
poor sister sobs and weeps.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Calm yourself, dear niece. Good Titus, dry your eyes.


**TITUS ANDRONICUS**


Oh, Marcus, Marcus! Brother, I know that your handkerchief  
can't dry my tears, since it's already so wet with your own.

**LUCIUS**

Oh, my Lavinia, I'll wipe your cheeks.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Look, Marcus, look! I understand her signs--if she could  
talk, she'd say to your brother what I just said to you: his  
handkerchief, also soaked in his tears, won't help her sad  
cheeks. Oh, this is a fellowship of suffering, as far from help  
as [Limbo](#)  is from heaven!

 "Limbo" is the outer edge of hell; a place suspended between the torments of hell's lower circles and the bliss of heaven.

*AARON enters.*

**AARON**

Titus Andronicus, my lord the emperor sends a message--if  
you love your sons, you, Marcus, Lucius, or any of your  
family should chop off your hand and send it to the king.  
With that ransom for their crime, he'll send both your sons  
back to you alive.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, generous emperor! Oh, sweet Aaron! Has a raven ever  
sounded so much like a lark that sings at sunrise? With all  
my heart, I'll send the emperor my hand; good Aaron, will  
you help chop it off?

**LUCIUS**

Stay, father! for that noble hand of thine,  
 165 That hath thrown down so many enemies,  
 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 ANDRONICUS**

Which of your hands hath not defended Rome,  
 170 And rear'd aloft the bloody battle-axe,  
 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;  
 175 Then have I kept it to a worthy end.

**AARON**

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

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My hand shall go.

**LUCIUS**

By heaven, it shall not go!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

180 Sirs, strive no more: such wither'd herbs as these  
 Are meet for plucking up, and therefore mine.

**LUCIUS**

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

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Agree between you; I will spare my hand.

**LUCIUS**

Then I'll go fetch an axe.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

But I will use the axe.

*Exeunt LUCIUS and MARCUS*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

190 Come hither, Aaron; I'll deceive them both:  
 Lend me thy hand, and I will give thee mine.

**AARON**

*[Aside]* If that be call'd deceit, I will be honest,  
 And never, whilst I live, deceive men so:  
 But I'll deceive you in another sort,  
 195 And that you'll say, ere half an hour pass.

*Cuts off TITUS's hand*

*Re-enter LUCIUS and MARCUS*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Now stay your strife: what shall be is dispatch'd.  
 Good Aaron, give his majesty my hand:  
 Tell him it was a hand that warded him  
 From thousand dangers; bid him bury it  
 200 More hath it merited; that let it have.  
 As for my sons, say I account of them  
 As jewels purchased at an easy price;

**LUCIUS**

Wait, father! Your noble hand--that has defeated so many  
 enemies--shouldn't be sent. My hand will serve the  
 purpose. I'm young and can spare the loss of blood more  
 easily, and so my hand should save my brothers' lives.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Which of your hands hasn't defended Rome, wielding a  
 bloody battle axe and wreaking destruction on the enemy's  
 castle? Oh, both are deserving. My hand has been merely  
 idle; if it ransoms my two nephews from their death, then  
 it's done something useful.

**AARON**

Come on, figure out whose hand should be sent, lest they  
 die before their pardon comes.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My hand will go.

**LUCIUS**

By God, it won't go!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Sirs, stop fighting; my hands are like withered herbs that  
 need to be plucked out of the garden. So we'll send one of  
 mine.

**LUCIUS**

Dear father, if I'm ever worthy to be called your son, let me  
 save my brothers from death.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

And, now for the sake of our parents, let me show you a  
 brother's love.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

All right, I'll spare my hand; you two figure it out.

**LUCIUS**

Then I'll go get an axe.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

But I'll be the one to use it.

*LUCIUS and MARCUS exit.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come quickly, Aaron; I'll deceive them both. Lend me your  
 hand, and I'll give you mine.


**AARON**


*[To himself]* If this is called lying, then I'll be honest, and  
 never lie to men like this as long as I live. But I'll trick you  
 another way, as you'll see less than half an hour from now.

*AARON cuts off TITUS's hand.*

*LUCIUS and MARCUS re-enter.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Now stop fighting: what's done is done. Good Aaron, give  
 his majesty my hand. Tell him it was a hand that defended  
 him from a thousand dangers; ask him to bury it, since it  
 deserved more than this. As for my sons, say I think of this  
 as a good exchange, jewels for a cheap price--although  
 precious, too, since I've bought back my own .

 Titus has given up his own hand  
 for his "own" sons. They are flesh of  
 his flesh.

And yet dear too, because I bought mine own.

**AARON**

I go, Andronicus: and for thy hand  
 205 Look by and by to have thy sons with thee.  
*[Aside]*  
 Their heads, I mean. O, how this villany  
 Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it!  
 210 Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace.  
 Aaron will have his soul black like his face.

*Exit*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O, here I lift this one hand up to heaven,  
 And bow this feeble ruin to the earth:  
 If any power pities wretched tears,  
 215 To that I call!  
*[To LAVINIA]*  
 What, wilt thou kneel with me?  
 Do, then, dear heart; for heaven shall hear our  
 220 prayers;  
 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 ANDRONICUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

But yet let reason govern thy lament.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

If there were reason for these miseries,  
 230 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,  
 Threatening the welkin with his big-swoln face?  
 And wilt thou have a reason for this coil?  
 235 I am the sea; hark, how her sighs do blow!  
 She is the weeping welkin, I the earth:  
 Then must my sea be moved with her sighs;  
 Then must my earth with her continual tears  
 Become a deluge, overflow'd and drown'd;  
 240 For why my bowels cannot hide her woes,  
 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  
 245 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 griefs their sports, thy resolution mock'd;  
 That woe is me to think upon thy woes  
 250 More than remembrance of my father's death.

*Exit*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**AARON**

I'll go, Andronicus; and in exchange for your hand, you'll  
 soon have your sons with you.

*[To himself]* Their heads, I mean. Oh, the very thought of  
 this villainy delights me even before I've done it! Let fools  
 do good deeds, and fair men call for mercy. Aaron will have  
 his soul as black as his face.

*AARON exits.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, now I lift my one hand up to pray to heaven, and kneel  
 on the ground with my feeble body: if any power pities the  
 tears of the miserable, I call on that!

*[To LAVINIA]* What, will you kneel with me? Do then, dear  
 heart, for heaven will hear our prayers: we'll break the dim  
 sky with our sighs and stain the sun with the fog of our  
 tears, as when it's overshadowed by rain clouds.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, brother, be rational and don't break into these fits of  
 extreme passion.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Isn't my sorrow deep, since there's no end to it? Then let my  
 passions be bottomless as well.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

But still, let reason govern your sorrow.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

If there were anything reasonable about these miseries,  
 then I could bind my grief within reasonable limits. When  
 heaven weeps, doesn't the earth overflow with rain? If the  
 winds blow hard, don't the waves get higher, threatening  
 the swollen face of the sky? And would you like me to tell  
 you the reason for this storm? I am the sea; see how  
 Lavinia's sighs blow. She is the weeping sky, and I'm the  
 earth. My sea must be moved with her sighs, and my earth  
 must drown with her continual tears. I can't hide her sorrow  
 in my bowels, but must vomit it up like a drunken man.  
 Then give me permission, for losers must give relief to their  
 stomachs by talking bitterly.


*A MESSENGER enters, carrying two heads and a hand.*


**MESSENGER**

Worthy Andronicus, you've gotten a poor reward for the  
 good hand you sent the emperor. Here are the heads of  
 your two noble sons, and here's your hand, sent back to  
 you in contempt; your sorrow is a joke to them, and your  
 sacrifice is mocked. It's worse for me to think of what  
 you've suffered than remembering the death of my own  
 father.

*MESSENGER exits.*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Now let hot Etna  cool in Sicily, and let my heart burn like  
 hell forever! These miseries are too much to bear. To cry  
 with those who cry does some help, but to mock sorrow is  
 like dying twice.

 Mount "Etna" (Aetna in the  
 original text) is an active volcano in  
 Sicily.



**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 ANDRONICUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

When will this fearful slumber have an end?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Now, farewell, flattery: die, Andronicus;  
Thou dost not slumber: see, thy two sons' heads,  
265 Thy warlike hand, thy mangled daughter here:  
Thy other banish'd 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:  
270 Rend off thy silver hair, thy other hand  
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 ANDRONICUS**

Ha, ha, ha!

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

275 Why dost thou laugh? it fits not with this hour.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, I have not another tear to shed:  
Besides, this sorrow is an enemy,  
And would usurp upon my watery eyes  
And make them blind with tributary tears:  
280 Then which way shall I find Revenge's cave?  
For these two heads do seem to speak to me,  
And threat me I shall never come to bliss  
Till all these mischiefs be return'd again  
Even in their throats that have committed them.  
285 Come, let me see what task I have to do.  
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;  
290 And in this hand the other I will bear.  
Lavinia, thou shalt be employ'd: 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:  
295 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.

*Exeunt TITUS, MARCUS, and LAVINIA*

**LUCIUS**

Farewell Andronicus, my noble father,  
The wofull'st man that ever lived in Rome:  
300 Farewell, proud Rome; till Lucius come again,  
He leaves 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  
305 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,  
310 To be revenged on Rome and Saturnine.

**LUCIUS**

Ah, how can I still be alive after this sight has made such a  
deep wound in me? Oh, life is no more than a living death,  
when the only thing that tells us we're still alive is that we  
breathe in and out.

*LAVINIA kisses TITUS.*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, poor heart, that kiss can't give any more comfort than  
frozen water to a starved snake.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

When will we wake up from this horrible dream?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Now I'll speak plainly. Die, Andronicus, for you're not  
asleep. Look at your two sons' heads, your brave hand, your  
mangled daughter here, your other banished son struck  
pale with the sight, your brother--me--like a stone, cold and  
numb. Oh, now I won't try to calm you down; tear off your  
silver hair, bite your one remaining hand with your teeth,  
and let this sad sight kill us here. Now is the time to despair;  
why are you so quiet?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Ha, ha, ha!

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Why are you laughing? It doesn't fit the mood.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, I don't have another tear to shed. Besides, this sorrow  
is an enemy, which would make my eyes weak by blinding  
them with tears--how will I find Revenge's cave then? For  
these two heads seem to speak to me, threatening that I'll  
never be happy again until I take revenge by returning all  
these offenses in kind, back down the throats of those who  
have wronged us. Come, let's see what I have to do. You sad  
people, circle around me, so that I can turn to each of you  
and swear on my soul to take revenge on your behalf. The  
vow is made.

*[To MARCUS]* Come, brother, take a head, and in this hand  
I'll carry the other.

*[To LAVINIA]* Lavinia, you'll have a job too--these arms!  
Carry my hand between your teeth, sweet girl.

*[To LUCIUS]* As for you, boy, get out of my sight; you're  
banished, and must not stay. Go to the Goths and raise an  
army there, and if you love me--as I think you do--let's kiss  
and say goodbye, for we have much to do.

*TITUS, MARCUS, and LAVINIA exit.*

**LUCIUS**

Goodbye, Andronicus, my noble father and the saddest  
man that ever lived in Rome. Goodbye, proud Rome. Until  
Lucius comes again, he leaves behind a promise to return,  
dearer than his life. Farewell, Lavinia, my noble sister: oh, if  
only you were like you were before! But now neither Lucius  
nor Lavinia lives, except in grief and despair. As long as  
Lucius lives, he will fight for justice for you, and make proud  
Saturnine and his empress beg at the gates like [Tarquin and  
his queen](#). Now I'll go to the Goths, and raise an army to  
take revenge on Rome and Saturnine.

<sup>5</sup> "Tarquin," previously mentioned as Lucrece's rapist, was also the last king of Rome in history and legend. His tyrannical reign ended with an uprising that eventually established the Roman Republic.

Exit

LUCIUS exits.

## Act 3, Scene 2

## Shakespeare

*Enter TITUS, MARCUS, LAVINIA and Young LUCIUS, a boy***TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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:  
 5 Thy niece and I, poor creatures, want our hands,  
 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,  
 10 Beats in this hollow prison of my flesh,  
 Then thus I thump it down.  
 [To LAVINIA]  
 Thou map of woe, that thus dost talk in signs!  
 15 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;  
 Or get some little knife between thy teeth,  
 And just against thy heart make thou a hole;  
 20 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.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

25 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?  
 Ah, wherefore dost thou urge the name of hands;  
 To bid Aeneas tell the tale twice o'er,  
 30 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.  
 Fie, fie, how frantically I square my talk,  
 As if we should forget we had no hands,  
 35 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;  
 I can interpret all her martyr'd signs;  
 She says she drinks no other drink but tears,  
 40 Brew'd with her sorrow, mesh'd upon her cheeks:  
 Speechless complainer, I will learn thy thought;  
 In thy dumb action will I be as perfect  
 As begging hermits in their holy prayers:  
 Thou shalt not sigh, nor hold thy stumps to heaven,  
 45 Nor wink, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make a sign,  
 But I of these will wrest an alphabet  
 And by still practise learn to know thy meaning.

**YOUNG LUCIUS**


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

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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


## Shakescleare Translation


*TITUS, MARCUS, LAVINIA enter with Young LUCIUS, a boy.*

 Young Lucius is the son of Lucius, and Titus's grandson.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

There, there. Sit down. And make sure you eat no more than will keep us alive long enough to take revenge on our enemies. Marcus, unfold your arms: your niece and I, poor creatures, lack hands and can't show ten times more sadness by standing like that. Instead, I have to beat my breast with my poor remaining right hand. My heart beats in the hollow prison of my body, enraged with misery, and I thump it down.

[To LAVINIA] You map of grief , talking in sign language! When your poor heart beats fast, you can't strike your chest to make it quiet. Try sighing, my girl, or kill it with groans. Or take a little knife between your teeth and make a hole against your heart, so all the tears that fall from your poor eyes may run in and drown it.

 A "map," like Lavinia, communicates with the viewer through signs.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Brother, stop! Don't tell her how to lay violent hands on herself.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh! Has sorrow already made you mad? Why, Marcus, no man should be mad but me. What violent hands can she lay on her life? Why do you use the word "hands?" That's like asking Aeneas to tell the story again of how Troy was burnt and he lost everything. Oh, don't say anything about hands, lest we remember that we don't have any. Ha, but I'm talking foolishly--as if we could forget we have no hands, just because Marcus didn't mention it! Come, let's eat. And gentle girl, eat this--what, you won't drink? Hear what she says, Marcus; I can interpret all her signs. She says she'll drink nothing but the tears on her cheeks, brewed with her sorrow.

[To LAVINIA] Speechless victim, I will learn your thoughts; your silent actions will be as clear in meaning to me as the prayers of hermits. You won't sigh, or hold your stumps to heaven, or wink, or nod, or kneel, or make a sign without me understanding you: I'll make an alphabet of these actions, and I'll learn to know what you mean.

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

Good grandfather, stop this bitter sadness; make my aunt laugh with some pleasing story.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, the sweet boy, moved by compassion, cries to see his grandfather's grief.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

*MARCUS strikes the dish with a knife*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

At that that I have kill'd, my lord; a fly.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Out on thee, murderer! thou kill'st my heart;  
Mine eyes are cloy'd with view of tyranny:  
60 A deed of death done on the innocent  
Becomes not Titus' brother: get thee gone:  
I see thou art not for my company.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Alas, my lord, I have but kill'd a fly.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

But how, if that fly had a father and mother?  
65 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  
70 kill'd him.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Pardon me, sir; it was a black ill-favor'd fly,  
Like to the empress' Moor; therefore I kill'd him.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O, O, O,  
Then pardon me for reprehending thee,  
75 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.  
80 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 ANDRONICUS**

85 Alas, poor man! grief has so wrought on him,  
He takes false shadows for true substances.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, take away. Lavinia, go with me:  
I'll to thy closet; and go read with thee  
Sad stories chanced in the times of old.  
Come, boy, and go with me: thy sight is young,  
90 And thou shalt read when mine begin to dazzle.

*Exeunt*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Calm down, innocent boy; you are made of tears, and tears  
will melt away your life.

*MARCUS stabs his dinner dish with a knife.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

What do you strike at with your knife, Marcus?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

I struck at a fly, my lord, which I killed.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Get out, murderer! You kill my heart; my eyes are filled with  
tears at seeing this cruelty. The murder of the innocent  
doesn't become Titus's brother; get out, since I see you  
aren't fit for my company.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My lord, I've only killed a fly.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

But what if that fly had a father and mother? He would fly  
on his slender golden wings, buzzing sad songs in the air!  
Poor harmless fly, that, with his pretty buzzing song, came  
here to make us happy! And you have killed him.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Forgive me, sir; it was a black ugly fly that looked like the  
empress's Moor, which was why I killed him.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, oh, oh, then forgive me for attaching you, for you've  
done a good deed. Give me your knife, and I'll butcher him,  
pretending it's the Moor come here to poison me. *[Stabs the  
fly.]* Here's for you, and that's for Tamora. Ah, bastard! At  
least we're not so low; between us we can still kill a fly that  
looks like a coal-black Moor.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, poor man! He is so grief-stricken that he imagines  
shadows are the real thing.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, let's go. Lavinia, come with me; I'll go to your room  
and read sad stories of old times with you.

*[To LUCIUS]* Come with me, too, boy; your young eyes can  
read when my own begin to fade.

*All exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter YOUNG LUCIUS, and LAVINIA running after him, and the boy flies  
from her, with books under his arm. Then enter TITUS and MARCUS*

### Shakescleare Translation

*YOUNG LUCIUS enters with books under his arm, with  
LAVINIA running after him. TITUS and MARCUS enter after  
them.*

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

Help, grandsire, help! my aunt Lavinia  
Follows me every where, I know not why:  
Good uncle Marcus, see how swift she comes.  
Alas, sweet aunt, I know not what you mean.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

5 Stand by me, Lucius; do not fear thine aunt.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

Ay, when my father was in Rome she did.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

What means my niece Lavinia by these signs?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

10 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.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

15 Canst thou not guess wherefore she plies thee thus?

**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;  
20 And I have read that Hecuba of Troy  
Ran mad through 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:  
25 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.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

30 Lucius, I will.  
*LAVINIA turns over with her stumps the books which LUCIUS has let fall*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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.  
But thou art deeper read, and better skill'd  
35 Come, and take choice of all my library,  
And so beguile thy sorrow, till the heavens  
Reveal the damn'd contriver of this deed.  
Why lifts she up her arms in sequence thus?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

Help, grandfather, help! My aunt Lavinia follows me  
everywhere, but I don't know why. Uncle Marcus, see how  
quickly she comes after me. Oh, sweet aunt, I don't know  
what you mean.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Stand by me, Lucius; don't be afraid of your aunt.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

She loves you too much to hurt you, boy.


**YOUNG LUCIUS**

Yes, when my father was in Rome she did.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

What does my niece Lavinia mean by this sign language?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**


Don't be afraid of her, Lucius; she means something. See,  
Lucius, how much she loves you; she wants you to go  
somewhere with her. Oh, boy, Cornelia  never read to her  
sons with so much care as Lavinia reads you sweet poetry  
and Tully's Orator.



**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Can't you guess what she wants from you?

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

My lord, I don't know and I can't guess. Unless she's  
suffering from some fit or madness, for I've often heard my  
grandfather say that extreme grief makes people mad, and  
I've read that Hecuba of Troy  went mad from sorrow.  
That made me afraid--although, my lord, I know my noble  
aunt loves me as dearly as my mother ever did, and would  
only in madness have ever frightened me--and I threw  
down my books and ran, but perhaps for no reason. Forgive  
me, sweet aunt; and madam, if my uncle Marcus comes  
with us, I'll gladly go with you.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Lucius, I will.

*LUCIUS has dropped some books to the ground; LAVINIA  
begins to search through them with her stumps.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

What are you doing, Lavinia? Marcus, what does this mean?  
She wants to see one of these books. Which book? Open  
them, boy.


*[To LAVINIA]* You're a better reader than me--come and take  
any book from my library, and so distract yourself from your  
sorrow until the heavens reveal who did this to you. Why  
does she lift her arms up twice?


**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**


I think she means that there was more than one who did  
this; yes, there was more than one. Unless she's praying to  
heaven for revenge.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Lucius, which book is she searching through so frantically?

 Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi brothers (Roman tribunes in the late 2nd century BC), was famous for her attention to her children's education.

 Tully's Orator was a famous rhetorical handbook--i.e., a book that taught students how to speak eloquently.

 Remember that Hecuba was Queen of Troy during the Trojan War. Her grief over the death of her children and the destruction of Troy is the driving force behind Euripides's tragedy "Hecuba."

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphoses;  
My mother gave it me.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

45 For love of her that's gone,  
Perhaps she cull'd it from among the rest.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Soft! see how busily she turns the leaves!

*Helping her*

What would she find? Lavinia, shall I read?  
50 This is the tragic tale of Philomel,  
And treats of Tereus' treason and his rape:  
And rape, I fear, was root of thine annoy.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

See, brother, see; note how she quotes the leaves.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Lavinia, wert thou thus surprised, sweet girl,  
55 Ravish'd and wrong'd, 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!--  
60 Pattern'd by that the poet here describes,  
By nature made for murders and for rapes.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Give signs, sweet girl, for here are none  
65 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?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Sit down, sweet niece: brother, sit down by me.  
70 Apollo, Pallas, Jove, or Mercury,  
Inspire me, that I may this treason find!  
My lord, look here: look here, Lavinia:  
This sandy plot is plain; guide, if thou canst  
This after me, when I have writ my name  
75 Without the help of any hand at all.

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

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Cursed be that heart that forced us to this shift!  
Write thou good niece; and here display, at last,  
What God will have discover'd for revenge;  
Heaven guide thy pen to print thy sorrows plain,  
80 That we may know the traitors and the truth!

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O, do ye read, my lord, what she hath writ?  
'Stuprum. Chiron. Demetrius.'

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

What, what! the lustful sons of Tamora  
Performers of this heinous, bloody deed?

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

Grandfather, it's Ovid's Metamorphoses; my mother gave it to me.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Perhaps she chose it for love of Lucius's mother.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Look! See how quickly she turns the pages.

*TITUS helps LAVINIA.*

What is she looking for? Lavinia, do you want me to read?  
This is the tragic story of Philomel, who was raped by  
Tereus--and rape, I fear, was what happened to you.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

See, brother, see; look how she's pointing to particular passages.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Lavinia, were you attacked, sweet girl, raped as Philomel was in the silent, vast, and gloomy woods? Of course, of course! Yes, there is a place like that, the wood where we hunted--oh, I wish we had never, never hunted there!--just like the one described by Ovid, made by nature for murder and rape.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, why would nature create such a foul place, unless the gods take delight in our suffering?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Give signs, sweet girl, for everyone here is your friend: what Roman lord is responsible? Was it Saturnine--like [Tarquin](#) <sup>4</sup>, who left the camp to attack Lucrece?

<sup>4</sup> Remember that (in several historical accounts), the tyrant Tarquin's rape of a Lucrece inspired a rebellion and the birth of the Roman republic.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Sit down, sweet niece: brother, sit down by me. May [Apollo](#), [Pallas](#), [Jove](#), or [Mercury](#) <sup>5</sup> inspire me, so that I can find some way to expose the criminal! My lord, look; look at this, Lavinia. This is a plain plot of sand; if I take this stick, I can write my name without any hands at all. If you can, do what I did.

<sup>5</sup> Marcus invokes some of the most important gods in the pantheon here--Apollo is the sun god, Pallas Athena is goddess of wisdom, Jove is king of the gods, and Mercury is both a god himself and the gods' messenger.

*He writes his name in the sand with his staff, guiding it with his feet and mouth.*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Curses on the heart that forced us to this method! Write, good niece; and tell us, at last, what God wants to be known so that we can take revenge. Heaven will guide your pen to show what happened, so that we may know the traitors and the truth!

*LAVINIA takes the staff in her mouth and writes, guiding it with her stumps.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, do you read, my lord, what she's written? "Rape. Chiron. Demetrius."

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

What, what! The lustful sons of Tamora did this horrible, bloody crime?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

85 Magni Dominator poli,  
Tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus vides?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

O, calm thee, gentle lord; although I know  
There is enough written upon this earth  
To stir a mutiny in the mildest thoughts  
90 And arm the minds of infants to exclains.  
My lord, kneel down with me; Lavinia, kneel;  
And kneel, sweet boy, the Roman Hector's hope;  
And swear with me, as, with the woful fere  
And father of that chaste dishonour'd dame,  
95 Lord Junius Brutus sware 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.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

'Tis sure enough, an you knew how.  
100 But if you hunt these bear-whelps, then beware:  
The dam will wake; and, if she wind you once,  
She's with the lion deeply still in league,  
And lulls him whilst she playeth on her back,  
And when he sleeps will she do what she list.  
105 You are a young huntsman, Marcus; let it 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  
Will blow these sands, like Sibyl's leaves, abroad,  
110 And where's your lesson, then? Boy, what say you?

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

I say, my lord, that if I were a man,  
Their mother's bed-chamber should not be safe  
For these bad bondmen to the yoke of Rome.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

115 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 ANDRONICUS**

Come, go with me into mine armoury;  
Lucius, I'll fit thee; and withal, my boy,  
Shalt carry from me to the empress' sons  
120 Presents that I intend to send them both:  
Come, come; thou'lt do thy message, wilt thou not?

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

Ay, with my dagger in their bosoms, grandsire.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

No, boy, not so; I'll teach thee another course.  
Lavinia, come. Marcus, look to my house:  
125 Lucius and I'll go brave it at the court:  
Ay, marry, will we, sir; and we'll be waited on.

*Exeunt TITUS, LAVINIA, and Young LUCIUS*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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

*Exit*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Magni Dominator poli, Tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus vides? <sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Titus's Latin words, here, are "Master of the great heavens, can you so calmly hear crimes? And so calmly see them?"

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, calm yourself, gentle lord--although I know there's enough written here on the ground to enrage even the mildest person, and make children exclaim with anger. My lord, kneel down with me; Lavinia, kneel; and kneel, sweet boy, who we hope will grow up to be the Roman Hector <sup>7</sup>. Swear with me--as Lucrece's father, Lord Junius Brutus <sup>8</sup>, swore after her rape--that we will take mortal revenge on these traitorous Goths. We'll see them bleed, or we'll die instead.

<sup>7</sup> "Hector" was a legendary Trojan warrior in Homer's *Iliad* who was brutally killed, and he was the son of Hecuba and Priam.

<sup>8</sup> "Junius Brutus," Lucrece's father, paraded her body through the streets in outrage after her rape at the hands of Tarquin, inciting a rebellion against the king.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Certainly we will, if we can. But if you hunt these bear cubs, then beware; their mother will wake, and if she sees you once, she'll set the lion on you--for she lulls him to sleep while she plays on her back, and while he sleeps she'll do what she wants. You're not much of a huntsman, Marcus; leave it alone. And come, I'll go get a sheet of brass <sup>9</sup>, and with a steel pen I'll write these words and lay it aside: the angry northern wind will blow these sands through the air like Sibyl's leaves <sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabethan proverbial wisdom held that injuries are written in "brass," making them last much longer than writing in the "sand" that blows away.

<sup>10</sup> The "Sybil" was a priestess who made prophecies by writing on oak leaves.

[*To YOUNG LUCIUS*] And what do you have to say for yourself, boy?

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

I say, my lord, that if I were a man, these slaves wouldn't be safe in their mother's bedroom.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Yes, that's my boy! Your father has often done the same for his ungrateful country.

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

And so will I, uncle, if I live long enough.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, go with me to my armoury; Lucius, I'll fit you with armor, and you'll go to the empress's sons dressed like that, carrying presents from me. Come, come--you'll take the message for me, won't you?

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

Yes, by stabbing them in their hearts, grandfather.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

No, boy, not that; I'll teach you another way. Lavinia, come. Marcus, take care of my house while I'm gone; Lucius and I will go make a spectacle of ourselves at court. Yes, indeed we will, sir; and they'll pay attention.

*TITUS, LAVINIA, and Young LUCIUS exit.*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, heavens, can you hear a good man groan, and not stop these sufferings, or take pity on him? Marcus, care for him in his madness, since he now has more scars of sorrow on his heart than marks of the enemy on his battered shield. And yet he's so attached to justice that he won't take revenge. So take revenge for old Andronicus, heavens!

*MARCUS exits.*

## Act 4, Scene 2

## Shakespeare

*Enter, from one side, AARON, DEMETRIUS, and CHIRON; from the other side, Young LUCIUS, and an Attendant, 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 honours from Andronicus.

*[Aside]*

And pray the Roman gods confound you both!

**DEMETRIUS**

Gramercy, lovely Lucius: what's the news?

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

*[Aside]* That you are both decipher'd, that's the news,  
For villains mark'd with rape.-- May it please you,  
My grandsire, well advised, hath sent by me  
The goodliest weapons of his armoury  
To gratify your honourable youth,  
The hope of Rome; for so he bade me say;  
And so I do, and with his gifts present  
Your lordships, that, whenever you have need,  
You may be armed and appointed well:  
And so I leave you both:

*[Aside]*

like bloody villains.

*Exeunt Young LUCIUS, and Attendant*

**DEMETRIUS**

What's here? A scroll; and written round about?  
Let's see;

*[Reads]*

'Integer vitae, scelerisque purus,  
Non eget Mauri jaculis, nec arcu.'

**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!

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,

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 advanced to this height?

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

## Shakescleare Translation

*AARON, DEMETRIUS, and CHIRON enter from one side; Young LUCIUS and a servant enter from the other side, carrying a bundle of weapons with scraps of paper tied around them.*

**CHIRON**

Look, Demetrius, here's the son of Lucius--and he's got some message to give us.

**AARON**

Yes, some mad message from his mad grandfather.

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

My lords, I bring greetings from Andronicus with all the humility I can.

*[To himself]* And I pray the Roman gods punish you both!

**DEMETRIUS**

Thanks, lovely Lucius; what's the news?

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

*[To himself]* That we've found you out, that's the news, and know that you're rapists.

*[To CHIRON and DEMETRIUS]* With all respect, my grandfather has sent me to bring you the best weapons from his armory to amuse your honorable youth, for you are the hope of Rome. He told me to tell you that, and so I do. And I present you these gifts, your lordships, so that you can always be armed whenever you need to--and with that, I'll go.


*[To himself]* Armed like murderous villains, that is.

*Young LUCIUS exits with servant.*

**DEMETRIUS**


*[Looks at weapon]* What's this? A scroll tied around? Let's see.

*[Reads]* "Integer vitae, scelerisque purus, / Non eget Mauri jaculis, nec arcu."

 The inscription reads, "The man who is of pure life and free from crime needs not the bows and arrows of the Moor."

**CHIRON**

Oh, it's a verse by Horace , I know it well; I read it in school a long time ago.

 Horace was a famous Roman poet during the reign of Augustus.

**AARON**

Yes, right, a verse from Horace. You've got it.

*[To himself]* Ha, what an ass! This is no joke--the old man knows that they're guilty, and sends them weapons wrapped with words that wound them, although they don't pick up on it. But if our sly empress were here, she would applaud Andronicus's cleverness. But we'll leave her be for a while, since she's unwell.

*[To CHIRON and DEMETRIUS]* And now, young lords--wasn't it lucky that we came to Rome, since we arrived as foreigners and captives and now have so much power? It pleased me to have a go at Marcus Andronicus at the palace gate in front of his brother.

**DEMETRIUS**

And I love to see this great lord bow to us and send us gifts.



Basely insinuate and send us gifts.

**AARON**

50 Had he not reason, Lord Demetrius?  
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.

**CHIRON**

55 And that would she for twenty thousand more.

**DEMETRIUS**

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

**AARON**

*[Aside]* Pray to the devils; the gods have given us  
over.

60

*Trumpets sound within*

**DEMETRIUS**

Why do the emperor's trumpets flourish thus?

**CHIRON**

Belike, for joy the emperor hath a son.

**DEMETRIUS**

Soft! who comes here?

*Enter a Nurse, with a blackamoor Child in her arms*

**NURSE**

65 Good morn ow, lords:  
O, tell me, did you see Aaron the Moor?

**AARON**

Well, more or less, or ne'er a whit at all,  
Here Aaron is; and what with Aaron now?

**NURSE**

70 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 thine arms?

**NURSE**

75 O, that which I would hide from heaven's eye,  
Our empress' shame, and stately Rome's disgrace!  
She is deliver'd, lords; she is deliver'd.

**AARON**

To whom?

**NURSE**

I mean, she is brought a-bed.

**AARON**

Doesn't he have reason, Lord Demetrius? Didn't you treat  
his daughter in a very friendly way?

**DEMETRIUS**

I wish we had a thousand Roman ladies like that, to take  
turns serving our lust.

**CHIRON**

A kind and loving wish.

**AARON**

We just miss your mother to say "amen."

**CHIRON**

And she would wish we had twenty thousand more.

**DEMETRIUS**

Come, let's go and pray to all the gods for your beloved  
mother in her labor pains.

**AARON**

*[To himself]* Pray to the devils; the gods have given up on  
us.

*Trumpets sound from within the palace.*

**DEMETRIUS**

Why do the emperor's trumpets make that sound?

**CHIRON**

Probably because the emperor has a son.

**DEMETRIUS**

Look! Who's that?

*A nurse enters with a [blackamoor](#) child in her arms.*

**NURSE**

Good morning, lords; oh, tell me, have you seen Aaron the  
Moor?

**AARON**

Well, they've seen me more or less, or they never saw me at  
all--here's Aaron. What do you want with him?

**NURSE**

Oh, gentle Aaron, we're all ruined! Help, or we'll be  
miserable forever!

**AARON**

Why do you scream and cry like that? What's that bundle in  
your arms?

**NURSE**


Oh, something that I would hide from the eye of heaven--  
the shame of our empress and the disgrace of noble Rome!  
She is [delivered](#), lords; she's delivered.


**AARON**

To whom?

**NURSE**

I mean, she's had a child.

 "Blackamoor" is an Elizabethan term for a dark-skinned person--the baby is Aaron's child.

 Shakespeare plays on the dual meanings of "delivered" in Elizabethan English--both the modern sense of "handed over" (which is how Aaron understands her at first) and "to give birth to a child."

**AARON**

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

**NURSE**

A devil.

**AARON**

80 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

Amongst the fairest breeders of our clime:

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

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

**AARON**

'Zounds, ye whore! is black so base a hue?

Sweet blowse, you are a beauteous blossom, sure.

**DEMETRIUS**

Villain, what hast thou done?

**AARON**

That which thou canst not undo.

**CHIRON**

90 Thou hast undone our mother.

**AARON**

Villain, I have done thy mother.

**DEMETRIUS**

And therein, hellish dog, thou hast undone.

Woe to her chance, and damn'd her loathed choice!

Accursed the offspring of so foul a fiend!

**CHIRON**

95 It shall not live.

**AARON**

It shall not die.

**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**

100 I'll broach the tadpole on my rapier's point:

Nurse, give it me; my sword shall soon dispatch it.

**AARON**

Sooner this sword shall plough thy bowels up.

*Takes the Child from the Nurse, and draws*

Stay, murderous villains! will you kill your brother?

105 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

That touches this my first-born son and heir!

I tell you, younglings, not Enceladus,

110 With all his threatening band of Typhon's brood,

Nor great Alcides, nor the god of war,

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

What, what, ye sanguine, shallow-hearted boys!

**AARON**

Well, God give her a good rest afterwards! What sort of child has he given her?

**NURSE**

A devil.

**AARON**

Why, then she's the devil's mother; a happy birth.

**NURSE**

It's a joyless, sad, and black child: here's the baby, as

disgusting as a toad among the fairest ladies of our land.

The empress sends it to you--for it looks exactly like you--

and orders you to kill it with your dagger.

**AARON**

By God, you whore! Is black so terrible a color?

*[To the baby]* Sweetheart, you are a beautiful flower, you are.

**DEMETRIUS**

Villain, what have you done?

**AARON**

That which you can't undo.

**CHIRON**

You have undone our mother.

**AARON**

Villain, I have done your mother.

**DEMETRIUS**

And in doing that, hellish dog, you've undone her. Oh, let

her good luck come to an end, and damn her disgusting

choice! Curses on the offspring of such a foul devil!

**CHIRON**

It shall not live.

**AARON**

It shall not die.

**NURSE**

Aaron, it must; the mother orders it.

**AARON**

What, it has to die, nurse? Then let no one but me kill my

own flesh and blood.

**DEMETRIUS**

I'll stab the tadpole with the point of my blade; nurse, give

it to me. My sword will soon get rid of it.

**AARON**

Before you do that, this sword will tear out your bowels.



*Aaron takes the child from the nurse, and draws his sword.*

Stop, murderous villains! Will you kill your brother? Now, by

the light of the stars that shone so brightly when this boy

was conceived, I'll kill whoever touches this child, my first-

born son and heir! I tell you, boys, Enceladus and all of

Typhon's offspring , or Alcides , or the god of war


couldn't take this prey from his father's hands. What, what,


you stupid, shallow boys! You white-washed walls! You

painting alehouse signs! Coal-black is better than any other

color, because it will never bear another hue: all the water

in the ocean can never turn the swan's black legs to white,

 Enceladus and Typhon are Greek mythological giants.

 Alcides is an alternative name for Hercules, famous for his strength.

Ye white-limed walls! ye alehouse painted signs!  
 115 Coal-black is better than another hue,  
 In that it scorns to bear another hue;  
 For all the water in the ocean  
 Can never turn the swan's black legs to white,  
 Although she lave them hourly in the flood.  
 120 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?

**AARON**

My mistress is my mistress; this myself,  
 The vigour and the picture of my youth:  
 125 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.

**DEMETRIUS**

By this our mother is forever shamed.

**CHIRON**

Rome will despise her for this foul escape.

**NURSE**

130 The emperor, in his rage, will doom her death.

**CHIRON**

I blush to think upon this ignomy.

**AARON**

Why, there's the privilege your beauty bears:  
 Fie, treacherous hue, that will betray with blushing  
 The close enacts and counsels of the heart!  
 135 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,  
 140 And from that womb where you imprison'd were  
 He is enfranchised and come to light:  
 Nay, he is your brother by the surer side,  
 Although my seal be stamped in his face.

**NURSE**

Aaron, what shall I say unto the empress?

**DEMETRIUS**

145 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.

**AARON**

Then sit we down, and let us all consult.  
 My son and I will have the wind of you:  
 150 Keep there: now talk at pleasure of your safety.

*They sit*

**DEMETRIUS**

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,  
 155 The chafed boar, the mountain lioness,  
 The ocean swells not so as Aaron storms.  
 But say, again; how many saw the child?

**NURSE**

Cornelia the midwife and myself;  
 And no one else but the deliver'd empress.

even if she bathed them hourly in the flood. Tell the  
 empress from me that I'm old enough to keep my own  
 child, whatever excuse she must make for it.

**DEMETRIUS**

Will you betray your noble mistress like this?

**AARON**

My mistress is my mistress; this child is me, the picture of  
 how I was a child. I prefer this to all the world, and despite  
 everything I will keep it safe--or all Rome will burn.

**DEMETRIUS**

Our mother will be forever shamed by this.

**CHIRON**

Rome will hate her if this foul thing lives.

**NURSE**

The emperor, in his anger, will condemn her to death.

**CHIRON**

I can't stand to think of this humiliation.

**AARON**

Why, that's because you're white: your treacherous color so  
 easily betrays what you're thinking, since you blush so  
 easily! But this young boy has another kind of complexion.  
 Look how the black slave smiles on his father, as if to say  
 "old boy, I'm yours." He's your brother, lords, fed from the  
 same blood that first gave you life, and from the womb  
 where you were imprisoned he has emerged, too, and come  
 to the light. No, he is your brother, certainly, although he  
 looks like me.

**NURSE**

Aaron, what should I tell the empress?

**DEMETRIUS**

Advise us what we should do, Aaron, and we'll take your  
 advice. Save the child so that we can all be safe.

**AARON**

Then let's sit down and think. My son and I will have some  
 space--stay over there. Stay there; now feel free to make a  
 plan.

*They sit.*

**DEMETRIUS**

How many women saw his child?

**AARON**

Ah, see, brave lords! When we're working together, I'm like  
 a lamb; but when you cross me, the boar, the mountain  
 lioness, and the ocean are not so powerful as Aaron in rage.  
 But tell us, again; how many have seen the child?

**NURSE**

Cornelia the midwife, me, and no one else but the empress.

**AARON**

160 The empress, the midwife, and yourself:  
Two may keep counsel when the third's away:  
Go to the empress, tell her this I said.

*He kills the nurse*

Weke, weke! so cries a pig prepared to the spit.

**DEMETRIUS**

165 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:  
And now be it known to you my full intent.  
170 Not far, one Muli lives, 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,  
And tell them both the circumstance of all;  
175 And how by this their child shall be advanced,  
And be received for the emperor's heir,  
And substituted in the place of mine,  
To calm this tempest whirling in the court;  
And let the emperor dandle him for his own.  
180 Hark ye, lords; ye see I have given her physic,

*Pointing to 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,  
But send the midwife presently to me.  
185 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,  
190 Herself and hers are highly bound to thee.

*Exeunt DEMETRIUS and CHIRON bearing off 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.  
195 Come on, you thick lipp'd 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  
200 To be a warrior, and command a camp.

*Exit*

**AARON**

The empress, the midwife, and you: two can be silent when  
the third's gone. Go to the empress and tell her that.

*AARON kills the nurse.*

Ha! She cries like a pig prepared to be roasted.

**DEMETRIUS**

What are you doing, Aaron? Why did you do this?

**AARON**

Oh, Lord, sir, for strategy. Should this babbling gossip live to  
tell the tale? No, lords, no--and now let me tell you my full  
plan. One of my countrymen, Muli, lives not too far from  
here. Yesterday night his wife gave birth to a child like her,  
as fair-skinned as you. Go to him, give the mother money,  
and tell them the situation: if they give us their child, it shall  
become the emperor's heir and take the place of mine, to  
calm this storm in the court and let the emperor have his  
son. Listen, lords, you see I have given her medicine--

*Pointing to the nurse*

And you have to take care of the funeral; bury her in the  
fields nearby, for you're noble gentlemen. Once you're done  
with that, hurry up and send the midwife to me. Once I've  
taken care of the midwife and the nurse, then the ladies can  
gossip all they want.

**CHIRON**

Aaron, I see you wouldn't trust the air with your secrets.

**DEMETRIUS**

For this favor to our mother, we're very grateful to you.

*DEMETRIUS and CHIRON exit, carrying the nurse's body.*

**AARON**

Now, swift as a sparrow, I'll go to the Goths, to leave this  
treasure in my arms and secretly greet the empress's  
friends.

*[To the baby]* Come on, you thick-lipped slave, I'll take you  
there, for it's you that's caused all this mess. I'll feed you  
with berries and roots, and curds and whey. You'll nurse  
from the goat, and live in a cave, and I'll bring you up to be  
a great warrior and command a camp.

*AARON exits.*

## Act 4, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter TITUS, bearing arrows with letters at the ends of them; with him, MARCUS, Young LUCIUS, PUBLIUS, SEMPRONIUS, CAIUS, and other Gentlemen, with bows*

### Shakescleare Translation

*TITUS enters, carrying arrows with letters tied around the ends; MARCUS, Young LUCIUS, PUBLIUS, SEMPRONIUS, CAIUS, and other gentlemen enter with him, carrying bows.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, Marcus; come, kinsmen; this is the way.  
Sir boy, now let me see your archery;  
Look ye draw home enough, and 'tis there straight.  
Terras Astraea reliquit:

- 5 Be you remember'd, 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:  
10 No; Publius and Sempronius, you must do it;  
'Tis you must dig with mattock and with spade,  
And pierce the inmost centre of the earth:  
Then, when you come to Pluto's region,  
I pray you, deliver him this petition;  
15 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  
20 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 unsearch'd:  
This wicked emperor may have shipp'd her hence;  
And, kinsmen, then we may go pipe for justice.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

- 25 O Publius, is not this a heavy case,  
To see thy noble uncle thus distract?

**PUBLIUS**

- Therefore, my lord, it highly us concerns  
By day and night to attend him carefully,  
And feed his humour kindly as we may,  
30 Till time beget some careful remedy.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Kinsmen, his sorrows are past remedy.  
Join with the Goths; and with revengeful war  
Take wreak on Rome for this ingratitude,  
And vengeance on the traitor Saturnine.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

- 35 Publius, how now! how now, my masters!  
What, have you met with her?

**PUBLIUS**

- No, my good lord; but Pluto sends you word,  
If you will have Revenge from hell, you shall:  
Marry, for Justice, she is so employ'd,  
40 He thinks, with Jove in heaven, or somewhere else,  
So that perforce you must needs stay a time.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**


- 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.  
45 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 wrong with wrongs more than our backs can bear:  
And, sith there's no justice in earth nor hell,  
50 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;


*He gives them the arrows*

- 'Ad Jovem,' that's for you: here, 'Ad Apollinem.'  
'Ad Martem,' that's for myself:  
55 Here, boy, to Pallas: here, to Mercury:  
To Saturn, Caius, not to Saturnine;  
You were as good to shoot against the wind.  
To it, boy! Marcus, loose when I bid.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come on, Marcus, come; kinsmen, this is the way.

[To Young LUCIUS] Sir boy, now let me see your archery;  
make sure you draw home and shoot straight. Terras  
Astraea reliquit : remember it. Marcus, justice is gone,  
she ran away. Sirs, pick up your weapons. You, cousins, will  
go around the ocean and cast your nets; perhaps you can  
catch her in the sea. But there's just as little justice there as  
on land--so never mind. No, Publius and Sempronius, you  
must do it; dig with a fork and spade until you get to the  
center of the Earth. Then, when you get to Pluto's  
underworld, give him this petition. Tell him I ask for justice  
and for help, and that it comes from old Andronicus, who  
suffers in ungrateful Rome. Oh, Rome! Well, I made you  
miserable when I threw the people's votes on the tyrant  
Saturninus. Go, go away; and be careful everyone, and  
don't let a ship get by without searching it. This wicked  
emperor may have had her shipped her away. And then,  
kinsmen, we're searching for justice in vain.

 This Latin phrase translates as, "Astraea has left the earth." Astraea is the goddess of justice.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, Publius, isn't this distressing, to see your noble uncle so mad?

**PUBLIUS**

And for that reason, my lord, we make sure to watch him all day and night, and take care of him as best we can, until perhaps time will heal him.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Kinsmen, his sorrows are past fixing. Join the Goths, and by going to war take revenge on Rome for this ingratitude, and on the traitor Saturnine.



**TITUS ANDRONICUS**


Publius, how are you? How are you, my masters? What, have you found her?


**PUBLIUS**

No, my good lord; but Pluto says that you will have revenge from hell, if you ask for it. He thinks that Justice is busy with Jove in heaven, or somewhere else, so you need to wait a bit.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

It's wrong to make me wait. I'll dive into the burning lake in the underworld, and pull her out of Acheron  by the heels. Marcus, we're just shrubs, not cedars, not big-boned men like the cyclops . We're just metal and steel, Marcus, and yet we've had more wrongs done to us than our backs can bear. And, since there's no justice in earth or hell, we'll pray to heaven and move the gods to send down Justice to right our wrongs. Come, let's do it. You are a good archer, Marcus.

 Acheron is one of the rivers of hell, known as the "river of woe."

 The "cyclops" is a gigantic, mythical creature with a single eye.

*He gives them the arrows.*

"To Jove," that's for you; here, "To Apollo"; "To Mars," that's for me. Here, boy, to Pallas; here, to Mercury; to Saturn; Caius. Not to Saturnine--you might as well shoot against the wind. Get to it, boy! Marcus, let your arrow fly when I tell you. I swear I've written to every god for justice.

Of my word, I have written to effect;  
60 There's not a god left unsolicited.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Kinsmen, shoot all your shafts into the court;  
We will afflict the emperor in his pride.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Now, masters, draw.

*They shoot*

65 O, well said, Lucius!  
Good boy, in Virgo's lap; give it Pallas.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My lord, I aim a mile beyond the moon;  
Your letter is with Jupiter by this.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Ha, ha!  
70 Publius, Publius, what hast thou done?  
See, see, thou hast shot off one of Taurus' horns.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

This was the sport, my lord: when Publius shot,  
The Bull, being gall'd, gave Aries such a knock  
That down fell both the Ram's horns in the court;  
75 And who should find them but the empress' villain?  
She laugh'd, and told the Moor he should not choose  
But give them to his master for a present.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, there it goes: God give his lordship joy!

*Enter a Clown, with a basket, and two pigeons in it*

80 News, news from heaven! Marcus, the post is come.  
Sirrah, what tidings? have you any letters?  
Shall I have justice? what says Jupiter?

**CLOWN**

O, the gibbet-maker! he says that he hath taken  
them down again, for the man must not be hanged till  
85 the next week.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

But what says Jupiter, I ask thee?

**CLOWN**

Alas, sir, I know not Jupiter; I never drank with him  
in all my life.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, villain, art not thou the carrier?

**CLOWN**

90 Ay, of my pigeons, sir; nothing else.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, didst thou not come from heaven?

**CLOWN**

From heaven! alas, sir, I never came there God  
forbid I should be so bold to press to heaven in my

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Kinsmen, shoot all your arrows at the palace; we'll annoy  
the prideful emperor.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Now, masters, draw.

*They shoot.*

Oh, nicely done, Lucius! Good boy, in [Virgo's lap](#)<sup>4</sup>; give it  
to Pallas.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My lord, I aim a mile beyond the moon; I've sent your letter  
to Jupiter.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Ha, ha! Publius, Publius, what have you done? See, see,  
you've shot off one of [Taurus's horns](#)<sup>5</sup>.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

This was the game, my lord; when Publius shot his arrow,  
Taurus butted heads with Aries<sup>6</sup>, and both the ram's  
horns fell down into the court. And who should find them  
but the empress's villain? She laughed, and told the Moor  
he should [give them to the emperor](#)<sup>7</sup> as a present.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, there they go: God give joy to his lordship!

*Enter a CLOWN, carrying a basket with two pigeons in it.*

News, news from heaven! Marcus, the post is come. Man,  
what do you hear? Do you have any letters for me? Will we  
have justice? What does Jupiter say?

**CLOWN**

Oh, the gibbet<sup>8</sup>-maker! He says that he has taken the  
gibbets down again, for the man won't be hanged until next  
week.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

But what does Jupiter say, I ask you?

**CLOWN**

Sorry, sir, I don't know Jupiter; I've never had a drink with  
him in my life.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

But villain, aren't you the messenger?

**CLOWN**

Yes, I carry pigeons, sir--nothing else.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, didn't you come from heaven?

**CLOWN**

From heaven! Oh, sir, I've never been there. God forbid I  
should barge into heaven when I'm still so young. Why, I'm

<sup>4</sup> "Virgo's lap" refers to the constellation Virgo--so Titus is telling Lucius to shoot the arrow at the sky.

<sup>5</sup> "Taurus" is a constellation of a bull--hence, the horns.

<sup>6</sup> "Aries" is a constellation of a ram. Marcus puns on male rams' tendency to butt horns with one another.

<sup>7</sup> Tamora's comment that Aaron should give the horns to Saturnine is another joke about cuckold's horns. Marcus imagines that horns have fallen from the constellation Taurus (the bull) and that the emperor should wear them, since Tamora has committed adultery with Aaron.

<sup>8</sup> A "gibbet" is the wooden post used for hanging condemned criminals.

95 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 imperial's men.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

100 Tell me, can you deliver an oration to the emperor with a grace?

**CLOWN**

Nay, truly, sir, I could never say grace in all my life.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

105 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 a supplication?

**CLOWN**

110 Ay, sir.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

115 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.

**CLOWN**

I warrant you, sir, let me alone.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

120 Sirrah, hast thou a knife? come, let me see it. Here, Marcus, fold it in the oration; For thou hast made it like a humble suppliant. And when thou hast given it the emperor, Knock at my door, and tell me what he says.

**CLOWN**

God be with you, sir; I will.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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


*Exeunt*


going with my pigeons to the tribune of the plebs, to deal with a fight between my uncle and one of the emperor's soldiers.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

[To TITUS] Why, sir, this is the perfect messenger for your speech. Let him take the pigeons to the emperor from you.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Tell me, can you deliver a speech to the emperor with a grace  ?

 Titus means "grace" in the sense of aptitude and ability; the clown takes it to mean "say grace."

**CLOWN**

No, truly, sir, I've never said grace in my life.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Man, come here; don't say anything else, but just bring your pigeons to the emperor; you'll get justice from him, for my sake. Wait, wait; here's money for your trouble. Give me pen and ink. Man, can you deliver a petition gracefully?

**CLOWN**

Yes, sir.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Then here is a petition for you. And when you come to him, you must first kneel, then kiss his foot, then give him your pigeons, and then wait for your reward. I'll be close by, sir; make sure you do it well.

**CLOWN**

Leave it to me, sir.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Do you have a knife? Come, give it to me. Here, Marcus, fold it in the letter, for you've made it look like a humble petition. And when he's given it to the emperor, knock at my door, and tell me what he says.

**CLOWN**

God be with you, sir; I will.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, Marcus, let's go. Publius, follow me.

*All exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 4

### Shakespeare

*Enter SATURNINUS, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, Lords, and others; SATURNINUS with the arrows in his hand that TITUS shot*

### Shakescleare Translation

*SATURNINUS, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, and CHIRON enter with Lords and other servants. SATURNINUS is holding the arrows that TITUS shot.*



**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?  
 5 My lords, you know, as know the mightful gods,  
 However these disturbers of our peace  
 Buzz in the people's ears, there nought hath pass'd,  
 But even with law, against the willful sons  
 Of old Andronicus. And what an if  
 10 His sorrows have so overwhelm'd his wits,  
 Shall we be thus afflicted in his wrecks,  
 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;  
 15 This to Apollo; this to the god of war;  
 Sweet scrolls to fly about the streets of Rome!  
 What's this but libelling against the senate,  
 And blazoning our injustice every where?  
 A goodly humour, is it not, my lords?  
 20 As who would say, in Rome no justice were.  
 But if I live, his feigned ecstasies  
 Shall be no shelter to these outrages:  
 But he and his shall know that justice lives  
 In Saturninus' health, whom, if she sleep,  
 25 He'll so awake as she 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,  
 30 The effects of sorrow for his valiant sons,  
 Whose loss hath pierced him deep and scarr'd his heart;  
 And rather comfort his distressed plight  
 Than prosecute the meanest or the best  
 For these contempts.  
 35 *[Aside]*  
 Why, thus it shall become  
 High-witted Tamora to gloze with all:  
 But, Titus, I have touched thee to the quick,  
 40 Thy life-blood out: if Aaron now be wise,  
 Then is all safe, the anchor's in the port.

*Enter Clown***TAMORA**

How now, good fellow! wouldst thou speak with us?

**CLOWN**

Yea, forsooth, an your mistership be imperial.

**TAMORA**

45 Empress I am, but yonder sits the emperor.

**CLOWN**

'Tis he. God and Saint Stephen give you good den:  
 I have brought you a letter and a couple of pigeons  
 here.

*SATURNINUS reads the letter***SATURNINUS**

50 Go, take him away, and hang him presently.

**CLOWN**

How much money must I have?


**TAMORA**


Come, sirrah, you must be hanged.


**CLOWN**

Hanged! by'r lady, then I have brought up a neck to

**SATURNINUS**

Why, lords, this is an outrage! Has there ever been a Roman  
 emperor oppressed, disobeyed, and troubled like this--and  
 treated with such contempt, simply for enforcing the law?  
 My lords, you and the mighty gods know that whatever  
 these disturbers of the peace say, buzzing like bees in the  
 common people's ears, that what happened to old  
 Andronicus's sons was just and legal. And so what if he's  
 gone crazy? Do we have to deal with the consequences of  
 his fits and bitterness? And now he writes to heaven for  
 justice. See *[shows arrows]*, here's to Jove, and this one's to  
 Mercury; to Apollo, to the god of war . . . and these papers  
 are scattered throughout the streets of Rome! Isn't this libel  
 1 against the Senate, accusing us of injustice everywhere?  
 Good ammunition, my lords, for those would say there's no  
 justice in Rome. But if I live, his pretended madness won't  
 protect him--he and his family will know that justice lives as  
 long as Saturninus is here, and if she  sleeps, he'll wake  
 her and set her on them in fury.

 Libel is a written, false statement  
 that damages a person's reputation.

 Saturninus continues the habit of  
 referring to "justice" as a woman--  
 "she," here, is the goddess of Justice  
 (Astraea).

**TAMORA**

My gracious lord, my lovely Saturnine, lord of my life,  
 commander of my thoughts: calm yourself. Remember that  
 Titus is old; his grief for his sons has pierced him deeply and  
 scarred his heart. Comfort him in his distress instead of  
 prosecuting the greatest or least member of his family for  
 this.

*[To herself]* Well, it's clever to pretend to defend him like  
 this. But Titus, I've got you, and I've spilled your life-blood.  
 if Aaron's plan goes smoothly, then we're almost there.

*CLOWN enters.***TAMORA**

Hello, good man! Do you want to speak with us?

**CLOWN**

Yes, indeed, if you're an imperial lady.

**TAMORA**

I'm the empress, but the emperor is there.

**CLOWN**

It's him. God and Saint Stephen give you good evening; I've  
 brought you a letter and a couple of pigeons.

*SATURNINUS reads the letter.***SATURNINUS**

*[To guards]* Go, take him away, and hang him immediately.

**CLOWN**

How much money do I get?

**TAMORA**

Go on, man, you must be hanged.

**CLOWN**

Hanged! By our Lady, then I've come to a good end.

a fair end.

55

*Exit, guarded*

**SATURNINUS**

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

*Enter AEMILIUS*

**SATURNINUS**

What news with thee, Aemilius?

**AEMILIUS**

Arm, arm, my lord;--Rome never had more cause.  
70 The Goths have gather'd head; and with a power  
high-resolved men, bent to the spoil,  
They hither march amain, under conduct  
Of Lucius, son to old Andronicus;  
Who threatens, in course of this revenge, to do  
75 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 begin our sorrows to approach:  
80 'Tis he the common people love so much;  
Myself hath often over-heard them say,  
When I have walked like a private man,  
That Lucius' banishment was wrongfully,  
And they have wish'd that Lucius were their emperor.

**TAMORA**

85 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 dimm'd, that gnats do fly in it?  
90 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.  
95 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,  
When as the one is wounded with the bait,  
100 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 aged ear  
With golden promises; that, were his heart  
105 Almost impregnable, his old ears deaf,  
Yet should both ear and heart obey my tongue.

*CLOWN exits, under guard.*

**SATURNINUS**

Spiteful and intolerable treatment! How can I endure this monstrous behavior? I know where this came from--can I bear this? He acts as if his traitorous sons, that died lawfully for murdering my brother, have been unjustly killed by me! Go, drag the villain here by his hair; I won't go any easier on him because he's old and honored in battle. For this proud mockery I'll kill him, the crafty, crazy bastard, who helped to give me the throne hoping he could take control of Rome and me.


*AEMILIUS enters.*

**SATURNINUS**

What do you have to report, Aemilius?

**AEMILIUS**

Raise an army, my lord--Rome has never been under attack like this before. The Goths have arrived with an army of soldiers intent on sacking the city. They come here under the command of Lucius, old Andronicus's son, who threatens to take as much revenge as [Coriolanus](#) ever did.

 Coriolanus was a legendary general who was exiled from Rome. In revenge, he gathered an army of enemy soldiers and attacked the city.

**SATURNINUS**

Fierce warrior Lucius is general of the Goths? This news nips me like a flower covered in frost or grass beaten down with storms. Yes, now our sorrow comes; the common people love him. When I've disguised myself and walked through the streets, I've often heard them say that Lucius was wrongfully banished, and that they wish he were their emperor.

**TAMORA**

Why should you be afraid? Doesn't the city have strong defenses?

**SATURNINUS**

Yes, but the citizens prefer Lucius, and will rebel against me to support him.

**TAMORA**

King, your thoughts should be as imperial as your name. Is the sun dimmed when gnats fly in it? The eagle doesn't mind when little birds sing, since he knows he can shut them up whenever he wants--so can you with the silly citizens of Rome. Then cheer up, emperor. For I will enchant the old Andronicus with words sweeter and more dangerous than baits to fish or stalks of honeysuckle to sheep, when they're wounded with the bait or poisoned with delicious food.

**SATURNINUS**

But he won't beg his son to stop the attack.

**TAMORA**

If Tamora asks him, then he will. For I can smooth things over and fill his ear with golden promises. Even if his heart were hard as stone and his old ears deaf, both his heart and his ears would obey my words.

[To AEMILIUS]

Go thou before, be our ambassador:

110 Say that the emperor requests a parley  
Of warlike Lucius, and appoint the meeting  
Even at his father's house, the old Andronicus.

**SATURNINUS**

AEmilius, do this message honourably:

115 And if he stand on hostage for his safety,  
Bid him demand what pledge will please him best.

**AEMILIUS**

Your bidding shall I do effectually.

*Exit*

**TAMORA**

Now will I to that old Andronicus;

And temper him with all the art I have,

120 To pluck proud Lucius from the warlike Goths.  
And now, sweet emperor, be blithe again,  
And bury all thy fear in my devices.

**SATURNINUS**

Then go successantly, and plead to him.

*Exeunt*

[To AEMILIUS] You, go ahead of me and be our ambassador.

Tell Lucius that the emperor requests a meeting with him at the house of his father, old Andronicus.

**SATURNINUS**

Aemilius, take care with this message. If he asks for some proof that we won't harm him, ask him what we can do to show we're in good faith.

**AEMILIUS**

I'll deliver the message as well as I can.

*AEMILIUS exits.*

**TAMORA**

Now I'll go to old Andronicus and deal with him with all the cunning I have, to get him to bring proud Lucius here from the warrior Goths. And now, sweet emperor, be cheerful again, and don't be afraid, since I'm taking care of it.

**SATURNINUS**

Then go now and talk to him.

*All exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter LUCIUS with an army of Goths, with drum and colours*

**LUCIUS**

Approved warriors, and my faithful friends,

I have received letters from great Rome,

Which signify what hate they bear their emperor

And how desirous of our sight they are.

5 Therefore, great lords, be, as your titles witness,  
Imperious and impatient of your wrongs,  
And wherein Rome hath done you any scath,  
Let him make treble satisfaction.

**FIRST GOTH**

Brave slip, sprung from the great Andronicus,

10 Whose name was once our terror, now our comfort;

Whose high exploits and honourable 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

15 Led by their master to the flowered fields,  
And be avenged on cursed Tamora.

**ALL THE 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?

20

*Enter a Goth, leading AARON with his Child in his arms*

**SECOND GOTH**

Renowned Lucius, from our troops I stray'd

To gaze upon a ruinous monastery;

And, as I earnestly did fix mine eye

Upon the wasted building, suddenly

25

### Shakesclare Translation

*LUCIUS enters with an army of Goths, with war drums and flags.*

**LUCIUS**

Faithful friends and proven warriors, I've received letters from Rome telling me how much they hate the emperor and how eagerly they look forward to our arrival. So, great lords who are impatient with the wrongs done to you, however Rome has hurt you, make sure you repay it threefold.

**FIRST GOTH**

Brave son of great Andronicus--whose name once terrorized us and now comforts us, and whose honorable service to Rome has been badly repaid--you can count on us. We'll go where you lead us, like stinging bees led by the beekeeper to a field of flowers, and take revenge on cursed Tamora.

**ALL THE GOTHs**

Everything he says, we say with him.

**LUCIUS**

I thank him humbly, and I thank all of you, too. But who's that, led by a Goth warrior?

*A Goth enters with AARON, holding his child in his arms.*

**SECOND GOTH**

Famous Lucius, I went ahead of the army to see a ruined monastery, and as I looked at the building, I heard a baby cry underneath a wall. I followed the noise to its source, and heard someone shushing the baby by saying, "Be quiet,

I heard a child cry underneath a wall.  
I made unto the noise; when soon I heard  
The crying babe controll'd with this discourse:  
'Peace, tawny slave, half me and half thy dam!  
Did not thy hue bewray whose brat thou art,  
30 Had nature lent thee but thy mother's look,  
Villain, thou mightst have been an emperor:  
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  
35 the babe,--  
'For I must bear thee to a trusty Goth;  
Who, when he knows thou art the empress' babe,  
Will hold thee dearly for thy mother's sake.'  
With this, my weapon drawn, I rush'd upon him,  
40 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 robb'd Andronicus of his good hand;  
This is the pearl that pleased your empress' eye,  
45 And here's the base fruit of his burning lust.  
Say, wall-eyed slave, whither wouldst thou convey  
This growing image of thy fiend-like face?  
Why dost not speak? what, deaf? not a word?  
A halter, soldiers! hang him on this tree.  
50 And by his side his fruit of bastardy.

**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.  
55 Get me a ladder.

*A ladder brought, which AARON is made to ascend*

**AARON**

Lucius, save the child,  
And bear it from me to the empress.  
If thou do this, I'll show thee wondrous things,  
That highly may advantage thee to hear:  
60 If thou wilt not, befall what may befall,  
I'll speak no more but 'Vengeance rot you all!'

**LUCIUS**

Say on: an if it please me which thou speak'st  
Thy child shall live, and I will see it nourish'd.

**AARON**

An if it please thee! why, assure thee, Lucius,  
65 '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,  
Complots of mischief, treason, villainies  
Ruthful to hear, yet piteously perform'd:  
70 And this shall all be buried by my death,  
Unless thou swear to me my child shall live.

**LUCIUS**

Tell on thy mind; I say thy child shall live.

**AARON**

Swear that he shall, and then I will begin.

**LUCIUS**

Who should I swear by? thou believest no god:  
75 That granted, how canst thou believe an oath?

brown slave, half me and half your mother! The color of  
your skin betrayed who your father was; if nature had made  
you look like your mother, you might have been an  
emperor. But when the bull and cow are both milk-white,  
they don't breed a coal-black calf. Be quiet, villain, be  
quiet!"--so he said to the baby--"Since I have to take you to  
a trustworthy Goth, who, when he knows that you're the  
empress's child, will take good care of you for your  
mother's sake." When I heard this, I rushed at him with my  
weapon drawn, took him prisoner, and bought him here to  
do with as you see fit.

**LUCIUS**

Oh, many thanks, Goth, for this is the devil incarnate who  
robbed Andronicus of his good hand. This is the pearl that  
pleased the eye of your empress, and this child is the fruit  
of his burning lust. Tell us, slave, what should we do with  
this growing image of your devil-like face? Why don't you  
say anything? What, are you deaf? Not a word? Come on,  
soldiers! Hang him on this tree, and hang the fruit of his  
adulterous affair next to him.

**AARON**

Don't touch the boy; he is of royal blood.

**LUCIUS**

But he's too like the father to ever be good. First hang the  
child so he can see it die, which is a sight that will distress a  
father's soul. Get me a ladder.

*Soldiers bring a ladder, which AARON is forced to climb.*

**AARON**

Lucius, save the child, and bring it to the empress from me.  
If you do this, I'll show you marvelous things that will be to  
your advantage to hear. If you don't, whatever happens, I'll  
say nothing more but "revenge rot you all!"

**LUCIUS**

Say what you have to say: if I'm pleased with what you say,  
your child will live and I'll see it taken care of.

**AARON**

If it please you! Why, I assure you, Lucius, you'll be enraged  
when you hear what I have to say, for I'll reveal murders,  
rapes, and massacres; acts committed under cover of night;  
horrible deeds; treasonous plots; and villainous deeds  
which would make you have pity when you hear them, but  
were performed without pity. And all this will be buried  
with me when I die, unless you promise to me that my child  
will live.

**LUCIUS**

Tell what you know. I promise that your child will live.

**AARON**

Swear that he will, and then I'll talk.

**LUCIUS**

What can I swear? You don't believe in any gods; if that's  
true, then how can you believe an oath?

**AARON**

What if I do not? as, indeed, I do not;  
 Yet, for I know thou art religious  
 And hast a thing within thee called conscience,  
 With twenty popish tricks and ceremonies,  
 80 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  
 And keeps the oath which by that god he swears,  
 To that I'll urge him: therefore thou shalt vow  
 85 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;  
 Or else I will discover nought to thee.

**LUCIUS**

Even by my god I swear to thee I will.

**AARON**

90 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 murder'd Bassianus;  
 95 They cut thy sister's tongue and ravish'd her  
 And cut her hands and trimm'd her as thou saw'st.

**LUCIUS**

O detestable villain! call'st thou that trimming?

**AARON**

Why, she was wash'd and cut and trimm'd, and 'twas  
 Trim sport for them that had the doing of it.

**LUCIUS**

100 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 learn'd of me,  
 105 As true a dog as ever fought at head.  
 Well, let my deeds be witness of my worth.  
 I train'd thy brethren to that guileful hole  
 Where the dead corpse of Bassianus lay:  
 I wrote the letter that thy father found  
 110 And hid the gold within the letter mention'd,  
 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 play'd the cheater for thy father's hand,  
 115 And, when I had it, drew myself apart  
 And almost broke my heart with extreme laughter:  
 I pry'd me through the crevice of a wall  
 When, for his hand, he had his two sons' heads;  
 Beheld his tears, and laugh'd so heartily,  
 120 That both mine eyes were rainy like to his:  
 And when I told the empress of this sport,  
 She swooned almost at my pleasing tale,  
 And for my tidings gave me twenty kisses.

**FIRST GOTH**

What, canst thou say all this, and never blush?

**AARON**

So what if I don't? Indeed, I don't--but I know you're  
 religious and have a thing called "conscience," and I've seen  
 you perform twenty popish rituals and ceremonies,  
 which you're always careful to observe. So that's why I  
 make you swear, since I know that an idiot treats a toy like a  
 god and keeps the promise he swears by that god. So you  
 will swear by that god--whatever god it is that you worship--  
 to save my boy, take care of him, and raise him, or else I  
 won't tell you anything.

**LUCIUS**

By my god, I swear to you that I will.

**AARON**

The first thing you should know is that his mother is the  
 empress.

**LUCIUS**

Oh, insatiable and lustful woman!

**AARON**

Oh, Lucius, that was a charitable deed compared to what  
 you'll hear from me soon. It was her sons that murdered  
 Bassianus, and they were the ones who raped your sister,  
 cut out her tongue, and cut her hands and trimmed her  
 as you saw.

**LUCIUS**

Oh, horrible villain! You call that trimming?

**AARON**

Why, yes, she was washed and cut and trimmed, and it was  
 good fun for those who did it.

**LUCIUS**


Oh, barbaric animals, just like you!


**AARON**

Indeed, I was the one who told them to do it--they got their  
 cunning from their mother, like a trump card that always  
 wins the match. But their violence, I think, they learned  
 from me, like a dog that goes for the bull's head. Well, my  
 deeds will show what I'm made of. Plotting with the queen  
 and her two sons, I lured your brothers to the hole where  
 Bassianus's dead body lay; I wrote the letter that your  
 father found and hid the gold mentioned in the letter, in  
 league with the queen and her sons. What has happened  
 that made you suffer that I wasn't involved with in some  
 way? I cheated your father out of his hand, and when I had  
 it, I broke down with laughter as soon as I was out of your  
 sight. When he got his two sons' heads in exchange for his  
 hand, I saw his tears from a hiding spot in the wall and  
 laughed so hard that I cried too. When I told the empress  
 this funny story, she almost fainted with pleasure, and as a  
 reward gave me twenty kisses.

**FIRST GOTH**

What, can you say all this and not blush with shame?

 "Popish" was an Elizabethan term for Catholic practices--an anachronistic reference for Ancient Rome.

 "Trimmed," here and in the next lines, makes for a disturbing pun. The word is slang for sexual intercourse, and also refers to the process of trimming fat from meat. In this case, Lavinia's very limbs have been "trimmed" from her body.

**AARON**

125 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--  
 130 Wherein I did not some notorious ill,  
 As kill a man, or else devise his death,  
 Ravish a maid, or plot the way to do it,  
 Accuse some innocent and forswear myself,  
 Set deadly enmity between two friends,  
 135 Make poor men's cattle break their necks;  
 Set fire on barns and hay-stacks in the night,  
 And bid the owners quench them with their tears.  
 Oft have I digg'd up dead men from their graves,  
 And set them upright at their dear friends' doors,  
 140 Even when their sorrows almost were forgot;  
 And on their skins, as on the bark of trees,  
 Have with my knife carved in Roman letters,  
 'Let not your sorrow die, though I am dead.'  
 Tut, I have done a thousand dreadful things  
 145 As willingly as one would kill a fly,  
 And nothing grieves me heartily indeed  
 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**

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

**LUCIUS**

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

*Enter a Goth*

**THIRD GOTH**

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

**LUCIUS**

Let him come near.

*Enter AEMILIUS*

**LUCIUS**

160 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,  
 165 He craves a parley at your father's house,  
 Willing you to demand your hostages,  
 And they shall be immediately deliver'd.

**FIRST GOTH**


What says our general?

**LUCIUS**

170 Aemilius, let the emperor give his pledges  
 Unto my father and my uncle Marcus,

**AARON**

Yes, like a black dog , as the saying goes.

 To "blush like a black dog" was an Elizabethan proverb referring to those who are without shame. Aaron also puns on his own dark skin.

**LUCIUS**

Aren't you sorry for these horrible crimes?

**AARON**

Yes, I'm sorry that I didn't do a thousand more. Even now I curse the day--although there haven't been many such days, I admit--when I didn't do some horrible thing like kill a man (or else plot his death), rape a girl (or plot some way to do it), accuse some innocent person, swear, make two friends hate each other, break the neck of poor cattle, or set barns and hay-stacks on fire and tell the owners to put out the flames with their tears. I've often dug up dead men from their graves and set them standing up at the doors of their dear friends--who had begun to get over their grief--and used my knife to write on their skins, as on the bark of trees, "Don't let your sorrow die, although I'm dead." Ha, I've done a thousand awful things as easily as one would kill a fly, and nothing makes me sadder than not being able to do ten thousand more.

**LUCIUS**

Cut the devil down; he doesn't deserve such an easy death as hanging.

**AARON**

If there are devils, I wish I were one, and could live and burn forever in fire--so that I could see you in hell, and continue to torment you with my bitter words!

**LUCIUS**

Sirs, shut him up, and don't let him say anything else.

*A GOTH enters.*

**THIRD GOTH**

My lords, a messenger from Rome is here asking to see you.

**LUCIUS**

Let him come in.

*AEMILIUS enters.*

**LUCIUS**

Welcome, Aemilius. What's happening in Rome?

**AEMILIUS**

Lord Lucius and princes of the Goths, the Roman emperor sends his greetings. He understands that you are here with an army, and asks to meet with you at your father's house--if you ask for hostages to ensure your safety, they'll be immediately sent to you.

**FIRST GOTH**

How does our general respond?

**LUCIUS**

Aemilius, if the emperor gives these promises to my father and my uncle Marcus, we'll come. Let's march away.

And we will come. March away.

*Exeunt*

*All exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, and CHIRON, 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.  
5 Knock at his study, where, they say, he keeps,  
To ruminat strange plots of dire revenge;  
Tell him Revenge is come to join with him,  
And work confusion on his enemies.

*They knock*

*Enter TITUS, above*

#### TITUS ANDRONICUS

Who doth molest my contemplation?  
10 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;  
15 And what is written shall be executed.

#### TAMORA

Titus, I am come to talk with thee.

#### TITUS ANDRONICUS

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

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

#### TITUS ANDRONICUS

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,  
25 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?

#### TAMORA

Know, thou sad man, I am not Tamora;  
30 She is thy enemy, and I thy friend:  
I am Revenge: sent from the 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;  
35 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;  
40 And in their ears tell them my dreadful name,  
Revenge, which makes the foul offender quake.

### Shakescleare Translation

*TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, and CHIRON enter, in disguise.*

#### TAMORA

So, I'll go to Titus dressed in this strange costume, and tell him I am Revenge, sent from below to help him right his terrible wrongs. I'll knock at the door to his study--which is where he spends most of his time, they say, plotting ways to take revenge--and tell him Revenge has come to help him destroy his enemies.

*They knock.*

*TITUS enters on the balcony.*

#### TITUS ANDRONICUS

Who's bothering me? Are you trying to make me open the door, so that I'll lose my resolve and all my work will come to nothing? You're wrong if you think that will happen--for I've written my plan on this paper in blood, and what is written will be done.

#### TAMORA

Titus, I've come to talk with you.

#### TITUS ANDRONICUS

No, I won't hear it. How can I talk, since I lack a hand to accompany my words with appropriate gestures? You've gotten the better of me, so don't say anything else.

#### TAMORA


If you knew who I was, you'd talk to me.

#### TITUS ANDRONICUS

I'm not crazy; I know who you are. By my poor stump, these lines of blood, these lines of grief on my face, my exhausted days and heavy nights, and all my suffering, I know that you're our proud empress, mighty Tamora. Have you come for my other hand?

#### TAMORA

You sad man, I'm not Tamora. She's your enemy, and I'm your friend. I am Revenge, sent from hell to ease your mind, vulture-like in the way it gnaws at you, by taking bloody vengeance on your enemies. Come down, and welcome me to this world; talk to me about murder and death. There isn't a hollow cave, secret hideaway, obscure place, or misty valley where they can hide that I won't find them. I'll whisper "Revenge" in their ears, and the criminals will quake with fear.

 Hand gestures (the "hand" that gives talk "action" in the original text) were an important part of classical rhetoric.



**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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 ANDRONICUS**

45 Do me some service, ere I come to thee.  
Lo, by thy side where Rape and Murder stands;  
Now give me some surance that thou art Revenge,  
Stab them, or tear them on thy chariot-wheels;  
And then I'll come and be thy waggoner,  
50 And whirl along with thee about the globe.  
Provide thee two proper palfreys, black as jet,  
To hale thy vengeful waggon swift away,  
And find out murderers in their guilty caves:  
And when thy car is loaden with their heads,  
55 I will dismount, and by the waggon-wheel  
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,  
60 So thou destroy Rapine and Murder there.

**TAMORA**

These are my ministers, and come with me.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Are these thy ministers? what are they call'd?

**TAMORA**

Rapine and Murder; therefore called so,  
Cause they take vengeance of such kind of men.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

65 Good Lord, how like the empress' sons they are!  
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,  
70 I will embrace thee in it by and by.

*Exit above*

**TAMORA**

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

*Enter TITUS below*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Long have I been forlorn, and all for thee:  
Welcome, dread Fury, to my woful house:  
Rapine and Murder, you are welcome too.  
85 How like the empress and her sons you are!  
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;  
90 And, would you represent our queen aright,  
It were convenient you had such a devil:  
But welcome, as you are. What shall we do?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Are you Revenge? And have you been sent to me to torture  
my enemies?

**TAMORA**

I am; so come down and welcome me.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Do something for me before I come to you. I see that Rape  
and Murder stand by your side; to prove that you really are  
Revenge, stab them or crush them under the wheels of your  
chariot. Then I'll come and be your charioteer, and travel  
with you around the globe. I'll give you two black horses to  
pull your wagon of revenge as you find the murderers in  
their guilty caves; and when the cart is loaded with their  
heads, I'll dismount and trot alongside your wheel like a  
slavish footman all day long, from when the sun rises in the  
east until it falls into the sea. And I'll do this hard task every  
day, if you destroy Rape and Murder there.

**TAMORA**

These are my agents, and come with me wherever I go.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Are these your agents? What are their names?

**TAMORA**

They're called Rape and Murder because they take revenge  
on rapists and murderers.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Good Lord, they look a lot like the empress's sons! And you  
look like the empress! But we mortal men have miserable,  
mad eyes that are easy to deceive. Oh, sweet Revenge, now  
I'll come to you; and, if you can be happy with a one-armed  
embrace, I'll embrace you soon.

*TITUS exits the balcony.*

**TAMORA**

[*To CHIRON and DEMETRIUS*] Since he's crazy, I'll just keep  
agreeing with him. Whatever I come up with, just support  
my story in whatever you say--for now he thinks I'm  
Revenge. And, since he'll be easy to deceive now, I'll make  
him bring his son Lucius to his house. And during the  
banquet, I'll find some cunning way to destroy the Goth  
army, or at least to make them turn against him. Look, here  
he comes; I have to keep this up.

*TITUS enters below.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I've been waiting for you for a long time. Welcome to my  
sad house, dreaded Fury 🗡️; Rape and Murder, you're  
welcome here, too. You look so much like the empress and  
her sons! You would look even more like them if you had a  
Moor with you--couldn't you find such a devil in hell? For I  
know that the empress doesn't go anywhere without a  
Moor, and if you're trying to look like her, it would be  
convenient to have a devil like that. But you're welcome  
just as you are. What should we do?

🗡️ A "fury" is a female goddess of  
vengeance in Greco-Roman  
mythology.

**TAMORA**

What wouldst thou have us do, Andronicus?

**DEMETRIUS**

Show me a murderer, I'll deal with him.

**CHIRON**

95 Show me a villain that hath done a rape,  
And I am sent to be revenged on him.

**TAMORA**

Show me a thousand that have done thee wrong,  
And I will be revenged on them all.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Look round about the wicked streets of Rome;  
100 And when thou find'st a man that's like thyself.  
Good Murder, stab him; he's a murderer.  
Go thou with him; and when it is thy hap  
To find another that is like to thee,  
Good Rapine, stab him; he's a ravisher.  
105 Go thou with them; and in the emperor's court  
There is a queen, attended by a Moor;  
Well mayst thou know her by thy own proportion,  
for up and down she doth resemble thee:  
I pray thee, do on them some violent death;  
110 They have been violent to me and mine.

**TAMORA**

Well hast thou lesson'd us; this shall we do.  
But would it please thee, good Andronicus,  
To send for Lucius, thy thrice-valiant son,  
Who leads towards Rome a band of warlike Goths,  
115 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;  
And at thy mercy shalt they stoop and kneel,  
120 And on them shalt thou ease thy angry heart.  
What says Andronicus to this device?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Marcus, my brother! 'tis sad Titus calls.

*Enter MARCUS*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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 aged father's life.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

This will I do, and soon return again.

*Exit*

**TAMORA**

135 Now will I hence about thy business,  
And take my ministers along with me.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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**

What do you want us to do, Andronicus?

**DEMETRIUS**

Show me a murderer, I'll deal with him.

**CHIRON**

Show me a villain that's raped someone, and I'm here to  
take revenge on him.

**TAMORA**

If you show me a thousand people who have wronged you,  
I'll take revenge on all of them.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Look around the wicked streets of Rome, and when you find  
a man that looks like you, good Murder, stab him, for he's a  
murderer. Go with him, good Rape, and when you find  
someone who looks like you, stab him, for he's a rapist.

*[To TAMORA]* Go with them, and in the emperor's court  
there's a queen served by a Moor--you'll recognize her,  
since she looks exactly like you. I beg you, give them both a  
violent death, for they've been violent to me and my family.

**TAMORA**

You've told us well; we'll do it. But wouldn't it be nice, good  
Andronicus, to send a message to your brave son Lucius--  
who is coming towards Rome with an army of Goths--and  
invite him to come for a banquet at your house? And when  
he's here at this feast, I'll bring the empress and her sons,  
the emperor himself, and all your enemies. They'll kneel  
before you and beg for mercy, and you can do what you  
want with them. What do you think of this plan?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Marcus, my brother! Sad Titus is calling for you.

*MARCUS enters.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Go to your nephew Lucius, gentle Marcus, and tell him to  
come to my house, bringing some of the Goth princes with  
him. Ask him to leave his army where they are; tell him the  
emperor and the empress are also coming for a banquet at  
my house, and he'll feast with them. Do this out of love for  
me, and tell him to come out of love and respect for his old  
father.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

I'll do it, and return soon.

*MARCUS exits.*

**TAMORA**

Now I'll go and take revenge for you, bringing my agents  
with me.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

No, no, let Rape and Murder stay with me. Or else I'll call my  
brother back again, and I'll count on Lucius to take revenge  
for me.

**TAMORA**

140 *[Aside to her sons]* What say you, boys? will you  
bide with him,  
Whiles I go tell my lord the emperor  
How I have govern'd our determined jest?  
Yield to his humour, smooth and speak him fair,  
145 And tarry with him till I turn again.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

*[Aside]* I know them all, though they suppose me mad,  
And will o'erreach them in their own devices:  
A pair of cursed hell-hounds and their dam!

**DEMETRIUS**

Madam, depart at pleasure; leave us here.

**TAMORA**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

*Exit TAMORA*

**CHIRON**

Tell us, old man, how shall we be employ'd?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

*Enter PUBLIUS and others*

**PUBLIUS**

What is your will?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Know you these two?

**PUBLIUS**

160 The empress' sons, I take them, Chiron and Demetrius.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Fie, Publius, fie! thou art too much deceived;  
The one is Murder, Rape is the other's name;  
And therefore bind them, gentle Publius.  
Caius and Valentine, lay hands on them.

165 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.

*Exit*

*PUBLIUS, & c. lay hold on CHIRON and DEMETRIUS*

**CHIRON**

Villains, forbear! we are the empress' sons.

**PUBLIUS**

And therefore do we what we are commanded.

170 Stop close their mouths, let them not speak a word.  
Is he sure bound? look that you bind them fast.

*Re-enter TITUS, with LAVINIA; he bearing a knife, and she a basin*

**TAMORA**

*[To her sons, so that only they can hear]* What do you think,  
boys? Will you stay with him while I go tell my husband the  
emperor how I've handled this new joke? Play along, be  
nice, and stay with him until I return again.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

*[To himself]* I know who they are, although they think I'm  
crazy. I'll beat them at their own game, this pair of cursed  
hell-dogs and their mother!

**DEMETRIUS**

Madam, go whenever you want; leave us here.

**TAMORA**

Goodbye, Andronicus; Revenge is going now to lay a plot  
against your enemies.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I know you are. Sweet Revenge, goodbye.

*TAMORA exits.*

**CHIRON**

Tell us, old man, what should we do?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, I have enough work for you to do. Publius, Caius, and  
Valentine, come here!

*PUBLIUS and other servants enter.*

**PUBLIUS**

What do you want us to do?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Do you know these two?

**PUBLIUS**

They're the empress's sons, Chiron and Demetrius.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Oh, Publius, you're wrong. One is Murder, and the other's  
name is Rape. So put them in chains, gentle Publius;  
restrain them, Caius and Valentine. You've often heard me  
wish for this moment, and now it's here, so make sure  
they're bound tightly. Gag them if they start to cry out.

*TITUS exits.*

*PUBLIUS and others attack CHIRON and DEMETRIUS.*

**CHIRON**

Stop, villains! We are the empress's sons.

**PUBLIUS**

And so we'll do what we're told. Gag them, don't let them  
speak a word. Is he tightly bound? Make sure they can't  
escape.

*TITUS re-enters with LAVINIA. He holds a knife and she  
carries a basin.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, come, Lavinia; look, thy foes are bound.  
Sirs, stop their mouths, let them not speak to me;  
175 But let them hear what fearful words I utter.  
O villains, Chiron and Demetrius!  
Here stands the spring whom you have stain'd with mud,  
This goodly summer with your winter mix'd.  
You kill'd her husband, and for that vile fault  
180 Two of her brothers were condemn'd 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 constrain'd and forced.  
185 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,  
Whilst that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold  
190 The basin that receives your guilty blood.  
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,  
195 And of the paste a coffin I will rear  
And make two pasties of your shameful heads,  
And bid that strumpet, your unhallow'd dam,  
Like to the earth swallow her own increase.  
This is the feast that I have bid her to,  
200 And this the banquet she shall surfeit on;  
For worse than Philomel you used my daughter,  
And worse than Progne I will be revenged:  
And now prepare your throats. Lavinia, come,

*He cuts their throats*

Receive the blood: and when that they are dead,  
205 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.  
Come, come, be every one officious  
To make this banquet; which I wish may prove  
210 More stern and bloody than the Centaurs' feast.  
So, now bring them in, for I'll play the cook,  
And see them ready 'gainst their mother comes.

*Exeunt, bearing the dead bodies*


**TITUS ANDRONICUS**


Come, come, Lavinia; see, your enemies are in chains. Men,  
stop them from talking, I don't want to hear it. But I want  
them to hear every word I say. Oh villains, Chiron and  
Demetrius! Here is the fountain you've stained with mud,  
the lovely summer you've mixed with your winter. You  
killed her husband, and for that vile crime two of her  
brothers were condemned to death, and my hand was cut  
off and made into a joke. You cut off her sweet hands and  
her tongue. And worse than that, inhuman traitors, you  
took something from her more precious than hands or  
tongue—you raped her. What would you say, if I let you  
speak? Villains, you'd be ashamed to beg for mercy. Listen,  
miserable criminals! This is how I mean to kill you. I still  
have one hand left to cut your throats, while Lavinia holds  
between her stumps the basin that will receive your guilty  
blood. You know that your mother means to dine with me,  
and calls herself Revenge, and thinks that I'm crazy. Listen,  
villains! I'll grind your bones to dust, and with your blood  
and that dust I'll make a paste, and of that paste I'll make  
two pies out of your shameful heads. And then I'll tell that  
whore, your unholy mother, to eat you and swallow her  
own children. This is the feast I've prepared for her, and this  
is the food she'll eat. For you treated my daughter worse  
than Philomel, and I'll be revenged worse than Progne.  
And now prepare your throats. Lavinia, come,

*TITUS cuts their throats.*

catch the blood. And when they're dead, I'll go grind their  
bones to a fine powder, and mix it with their hateful blood.  
And then their vile heads will be baked in that paste. Come,  
come, everyone do your part in preparing this banquet,  
which I hope will be more bloody and cruel than the  
Centaurs' feast. So, now bring them in, for I'll be the  
cook, and make sure they're ready for when their mother  
comes.

*All exit, carrying the dead bodies.*

 "Progne" (or Procne) was Philomel's sister, and the wife of Philomel's rapist Tereus. Though Philomel's tongue was cut out, she embroidered a scene that alerted her sister to the crime. In revenge, Progne murdered her own son and served him to Tereus. Both sisters were changed into birds while escaping Tereus.

 The "Centaurs' feast" refers to the bloody mythological battle between the Centaurs and the Lapith people, which began at a wedding banquet.

**Act 5, Scene 3****Shakespeare**

*Enter LUCIUS, MARCUS, and Goths, with AARON prisoner*

**LUCIUS**

Uncle Marcus, since it is 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,  
5 This ravenous tiger, this accursed devil;  
Let him receive no sustenance, 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;  
10 I fear the emperor means no good to us.

**Shakescleare Translation**

*LUCIUS, MARCUS, and Goths enter, with AARON as a prisoner.*

**LUCIUS**

Uncle Marcus, since my father wants me to come back to  
Rome, I'll do it.

**FIRST GOTH**

And we're with you, whatever happens.

**LUCIUS**

Good uncle, take this barbaric Moor as your prisoner—he's a  
hungry tiger, a cursed devil. Don't feed him, but keep him in  
chains until he's brought before the empress, to prove what  
she's done. And make sure our army is close by; I'm afraid  
the emperor plans to betray us.

**AARON**

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

**LUCIUS**

15 Away, inhuman dog! unhallow'd slave!  
Sirs, help our uncle to convey him in.

*Exeunt Goths, with AARON. Flourish within*

**LUCIUS**

The trumpets show the emperor is at hand.

*Enter SATURNINUS and TAMORA, with AEMILIUS, Tribunes, Senators,  
and others*

**SATURNINUS**

What, hath the firmament more suns than one?

**LUCIUS**

20 What boots it thee to call thyself a sun?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Rome's emperor, and nephew, break the parle;  
These quarrels must be quietly debated.  
The feast is ready, which the careful Titus  
Hath ordain'd to an honourable end,  
25 For peace, for love, for league, and good to Rome:  
Please you, therefore, draw nigh, and take your places.

**SATURNINUS**

Marcus, we will.

*Hautboys sound. The Company sit down at table*

*Enter TITUS dressed like a Cook, LAVINIA veiled, Young LUCIUS, and  
others. TITUS places the dishes on the table*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Welcome, my gracious lord; welcome, dread queen;  
30 Welcome, ye warlike Goths; welcome, Lucius;  
And welcome, all: although the cheer be poor,  
'Twill fill your stomachs; please you eat of it.

**SATURNINUS**

Why art thou thus attired, Andronicus?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

35 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 ANDRONICUS**

An if your highness knew my heart, you were.  
My lord the emperor, resolve me this:  
Was it well done of rash Virginius  
40 To slay his daughter with his own right hand,  
Because she was enforced, stain'd, and deflower'd?

**SATURNINUS**

It was, Andronicus.


**TITUS ANDRONICUS**


Your reason, mighty lord?

**AARON**

May some devil whisper curses in my ear and give me the  
words, so that I can say all the venomous things that are in  
my heart!

**LUCIUS**

Get away, inhuman dog! Unholy slave! Soldiers, help **our** 

 In saying "our," here, Lucius has begun adopting the royal "we."

*The Goths exit with AARON. A sound of trumpets is heard.*

**LUCIUS**

The trumpets show that the emperor is here.

*SATURNINUS and TAMORA enter with AEMILIUS, Tribunes,  
Senators, and servants.*

**SATURNINUS**

What, is there more than one sun in the sky?

**LUCIUS**

What's the point of calling yourself a sun?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Rome's emperor, and nephew, stop it; these differences  
must be discussed quietly. The feast is ready, which Titus  
has carefully prepared to make peace between you, and to  
bring love, fellowship, and honor to Rome. So please come  
and take your places at the table.

**SATURNINUS**

Marcus, we will.

*Sound of trumpets is heard. Everyone sits down at the  
table.*

*TITUS enters dressed like a cook, along with LAVINIA (who  
is wearing a veil), Young LUCIUS, and other members of his  
household. TITUS places the dishes on the table.*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Welcome, my gracious lord; welcome, mighty queen.  
Welcome, warrior Goths; welcome Lucius; welcome to  
everyone. Although the food is modest, it will fill your  
stomachs, so please eat it.

**SATURNINUS**

Why are you dressed like that, Andronicus?


**TITUS ANDRONICUS**


Because I wanted to make sure that everything was perfect  
for you and your wife.

**TAMORA**

We're grateful to you, Andronicus.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

If you knew what's in my heart, you would be. My lord, give  
me your opinion on this. Was it a good choice for quick-  
tempered Virginius  to kill his daughter with his own  
hands, because she had been raped?

 According to the historian Livy, Lucius "Virginius" was a Roman centurion who killed his daughter after she was raped by a powerful politician.

**SATURNINUS**

It was, Andronicus.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why do you think so, mighty lord?

**SATURNINUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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;

*Kills LAVINIA*

50 And, with thy shame, thy father's sorrow die!

**SATURNINUS**

What hast thou done, unnatural and unkind?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**SATURNINUS**

What, was she ravish'd? tell who did the deed.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Will't please you eat? will't please your  
highness feed?

**TAMORA**

Why hast thou slain thine only daughter thus?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**SATURNINUS**

Go fetch them hither to us presently.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

65 Why, there they are both, baked in that 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.

*Kills TAMORA*

**SATURNINUS**

Die, frantic wretch, for this accursed deed!

*Kills TITUS*

**LUCIUS**

70 Can the son's eye behold his father bleed?  
There's meed for meed, death for a deadly deed!

*Kills SATURNINUS. A great tumult. LUCIUS, MARCUS, and others go up  
into the balcony*

**SATURNINUS**

Because the girl shouldn't live any longer after having been  
dishonored, and by staying alive she reminds him of his  
grief.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

You make a strong case and give me a pattern to follow. I'll  
follow that miserable example. Die, die, Lavinia, and let  
your shame die with you--

*TITUS kills LAVINIA.*

and with that shame, may your father's grief die as well!

**SATURNINUS**

Who have you done? This is cruel and unnatural!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I've killed the girl who made my eyes blind with tears. I am  
as miserable as Virginius, and have a thousand times more  
cause than him to do this horrible thing. And now it's done.

**SATURNINUS**

What, was she raped? Tell us who did it.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Will you eat? Will it please your highness to enjoy the food?

**TAMORA**

Why have you killed your only daughter like this?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

It wasn't me. It was Chiron and Demetrius; they raped her  
and cut out her tongue, and so they're responsible for all  
this.

**SATURNINUS**

Go bring them here now.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, they're both here, baked in that pie. Their mother has  
been daintily eating the flesh of her own children. It's true,  
it's true; I'll prove it with my sharp knife.

*TITUS kills TAMORA.*

**SATURNINUS**

Die, madman, for this murder!

*SATURNINUS kills TITUS.*

**LUCIUS**

Can a son watch his father bleed and do nothing? You'll die  
for this!

*LUCIUS kills SATURNINUS. A great commotion. LUCIUS,  
MARCUS, and servants go up into the balcony.*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

You sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome,  
By uproar sever'd, like a flight of fowl  
75 Scatter'd by winds and high tempestuous gusts,  
O, let me teach you how to knit again  
This scatter'd corn into one mutual sheaf,  
These broken limbs again into one body;  
Lest Rome herself be bane unto herself,  
80 And she whom mighty kingdoms court'sy to,  
Like a forlorn and desperate castaway,  
Do shameful execution on herself.  
But if my frosty signs and chaps of age,  
Grave witnesses of true experience,  
85 Cannot induce you to attend my words,  
*[To Lucius]*  
Speak, Rome's dear friend, as erst our ancestor,  
When with his solemn tongue he did discourse  
To love-sick Dido's sad attending ear  
90 The story of that baleful burning night  
When subtle Greeks surprised King Priam's Troy,  
Tell us what Sinon hath bewitch'd our ears,  
Or who hath brought the fatal engine in  
That gives our Troy, our Rome, the civil wound.  
95 My heart is not compact of flint nor steel;  
Nor can I utter all our bitter grief,  
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,  
100 Lending your kind commiseration.  
Here is a captain, let him tell the tale;  
Your hearts will throb and weep to hear him speak.

**LUCIUS**

Then, noble auditory, be it known to you,  
That cursed Chiron and Demetrius  
105 Were they that murdered our emperor's brother;  
And they it were that ravished our sister:  
For their fell faults our brothers were beheaded;  
Our father's tears despised, and basely cozen'd  
Of that true hand that fought Rome's quarrel out,  
110 And sent her enemies unto the grave.  
Lastly, myself unkindly banished,  
The gates shut on me, and turn'd weeping out,  
To beg relief among Rome's enemies:  
Who drown'd their enmity in my true tears.  
115 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 adventurous body.  
120 Alas, you know I am no vaunter, I;  
My scars can witness, dumb although they are,  
That my report is just and full of truth.  
But, soft! methinks I do digress too much,  
Citing my worthless praise: O, pardon me;  
125 For when no friends are by, men praise themselves.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Now is my turn to speak. Behold this child:


*Pointing to the Child in the arms of an Attendant*

Of this was Tamora delivered;  
The issue of an irreligious Moor,  
130 Chief architect and plotter of these woes:  
The villain is alive in Titus' house,  
And as he is, to witness this is true.  
Now judge what cause had Titus to revenge  
These wrongs, unspeakable, past patience,  
135 Or more than any living man could bear.  
Now you have heard the truth, what say you, Romans?  
Have we done aught amiss,--show us wherein,  
And, from the place where you behold us now,  
The poor remainder of Andronici  
140 Will, hand in hand, all headlong cast us down.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

You sad-looking men, people, and sons of Rome--torn apart  
by conflict, scattered like a flock of birds in the wind--we'll  
show you how to put this broken body back together again,  
how to put the scattered corn back into its sheaf. If we  
don't, Rome will be a curse to herself. The empire that once  
defeated many mighty kingdoms will, like a pitiful and  
desperate person shipwrecked on an island, collapse. But if  
white hair and wrinkles (the signs of experience) can't  
convince you to listen to me--

*[To LUCIUS]* then speak, Rome's good friend. Speak as  
eloquently as Aeneas when he told lovesick Dido about the  
fall of Troy--that destructive, burning night when the Greeks  
surprised King Priam's city. Tell us what [Sinon](#) has  
betrayed us, or who brought in the Trojan horse that has  
caused civil war in Rome. My heart isn't made of flint or  
steel, and I can't talk about all our suffering without crying--  
so I'll have to stop talking, even when you should listen  
most closely to what I have to say. Here's your captain: let  
him explain everything. Your hearts will throb and cry when  
you hear him.

 "Sinon" was the Greek soldier who persuaded the Trojans to accept the wooden horse containing the enemy army that destroyed the city.

**LUCIUS**

Then, noble listeners, you should all know that it was  
Chiron and Demetrius who murdered our emperor's  
brother and raped our sister. For their foul crimes our  
brothers were beheaded, and my father's tears were  
mocked and his hand--the hand which has fought so many  
battles for Rome and sent her enemies to the grave--cut off  
as a joke. Lastly, I was unkindly banished from Rome. The  
gates shut on me and I turned away crying, and went to  
seek help from Rome's enemies. They drowned their hatred  
for Rome in my own honest tears and treated me as their  
friend. I'm the one who was turned away and yet I have  
saved Rome with my own blood, turning the knife's point  
away from her and allowing it to pierce my own body. Oh,  
you know that I'm no boaster; my scars (although they're  
silent) can prove that what I say is fair and honest. But wait!  
I think I'm talking too much in praise of myself. Forgive me,  
for people praise themselves when friends aren't around to  
do it for them.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Now it's my turn to speak. Look at this child:

*MARCUS points to the child in the arms of a servant.*

This is the son of Tamora and a corrupt Moor, who was  
responsible for plotting all these crimes. The villain is a  
prisoner in Titus's house; we've kept him to alive to prove it.  
Now you see how many reasons Titus had to take revenge--  
these crimes against him were unspeakable, past  
endurance, more than any living man could bear. Now that  
you've heard the truth, what do you say, Romans? Have we  
done anything we shouldn't have? If we have, tell us so, and  
the poor remains of the Andronici family will throw  
ourselves off the walls of our house, hand in hand, and  
crack our skulls on the stones below. Speak, Romans,  
speak: if that's what you want us to do, Lucius and I will fall  
hand in hand.



And on the ragged stones beat forth our brains,  
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.

**AEMILIUS**

145 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.

**ALL**

Lucius, all hail, Rome's royal emperor!

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

150 Go, go into old Titus' sorrowful house,  
*[To Attendants]*  
And hither hale that misbelieving Moor,  
To be adjudged some direful slaughtering death,  
155 As punishment for his most wicked life.

*Exeunt Attendants*

*LUCIUS, MARCUS, and the others descend*

**ALL**

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,  
160 For nature puts me to a heavy task:  
Stand all aloof: but, uncle, draw you near,  
To shed obsequious tears upon this trunk.  
O, take this warm kiss on thy pale cold lips,

*Kissing TITUS*

165 These sorrowful drops upon thy blood-stain'd face,  
The last true duties of thy noble son!

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Tear for tear, and loving kiss for kiss,  
Thy brother Marcus tenders on thy lips:  
O were the sum of these that I should pay  
Countless and infinite, yet would I pay them!

**LUCIUS**

170 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 matter hath he told to thee,  
175 Meet and agreeing with thine infancy;  
In that respect, then, like a loving child,  
Shed yet some small drops from thy tender spring,  
Because kind nature doth require it so:  
Friends should associate friends in grief and woe:  
180 Bid him farewell; commit him to the grave;  
Do him that kindness, and take leave of him.

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

O grandsire, grandsire! even with all my heart  
Would I were dead, so you did live again!  
O Lord, I cannot speak to him for weeping;  
185 My tears will choke me, if I open my mouth.

*Re-enter Attendants with AARON*

**AEMILIUS**

Come, come, you respected elder of Rome, and take our  
emperor gently by the hand. I mean our emperor Lucius; for  
I know that the common people want him to take the  
throne.

**ALL**

All hail Lucius, Rome's royal emperor!

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Go, go into old Titus's sad house,

*[To servants]* And bring that atheist Moor here, so that we  
can condemn him to some horrible death as punishment  
for his evil life.

*Servants exit.*

*LUCIUS, MARCUS, and servants come down from the  
balcony.*

**ALL**

All hail, Lucius, Rome's gracious governor!

**LUCIUS**

Thanks, gentle Romans; I hope that I'll govern graciously, to  
heal Rome's wounds and suffering. But, gentle people, give  
me a moment to mourn my father. Everyone stand aside.  
But uncle, come closer, to cry with me on this body. Oh,  
take this warm kiss on your pale cold lips.

*LUCIUS kisses TITUS.*

These sad drops on your blood-stained face are the last  
marks of respect and love from your noble son!

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Your brother Marcus, too, gives you tears and a kiss. If I  
could give you an infinite number of both, I would!

**LUCIUS**

Come here, son; come, come, and show us how to cry. Your  
grandfather loved you very much. He would often bounce  
you on his knee, or sing to you until you fell asleep on his  
chest; he told you many things that were fit for you to know  
when you were a child. Like a loving child, then, shed some  
tears, since kind nature requires it. Friends should be  
together in times of grief and sorrow. Say goodbye before  
we bury him. Do that kindness, and then leave him in  
peace.

**YOUNG LUCIUS**

Oh, grandfather, grandfather! I wish I were dead, so that you  
could live again! Oh, God, I can't talk through my tears;  
they'll choke me if I open my mouth.

*Servants re-enter with AARON.*

**AEMIILIUS**

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

**LUCIUS**

190 Set him breast-deep in earth, and famish him;  
There let him stand, and rave, and cry for food;  
If any one relieves or pities him,  
For the offence he dies. This is our doom:  
Some stay to see him fasten'd in the earth.

**AARON**

195 O, 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,  
200 I do repent it from my very soul.

**LUCIUS**

Some loving friends convey the emperor hence,  
And give him burial in his father's grave:  
My father and Lavinia shall forthwith  
Be closed in our household's monument.  
205 As for that heinous tiger, Tamora,  
No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weeds,  
No mournful bell shall ring her burial;  
But throw her forth to beasts and birds of prey:  
Her life was beast-like, and devoid of pity;  
210 And, being so, shall have like want of pity.  
See justice done on Aaron, that damn'd Moor,  
By whom our heavy haps had their beginning:  
Then, afterwards, to order well the state,  
That like events may ne'er it ruiniate.

*Exeunt*

**AEMIILIUS**

You sad family, stop your mourning to pass judgment on  
the evil man who is responsible for all this suffering.

**LUCIUS**

Bury him up the chest in the ground, and starve him. Let  
him stand there, and scream, and cry for food; if anyone  
gives him anything or takes pity on him, they'll die for it.  
This is my judgment; someone make sure he's buried in the  
ground.

**AARON**

Oh, why should I be silent when I'm so angry? I'm no baby  
that will pray and ask forgiveness for the evil things I've  
done. I'd do ten thousand worse things, if I could. If I ever  
did one good thing in all my life, I regret it from my very  
soul.

**LUCIUS**

Loving friends, some of you take the emperor away and  
bury him in his father's grave. My father and Lavinia will  
immediately be buried in our family tomb. But as for that  
vicious tiger, Tamora, there will be no ceremony, no  
mourners, no bell, no funeral. Throw her body out as prey  
for beasts and vultures; her life was beast-like and she had  
no pity, so she won't get any from us. Make sure justice is  
done on Aaron, that damned Moor, who is responsible for  
all of this. And after that, I'll reform the government, so that  
such horrible events won't ever happen again and destroy  
our country.

*All exit.*

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