

# **Titus Andronicus**

**William Shakespeare**

## Act I

### SCENE I. Rome. Before the Capitol.

*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:  
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,  
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,  
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,  
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:  
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,  
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  
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,  
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,  
Plead your deserts in peace and humbleness.

### **SATURNINUS**

How fair the tribune speaks to calm my thoughts!

### **BASSIANUS**

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

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

## BASSIANUS

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  
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 freight,  
Returns with precious jading to the bay  
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,  
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;  
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,  
To hover on the dreadful shore of Styx?  
Make way to lay them by their brethren.

*The tomb is opened*

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,  
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**

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!  
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?  
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:  
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  
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,  
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.  
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  
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.

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

## LUCIUS

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

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

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

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**

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,  
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!  
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**

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,  
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,

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.

### **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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,  
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,  
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**

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.  
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**

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

## **BASSIANUS**

Andronicus, I do not flatter thee,  
But 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**

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

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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!'

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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,

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,  
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:  
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:  
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  
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,  
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,  
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.

Lavinia, you are not displeased 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:  
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*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**BASSIANUS**

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**

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.

*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**

My lord, you pass not here.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

*Stabbing MUTIUS*

**MUTIUS**

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:  
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*

### **SATURNINUS**

No, Titus, no; the emperor needs her not,  
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,  
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  
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,  
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  
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,  
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,  
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,  
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,  
Nor thou, nor these, confederates in the deed  
That hath dishonour'd all our family;  
Unworthy brother, and unworthy sons!

## **LUCIUS**

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

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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:

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.

**QUINTUS MARTIUS**

And shall, or him we will accompany.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

'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**

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**

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**

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**

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:  
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!  
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

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:  
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

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,  
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

My lord, what I have done, as best I may,  
Answer I must and shall do with my life.  
Only thus much I give your grace to know:

By all the duties that I owe to Rome,  
This noble gentleman, Lord Titus here,  
Is in opinion and in 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:  
Receive him, then, to favor, Saturnine,  
That hath express'd himself in all his deeds  
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.  
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;  
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!  
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,  
Nor with sour looks afflict his gentle heart.

### *Aside to SATURNINUS*

be won at last;  
Dissemble all your griefs and discontents:  
You are but newly planted in your throne;  
Lest, then, the people, and patricians too,  
Upon a just survey, take Titus' part,

And so supplant you for ingratitude,  
Which Rome reposes to be a heinous sin,  
Yield at entreats; and then let me alone:  
I'll find a day to massacre them all  
And raze their faction and their family,  
The cruel father and his traitorous sons,  
To whom I sued for my dear son's life,  
And make them know what 'tis to let a queen  
Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain.

*Aloud*

Come, come, sweet emperor; come, Andronicus;  
Take up this good old man, and cheer the heart  
That dies in tempest of thy angry frown.

### **SATURNINUS**

Rise, Titus, rise; my empress hath prevail'd.

### **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I thank your majesty, and her, my lord:  
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;  
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.  
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,  
Tendering our sister's honour and our own.

### **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;  
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,  
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**

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*

## Act II

### SCENE I. Rome. Before the Palace.

*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.  
As when the golden sun salutes the morn,  
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,  
Gallops the zodiac in his glistering coach,  
And overlooks the highest-peering hills;  
So Tamora:  
Upon her wit doth earthly 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  
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,  
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.  
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;  
And may, for aught thou know'st, affected be.

**CHIRON**

Demetrius, thou dost over-ween in all;  
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;  
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,  
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,  
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,  
And maintain such a quarrel openly?  
Full well I wot the ground of all this grudge:  
I would not for a million of gold  
The cause were known to them it most concerns;  
Nor would your noble mother for much more  
Be so 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

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!  
Now, by the gods that warlike Goths adore,  
This petty brabble will undo us all.  
Why, lords, and think you not how dangerous  
It is to jet upon a prince's right?  
What, is Lavinia then become so loose,  
Or Bassianus so degenerate,  
That for her love such quarrels may be 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**

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

**DEMETRIUS**

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

**AARON**

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

**CHIRON**

Aaron, a thousand deaths  
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;  
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.  
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,  
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**

Faith, not me.



## DEMETRIUS

Nor me, so I were one.

## AARON

For shame, be friends, and join for that you jar:  
'Tis policy and stratagem must do  
That you affect; and so must you resolve,  
That what you cannot as you would achieve,  
You must perforce accomplish as you may.  
Take this of me: Lucrece was not more chaste  
Than this Lavinia, Bassianus' love.  
A speedier course than lingering languishment  
Must we pursue, and I have found the path.  
My lords, a solemn hunting is in hand;  
There will the lovely Roman ladies troop:  
The forest walks are wide and spacious;  
And many unfrequented plots there are  
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  
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.  
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;  
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.  
Per Styga, per manes vehor.

*Exeunt*

## **SCENE II. A forest near Rome. Horns and cry of hounds heard.**

*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  
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,  
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*

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

### **SATURNINUS**

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

### **BASSIANUS**

Lavinia, how say you?

### **LAVINIA**

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

### **SATURNINUS**

Come on, then; horse and chariots let us have,  
And to our sport.

*To TAMORA*

Madam, now shall ye see  
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  
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*

### SCENE III. A lonely part of the forest.

*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  
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**

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  
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,  
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,  
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.

**AARON**

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  
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.  
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  
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,  
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, whatsoe'er they be.

*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  
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  
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  
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 swarth Cimmerian  
Doth make your honour of his body's hue,  
Spotted, detested, and abominable.  
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  
For sauciness. I pray you, let us hence,  
And let her joy her raven-colour'd love;  
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**

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:  
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:  
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,  
Would make such fearful and confused cries  
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,  
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,  
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**

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**

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

**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**

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**

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**

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.  
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**

'Tis true; the raven doth not hatch a lark:  
Yet have I heard,—O, could I find it now!—  
The lion moved with pity did endure  
To have his princely paws pared all away:  
Some say that ravens foster forlorn children,  
The whilst their own birds famish in their nests:  
O, be to me, though thy hard heart say no,  
Nothing so kind, but something pitiful!

**TAMORA**

I know not what it means; away with her!

**LAVINIA**

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

**TAMORA**

Hadst thou in person ne'er offended me,  
Even for his sake am I pitiless.  
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**

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.

**TAMORA**

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

**LAVINIA**

'Tis present death I beg; and one thing more  
That womanhood denies my tongue to tell:  
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:  
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!  
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**

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**

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,  
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  
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**

[Aside] Now will I fetch the king to find them here,  
That he thereby may give a likely guess  
How these were they that made away his brother.

*Exit*

**MARTIUS**

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**

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**

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**

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

### **MARTIUS**

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—  
Out of this fell devouring receptacle,  
As hateful as Cocytus' misty mouth.

### **QUINTUS**

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**

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**

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?

**MARTIUS**

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

**SATURNINUS**

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

**MARTIUS**

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**

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**

[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  
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.  
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,  
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**

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,—

**SATURNINUS**

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

**TAMORA**

Andronicus himself did take it up.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

**SATURNINUS**

Thou shalt not bail them: see thou follow me.  
Some bring the murder'd body, some the murderers:  
Let them not speak a word; the guilt is plain;  
For, by my soul, were there worse end than death,  
That end upon them should be executed.

**TAMORA**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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

*Exeunt*

## SCENE IV. Another part of the forest.

*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**

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**

If thou hadst hands to help thee knit the cord.

*Exeunt DEMETRIUS and CHIRON*

*Enter MARCUS*

**MARCUS**

Who is this? my niece, that flies away so fast!  
Cousin, a word; where is your husband?  
If I do dream, would all my wealth would wake me!  
If I do wake, some planet strike me down,  
That I may slumber 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,  
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,  
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!  
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?  
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,  
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.  
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  
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:  
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*

## Act III

### SCENE I. Rome. A street.

*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;  
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.  
For two and twenty sons I never wept,  
Because they died in honour's lofty bed.

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

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;  
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;  
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*

O reverend tribunes! O gentle, aged men!  
Unbind my sons, reverse the doom of death;  
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**

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,  
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:  
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 stones;  
A stone is silent, and offendeth not,  
And tribunes with their tongues doom men to death.

*Rises*

But wherefore stand'st thou with thy weapon drawn?

**LUCIUS**

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

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O happy man! they have befriended thee.  
Why, foolish Lucius, dost thou not perceive  
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*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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**

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?  
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;  
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  
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  
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**

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:  
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.  
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.  
Had I but seen thy picture in this plight,  
It would have madded me: what shall I do  
Now I behold thy lively body so?  
Thou hast no hands, to wipe away thy tears:  
Nor tongue, to tell me who hath martyr'd thee:  
Thy husband he is dead: and for his death  
Thy brothers are condemn'd, and dead by this.  
Look, Marcus! ah, son Lucius, look on her!  
When I did name her brothers, then fresh tears  
Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey-dew  
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.  
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,  
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  
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?  
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**

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**

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.  
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,  
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!  
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?

**LUCIUS**

Stay, father! for that noble hand of thine,  
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,  
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;  
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**

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**

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**

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,  
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  
More hath it merited; that let it have.  
As for my sons, say I account of them  
As jewels purchased at an easy price;  
And yet dear too, because I bought mine own.

### **AARON**

I go, Andronicus: and for thy hand  
Look by and by to have thy sons with thee.

*Aside*

Their heads, I mean. O, how this villany  
Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it!  
Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace.  
Aaron will have his soul black like his face.

*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,  
To that I call!

*To LAVINIA*

What, wilt thou kneel with me?  
Do, then, dear heart; for heaven shall hear our 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,  
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,  
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?  
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;  
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  
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  
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;  
But sorrow flouted at is double death.

## **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**

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,  
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:  
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**

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:  
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.  
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;  
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:  
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:  
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  
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,  
To be revenged on Rome and Saturnine.

*Exit*

## SCENE II. A room in Titus's house. A banquet set out.

*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:  
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,  
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!  
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;  
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

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,  
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,

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,  
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,  
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**

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

### **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*

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:  
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?  
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  
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,  
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.  
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**

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,  
And thou shalt read when mine begin to dazzle.

*Exeunt*

## Act IV

### SCENE I. Rome. Titus's garden.

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

**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**

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**

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**

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;  
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:  
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**

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  
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**

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**

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

### **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

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?  
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,  
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!—  
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  
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.  
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  
Without the help of any hand at all.

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

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,  
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?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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  
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,  
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.  
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.  
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,  
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**

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  
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:  
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,  
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*

## SCENE II. The same. A room in the palace.

*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  
Basely insinuate and send us gifts.

**AARON**

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**

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.

*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**

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**

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**

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**

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

**Nurse**

A devil.

**AARON**

Why, then she is the devil's dam; a joyful issue.

**Nurse**

A joyless, dismal, black, and sorrowful issue:  
Here is the babe, as loathsome as a toad  
Amongst the fairest breeders of our clime:  
The empress sends it thee, thy stamp, thy seal,  
And bids thee christen it with thy dagger's point.

**AARON**

'Zounds, 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**

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**

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**

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?  
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,  
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!  
Ye white-limed walls! ye alehouse painted signs!  
Coal-black is better than another hue,  
In that it scorns to bear another hue;  
For all the water in the ocean  
Can never turn the swan's black legs to white,  
Although she lave them hourly in the flood.  
Tell the empress from me, I am of age  
To keep mine own, excuse it how she can.

**DEMETRIUS**

Wilt thou betray thy noble mistress thus?

**AARON**

My mistress is my mistress; this myself,  
The vigour and the picture of my youth:  
This before all the world do I prefer;  
This maugre all the world will I keep safe,  
Or some of you shall smoke for it in Rome.

**DEMETRIUS**

By this our mother is forever shamed.

**CHIRON**

Rome will despise her for this foul escape.

**Nurse**

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

**CHIRON**

I blush to think upon this 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!  
Here's a young lad framed of another leer:  
Look, how the black slave smiles upon the father,  
As who should say 'Old lad, I am thine own.'

He is your brother, lords, sensibly fed  
Of that self-blood that first gave life to you,  
And from that womb where you 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**

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:  
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,  
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.

**AARON**

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

*He kills the nurse*

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

**DEMETRIUS**

What mean'st thou, Aaron? wherefore didst thou this?

**AARON**

O Lord, sir, 'tis a deed of policy:  
Shall she live to betray this guilt of ours,  
A long-tongued babbling gossip? no, lords, no:  
And now be it known to you my full intent.  
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;  
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.  
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.  
The midwife and the nurse well made away,  
Then let the ladies tattle what they please.

**CHIRON**

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

**DEMETRIUS**

For this care of Tamora,  
Herself and hers are highly bound to 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.  
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  
To be a warrior, and command a camp.

*Exit*

### SCENE III. The same. A public place.

*Enter TITUS, bearing arrows with letters at the ends of them; with him, MARCUS, Young LUCIUS, PUBLIUS, SEMPRONIUS, CAIUS, and other Gentlemen, with 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:  
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:  
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;  
Tell him, it is for justice and for aid,  
And that it comes from old Andronicus,  
Shaken with sorrows in ungrateful Rome.  
Ah, Rome! Well, well; I made thee miserable  
What time I threw the people's suffrages  
On him that thus doth tyrannize o'er me.  
Go, get you gone; and pray be careful all,  
And leave you not a man-of-war unsearch'd:  
This wicked emperor may have shipp'd her hence;  
And, kinsmen, then we may go pipe for justice.

#### MARCUS ANDRONICUS

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,  
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**

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,  
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.  
Marcus, we are but shrubs, no cedars we  
No big-boned men framed of the Cyclops' size;  
But metal, Marcus, steel to the very back,  
Yet wrung with wrongs more than our backs can bear:  
And, sith there's no justice in earth nor hell,  
We will solicit heaven and move the gods  
To send down Justice for to wreak our wrongs.  
Come, to this gear. You are a good archer, Marcus;

*He gives them the arrows*

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

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!

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;  
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*

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  
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**

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 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 emperial'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**

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**

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**

Ay, sir.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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**

Sirrah, hast thou a knife? come, let me see it.  
Here, Marcus, fold it in the oration;  
For thou hast made it like an 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*

## SCENE IV. The same. Before the palace.

*Enter SATURNINUS, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, Lords, and others; SATURNINUS with the arrows in his hand 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?  
My lords, you know, as know the mightful gods,  
However these disturbers of our peace  
Buz 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  
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;  
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?  
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,  
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,  
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.

*Aside*

Why, thus it shall become  
High-witted Tamora to gloze with all:  
But, Titus, I have touched thee to the quick,  
Thy life-blood out: if Aaron now be wise,  
Then is all safe, the anchor's in the port.

*Enter Clown*

How now, good fellow! wouldst thou speak with us?

**Clown**

Yea, forsooth, an your mistership be emperial.

**TAMORA**

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**

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  
a fair end.

*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,

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;  
Sly frantic wretch, that holp'st to make me great,  
In hope thyself should govern Rome and me.

*Enter AEMILIUS*

What news with thee, AEmilius?

**AEMILIUS**

Arm, arm, my lord;—Rome never had more cause.  
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 threats, in course of this revenge, to do  
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:  
'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**

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?  
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.  
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,  
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  
Almost impregnable, his old ears deaf,  
Yet should both ear and heart obey my tongue.

*To AEmilius*

Go thou before, be our ambassador:  
Say that the emperor requests a parley  
Of warlike Lucius, and appoint the meeting  
Even at his father's house, the old Andronicus.

### **SATURNINUS**

AEmilius, do this message honourably:  
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,  
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*



## Act V

### SCENE I. Plains near Rome.

*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.  
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,  
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  
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?

*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  
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,  
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  
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,  
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,  
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.  
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.  
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:  
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,  
'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, villanies  
Ruthful to hear, yet piteously perform'd:  
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:  
That granted, how canst thou believe an oath?

**AARON**

What if I do not? as, indeed, I do not;  
Yet, for I know thou art religious  
And hast a thing within thee called conscience,  
With twenty popish tricks and ceremonies,  
Which I have seen thee careful to observe,  
Therefore I urge thy oath; for that I know  
An idiot holds his bauble for a god  
And keeps the oath which by that god he swears,  
To that I'll urge him: therefore thou shalt vow  
By that same god, what god soe'er it be,  
That thou adorest and hast in reverence,  
To save my boy, to nourish and bring him up;  
Or else I will discover nought to thee.

**LUCIUS**

Even by my god I swear to thee I will.

**AARON**

First know thou, I begot him on the empress.

**LUCIUS**

O most insatiate and luxurious woman!

**AARON**

Tut, Lucius, this was but a deed of charity  
To that which thou shalt hear of me anon.  
'Twas her two sons that murder'd Bassianus;  
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**

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,  
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  
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,  
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,  
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**

Ay, like a black dog, as the saying is.

**LUCIUS**

Art thou not sorry for these heinous deeds?

**AARON**

Ay, that I had not done a thousand more.  
Even now I curse the day—and yet, I think,  
Few come within the compass of my curse,—  
Wherein I did not some notorious ill,  
As kill a man, or else devise his death,  
Ravish a maid, or plot the way to do it,  
Accuse some innocent and forswear myself,  
Set deadly enmity between two friends,  
Make poor men's cattle break their necks;  
Set fire on barns and 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,  
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  
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**

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**

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*

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,  
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**

AEmilius, let the emperor give his pledges  
Unto my father and my uncle Marcus,  
And we will come. March away.

*Exeunt*

## SCENE II. Rome. Before TITUS's house.

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

**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**

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,

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;  
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;  
Confer with me of murder and of death:  
There's not a hollow cave or lurking-place,  
No vast obscurity or misty vale,  
Where bloody murder or detested rape  
Can couch for fear, but I will find them out;  
And in their ears tell them my dreadful name,  
Revenge, which makes the foul offender quake.

### **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**

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,  
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,  
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,



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**

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,  
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;  
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,  
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.  
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;  
And, would you represent our queen aright,  
It were convenient you had such a devil:  
But welcome, as you are. What shall we do?

**TAMORA**

What wouldst thou have us do, Andronicus?

**DEMETRIUS**

Show me a murderer, I'll deal with him.

**CHIRON**

Show me a villain that hath done a rape,  
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;  
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.  
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;  
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,  
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,  
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*

Go, gentle Marcus, to thy nephew Lucius;  
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  
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**

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**

[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,  
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**

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**

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**

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.  
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.  
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*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, come, Lavinia; look, thy foes are bound.  
Sirs, stop their mouths, let them not speak to me;  
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  
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.  
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  
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,  
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,  
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,  
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  
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*

### SCENE III. Court of TITUS's house. A banquet set out.

*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,  
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;  
I fear the emperor means no good to 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**

Away, inhuman dog! unhallow'd slave!  
Sirs, help our uncle to convey him in.

*Exeunt Goths, with AARON. Flourish within*

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**

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,  
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;  
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**

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  
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?

**SATURNINUS**

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*

And, with thy shame, thy father's sorrow die!

**SATURNINUS**

What hast thou done, unnatural and unkind?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

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**

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**

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**

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*

### **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

You sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome,  
By uproar sever'd, like a flight of fowl  
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,  
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,  
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  
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.  
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,  
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  
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,  
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.  
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.  
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;  
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,  
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,  
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  
Will, hand in hand, all headlong cast us down.  
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**

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**

Go, go into old Titus' sorrowful house,

*To Attendants*

And hither hale that misbelieving Moor,  
To be adjudged some direful slaughtering death,  
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,  
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*

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**

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,  
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:  
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;  
My tears will choke me, if I ope my mouth.

*Re-enter Attendants with AARON*

**AEMILIUS**

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

**LUCIUS**

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

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,  
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.  
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;  
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 ruin.

*Exeunt*