

INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS

This early work by Shakespeare both made his name and provided him with material for his later plays.

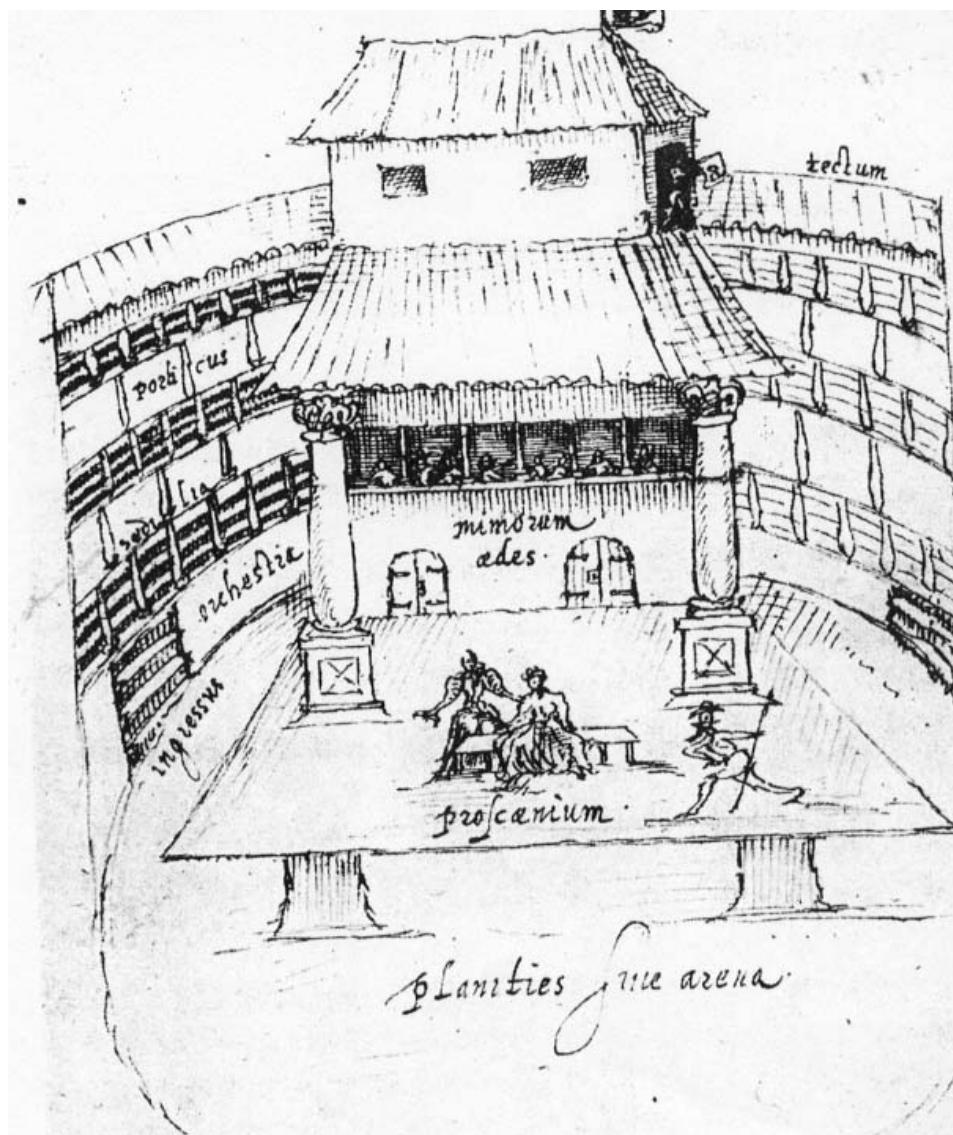
In the final days of the Roman Empire its general, Titus, has defeated the Goths, capturing their Queen, Tamora, and her three sons. After Titus has the eldest son killed Tamora vows revenge, and having gained power over Titus by marrying the corrupt Roman Emperor, Saturninus, gets it through her slave and lover, the evil Aaron. Aaron engineers the rape and mutilation of Titus's daughter, Lavinia, by Tamora's remaining sons, the killing of Lavinia's husband, Bassianus (the Emperor's brother), the framing and execution of two of Titus's sons for Bassianus's murder, and for good measure tricks Titus into having his hand cut off. Understandably driven mad by events, Titus wreaks his own terrible revenge on Tamora and her children, while his surviving son Lucius punishes Aaron after capturing Rome from Saturninus.

Titus Andronicus was a popular entry in the Sixteenth Century revenge genre, and can be thought of as a rough equivalent of a modern horror film, with plenty of black humour as well as gore. In fact, it seems it was the joint most popular play for many years, but for centuries afterwards audiences reacted badly to its over-the-top violence and bad-taste comedy. It's only recently that audiences have come to appreciate it again.

To understand how it was staged in Shakespeare's day, take a look at the crude drawing of the Swan Theatre below (*Titus* would have been performed originally at the Rose Theatre, but there would not have been a great deal of difference, and in any case this is the only picture we've got of a theatre of the time). As you can see, it's a bit like a house, with tiers of seats making a circle around it, and a stage on supports projecting outwards. The house itself was called "the tiring house", and was where the dressing rooms were. The poorer playgoers (the "groundlings") would have stood on the floor by the stage (up to 500 of them in the Rose), while the richest would have sat on the highest seats, which were covered by a roof. There were no curtains on stage, and little in the way of scenery. That's why so

much is described in detail in the dialogue. Costumes, however were elaborate (see the Peacham drawing above the List of Characters).

Notice the two doors at the back of the stage: these were used for entrances and exits (“at one door... at the other” etc. in the stage directions) and above these a gallery (“aloft” or “above” in the stage directions). There would also have been a “discovery space” (part of the back of the stage which could have been curtained off) and a trapdoor (serving possibly as the tomb and the pit in this play). All female parts in *Titus* would have been played by boys, as it was thought immoral for women to act on stage.



The De Witt drawing of the Swan Theatre.

INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS

“These words are razors...”

Shakespeare plays often cause strong reactions in audiences. Just as *Othello* unofficially holds the record for members of the public jumping on stage trying to stop the action, so *Titus Andronicus* must hold it for audiences walking out, fainting and being taken ill. Even in the most recent productions it has had this effect. On Shakespeare’s audience – habitually used to judicial brutality – the play’s gory violence must still have made a strong impression, and seems to have launched the career of its author – perhaps as an overnight sensation. For some twenty years (realistically) it was the joint most popular play. As tastes changed, however, audiences rejected it, and after 1724 it disappeared for over a century, only reappearing in a radically altered form in Victorian times, vanishing again between 1857 and 1923. Now things have come full circle, and used as we are to horror films and the idea that comedy and tragedy can have a close symbiotic relationship, this unjustly neglected play is being rediscovered.

Besides the issue of the subject content there is the issue of the play’s language, which lacks the realism of later Shakespeare plays, though perhaps not to the extent that past critics have claimed—the more a play is performed the more it finds meaningful interpretation, thanks to the developing skills of successive actors with repeated material, but *Titus* has been denied a continuous stage history. While it is true that there is a lot of rhetoric in *Titus*, this often adds to the feeling that these are Romans speaking, Romans clinging to their culture in the face of an onslaught of barbarism—a barbarism that has already invaded their own souls and which is ironically intensified by the constant literary language and references. Sometimes one gets the impression that Shakespeare is questioning the very nature of the Renaissance.

Perhaps it is this juxtaposition of barbarism and civilization which makes *Titus Andronicus* more relevant than ever. It is set in a materialistic age, blinded by luxury and in a moral decline of which it is unaware. Cultural heritage cannot save these Romans because theirs is the culture of hard-wired rhetorical tropes and lip-service

invocations of the gods; in fact, language is often used in the play as a barrier against true feeling or indeed truth itself, as in the infamous discovery of Lavinia by a Marcus unable to engage emotionally with what he sees, remaining in his own way as mute as she is. The base passions of the Goths which translate so easily into actions, brutally cut the Gordian knot of ritualized and fossilized tradition, and when Titus translates Saturninus's literary considerations into their real life meaning by killing Lavinia he points the way forward to a Rome no longer shackled by dead words but willing to embrace an albeit brutal truth in a radically new regime.

In *Titus Andronicus* we can see Shakespeare assimilating and transforming influences from the morality play, from Marlowe, from other revenge tragedies. The figure of Revenge which presides over the opening of *The Spanish Tragedy* becomes a plot device in which Tamora's fake Revenge is outsmarted by Titus; Titus's nods to Tamburlaine—his charioted entrance, the killing of his own son, etc.—are an ironic counterpoint to his true character; and Aaron compounds Vice, Barabas and Ithamore into a personality which lures the audience into a web of evil each time he appears.

More importantly, it sows the seeds of many later Shakespeare plays. Who are Othello and Iago, if not Aaron split body and spirit and elaborated, with perhaps a touch of Titus's simple-man-out-of-his-depth in the Moor? Where does Gloucester get his technique of sharing his evil plans with the audience? Cleopatra (as Lady Macbeth) we might say has a touch of Tamora about her, while the early Lavinia, perhaps, is a precursor to the sassier female characters of the canon. Could it not be that in this play Shakespeare developed the alternation of court and forest found in the comedies, or in its opening the issue of succession which informs the histories? Hamlet reminds us of Titus's feigned madness, while Lear recalls both his actual madness and his doomed sense of honour. The list is far from complete, but it is clear that without the fountainhead of *Titus* Shakespeare's legacy would have been of a very different form.

This edition has been prepared for practical school use, and stage directions, emendations and definitions are guided by considerations of student accessibility. Uncommon emendations or those peculiar to it are marked with an asterisk thus *. Editors, feel free to adopt!



Sketch (?1595) by Henry Peacham of an early production of *Titus Andronicus*.

LIST OF CHARACTERS

SATURNINUS	Roman Emperor after the first scene.
BASSIANUS	Saturninus's brother, engaged to Lavinia.
TITUS ANDRONICUS	Roman General.
MARCUS	Tribune of the People, Titus's brother.
LUCIUS	Titus's son (the one who survives).
QUINTUS	Titus's son (one of two framed for murder).
MARTIUS	Titus's son (the other framed for murder).
MUTIUS	Titus's son (the one Titus himself kills).
LAVINIA	Titus's daughter.
YOUNG LUCIUS	Lucius's son and Titus's grandson. He's a child.
PUBLIUS	Marcus's son.
AEMIILIUS	"A noble Roman". Perhaps a senator.
TAMORA	Queen of the Goths.
ALARBUS	Tamora's son, who gets sacrificed.
DEMETRIUS	Tamora's second son.
CHIRON	Tamora's youngest son.
AARON	Moor, Tamora's lover. Pronounce "Air-on".

A Captain, Tribune, Messenger, and **CLOWN** (i.e. a country bumpkin).
A **NURSE**, and a black child (usually performed by a doll).
Kinsmen to Titus (**SEMPRONIUS**, **CAIUS**, **VALENTINE**), Senators,
Tribunes, Officers, Soldiers (Romans and Goths), Attendants.

The play is set in Rome itself or the countryside around Rome.



The American actor, Ira Aldridge, played Aaron in Britain between 1850 and 1860, in a heavily censored version of the play.

ACT 1 SCENE 1

Rome. In front of the Capitol.

[In this long scene Saturninus and his brother Bassianus compete to be the next Emperor of Rome. The Roman general Titus arrives after having defeated the Goths. He has brought the bodies of 21 of his sons, and they are laid in the family tomb. He has also captured Tamora, the Goths' Queen and her three sons. Lucius, one of Titus's remaining four sons, demands that Tamora's "proudest" son is sacrificed, and Titus suggests the eldest, Alarbus. Tamora pleads for his life, but Titus won't listen, and the Goths swear revenge. Titus, a stickler for tradition, refuses to be Emperor himself and instead (foolishly) nominates the unsuitable Saturninus. After Saturninus asks for Lavinia, Titus's daughter, as his partner (she is in love with Bassianus, his brother) there is a family quarrel which results in another of Titus's sons, Mutius, being killed by his father. The fickle Saturninus then decides he wants to marry Tamora (1.1.318-331), which puts Titus's family in a dangerous position.



CLASSICAL REFERENCES:

Ajax: Greek general in Trojan War; killed himself after going mad

Capitol: (supposed) seat of Roman Government

Goths: a barbarian tribe, enemies of Rome

Hymenaeus: god of marriage

Jupiter: king of the gods, patron of the Capitol

Justice: in this scene refers to Astraea, goddess of justice

Laertes' son: Ulysses, who asked that Ajax got a proper burial

Pantheon: circular temple dedicated to all the gods

Phoebe: Diana, the goddess of the moon, hunting and chastity

Priam: King of Troy, who lost twice the number of sons Titus does

Scythia: ancient region, full of barbarians

Styx: river bounding the Underworld

Titan: here god of the sun (rather than giant)

Tribune: magistrate

POINTS OF INTEREST. The name of Saturnine comes from the god of agriculture, Saturn. People associated with this god were said to have sulky and capricious temperaments, as Saturnine does. Note that

Tamora's name suggests both Moor and amor (love) – she is Aaron the Moor's secret lover. Ora was one of Jupiter's mistresses.]

[Flourish; Enter the Tribunes and Senators aloft.
Enter, below, SATURNINUS and his Followers from one door, and BASSIANUS and his followers from the other, with drums and colours.]

SATURNINUS

Noble patricians, patrons of my right, [aristocrats, protectors]
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. [my]

BASSIANUS

Romans—friends, followers, favourers of my right—
If ever Bassianus, Caesar's son,^{1.1.10}
Were gracious in the eyes of royal Rome,
Keep then this passage to the Capitol;
And suffer not dishonour to approach [don't allow]
The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate, [sacred virtue]
To justice, continence, and nobility: [self-control]
But let desert in pure election shine; [merit]
And, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice.

[Enter MARCUS ANDRONICUS aloft, with the crown.]

MARCUS

Princes—that strive by factions and by friends
Ambitiously for rule and empery— [position of emperor]
Know that the people of Rome, for whom we stand^{1.1.20}
A special party, have by common voice,
In election for the Roman empery
Chosen Andronicus, surnamèd Pius [called]
For many good and great deserts to Rome: [honourable actions]
A nobler man, a braver warrior,

Lives not this day within the city walls.
 He by the senate is **accited** home [summoned]
 From weary wars against the barbarous Goths;
 That with his sons, a terror to our foes,
 Hath **yoked a nation** strong, trained up in arms. ^{1.1.30} [conquered a people]
 Ten years are spent since first he undertook
 This cause of Rome, and **chastisèd** with arms [beaten down]
 Our enemies' pride. Five times he hath returned
 Bleeding to Rome, bearing his **valiant** sons [brave]
 In coffins from the field; and at this day
 To the monument of the Andronici
 *Does sacrifice of **expiation**, [religious cleansing]
 And slays the noblest prisoner of the Goths.
 And now at last, laden with honour's spoils,
 Returns the good Andronicus to Rome, ^{1.1.40}
Renownèd Titus, flourishing in arms. [Famous]
 Let us **entreat**—by honour of his name [ask]
 Whom worthily you would have now succeed,
 And in the Capitol and senate's right,
 Whom you **pretend** to honour and adore— [claim]
 That you withdraw you and **abate** your strength. [reduce]
 Dismiss your followers, and, as suitors should,
 Plead your **deserts** in peace and humbleness. [merits]

SATURNINUS

How fair the tribune speaks to calm my thoughts!

BASSIANUS

Marcus Andronicus, so I do **affy** ^{1.1.50} [have faith]
 In thy uprightness and integrity,
 And so I love and honour **thee and thine**, [you and yours]
 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 favour
Commit my cause in balance to be weighed. [Hand over]
 [Exeunt the Followers of BASSIANUS]

SATURNINUS

Friends, that have been thus forward in my right,
I thank you all and here dismiss you all; ^{1.1.60}

And to the love and favour 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, tribunes, and let me in.

BASSIANUS

Tribunes, and me, a poor competitor.

[Flourish. Exeunt; 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 returned ^{1.1.70}

From where he **circumscribèd** with his sword [encompassed]
And brought to yoke the enemies of Rome.

[Sound drums and trumpets. Enter MARTIUS and MUTIUS; and then
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 others as many as they
can be. They set down the coffin, and TITUS speaks]

TITUS

Hail, Rome, victorious in thy **mourning weeds!** [funeral clothes]
Lo, as the bark that hath discharged her freight [Look]
Returns with precious **lading** to the bay [cargo]
From **whence** at first she weighed her anchorage, [where]

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, ^{1.1.80}
 Stand gracious to the rites that we intend!
 Romans, of five and twenty valiant sons,
 Half of the number that King Priam had,
 Behold the poor remains, alive and dead!
 These that survive let Rome reward with love;
 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, ^{1.1.90}
 Why suffer'st thou thy sons, unburied yet,
 To hover on the dreadful shore of Styx?
 Make way to lay them by their brethren.

[i.e. Jupiter]

[They open the tomb (trapdoor in stage)]

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!

[tend to do]

[apartment]

[give me back]

LUCIUS

Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths,
 That we may hew his limbs, and on a pile ^{1.1.100}
Ad manes fratrum sacrifice his flesh
 Before this earthy prison of their bones;
 That so the **shadows** be **not unappeased**,
 Nor we disturbed with **prodigies** on earth.

[to brothers' souls]

[ghosts; satisfied]

[strange things]

TITUS

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

TAMORA

Stay, Roman brethren! Gracious conqueror,

Victorious Titus, **rue** the tears I shed, [pity]
A mother's tears in passion for her son:
And if thy sons were ever dear to thee, ^{1.1.110}
O, think my son to be as dear to me!
Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome, [Isn't it enough]
To beautify thy triumphs and return,
Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke;
But must my sons be slaughtered in the streets
For valiant doings in their country's cause?
O, if to fight for king and **commonweal** [people, nation]
Were **piety** in thine, it is in these. [holiness]
Andronicus, stain not thy tomb with blood:
Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods? ^{1.1.120}
Draw near them, then, in being merciful.
Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge:
Thrice-noble Titus, spare my first-born son.

TITUS

Patient yourself, madam, and pardon me.
These are their brethren, whom your Goths beheld
Alive and dead; and for their brethren slain
Religiously they ask a sacrifice.
To this your son is marked; and die he must,
To appease their groaning **shadows** that are gone. [ghosts]

LUCIUS

Away with him, and make a fire **straight!** ^{1.1.130} [straightaway]
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. [Don't compare]

Alarbus goes to rest, and we survive
To tremble under Titus' threatening look.
Then, madam, stand resolved: but hope withal
The self-same gods that armed the Queen of Troy
With opportunity of sharp revenge^{1.1.140}
Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent,
May favour Tamora, the queen of Goths –
When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen –
To quit the bloody wrongs upon her foes. [enemies]

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

LUCIUS

See, lord and father, how we have performed
Our Roman rites: Alarbus' limbs are lopped,
And entrails feed the sacrificing fire,
Whose smoke like incense doth perfume the sky.
Remaineth naught but to inter our brethren, [It's only left to bury]
And with loud 'larums welcome them to Rome.^{1.1.150}

TITUS

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:

[Enter LAVINIA]

In peace and honour rest you here, my sons!

LAVINIA

In peace and honour live Lord Titus long—^{1.1.160}

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 this earth for thy return to Rome.
O, bless me here with thy victorious hand,
Whose fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud!

[funeral rites]

TITUS

Kind Rome, that hast thus lovingly reserved
The **cordial** of mine age to glad my heart!
Lavinia, live, outlive thy father's days,^{1.1.170}
And fame's eternal date, for virtue's praise!

[health drink]

[Lavinia rises. Enter above Marcus Andronicus, Saturninus, Bassianus,
Tribunes and others]

MARCUS

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

TITUS

Thanks, gentle tribune, noble brother Marcus.

MARCUS

And welcome, nephews, from successful wars,
You that survive and you that sleep in fame!
Fair lords, your fortunes are alike in all,
That in your country's service drew your swords:
But safer triumph is this funeral pomp
That hath aspired to **Solon's happiness**^{1.1.180}
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 **palliment** 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.

[= death]

[ceremonial robe]

[a candidate]

TITUS

A better head her glorious body fits^{1.1.190}
Than his that shakes for age and feebleness.
What, should I **don** this robe and trouble you?
Be chosen with proclamations today,
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:^{1.1.200}
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.

[put on]

[start up]

MARCUS

Titus, thou shalt obtain and ask the empery.

SATURNINUS

Proud and ambitious tribune, canst thou tell?

TITUS

*Patience, worthy prince.

SATURNINUS

Romans, do me right!
Patricians, draw your swords, and sheathe them not
Till Saturninus be Rome's Emperor!
Andronicus, would thou were shipped to hell
Rather than rob me of the people's hearts!^{1.1.210}

LUCIUS

Proud Saturnine, interrupter of the good
That noble-minded Titus means to thee!

TITUS

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

BASSIANUS

Andronicus, I do not flatter thee,
But 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**. [reward]

TITUS

People of Rome, and people's tribunes here, ^{1.1.220}
I ask your voices and your **suffrages**: [votes]
Will you bestow them friendly on Andronicus?

TRIBUNES

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

TITUS

Tribunes, I thank you; and this suit I make –
That you create 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. ^{1.1.230}
Then, if you will elect by my advice,
Crown him, and say 'Long live our Emperor!'

MARCUS

With voices and applause of every sort,
Patricians and plebeians, we create
Lord Saturninus Rome's great emperor;
And say 'Long live our Emperor Saturnine!'

[A long flourish.]

SATURNINUS

Titus Andronicus, for thy favours done
To us in our election this day
I give thee thanks in part of thy deserts,
And will with deeds **requite** thy gentleness; ^{1.1.240} [repay]

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

It doth, my worthy lord, and in this match
 I hold me highly honoured of your grace;
 And here in sight of Rome, to Saturnine –
 King and commander of our **commonweal**,^{1.1.250} [state]
 The wide world's emperor – do I **consecrate** [dedicate]
 My sword, my chariot, and my prisoners,
 Presents well worthy Rome's **imperious** lord. [imperial]
 Receive them then, the tribute that I owe,
 Mine honour's **ensigns** humbled at thy feet. [symbols]

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.^{1.1.260} [loyalty]

TITUS

[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

[Aside] A goodly lady, trust me, of the **hue** [appearance]
 That I would choose, were I to choose anew!
 [To Tamora]
 Clear up, fair queen, that cloudy **countenance**. [face]
 Though chance of war hath wrought this change of **cheer**, [expression]
 Thou com'st not to be **made a scorn** in Rome— [mocked]
 Princely shall be thy usage every way.
 Rest on my word, and let not discontent^{1.1.270}
 Daunt all your hopes. Madam, **he** comforts you [he who]

Can make you greater than the Queen of Goths.

[To Lavinia]

Lavinia, you are not displeased with this?

LAVINIA

Not I, my lord, *sith* true nobility

[since]

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

How, sir! Are you in earnest then, my lord?^{1.1.280}

BASSIANUS

Ay, noble Titus; and resolved withal

To do myself this reason and this right.

MARCUS

Suum cuique is our Roman justice:

[Each to his own]

This prince in justice seizeth but his own.

LUCIUS

And that he will and shall, if Lucius live.

TITUS

Traitors, *avaunt!* Where is the emperor's guard?

[go away]

Treason, my lord—Lavinia is surprised!

SATURNINUS

Surprised! By whom?

BASSIANUS

By him that justly may
Bear his betrothed from all the world away.

[Exeunt BASSIANUS and MARCUS with LAVINIA]

MUTIUS

Brothers, help to convey her hence away,^{1.1.290}
And with my sword I'll keep this door safe.

[Exeunt LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS.]

TITUS

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

MUTIUS

My lord, you pass not here.

TITUS

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

[Stabbing MUTIUS]

MUTIUS

Help, Lucius, help!

[Dies.]

[Re-enter LUCIUS]

LUCIUS

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

TITUS

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, ^{1.1.300}
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 begged the empire at thy hands. ^{1.1.310}

TITUS

O monstrous! What reproachful words are these?

SATURNINUS

But go thy ways; go, give that changing piece
To him that flourished 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

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 overshadow the gallant'st dames of Rome -- ^{1.1.320}
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 everything
 In readiness for Hymenaeus stand—
 I will not re-salute the streets of Rome,
 Or climb my palace, till from forth this place ^{1.1.330}
 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. ^{1.1.340}

[Exeunt SATURNINUS and his Followers; TAMORA and her Sons;
 AARON and Goths.]

TITUS

I am not *bid to wait upon* this bride. [invited to accompany]
 Titus, when *wert thou wont* to walk alone, [you liked to]
 Dishonoured thus, and challenged of wrongs?

[Re-enter MARCUS, LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS.]

MARCUS

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

TITUS

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

LUCIUS

But let us give him burial, as becomes: ^{1.1.350}
Give Mutius burial with our brethren.

TITUS

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

My lord, this is impiety in you:
My nephew Mutius' deeds do plead for him;
He must be buried with his brethren. ^{1.1.360}

MARTIUS

And shall, or him we will accompany.

TITUS

And shall! What villain was it spake that word?

QUINTUS

He that would vouch it in any place but here. [maintain]

TITUS

What, would you bury him in my despite? [in defiance of me]

MARCUS

No, noble Titus; but entreat of thee [beg you]
To pardon Mutius, and to bury him.

TITUS

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. ^{1.1.370}

MARTIUS

He is not with himself; let us withdraw.

QUINTUS

Not I, till Mutius' bones be buried.

[MARCUS, LUCIUS, QUINTUS and MARTIUS kneel]

MARCUS

Brother, for in that name doth nature plead –

QUINTUS

Father, and in that name doth nature speak –

TITUS

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

MARCUS

Renowned Titus, more than half my soul –

LUCIUS

Dear father, soul and substance of us all –

MARCUS

Suffer thy brother Marcus to *inter*
His noble nephew here in virtue's nest,
That died in honour and Lavinia's cause. ^{1.1.380}
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 barred his entrance here.

[bury]

TITUS

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

[They put MUTIUS into the tomb]

LUCIUS

There lie thy bones, sweet Mutius, with thy friends,^{1.1.390}
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.

[All but Marcus and Titus stand aside]

MARCUS

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

TITUS

I know not, Marcus, but I know it is –
Whether by device or no, the heavens can tell.
Is she not, then, beholding to the man
That brought her for this high good turn so far?^{1.1.400}

MARCUS

Yes, and will nobly **him remunerate**. [pay him back]

[Flourish. Re-enter, at one door, SATURNINUS, attended; TAMORA
DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, and AARON; at the other, BASSIANUS, LAVINIA
and others.]

SATURNINUS

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

BASSIANUS

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

SATURNINUS

Traitor, if Rome have law or we have power,

Thou and thy faction shall repent this rape.

[kidnap]

BASSIANUS

Rape, call you it, my lord, to seize my own,
My true betrothed love, and now my wife?
But let the laws of Rome determine all;^{1.1.410}
Meanwhile am I possessed 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 wronged,
That, in the rescue of Lavinia,^{1.1.420}
With his own hand did slay his youngest son,
In zeal to you, and highly moved to wrath
To be controlled in that he frankly gave:
Receive him then to favour, Saturnine,
That hath expressed himself in all his deeds
A father and a friend to thee and Rome.

TITUS

Prince Bassianus, leave to plead my deeds:
'Tis thou and those that have dishonoured me.
Rome and the righteous heavens be my judge
How I have loved and honoured Saturnine!^{1.1.430}

TAMORA

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

SATURNINUS

What, madam! be dishonoured openly,
And basely put it up without revenge?

TAMORA

Not so, my lord; the gods of Rome **forfend** [prevent]

I should be author to dishonour you!

But on mine honour dare I undertake

For good Lord Titus' innocence in all, ^{1.1.440}

Whose fury not **dissembled** speaks his griefs: [hidden]

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 SAT.] My lord, be ruled by me, be won at last.

Dissemble all your griefs and discontents – [Hide]

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 – ^{1.1.450}

Which Rome reputes to be a heinous sin –

Yield at entreats, and then let me alone.

I'll find a day to massacre them all,

And raze their faction and their family,

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.

Come, come, sweet emperor– [To TITUS] Come, Andronicus –

[To SAT.] **Take up** this good old man, and cheer the heart ^{1.1.460} [Bid rise]

That dies in **tempest** of thy angry frown. [the storm]

SATURNINUS

Rise, Titus, rise – my empress hath prevailed.

TITUS

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.^{1.1.470}
For you, Prince Bassianus, I have passed
My word and promise to the emperor
That you will be more mild and tractable.
And fear not, lords – and you, Lavinia –
By my advice, all humbled on your knees,
You shall ask pardon of his majesty.

[have residency in]

[easy to govern]

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

That on mine honour here do I protest.^{1.1.480}

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.

[Titus's sons stand up]

Lavinia, though you left me like a churl,
I found a friend; and sure as death I swore^{1.1.490}

[as if I was a peasant]

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

Tomorrow, **an** it please your majesty [if]
To hunt the panther and the hart with me,
With horn and hound we'll give your grace **bonjour**. [good morning]

SATURNINUS

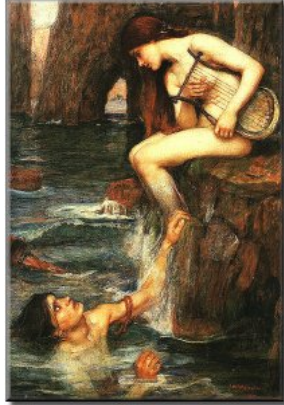
Be it so, Titus, and **gramercy** too. [thanks a lot]

[Exeunt]

[So ends the first scene and with it the first act. Shakespeare himself did not put in the act and scene divisions, at least not in this play – that was done by later editors, starting with his friends, who produced the 1623 collected works (the First Folio) after his death.]

ACT 2 SCENE 1

Rome. Before the palace.



[It's not clear if the suddenly important character of Aaron comes on here, or, ironically forgotten about, simply stays on at the end of the previous scene while everyone else walks off. This difficult soliloquy could even be the final speech of Act 1. To add to the confusion, some editors don't end the first act – which is really just the first scene - until the start of Act 2 Scene 2. I stop it here for the sake of giving the audience a break. However it's divided, this apparently lowly slave is now by himself and can speak his thoughts to the audience, about how glad he is that Tamora has married the Emperor but that she's really Aaron's slave, being in love with him, rather than the other way round. When Aaron's finished speaking Tamora's sons come on stage, fighting over Lavinia. Aaron intervenes, telling them that if they make a play for Bassianus's fiancée they'll disgrace their mother, spoil things for the Goth party at court, and maybe end up dead. He puts forward a "better" idea: the brothers rape Lavinia in the woods during the ceremonial hunt the next day.

CLASSICAL REFERENCES:

House of Fame – A place of rumour, or gossip.

Lucrece – Lucretia was a virtuous married woman who was raped by a son of the Roman king Tarquin and afterwards killed herself. This resulted in Tarquin being deposed and a republic declared. A very popular story among the Elizabethans, it is mentioned many times in Shakespeare, who wrote a poetical version of it himself.

Olympus – Mountain home of the Greek gods.

Prometheus – He stole fire from the gods to give to humanity, and was punished by being chained to the Caucasus mountains where his liver was for ever being eaten by eagles.

Nymph – One of many minor supernatural beings who took the form of young women; to see one naked would send men mad.

Semiramis – Beautiful, powerful but dangerous Assyrian queen who tended to destroy her lovers.

Siren – A sea nymph, like a mermaid. Sailors were so bewitched by the sirens' songs that they pined to death, until Ulysses defeated them.

Vulcan – Son of the god of fire, Vulcan was the blacksmith of the gods. Ugly and deformed, his wife Venus cheated on him with Mars, and his “badge” was cuckold’s horns.

POINTS OF INTEREST. What’s the difference between Chiron and Demetrius? Demetrius is the older one who perhaps sounds wise to modern audiences, but he’s mostly quoting platitudes (cliché sayings) which would have tipped off an Elizabethan audience that he was none too bright. Examples include 2.1.83-8. Despite his reference to Seneca at the end of the scene he is no more able than his brother to understand Titus’s barbed quotation from Horace sent with Young Lucius (see 4.2.37-9). In any case the Seneca quotation is wrong, with Demetrius saying the equivalent of “I am in hell”, an ironic reference to his fate in the play.

Note also how hunting vocabulary begins to be used in a sexual sense in this scene, e.g. lines 2.1.94-8.]

[Enter AARON]

AARON

Now climbeth Tamora Olympus' top,
Safe out of fortune's shot, and sits aloft, [on top]
Secure of thunder's crack or lightning's flash, [Safe from]
Advanced above pale envy's threatening reach.
As when the golden sun salutes the morn,
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams, [made golden]
Gallops the zodiac in his glistening coach, [i.e. through it]
And overlooks the highest-peering hill –
So Tamora.
Upon her wit doth earthly honour wait,^{2.1.10}
And virtue stoops and trembles at her frown.
Then, Aaron, arm thy heart and fit thy thoughts
To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress,
And mount her pitch, whom thou in triumph long [fly high as possible]
Hast prisoner held, fettered in amorous chains,
And faster bound to Aaron's charming eyes [hypnotic]
Than is Prometheus tied to Caucasus.
Away with slavish weeds and servile thoughts! [slave's clothes]
I will be bright, and shine in pearl and gold,
To wait upon this new-made empress.^{2.1.20}
To wait, said I? To wanton with this queen,

This goddess, this Semiramis, this nymph,
 This siren, that will charm Rome's Saturnine,
 And see his shipwreck and his commonweal's.
 Holla! What storm is this?

[bewitch]

[Enter DEMETRIUS and CHIRON braving]

[giving 'aggro']

DEMETRIUS

Chiron, thy years wants wit, thy wit wants edge
 And manners, to intrude where I am graced;
 And may, for aught thou know'st, affected be.

[butt in; doing well]

CHIRON

Demetrius, thou dost overween in all;
 And so in this, to bear me down with braves.^{2.1.30}
 'Tis not the difference of a year or two
 Makes me less gracious or thee more fortunate:
 I am as able and as fit as thou
 To serve and to deserve my mistress' grace,
 And that my sword upon thee shall approve,
 And plead my passions for Lavinia's love.

[you think you're smart]

[try to face me down]

[attractive]

[favour]

[Which; prove]

AARON [Aside]

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

[Call the riot police]

DEMETRIUS

Why, boy, although our mother, unadvised,
 Gave you a dancing-rapier by your side,
 Are you so desperate grown to threat your friends?^{2.1.40}
 Go to; have your lath glued within your sheath
 Till you know better how to handle it.

[ornamental sword]

[play-sword]

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 ye draw,
And maintain such a quarrel openly?
Full well I **wot** the ground of all this grudge: [know]
I would not for a million of gold
The cause were known to them it most concerns; ^{2.1.50}
Nor would your noble mother for much more
Be so dishonoured in the court of Rome.
For shame, put up.

DEMETRIUS

Not I, till I have sheathed
My rapier in his bosom, and **withal** [with it]
Thrust those 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 dar'st perform.

AARON

Away, I say! ^{2.1.60}
Now, by the gods that warlike Goths adore,
This **pretty brabble** will undo us all. [silly argument]
Why, lords, and think you not how dangerous
It is to **jet upon** a prince's right? [cut in on]
What, is Lavinia then become so loose,
Or Bassianus so degenerate,
That for her love such quarrels may be **broached** [made public]
Without **controlment**, justice, or revenge? [bringing to account]
Young lords, beware! And should the empress know
This discord's ground, the music would not please. ^{2.1.70}

CHIRON

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

DEMETRIUS

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

AARON

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

CHIRON

Aaron, a thousand deaths would I propose^{2.1.80}
 T'achieve her whom I love. [win]

AARON T'achieve her how?

DEMETRIUS

Why mak'st thou it so strange?
 She is a woman, therefore may be wooed;
 She is a woman, therefore may be won;
 She is Lavinia, therefore must be loved.
 What, man! More water glideth by the mill
 Than wots the miller of; and easy it is [knows]
 Of a cut loaf to steal a shive, we know. [slice]
 Though Bassianus be the emperor's brother,
 Better than he have worn Vulcan's badge.^{2.1.90}

AARON

[Aside.] Aye, 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, [i.e. struck down]
 And borne her cleanly by the keeper's nose? [carried her away; under]

AARON

Why, then, it seems some certain snatch or so [or, 'quickie']
 Would serve your turns.

CHIRON

Aye, so the turn were served. [or, 'ride']

DEMETRIUS

Aaron, thou hast hit it.

AARON

Would you had **hit it** too! [or, 'got it up']
Then should not we be tired with this ado.
Why, **hark ye**, hark ye! And are you such fools^{2.1.100} [listen up]
To **square** for this? Would it offend you, then, [fall out]
That both should **speed**? [succeed]

CHIRON

Faith, not me.

DEMETRIUS

Nor me, so I were one.

AARON

For shame, be friends, and join for **that you jar**. [what you argue about]
'Tis **policy** and **stratagem** must do [scheming; trickery]
That you affect; and so must you resolve [what you intend]
That what you cannot **as you would** achieve, [which you wish to]
You must **perforce** accomplish as you may. [necessarily]
Take this of me -- Lucrece was not more chaste
Than this Lavinia, Bassianus' love.^{2.1.110}
A speedier course than lingering **languishment** [lovesickness]
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 villainy.
Single you thither, then, this dainty doe, [Single out from there]
And strike her home by force if not by words --
This way, or not at all, stand you in hope.^{2.1.120}
Come, come, our empress, with her sacred wit
To villainy and vengeance consecrate,
Will we acquaint with all what we intend,
And she shall **file our engines** with advice [sharpen our wits]
That will not suffer you to square **yourselves**, [up to each other]
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;^{2.1.130}
There serve your lust, shadowed 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 [Whether it's right or wrong]
To cool this heat, a charm to calm these fits,
Per Styga, per manes vehor. [I am carried through Styx, through shades]

[Exeunt.]

ACT 2 SCENE 2

In front of the palace.

[As said before, some editors start Act 2 here, making this 2.1, the argument being that there is a break in the action. It is the morning of the hunt, with Titus giving an ironic speech (as Tamora does in the next scene, even more ironically) about how beautiful nature is, and how wonderful things are. So they should be, as the hunt is being staged to celebrate a double wedding, but we have already been told of Aaron's plot, which will shortly be put into action. Oblivious to it, Titus and his family make a racket with their horns to set the hounds baying and wake the emperor's court (compare the rude awakening they give it in 4.3) in a parody of the traditional serenading of a honeymoon couple. It is unlikely that the original performances would have featured actual dogs, just as Titus's chariot entrance in the last act would not have used horses; instead musicians would probably have provided the horns and barking off-stage. Despite the possibility of playing this scene as comic relief – with Saturninus reacting grumpily to Titus's misplaced cheer – there are a couple of sinister notes: Titus talks about his troubled sleep, and at the end Demetrius reminds his brother that they are going to use a different hunting technique to catch a “doe” – meaning Lavinia.]



[Enter TITUS ANDRONICUS, with his three sons LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS, and MARCUS; with hounds and horns]

TITUS

The hunt is up, the morn is bright and gay,
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,
T'attend the emperor's person carefully:
I have been troubled in my sleep this night,

[unleash; barking]

[sound; horn]

But dawning day new comfort hath inspired.^{2.2.10}

[Here a cry of hounds and wind horns in a peal; then enter
SATURNINUS, TAMORA, BASSIANUS, LAVINIA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON,
and their 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.

[*vigorously*]

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

I have dogs, my lord,^{2.2.20}
Will rouse the proudest panther in the chase,
And climb the highest promontory top.

TITUS

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.]

ACT 2 SCENE 3

A lonely part of the forest.

[Aaron's evil plan is now put into operation. He plants some gold, to make it look like Titus's sons Quintus and Martius are being paid to kill Bassianus, to confirm what he has written in his forged letter, before rejecting Tamora's amorous advances and going off to fetch Chiron and Demetrius. Lavinia and Bassianus, thinking that they have walked into a lovers' meeting, are sarcastic to Tamora; she, acting on Aaron's instructions, makes a row over it and calls for her sons. Bassianus is killed and Lavinia, after appealing in vain to Tamora's womanly feelings, is taken offstage to be raped. Quintus and Martius, perhaps drunk from the festivities, are tricked by Aaron into falling into the pit where Bassianus's body lies. Saturninus is brought on the scene and the frame-up completed by the production of the gold and the letter in front of the bewildered Titus and the angry Lucius.]



CLASSICAL REFERENCES:

Actaeon – He saw Diana naked and was turned into a stag by her. The original cuckold – see introduction to 4.3.

Cimmerian – Member of a tribe of robbers who lived in caves and avoided daylight.

Cocytus – A river in Hell.

Dian – Diana, goddess of hunting and chastity, to whom Bassianus sarcastically compares Tamora.

Dido – Queen of Carthage, who loved the “wandering prince” Aeneas.

Jove – Jupiter, king of the gods.

Pyramus – A Babylonian youth in Ovid's story of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, which inspired the much later *Romeo and Juliet*. Pyramus is in love with the beautiful virgin Thisbe, but finds her bloodstained veil; thinking she is dead, he kills himself.

Philomel – Philomela, rape victim who had her tongue cut out. For the full story see the introduction to the next scene. Aaron, with his knowledge of Roman literature, has clearly briefed Tamora's sons on what to do, and with Tamora's consent.

Saturn – Roman god of agriculture and time; those under his astrological influence were, as well as being prone to gloominess, unforgiving until avenged, as Saturninus is at the end of this scene.

Semiramis – See introduction to 2.1.

Venus – Adjective *veneréal*, Roman goddess of love.]

POINTS OF INTEREST. The central motif of the scene – the "loathsome pit" – has a shifting meaning. It begins as a possible place of refuge for Lavinia at 2.3.176, becomes Bassianus's tomb at 2.3.186, a hidden account of what is happening to Lavinia offstage throughout the Quintus and Martius episode, a metaphor for hell (e.g. at 2.3.236), an extension of the Andronici tomb from 1.1 (see 2.3.228) and finally a prison cell for Titus's wrongly suspected sons. Martius and Quintus fall into the pit because of unexplained problems with their sight and sleepiness. Perhaps the wood is very dark or they are drunk from the festivities; this edition takes the latter view, which seems to work better on stage. Whichever, it is hard to believe that these two were tough enough to outlive most of their brothers. Note also how Tamora changes her tune – that is, her tone and diction – in her descriptions of the place (2.3.10-29 and 2.3.91-108).

Among the Elizabethans adultery was a very common subject for humour. Men whose wives slept around were called "cuckolds", and described as having horns on their heads. Throughout the play you'll find jokes about horns and antlers; for example, at 2.3.67 *horning* referred both to an animal attacking with its horns and a wife cheating on her husband.]

[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.

[intelligence]

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 villainy.
And so repose, sweet gold, for their unrest

[in such poor terms]

[produce a trick]

[give birth to]

[Hides the gold]

That have their **alms** out of the empress' chest. [charity (he's stolen it)]

[Enter TAMORA]

TAMORA

My lovely Aaron, **wherefore look'st thou sad**^{2.3.10} [why do you look]

When everything does make a gleeful boast?

The birds chant melody on every bush;

The snakes lie rollèd in the cheerful sun;

The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,

And make a chequered 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;^{2.3.20}

And, after conflict such as was supposed

The wandering prince and Dido once enjoyed,

When with a happy storm they were surprised,

And curtained with a **counsel-keeping** cave, [≈ secret]

We may, each wreathèd 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.

*[They lie down together]

AARON

Madam, though Venus govern your desires,^{2.3.30}

Saturn is dominator over mine.

What signifies my **deadly-standing eye**,

[fixed killer's look]

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 –

[loving, erotic]

Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand;

Blood and revenge are hammering in my head.
Hark, Tamora, the empress of my soul,^{2.3.40}
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.^{2.3.50}

[judgement]

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.

[i.e. Pick a quarrel]

*[Aaron rises and exits.]

[Enter BASSIANUS and LAVINIA. *TAMORA rises, forgetting letter on ground.]

BASSIANUS

Who have we here? Rome's royal empress,
Unfurnished 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?

[Without her fine retinue]

TAMORA

Saucy controller of my private steps!^{2.3.60}
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-transformèd limbs,
Unmannerly intruder as thou art!

[≈ Cheeky snooper]

[Rude trespasser]

LAVINIA

Under your **patience**, gentle empress, [If you'll allow me]
 'Tis thought you have a goodly gift in **horning**, [cheating on men]
 And **to be doubted that** your Moor and you [≈ perhaps]
 Are **singled forth to try experiments**. [≈ selected for cross-breeding]
 Jove shield your husband from his hounds today!^{2.3.70}
 'Tis pity they should take him for a stag.

BASSIANUS

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

LAVINIA

And, being **intercepted** in your sport,^{2.3.80} [caught out]
 Great reason that my noble lord be **rated** [told off]
 For **sauciness**. I pray you let us hence, [impudence]
 And let her **joy** her raven-coloured love; [enjoy]
 This valley fits the purpose **passing** well. [rather]

BASSIANUS

The king my brother shall have notice of this.

LAVINIA

Aye, for these slips have made him **noted** long. [talked about]
 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?^{2.3.90}

TAMORA

Have I not reason, think you, to look pale?
These two have 'ticed me hither to this place.
A barren detested vale you see it is –
The trees, though summer, yet **forlorn** and lean,
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 showed me this abhorrèd pit,
They told me, here, at dead time of the night,
A thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes,^{2.3.100}
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 called me foul adulteress,
Lascivious Goth, and all the bitterest terms^{2.3.110}
That ever ear did hear to such effect –
And had you not by wondrous fortune come,
This vengeance on me had they executed.
Revenge it, as you love your mother's life,
Or be ye not henceforth called my children.

[in a bad way]
[deadly]

[hedgehogs]

[Sex-mad]

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 the **poniard**. You shall know, my boys,^{2.3.120} [dagger]
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, [≈ pampered pet]
Upon her **nuptial** vow, her loyalty, [wedding]
And with that **painted** hope braves your mightiness – [unreal]
And shall she carry this unto her grave?

CHIRON

An if she do, I would I were an eunuch. [if]
Drag hence her husband to some secret hole,
And make his dead trunk pillow to our lust.^{2.3.130}

TAMORA

But when ye have the honey we 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. [persuade]

DEMETRIUS

Listen, fair madam. Let it be your glory

To see her tears, but be your heart to them^{2.3.140}
As unrelenting flint to drops of rain.

LAVINIA

When did the tiger's young ones teach the dam? [mother]
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's 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! –^{2.3.150}
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.^{2.3.160} [stubborn]

TAMORA

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

LAVINIA

O Tamora, be called a gentle queen,
And with thine own hands kill me in this place!
For 'tis not life that I have begged so long – ^{2.3.170}
Poor I was slain when Bassianus died.

TAMORA

What begg'st thou, then? Fond woman, let me go. [Foolish]

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. ^{2.3.180}

DEMETRIUS

Away! For thou hast stayed us here too long. [kept]

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 BASSIANUS'S body into the pit; then exit with
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,^{2.3.190}
And let my **spleenful** sons this **trull** deflower. [lustful; tart]

[Exit]

[Re-enter AARON, with QUINTUS and MARTIUS. *He is plying them with drink]

AARON
Come on, my lords, **the better foot before** – [“best foot forward”]
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**. [≈ that means]

[*He takes a bottle from AARON, drinks, then passes it to MARTIUS]

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 fallen? What subtle hole is this,
Whose mouth is covered with rude-growing briars,
Upon whose leaves are drops of new-shed blood^{2.3.200}
As fresh as morning dew distilled 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 have a likely guess [through this]

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? ^{2.3.210}

[unholy]

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.

[unidentified]

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.

[truly perceptive]

QUINTUS

Aaron is gone, and my **compassionate** heart
Will not permit mine eyes once to behold
The thing **whereat** it trembles **by surmise**:
O, tell me who it is, for ne'er till now ^{2.3.220}
Was I a child to fear I know not what.

[emotion-filled]

[by which; to imagine]

MARTIUS

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

[fouled by]

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 ^{2.3.230} –
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.

[cruel]

QUINTUS

Reach me thy hand, that I may help thee out,
Or, wanting strength to do thee so much good,
I may be plucked into the swallowing womb
Of this deep pit – poor Bassianus' grave.^{2.3.240}
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 lose 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 leaped into it.
Say, who art thou that lately didst descend
Into this gaping hollow of the earth?

MARTIUS

The unhappy sons of old Andronicus,^{2.3.250}
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.

[hunting ground]

'Tis not an hour since I left them there.

MARTIUS

We know not where you left them all alive -

But, **out**, alas - here have we found him dead! [obviously]

[Re-enter TAMORA, with Attendants; TITUS ANDRONICUS and LUCIUS. *TITUS sees the letter and picks it up; TAMORA snatches it from him]

TAMORA

Where is my lord the king?

SATURNINUS

Here, Tamora, though grieved with killing grief. ^{2.3.260}

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,

[She hands over the letter.]

The **complot** of this timeless tragedy;
And wonder greatly that man's face can **fold**
In pleasing smiles such murderous tyranny.

[conspiracy]
[enclose]

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. ^{2.3.270}
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.^{2.3.280}

[He shows it]

SATURNINUS

[To TITUS] Two of thy whelps, fell curs of bloody kind, [cruel dogs]
Have here bereft my brother of his life. [robbed]
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

High emperor, upon my feeble knee
I beg this boon, with tears not lightly shed: [favour]
That this fell fault of my accursèd sons—^{2.3.290}
Accursèd 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

I did, my lord. Yet let me be their bail –
For, by my fathers' 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 murdered body, some the murderers.^{2.3.300}

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

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

[Exeunt severally. Attendants bearing the body]

[They leave the stage separately]

ACT 2 SCENE 4

Another part of the Forest.



[In this scene Tamora's sons have mutilated Lavinia to prevent her from speaking or writing about her ordeal, but they still continue to torment her. She is discovered by her uncle Marcus who, not knowing how to react, makes a long speech full of rhetoric, poetry and classical allusions. This play was written in the Renaissance, when lots of classical – ancient Greek and Roman – books were being rediscovered. It must have seemed to the young Shakespeare that the Romans were seriously hampered by the weight of their literary past and traditions, simply because of the amount of knowledge from them which had flooded the academic world.

CLASSICAL REFERENCES. Philomela was the daughter of the King of Athens and sister of Procne, wife of Tereus. Tereus raped Philomela and cut out her tongue so she couldn't denounce him, hiding her in a castle. However, she managed to send a tapestry (the "sampler") to Procne, who served up his son Itylus as food to him at a feast. In the version of the story which appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Philomela turns into a nightingale, escaping Tereus, who becomes a hoopoe. That Aaron knows the story and the pitfall of its plan can be seen from 2.3.43 – he's as well read as the Romans themselves. In Ovid "Titan" is the sun. The other reference is to the Thracian poet Orpheus, who hypnotized the three-headed watchdog of Hades, Cerberus, by playing music.

POINTS OF INTEREST. For the director there are two major challenges: to present Lavinia without the audience laughing, and having a Marcus holding forth without straining audience credulity, as to why he doesn't say or do anything more practical. There are similarities both in tone, diction and rhetoric between what Marcus says here and the reaction of Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy* to a scream in the night and his son Horatio hanging in the garden – "I did not slumber," he says, "therefore 'twas no dream" – but Hieronimo has more excuse

for his declamations since Horatio is dead. Peter Brook, in his famous 1955 version of the play, got rid of Marcus's speech completely.]

[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, [if]
Who 'twas that cut thy tongue and ravish'd thee.

CHIRON

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

DEMETRIUS

See how with signs and **tokens** she can **scrawl**. [symbols; 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!^{2.4.10}

[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 an eternal sleep!

Speak, gentle niece: what stern ungentle hands
 Hath lopped, and hewed, and made thy body bare
 Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments
 Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in,
 And might not gain so great a happiness^{2.4.20}
 As half thy love? Why dost not speak to me?
 Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,
 Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind,
 Doth rise and fall between thy rosèd lips,
 Coming and going with thy honey breath.
 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,^{2.4.30}
 Yet do thy cheeks look red as Titan's face,
 Blushing to be encountered with a cloud.
 Shall I speak for thee? Shall I say 'tis so?
 O, that I knew thy heart, and knew the beast,
 That I might rail at him, to ease my mind!
 Sorrow concealèd, like an oven stopped,
 Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is.
 Fair Philomela, why she but lost her tongue,
 And in a tedious sampler sewed her mind; [some intricate needlework]
 But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee.^{2.4.40} [means]
 A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,
 And he hath cut those pretty fingers off
 That could have better sewed than Philomel.
 O, had the monster seen those lily hands
 Tremble, like aspen leaves, upon a lute, [kind of stringed instrument]
 And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,
 He would not then have touched them for his life!
 Or had he heard the heavenly harmony
 Which that sweet tongue hath made,
 He would have dropped his knife, and fell asleep,^{2.4.50}
 As Cerberus at the Thracian poet's feet.
 Come, let us go, and make thy father blind,
 For such a sight will blind a father's eye.
 One hour's storm will drown the fragrant meads; [meadows]
 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 3 SCENE 1

Rome. A street.

[This is the scene where the problems pile up for Titus until he finally gets the message. He fails in his pleas for mercy for Quintus and Martius; he finds out Lucius has been banished; he sees Lavinia has been mutilated, has his own hand cut off... and realizes at long last that he has been tricked. But there is hope, as Lucius vows to raise an army among the Goths and attack Rome.



The generally accepted turning-point of the play is Titus's laughter at 3.1.263 – he's run out of tears, and becomes now the crazed leader of a vendetta.

CLASSICAL REFERENCES:

Etna – The famous, real, volcano in Sicily, the Italian island.

Limbo – A place next to hell but not in it, where good non-Christians and unbaptized children go. One of several Roman Catholic ideas in a play set in pre-Christian times.

Nilus – The River Nile, a symbol of overabundance to the Elizabethans.

Tarquin – The same last king of Rome who features elsewhere in this play. Because of the rape of Lucrece (Lucretia) by his son Sextus, and her subsequent suicide, he and his wife found themselves in 244 A.D. locked out of the city.

Troy – A symbol of great disaster for the Elizabethans, and one which features throughout the play.

POINTS OF INTEREST. In this edition Aaron remains secretly on stage after 3.1.204, so he can spy on the effects of his mischief. This is an editor's – rather than a director's – choice, since he tells us at 5.1.114-5, with no motive for lying, that he saw the heads and hand returned. Does he also hear Lucius's vow? It would have given him additional reason to go "as swift as swallow flies" to the empress's friends among the Goths (4.2.172-4) if he had. After Lucius exits, does he perhaps

gradually come out of hiding, silently rub his hands, then go offstage himself?]

[Enter Judges, Tribunes and Senators, with MARTIUS and QUINTUS bound, passing over the stage to the place of execution; TITUS going before, pleading]

TITUS

Hear me, grave fathers! Noble tribunes, stay!
For pity of mine age, whose youth was spent
In dangerous wars whilst you securely slept;
For all my blood in Rome's great quarrel shed;
For all the frosty nights that I have watched;
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,^{3.1.10}
Because they died in honour's lofty bed.

[TITUS lies down, and the Judges and others pass by him]

For these, tribunes, in the dust I write
My heart's deep languor and my soul's sad tears. [grief]
Let my tears stanch the earth's dry appetite; [satisfy]
My sons' sweet blood will make it shame and blush.

[Exeunt the Judges and others with the prisoners]

O earth, I will befriend thee more with rain
That shall distil from these two ancient urns, [i.e. my old eyes]
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,^{3.1.20}
And keep eternal spring-time on thy face,
So thou refuse to drink my dear sons' blood.

[Enter Lucius with his weapon drawn]

O reverend tribunes! O gentle aged men! [respected]

Unbind my sons, reverse the doom of death;
And let me say, that never wept before,
My tears are now **prevailing** orators.

[the strongest]

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!

[tell]

TITUS

Ah, Lucius, for thy brothers let me plead.^{3.1.30}
Grave tribunes, once more I **entreat of** you.

[beg]

LUCIUS

My gracious lord, no tribune hears you speak.

TITUS

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

[notice]

[pointlessly]

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.^{3.1.40}
When I do weep they humbly at my feet
Receive my tears, and seem to weep with me;
And were they but **attired in grave weeds**,
Rome could afford no tribunes 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.

[dressed in black]

[Rises]

But **wherefore stand'st thou** with thy weapon drawn? [why do you stand]

LUCIUS

To rescue my two brothers from their death,

For which attempt the judges have pronounced^{3.1.50}
My everlasting doom of banishment.

[lifelong sentence]

TITUS

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?

[provides]

[Enter MARCUS and LAVINIA]

MARCUS

Titus, prepare thy aged eyes to weep,
Or if not so, thy noble heart to break.^{3.1.60}
I bring consuming sorrow to thine age.

TITUS

Will it consume me? Let me see it then.

MARCUS

This was thy daughter.

TITUS

Why, Marcus, so she is.

LUCIUS

Aye me! This object kills me!

TITUS

Faint-hearted boy, arise, and look upon her.
Speak, my 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 cam'st;^{3.1.70}
And now, like Nilus, it disdaineth bounds.
Give me a sword – I'll chop off my hands too,

[≈ some kindling]

[won't be contained]

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.^{3.1.80}

LUCIUS

Speak, gentle sister, who hath martyred thee?

[brutalized]

MARCUS

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

[i.e. her tongue]

LUCIUS

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

MARCUS

O, thus I found her straying in the park,
 Seeking to hide herself, as doth the deer
 That hath received some unrecuring wound.^{3.1.90}

[uncurable]

TITUS

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.^{3.1.100}
 But that which gives my soul the greatest spurn
 Is dear Lavinia, dearer than my soul.

[Surrounded]

[Always waiting]

[kick]

Had I but seen thy picture in this plight
It would have maddened me. What shall I do
Now I behold thy lively body so?
Thou hast no hands to wipe away thy tears,
Nor tongue to tell me who hath martyred thee.
Thy husband he is dead, and for his death
Thy brothers are condemned, and dead by this.
Look, Marcus! Ah, son Lucius, look on her!^{3.1.110}
When I did name her brothers, then fresh tears
Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey dew
Upon a gathered lily almost withered.

MARCUS

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

TITUS

[To Lavinia] 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,^{3.1.120}
Or make some sign how I may do thee ease.
Shall thy good uncle, and thy brother Lucius,
And thou, and I, sit round about some fountain,
Looking all downwards, to behold our cheeks
How they are stained, like meadows yet not dry,
With miry slime left on them by a flood?
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?^{3.1.130}
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 device of further misery,
To make us wondered at in time to come.

[boggy]

LUCIUS

Sweet father, cease your tears, for at your grief

See how my wretched sister sobs and weeps.

MARCUS

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

[Gives him handkerchief]

TITUS

Ah, Marcus, Marcus! Brother, well I wot
Thy napkin cannot drink a tear of mine,^{3.1.140}
For thou, poor man, hast drowned it with thine own.

[know]
[handkerchief]

LUCIUS

Ah, my Lavinia, I will wipe thy cheeks.

TITUS

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 be-wet,
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!

[heaven]

[Enter AARON the Moor alone]

AARON

Titus Andronicus, my lord the emperor^{3.1.150}
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.

[back here]

TITUS

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.^{3.1.160}

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

Which of your hands hath not defended Rome,
And reared aloft the bloody battle-axe,
Writing destruction on the enemy's casque?
O, none of both but are of high desert.^{3.1.170}
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.

[helmet]

AARON

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

MARCUS

My hand shall go.

LUCIUS

By heaven, it shall not go!

TITUS

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

[i.e. his old hands]
[suitable; weeding]

LUCIUS

Sweet father, if I shall be thought thy son,
Let me redeem my brothers both from death.^{3.1.180}

MARCUS

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

TITUS

Agree between you – I will spare my hand.

LUCIUS

Then I'll go fetch an axe.

MARCUS

But I will use the axe.

[Exeunt LUCIUS and MARCUS]

TITUS

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

AARON

[Aside] If that be called deceit, I will be honest,
And never whilst I live deceive men so -
But I'll deceive you in another sort,
And that you'll say ere half an hour pass.^{3.1.190}

[way]
[before]

[He cuts off TITUS'S hand *with his sword]

[Re-enter LUCIUS and MARCUS]

TITUS

Now stay your strife – what shall be is despatched. [done]
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.^{3.1.200}
[Aside] Their heads I mean. O, how this villainy
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.

[*AARON pretends to exit, but conceals himself in the discovery space]

TITUS

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, who kneels] 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,^{3.1.210} [sky]
And stain the sun with fog, as sometime clouds
When they do hug him in their melting bosoms.

MARCUS

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

TITUS

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

MARCUS

But yet let reason govern thy **lament**. [sorrow]

TITUS

If there were reason for these miseries,
Then into limits could I bind my woes.
When heaven doth weep, doth not the earth o'erflow?^{3.1.220}
If the winds rage, doth not the sea wax mad,
Threatening the **welkin** with his big-swol'n face?
And wilt thou have a reason for this **coil**? [turmoil]
I am the sea – hark, how her sighs do flow!
She is the weeping **welkin**, I the earth: [sky]
Then must my sea be movèd with her sighs;
Then must my earth with her continual tears
Become a deluge, overflowed and drowned;
For why my bowels cannot hide her woes,
But like a drunkard must I vomit them.^{3.1.230}

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. TITUS and LAVINIA rise]

MESSENGER

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

[entertainment]

[Exit]

MARCUS

Now let hot Etna cool in Sicily,^{3.1.240}
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.

[mocked]

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!

[because of it]

[LAVINIA kisses him]

MARCUS

Alas, poor heart, that kiss is comfortless
As frozen water to a starvèd snake.^{3.1.250}

TITUS

When will this fearful slumber have an end?

MARCUS

Now farewell, **flatt'ry** – die, Andronicus.
Thou dost not slumber: see thy two sons' heads,
Thy warlike hand, thy mangled daughter here,
Thy other banished son with this dear sight
Struck pale and bloodless; and thy brother – aye,
Even like a stony image, cold and numb.

[self-delusion]

Ah! Now no more will I control thy griefs –
Rent off thy silver hair, thy other hand
Gnawing with thy teeth, and be this dismal sight^{3.1.260}
The closing up of our most wretched eyes.
Now is a time to storm - why art thou still?

[Tear]

TITUS

Ha, ha, ha!

MARCUS

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

[at a time like this]

TITUS

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,^{3.1.270}
And threat me I shall never come to bliss
Till all these mischiefs be returned 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.

[take over]

[MARCUS, LUCIUS and LAVINIA surround TITUS. They make a vow]

The vow is made. Come, brother, take a head;
And in this hand the other will I bear.
And Lavinia, thou shalt be employed: ^{- 3.1.290}
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.

[Hurry]

[Exeunt TITUS, MARCUS, and LAVINIA]

LUCIUS

Farewell, Andronicus, my noble father -
The woeful'st man that ever lived in Rome.
Farewell, proud Rome, till Lucius come again –
He loves his pledges dearer than his life.
Farewell, Lavinia, my noble sister –
O, would thou wert as thou to-fore 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]

ACT 3 SCENE 2

Rome. A Room in TITUS'S House. A banquet set out, with Servants present.



[This scene was added to the play at a later date by Shakespeare (perhaps, from the fluent, confident style, about 1597-9). Titus's family sit down together to eat a meal to strengthen them for revenge, but the increasingly disturbed Titus talks of suicide as an option for Lavinia. Marcus replies with an unfortunate comment about hands, which makes Titus even more upset until he realizes he is beginning to understand Lavinia's gestures. Marcus again, however, upsets Titus by killing a fly with his knife, but he retrieves the situation by saying the fly looked "ill-favoured" like Aaron, which leads to a renewed attack on the fly by Titus. The scene ends with Titus offering to read to Lavinia "sad stories" from the past.

Why did Shakespeare insert this additional scene? There are a number of possibilities:

- a) He wanted to cash in on a fashion for "mad" scenes. Adding scenes to spice up revenge tragedies was not unknown –in 1602 additional scenes were added to *The Spanish Tragedy*.
- b) He felt the need to stress the fact that after the execution of Titus's sons and the loss of his hand the old man was becoming quite mad.
- c) He wanted to insert an interval into the play. There had to be an interval here because in the next scene the same actors appear, and there would have been no point putting two scenes together with the same actors – Shakespeare never does this.
- d) Titus in this scene vows to "wrest an alphabet" from Lavinia's "martyred signs" before eventually sitting down to read with her. This connects masterfully with what happens in the next scene, where Lavinia combines physical gesture with printed words to tell her story. This reminds us of the themes of the play, e.g. that words are precious but can be worthless without actions.
- e) The audience is given more time to feel sorry for Lavinia, who is particularly pitiable here.

- f) Perhaps after all the grimness he felt some humour needed to be injected, and the interaction between the brothers can be played as a comic double act.
- g) In being presented as a family meal it shows the Andronici producing a united front in adversity.
- h) It foreshadows the final fatal banquet.

CLASSICAL REFERENCES. Lines 3.2.27-8 refer to a passage in the epic poem *The Aeneid* (2.2) by the Roman author Virgil. In it Dido, the Queen of Carthage, asks the Trojan prince Aeneas to tell her the story of the fall of Troy. Aeneas's wife was called Lavinia; after his death she fled from her son-in-law to the woods, where she gave birth.

POINTS OF INTEREST. Note how the addition of this scene makes Aaron's comment at 5.1.141-2 ("Tut, I have done a thousand dreadful things As willingly as one would kill a fly") charged with irony. (Another name for the Devil is "Beelzebub", which means "Lord of the Flies"). Also, Shakespeare uses the idea of telling sad stories when the chips are down (see 3.2.82-3) in later plays, most notably in his tragic masterpiece *King Lear*, where the Titus-like Lear suggests that he and his daughter Cordelia tell each other "old tales" while in prison (at 5.3.12).]

[Enter TITUS, MARCUS, LAVINIA, and YOUNG LUCIUS]

TITUS

So so, now sit, and look you eat no more
Than will preserve just so much strength in us,
As will revenge these bitter **woes** of ours. [sorrows]
Marcus, **unknit that sorrow-wreathen knot**: [i.e. unfold your arms]
Thy niece and I, poor creatures, want our hands,
And cannot **passionate** our tenfold grief [express]
With folded arms. This poor right hand of mine
Is left to **tyrannize** upon my breast; [beat (like a tyrant's)]
And, when my heart, all mad with misery,
Beats in this hollow prison of my flesh,^{3.2.10}
Then thus [Strikes his breast] 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. ^{3.2.20}

[drain]
 [sorrowing]

MARCUS

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

[Shame]

TITUS

How now! Has sorrow made thee **dote** already?
 Why, Marcus, no man should be mad but I:
 What violent hands can she lay on her life?
 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. ^{3.2.30}
 Fie, fie, how frantically I **square** my talk,
 As if we should forget we had no hands
 If Marcus did not name the word of hands.
 Come, let's **fall to**, and, gentle girl, eat this.
 Here is no drink? Hark, Marcus, what she says—
 I can interpret all her martyred signs—
 She says she drinks no other drink but tears,
Brewed with her sorrow, **mashed** upon her cheeks.
 Speechless complainer, I will learn thy thought;
 In thy dumb action will I be as perfect ^{3.2.40}
 As begging hermits in their holy prayers.
 Thou shalt not sigh, nor hold thy stumps to heaven,
 Nor **wink**, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make a sign,
 But I of these will **wrest** an alphabet,
 And by **still** practice learn to know thy meaning.

[go soft in the head]

[why do you insist on]

[leave off the subject]

[In case]

[shape]

[tuck in]

[beermaking terms]

[close your eyes]

[work out]

[constant]

YOUNG LUCIUS

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

MARCUS

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

TITUS

Peace, tender sapling—thou art made of tears,^{3.2.50}
And tears will quickly melt thy life away.

[MARCUS strikes the dish with a knife]

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

MARCUS

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

TITUS

Out on thee, murderer! Thou kill'st my heart;
Mine eyes are cloyed with view of tyranny. [bloated]
A deed of death done on the innocent
Becomes not Titus' brother. Get thee gone— [Doesn't suit]
I see thou art not for my company.

MARCUS

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

TITUS

But how if that fly had a father and mother?^{3.2.60}
*How would they hang their slender gilded wings
And buzz lamenting doings in the air! [their sad business]
Poor harmless fly,
That with his pretty buzzing melody
Came here to make us merry—and thou hast killed him.

MARCUS

Pardon me, sir: 'twas a black ill-favoured fly, [ugly]
Like to the empress' Moor—therefore I killed him.

TITUS

O, O, O!
Then pardon me for reprehending thee, [having a go at you]

For thou hast done a charitable deed. ^{3.2.70}

Give me thy knife: I will **insult on** him,

[put one over]

Flattering myself as if it were the Moor

[Pretending]

Come hither purposely to poison me –

[Stabs fly] There's for thyself, and that's for Tamora –

Ah, **sirrah!**

[‘you little devil’]

Yet I think we are not brought so low

But that between us we can kill a fly

That comes in likeness of a coal-black Moor.

MARCUS

Alas, poor man! Grief has **so wrought** on him,

[had such an effect]

He takes false shadows for true substances. ^{3.2.80}

TITUS

[To Servants] Come, take away. **[To LAVINIA]** Lavinia, go with me –

I'll to **thy closet**, and go read with thee

[your own room]

Sad stories **chancèd** in the times of old.

[which happened]

[To YOUNG LUCIUS] Come, boy, and go with me - thy sight is young,

And thou shalt read when mine begin to **dazzle**. [blur (with tears or age)]

[Exeunt]

[In later stagings of the original play an interval probably took place after this scene.]



From an old engraving of the opening of Act 4 Scene 1

ACT4 SCENE 1

Rome. In front of TITUS'S house.



[If we assume that Shakespeare wrote the previous scene to provide a suitably bridged interval we can see the thematic link between that and this scene: the reading which Titus hope will provide some comfort leads to a communication between Lavinia and her relatives. She has found a

book – the very one that Marcus cites when he finds her in the forest, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and its tale of Philomela – and can now show what happened to her. With the culprits identified, Titus sends young Lucius on a mission to them.

CLASSICAL REFERENCES. Unsurprisingly this scene is heavy with them, though they are mostly from the two relevant stories of Philomela and Lucrece:

Apollo – Chosen in Marcus’s list at 4.1.65 in his capacities of god of justice and prophecy. See below *Pallas*, *Jove* and *Mercury*.

Cornelia – Virtuous woman famed for the education she gave her “only jewels” of sons, known as the Gracchi, who became heroes of the people.

Hecuba of Troy – See introduction to 1.1. After blinding Polymnestor with her bare hands she went insane.

Jove – Jupiter forms part of Marcus’s list in his roles of guardian of justice and virtue, and punisher of wrong-doers.

Lord Junius Brutus – With popular support he threw Tarquin and his family out of Rome after the Rape of Lucrece.

Mercury – As well as divine messenger he was the god of cunning.

Ovid’s Metamorphosis – Ovid was a celebrated Roman author and friend of Virgil who enjoyed great success before running foul of the Emperor and (like Lucius) getting himself banished. *Metamorphoses*, a series of stories in verse about things turning into other things, is his masterpiece. Shakespeare’s spelling shows he is thinking of Arthur Golding’s 1565-7 translation into English. Many of the ideas in this play come from Ovid. Philomela, by the way, becomes a nightingale.

Pallas – Athene, the Roman Minerva, goddess of wisdom as elsewhere, but here also goddess of war.

Philomel – At 4.1.47 Lavinia is fully identified with Philomela. See also introductions to 2.3 and 2.4.

Sibyl – Prophetess who wrote her prophecies on leaves placed in a certain order outside her cave, and were prone to being blown away.

Tarquin – Yet another aspect of the story of the Rape of Lucrece is shown at 4.1.63-4: Tarquin's sneaky approach to Lucrece's chamber was legendary and used by Shakespeare elsewhere, e.g. when Macbeth approaches Duncan's room "with his stealthy pace"/ With Tarquin's ravishing strides" (*Macbeth* 2.1.54-5). See also introductions to 2.1 and 3.1.

Tereus – The villain of the Philomela story, identified at 4.1.48 as being guilty of treason – he betrayed his father-in-law and his wife, as well as Philomela.

Tully's Orator – Marcus Tullius Cicero, more commonly known as Cicero, was renowned as a master of oratory (rhetoric) the art of persuasion through language. He failed to persuade Mark Antony, though, who had him killed.]

POINTS OF INTEREST. Having previously shown its weakness in its blunting of emotional response, the literature-based tradition of Rome now shows its strength. Chiron and Demetrius foolishly believe that they can cut off the flow of words that Roman communication depends on, and that they can get away with their policy of instant gratification of their base desires, but here – as in the next scene – they show they have seriously underestimated the power of Rome's intellectual achievement. Note too how Shakespeare cheekily brings the very book he plunders for his plot physically on to the stage.

[Enter TITUS and MARCUS Then enter YOUNG LUCIUS running, with books under his arm, and LAVINIA running after him]

YOUNG LUCIUS

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

[Drops books]

MARCUS

Stand by me, Lucius – do not fear thine aunt.

TITUS

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

YOUNG LUCIUS

Aye, when my father was in Rome she did.

MARCUS

What means my niece Lavinia by these signs?

TITUS

Fear her not, Lucius – somewhat doth she mean.
See, Lucius, see how much she makes of thee:^{4.1.10}

Somewhither would she have thee go with her.

[Somewhere]

Ah, boy, Cornelia never with more care
Read to her sons than she hath read to thee
Sweet poetry and Tully's *Orator*.

MARCUS

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^{4.1.20}
Ran mad for sorrow: that made me to fear;
Although, my lord, I know my noble aunt
Loves me as dear as e'er my mother did,
And would not, but in fury, fright my youth:
Which made me down to throw my books, and fly,--
Causeless, perhaps: but pardon me, sweet aunt:
And, madam, if my uncle Marcus go,
I will most willingly attend your ladyship.

MARCUS

Lucius, I will.

[LAVINIA turns over with her stumps the books which Lucius has let fall]

TITUS

How now, Lavinia! Marcus, what means this?^{4.1.30}
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 skilled:
Come and take choice of all my library,
And so beguile thy sorrow, till the heavens
Reveal the damned contriver of this deed.
Why lifts she up her arms in sequence thus?

MARCUS

I think she means that there were more than one
Confederate in the fact—aye, more there was,
Or else to heaven she heaves them for revenge.^{4.1.40}

TITUS

Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?

YOUNG LUCIUS

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

MARCUS

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

TITUS

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

MARCUS

See, brother, see – note how she quotes the leaves.^{4.1.50}

TITUS

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

MARCUS

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

TITUS

Give signs, sweet girl – for here are none but friends –^{4.1.60}
What Roman lord it was durst do the deed,
Or slunk not Saturnine, as Tarquin **erst**, [once]
That left the camp to sin in Lucrece' bed?

MARCUS

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.^{4.1.70}

[He writes his name with his staff, guiding 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 discovered 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, guides it with her stumps, and

writes.]

TITUS

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

'*Stuprum* – Chiron -- Demetrius'

[Rape]

MARCUS

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

TITUS

Magni Dominator poli,^{4.1.80}
Tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus vides?

[Lord of the great heavens,
Are you slow to hear and
see crimes ?]

MARCUS

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 exclams,
My lord, kneel down with me; Lavinia, kneel;
And kneel, sweet boy, the Roman Hector's hope;
And swear with me – as, with the woeful fere
And father of that chaste dishonoured dame,
Lord Junius Brutus sware for Lucrece' rape –^{4.1.90}
That we will prosecute, by good advice,
Mortal revenge upon these traitorous Goths,
And see their blood, or die with this reproach.

[hero of Troy]

TITUS

'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 alone;^{4.1.100}
And, come, I will go get a leaf of brass,

[if]
[cubs]
[mother]

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 our lesson, then? Boy, what say you?

YOUNG LUCIUS

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

MARCUS

Ay, that's my boy! thy father hath full oft
For his ungrateful country done the like. ^{4.1.110}

YOUNG LUCIUS

And, uncle, so will I, an if I live.

TITUS

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

YOUNG LUCIUS

Aye, with my dagger in their bosoms, grandsire.

TITUS

No, boy, not so – I'll teach thee another **course**. [way]
Lavinia, come. Marcus, look to my house –
Lucius and I'll go brave it at the court. ^{4.1.120}
Aye, marry will we, sir –and we'll be waited on.

[Exeunt TITUS, LAVINIA, and YOUNG LUCIUS]

MARCUS

O heavens, can you hear a good man groan,
And not relent, or not **compassion** him? [pity]
Marcus, attend him in his **ecstasy**, [madness]

That hath more scars of sorrow in his heart
Than foemen's marks upon his battered shield;
But yet so just that he will not revenge:--
Revenge the heavens for old Andronicus!

[enemies']

[Heaven take revenge]

[Exit]

ACT 4 SCENE 2

Rome. A Room in the Palace.

[In this scene Chiron and Demetrius are visited by Young Lucius, who has agreed to carry out his grandfather's plan and gives the brothers a gift of weapons with an accompanying verse showing their guilt has been discovered. They don't understand it; Aaron does. A Nurse arrives with Aaron's child by Tamora, who has issued an order to kill it. But Aaron has other ideas...



CLASSICAL REFERENCES.

Alcides – Hercules, who helped *Typhon* and the other Titans beat the gods.

Enceladus –fearsome Titan who attacked the gods under the leadership of *Typhon*, but was struck down by Jupiter's thunderbolt. He ignited the volcano of Mount Etna with his breath.

Horace– famed Roman poet.

Typhon – 100-headed fire-breathing, hurricane-raising Titan or giant who led an assault on Mount Olympus. In Egyptian mythology he was the brother of Osiris and the source of all evil.

POINTS OF INTEREST. What does Titus's message mean? Something along the lines of, "We know you're the criminals, and in league with the Moor, so take these weapons because you're going to need them." Chiron and Demetrius never rise above the stupid, thinking Titus is simply creeping up to them, but Aaron in learning and intelligence is a cunning match for the Romans.

Although Aaron's protective stance towards his offspring is often used to prove he has a human side, his motives can also be seen as egotistical. His final speech seems to suggest the boy will be like a perverse version of the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, who lived in a cave and were suckled by a she-wolf. Perhaps he simply sees the boy as a means of perpetuating his own evil influences on Rome – the goat that Aaron says will suckle his child was a symbol of the devil to the Elizabethans.

Not enough time has passed for Tamora to have the child. This is a technique called “double time”, where two time scales run alongside each other, without the audience realizing. Another example is Lavinia’s accusation that Tamora’s adultery has made Saturninus “noted long” (2.3.86) when they’ve only been married one night!]

[Enter AARON, DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, at one door; at another door 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

Aye, 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? [Many thanks]

YOUNG LUCIUS

[Aside] That you are both **deciphered**, that's the news, [found out]
For villains marked with rape. [To them] May it please you:
My grandsire, **well advised**, hath sent by me^{4.2.10} [clear-headed]
The goodliest weapons of his armoury
To **gratify** your honourable youth, [give pleasure to]
The hope of Rome – for so he bid me say –
And so I do, and with his gifts present
Your lordships, that, whenever you have need,
You may be armed and **appointed well**. [well equipped]
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,*^{4.2.20} [The man of upright life and
Non eget Mauri jaculis, nec arcu.' free from crime does not need the
javelins or bows of the Moor]

CHIRON

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

AARON

Aye, just – a verse in Horace – right you have it. [Yes, right]

[Aside] Now, what a thing it is to be an ass!

Here's no sound jest! The old man hath found their guilt [It's a bad joke]

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

But were our witty empress well afoot, [up and about]
She would applaud Andronicus' conceit –^{4.2.30} [trick]

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. [Suck up to us]

AARON

Had he not reason, Lord Demetrius?

Did you not use his daughter very friendly?^{4.2.40}

DEMETRIUS

I would we had a thousand Roman dames

At such a bay, by turn to serve our lust. [Cornered like that]

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 belovèd mother in her pains.

[i.e. labour pains]

AARON

[Aside] Pray to the devils – the gods have given us over!
[Flourish within]

DEMETRIUS

Why do the emperor's trumpets flourish thus?

CHIRON

Belike for joy – the emperor hath a son. ^{4.2.50}

[Maybe]

DEMETRIUS

Soft! Who comes here?

[Quiet]

[Enter a NURSE, with a black CHILD in her arms.]

NURSE

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

AARON

Well, 'Moor' or less – or ne'er a 'whit' at all!
Here Aaron is, and what with Aaron now?

[anything, a white man]

NURSE

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

AARON

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

NURSE

O, that which I would hide from heaven's eye,
Our empress' shame and stately Rome's disgrace!^{4.2.60}
She is delivered, lords – she is delivered.

AARON

To whom?

NURSE

I mean, she's 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! [mother]

NURSE

A joyless, dismal, black, and sorrowful issue:
Here is the babe, as loathsome as a toad
Amongst the fairest breeders of our **clime**: [region]
The empress sends it thee, thy stamp, thy seal,
And bids thee christen it with thy dagger's point.^{4.2.70}

AARON

Zounds, ye whore! Is black **so base a hue**? [such a worthless colour]
Sweet ***blowth**, you are a beauteous blossom sure. [bloom, bawler,
naked one]

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 damned her loathed choice!
Accursed the offspring of so foul a fiend!

CHIRON

It shall not live. ^{4.2.80}

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. [skewer]
Nurse, give it me – my sword shall soon despatch 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? [Stop]
Now, by **the burning tapers** of the sky, [i.e. the stars]
That shone so brightly when this boy was got, ^{4.2.90}
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! [bloody]
 Ye white-limed walls! Ye alehouse painted signs!
 Coal-black is better than another hue,
 In that it scorns to bear another hue. ^{4.2.100}
 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. [washes]
 Tell the empress from me I am **of age** [old enough]
 To keep mine own, excuse it how she can.

DEMETRIUS

Wilt thou betray thy noble mistress thus?

AARON

My mistress is my mistress – this my self,
 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, ^{4.2.110} [despite]
 Or some of you shall **smoke** for it in Rome. [be burned]

DEMETRIUS

By this our mother is for ever shamed.

CHIRON

Rome will despise her for this foul **escape**. [affair, birth]

NURSE

The emperor, in his rage, will **doom her** death. [condemn her to]

CHIRON

I blush to think upon this **ignomy**. [scandal]

AARON

Why, there's the privilege your beauty bears:
Fie, treacherous hue, that will betray with blushing [Shame on you]
 The close enacts and counsels of thy heart!
 Here's a young lad framed of another **leer**: [complexion]
 Look how the black slave smiles upon the father, ^{4.2.120}
 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 your womb where you imprisoned 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.

[same]

[has been freed]

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. ^{4.2.130}
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. [They sit] Now talk at pleasure of your safety.

DEMETRIUS

[To Nurse] How many women saw this child of his?

AARON

Why, so, brave lords! When we join in league
I am a lamb, but if you brave the Moor,
The chafèd boar, the mountain lioness,
The ocean swells not so as Aaron storms.
[To Nurse] But say, again, how many saw the child? ^{4.2.140}

[maddened]

NURSE

Cornelia the midwife and myself,
And no one else but the delivered empress.

AARON

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

[Stabs her, and she dies]

Weke, weke! – so cries a pig prepared to the spit. [Squeak]

DEMETRIUS

What mean'st thou, Aaron? *Wherefore* didst thou this? [Why]

AARON

O Lord, sir, 'tis a *deed of policy*. [act of pragmatism]

Shall she live to betray this guilt of ours,
A long-tongued babbling gossip? No, lords, no! ^{4.2.150}

And now be it known to you my full intent:

Not far, one Muly 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, [Negotiate]

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; ^{4.2.160}

And let the emperor *dandle him* for his own. [fuss over him as]

Hark ye, lords – ye see I have given her *physic*. [Listen; medicine]

[Pointing to the NURSE]

And you *must needs bestow* her funeral – [should provide]

The fields are near, and you are *gallant grooms*. [brave lads]

This done, see that you take no longer days,

But send the midwife *presently* to me. [straightaway]

The midwife and the nurse well made away,

Then let the ladies *tattle* what they please. [gossip]

CHIRON

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

DEMETRIUS

For this care of Tamora, ^{4.2.170}
Herself and hers are highly bound to thee.

[Exeunt DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, bearing off the dead NURSE]

AARON

Now to the Goths, as swift as swallow flies,
There to dispose this treasure in mine arms,
And secretly to greet the empress' friends.

Come on, you thick-lipped slave, I'll **bear you hence**, [carry you there]
For it is you that **puts us to our shifts**. [motivates me]

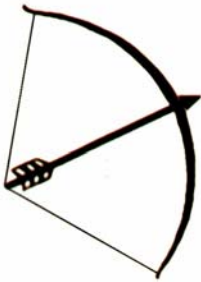
I'll make you feed on berries and on roots,
And feed on curds and whey, and suck the goat,

And **cabin** in a cave, and bring you up [lodge]
To be a warrior and command a camp. ^{4.2.180}

[Exit]

ACT 4 SCENE 3

Rome. A public Place.



[In this scene Titus gets his family and friends to fire arrows (with messages attached) up to heaven to call on the gods for justice. Marcus instead tells them to fire into the Emperor's court. In Shakespeare's day the arrows would either have been fired out of the open-topped theatre (no "health and safety" then!) or at signs-of-the-zodiac decorations on the theatre itself. A "Clown" (a country bumpkin) appears, on his way to bribe the people's tribunal, showing how corrupt Rome has become. Titus at first thinks the Clown has brought his reply from the gods; then he pays him to take a knife, wrapped in a letter (a "supplication" or "oration" – a request or petition) to Saturninus. The Clown would have been funny in Shakespeare's day, but his jokes are mostly lost on us now. Two examples: he mishears "Jupiter" as "gibbeter" (a maker of gallows); he misunderstands "with a grace" (gracefully) to mean "with a mealtime prayer".

CLASSICAL REFERENCES:

Acheron – A river of Hades.

Apollo – God of the sun, or reason.

Aries – Zodiac sign of the Ram.

Cyclops – A one-eyed giant.

Jove or *Jupiter* – Most powerful of the gods.

Mars – God of war.

Mercury – Messenger of the gods.

Pallas or *Athene* – Goddess of wisdom and virginity.

Pluto – God of the Underworld, where the dead go.

Saturn – God of revenge (among other things).

Taurus – Zodiac sign of the Bull.

Virgo – Zodiac sign of the Virgin.

POINTS OF INTEREST. In this scene the cuckold Saturninus is compared to

Taurus and Aries – the Bull and the Ram, which both have horns – because Aaron is sleeping with his wife Tamora. See introduction to 2.3. For similarities with *The Spanish Tragedy* see *Sources of the Play*.]

[Enter TITUS, bearing arrows with letters at the ends of them; with him MARCUS, YOUNG LUCIUS, and other gentlemen, with bows]

TITUS

Come, Marcus, come. Kinsmen, this is the way.

Sir boy, let me see your archery;

Look ye draw home enough, and 'tis there straight.

Terras Astrea reliquit: [Justice has left the earth]

Be you remembered, Marcus, she's gone, she's fled. [Remember]

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; [i.e. Justice]

Yet there's as little justice as at land.

No. Publius and Sempronius, you must do it –^{4.3.10}

'Tis you must dig with mattock and with spade, [kind of pickaxe]

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 [When; votes or prayers]

On him that thus doth tyrannize o'er me.^{4.3.20} [i.e. Saturninus]

Go, get you gone and pray be careful all,

And leave you not a man-of-war unsearched: [warship]

This wicked emperor may have shipped her hence;

And, kinsmen, then we may go pipe for justice.

MARCUS

O Publius, is not this a heavy case,

To see thy noble uncle thus distract? [distracted or distraught]

PUBLIUS

Therefore, my lords, 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.^{4.3.30}

[humour him]
[produces]

MARCUS

Kinsmen, his sorrows are past remedy -
*But rather hope my banished nephew might
Join with the Goths; and with revengeful war
Take wreak on Rome for this ingratitude -
And vengeance on the traitor Saturnine!

[revenge]

TITUS

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 employed,^{4.3.40}
He thinks, with Jove in heaven, or somewhere else,
So that perforce you must needs stay a time.

[Certainly]

[maybe; wait a bit]

TITUS

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,^{4.3.50}
We will solicit heaven, and move the gods
To send down Justice for to wreak our wrongs.
Come, to this gear. You are a good archer, Marcus.

[since]

[He gives them the arrows]

'Ad Jovem' that's for you; here, 'Ad Apollinem';
'Ad Martem' that's for myself.

[To Jove, Apollo]
[To Mars]

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. ^{4.3.60}
There's not a god left unsolicited.

[might as well]
[let go when I ask]

MARCUS

Kinsmen, shoot all your shafts into the court:
We will afflict the emperor in his pride.

TITUS

Now, masters, draw. [They shoot] O, well **said**, Lucius! [done]
Good boy, in Virgo's lap! Give it Pallas!

MARCUS

My lord, I aim a mile beyond the moon:
Your letter is with Jupiter by this.

[*A bit of rubble falls on the stage]

TITUS

Ha! ha!
Publius, Publius, hast thou done?
See, see, thou hast shot off one of Taurus' horns.

MARCUS

This was the sport, my lord: when Publius shot, ^{4.3.70}
The Bull, being **galled**, gave Aries such a knock
That down fell both the Ram's horns in the court;
And who should find them but the empress' villain?
She laughed, and told the Moor he should not choose
But give them to his master for a present.

[annoyed]

TITUS

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?

[=You, boy!]

CLOWN

Ho, the gibbet-maker? He says that he hath taken^{4.3.80} them down again, for the man must not be hanged till the next week.

TITUS

But what says Jupiter, I ask thee?

CLOWN

Alas, sir, I know not "Jubbeter" - I never drank with him in all my life! [**jubbe = container for liquor*]

TITUS

Why, villain, art not thou the carrier?

CLOWN

Aye, of my pigeons, sir – nothing else.

TITUS

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^{4.3.90} days. Why, I am going with my pigeons to the tribunal plebs, to take up a matter of brawl betwixt my uncle and one of the emperal's men.

MARCUS

[*To Titus*] 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. [*petition*]

TITUS

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. ^{4.3.100}

[*Clown backs away]

TITUS

Sirrah, come hither: make no more ado,
But give your pigeons to the emperor.
By me thou shalt have justice at his hands.
Hold, hold – meanwhile here's money for thy charges.
Give me pen and ink. [He writes]
Sirrah, can you with a grace deliver up a supplication?

CLOWN

Aye, sir.

TITUS

Then here is a supplication for you. [Gives letter]
And when you come to him, at the first approach
you must kneel; then kiss his foot, then deliver up ^{4.3.110}
your pigeons; and then look for your reward. I'll be
at hand, sir; see you do it bravely. [Takes hold of Clown]

CLOWN

I warrant you, sir - let me alone! [promise]

TITUS

Sirrah, hast thou a knife? Come let me see it.
[To Marcus] Here, Marcus, fold it in the oration.
[To Clown] For thou must hold it like a humble suppliant.
And when thou hast given it to the emperor,
Knock at my door, and tell me what he says.

CLOWN

God be with you, sir, I will.

TITUS

Come, Marcus, let us go. Publius, follow me. ^{4.3.120}

[Exeunt]

ACT 4 SCENE 4

Rome. A State Room at the Palace.

[The Andronicus family's attack on Saturninus's court sends the emperor into a fury, and it's the noose for the poor Clown when he hands over the tricked-out letter. As if things couldn't get any worse, Aemilius announces the approach of Titus's surviving son Lucius at head of the Goth army. But Tamora has a cunning plan...

CLASSICAL REFERENCES. Coriolanus (4.4.67) was the subject of a later play by Shakespeare. After being expelled from Rome he joined forces with his former enemy and marched on the city, camping five miles outside it. The Romans tried to make peace with him, but he remained stubborn, and it was only the intervention of his family which persuaded him not to attack. The mention of the name shows how Aemilius has thought the situation through.

POINTS OF INTEREST. As with the rest of this play, the use of imagery in this scene points forward to the mature Shakespeare, with clever motifs and extended metaphors. Look, for example, at 4.4.81-93: here Tamora begins by striking the sun/gnat metaphor, follows it with the brilliant eagle/small birds one, then creates a motif of sheep diseases to suggest that Titus, like the people of Rome, is a sheep, and therefore easily led to slaughter. *Gid*, adjective *giddy*, is a disease which sends sheep mad, while *rot*, adjective *rotted*, is another which poisons their livers when they eat too many "honey-stalks", Tamora's symbol for the flattering words she is going to use to trap Titus. Saturninus has already called himself Titus's "slaughterman" – which besides meaning an executioner was the term for someone who killed sheep for the butcher.]



[Enter SATURNINUS, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON and attendants. SATURNINUS carries in his hand the arrows that TITUS shot at him]

SATURNINUS

Why, lords, what wrongs are these! Was ever seen

An emperor in Rome thus **overborne** – [oppressed]
 Troubled, confronted thus – and, for the extent
 Of legal justice, used in such contempt?
 My lords, you know – as know the **mighty** gods – [powerful]
 However these disturbers of our peace
Buzz in the people's ears, there **naught** hath passed – [Whisper; nothing]
But even with law – against the wilful sons [Except in line]
 Of old Andronicus. And what and if
 His sorrows have so overwhelmed his wits,^{4.4.10}
 Shall we be thus afflicted in his **wreaks**, [acts of revenge]
 His fits, his frenzy, and his bitterness?
 And now he writes to heaven for his **redress**: [justice]
 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! [Perfumed (with incense)]
 What's this but libelling against the Senate,
 And **blazoning** our injustice everywhere? [advertising]
 A **goodly humour**, is it not, my lords? [fine state of mind]
 As who would say, in Rome no justice were! ,^{4.4.20}
 But if I live, his **feignèd ecstasies** [phoney mysticism]
 Shall be no shelter to these outrages,
 But he and his shall know that Justice lives
 In Saturninus' health; whom, if **she** sleep, [i.e. Justice]
 He'll so awake as he in fury shall
 Cut **off** the proud'st conspirator that lives. [down]

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, ,^{4.4.30}
 Whose loss hath pierced him deep, and scarred his heart;
 And rather comfort his distressed plight
 Than prosecute the meanest or the best
 For these contempts. [Aside] Why, thus it shall **become** [suit]
High-witted Tamora to **gloze with** all. [Clever; "soft-soap"]
 But, Titus, I have **touched thee to the quick**, [cut you deeply]
 Thy life-blood on't. If Aaron now be wise,
 Then is all safe – the anchor in the port.

[Enter CLOWN]

How now, good fellow! Wouldst thou speak with us? [Hello]

CLOWN

Yes, forsooth, an your mistership be emperial. ,^{4.4.40} [very much, if]

TAMORA

Empress I am, but yonder sits the emperor.

CLOWN

'Tis he! God and Saint Stephen give you good e'en. I have [afternoon] brought you a letter and a couple of pigeons here.

[*SATURNINUS opens the letter and the knife drops to the floor]

SATURNINUS

Go take him away, and hang him presently! [now]

CLOWN

How much money must I have?

TAMORA

Come, sirrah, you must be hanged. [boy]

CLOWN

Hanged! By'r lady, then I have brought up a neck to a fair end.

[Exit guarded]

SATURNINUS

[Reads letter] Despiteful and intolerable wrongs! ,^{4.4.50}

Shall I endure this monstrous villainy?

I know from whence this same device proceeds.

May this be borne, as if his traitorous sons, [put up with]

That died by law for murder of our brother,

Have by my means been butchered wrongfully?

Go, drag the villain hither by the hair; [here]

Nor age nor honour shall **shape privilege**. [grant him immunity]
For this proud mock I'll be thy slaughterman;
Sly frantic wretch, that **holp'st** to make me great, [helped]
In hope thyself should govern Rome and me. ,^{4.4.60}

[Enter AEMILIUS]

What news with thee, Aemilius?

AEMILIUS

Arm, arm, my lord! Rome never had more cause!
The Goths have **gathered head**, and with a power [raised an army]
Of high resolved men, bent **to the spoil**, [on looting]
They hither march **amain**, under **conduct** [at full tilt; leadership]
Of Lucius, son to old Andronicus;
Who threats, in course of this revenge, to do
As much as e'er Coriolanus did.

SATURNINUS

Is warlike Lucius general of the Goths?
These tidings **nip** me, and I hang the head,^{4.4.70} [i.e. in the bud]
As flowers with frost, or grass beat down with storms.
Aye, now begins our sorrows to approach:
'Tis he the common people love so much –
Myself hath often overheard them say,
When I have walked like a private man,
That Lucius' banishment was **wrongfully**, [wrongfully done]
And they have wished that Lucius were their emperor.

TAMORA

Why should you fear? Is not your city strong?

SATURNINUS

Ay, but the citizens favour Lucius,
And will revolt from me to **succour** him. ,^{4.4.80} [assist]

TAMORA

King, be thy thoughts **imperious** like thy name. [imperial, commanding]
Is the sun dimmed, that gnats do fly in it?

The eagle suffers little birds to sing,
 And **is not careful** what they mean **thereby**, [doesn't care; by it]
 Knowing that with the shadow of his wing
 He can at pleasure **stint** their melody. [stop]
 Even so mayest thou the **giddy** men of Rome. [easily swayed]
 Then cheer thy spirit: for know, thou emperor,
 I will enchant the old Andronicus
 With words more sweet, and yet more dangerous, ^{4.4.90}
 Than baits to fish or **honey-stalks** to sheep, [red clover]
 When as the one is wounded with the bait,
 The other **rotted** with delicious feed. [made ill]

SATURNINUS

But he will not **entreat** his son for us. [plead with]

TAMORA

If Tamora entreat him, then he will:
 For I can **smooth** and fill his aged ear [flatter]
 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 – ^{4.4.100}
 Say that the emperor requests **a parley** [peace talks With]
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, [insists on]
 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, [mould]
 To pluck proud Lucius from the warlike Goths. ^{4.4.110}

And now, sweet emperor, be blithe again,
And bury all thy fear in my devices.

[happy]

SATURNINUS

Then go incessantly, and plead to him.

[without delay]

[Exeunt]

ACT 5 SCENE 1

Near Rome.

[It's not clear what Lucius said to the Goths to make them switch sides, but it seems to have worked. They're on the outskirts of Rome and have arrested Aaron, complete with his child. In return for its life he offers to spill the beans, but Lucius gets more than he bargained for in the confession. Aaron makes a joke out of Lavinia's plight, punning on the word *trim*, which could mean *cut (hair or other)*, *prepare meat for selling*, *have sex with* or *excellent*. The scene ends with Aemilius bringing an invitation from Saturninus to hold talks in Titus's house.



POINTS OF INTEREST. The play is set in pre-Christian times, yet the Second Goth has been gazing on a “ruinous monastery” – a reference to the Dissolution of the Monasteries of 1538-41 under Henry VIII – and Aaron accuses Lucius of “popish tricks”. Note also Aaron’s willingness “to do a thousand dreadful things... as one would kill a fly”, which might have been on Shakespeare’s mind when he patched in the passage showing the Andronici doing precisely that in 3.2.

Aaron’s speech of unrepentant villainy at 5.1.124-144 is heavily influenced by Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* 2.3.176-214.]

[Enter LUCIUS with an army of GOTHS, with drum and colours.]

LUCIUS

Approved warriors and my faithful friends, [Proven]
I have received letters from great Rome,
Which signifies what hate they bear their emperor,
And how desirous of our sight they are. [they'd like to see us]
Therefore, great lords, be, as your titles witness,
Imperious and impatient of your wrongs;
And wherein Rome hath done you any scath [injury]
Let him make treble satisfaction.

FIRST GOTH

Brave **slip**, sprung from the great Andronicus, [offshoot, child]
Whose name was once our terror, now our comfort;^{5.1.10}
Whose high exploits and honourable deeds
Ingrateful Rome **requites** with foul contempt, [rewards]
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 cursèd Tamora.

GOTHS

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

LUCIUS

I humbly thank him, and I thank you all –
But who comes here, led by a **lusty** Goth? [strong and healthy]

[Enter a GOTH, leading AARON with his CHILD in his arms]

SECOND GOTH

Renowned Lucius, from our troops I strayed^{5.1.20}
To gaze upon a ruinous monastery;
And as I earnestly did fix mine eye
Upon the wasted building, suddenly
I heard a child cry underneath a wall.
I made unto the noise, when soon I heard
The crying babe controlled with this discourse:
'Peace, **tawny** slave, half me and half thy **dam**! [brown; mother]
Did not thy hue **bewray** whose brat thou art. [reveal]
Had nature lent thee but thy mother's look,
Villain, thou mightst have been an emperor;^{5.1.30}
But where the bull and cow are both milk-white,
They never do **beget** a coal-black calf. [give birth to]
Peace, villain, peace!' – even thus he **rates** the babe – [tells off]
'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 rushed upon him,
Surprised him suddenly, and brought him hither,

To **use** as you think needful of the man.

[deal with]

LUCIUS

O worthy Goth, this is the incarnate devil^{5.1.40}
 That robbed 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? No? Not a word?
 A halter, soldiers: hang him on this tree,
 And by his side his fruit of bastardy.

[bulging; where]

AARON

Touch not the boy -- he is of royal blood.

LUCIUS

Too like the sire for ever being good.^{5.1.50}
 First hang the child, that he may see it **sprawl** –
 A sight to **vex** the father's soul **withal**.
 Get me a ladder.

[convulse]

[torment; with]

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!

[*A ladder is brought on, and propped up for AARON to ascend]

LUCIUS

Say on: an if it please me which thou speak'st,
 Thy child shall live, and I will see it **nourished**.^{5.1.60}

[taken care of]

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, villainies –
Ruthful to hear, yet piteously performed –
And this shall all be buried in my death,
Unless thou swear to me my child shall live.

[Conspiracies]
[Sorrowful; pitifully]

LUCIUS

Tell on thy mind – I say thy child shall live.

AARON

Swear that he shall, and then I will begin.^{5.1.70}

LUCIUS

Who should I swear by? Thou believ'st 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.^{5.1.80}
To that I'll urge him: therefore thou shalt vow
By that same god – what god soe'er it be
That thou ador'st and hast in reverence –
To save my boy, to nourish and bring him up;
Or else I will discover naught to thee.

[Catholic]

[reveal nothing]

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!
lecherous]

[impossible to satisfy;

AARON

Tut, Lucius, this was but a deed of charity
 To that which thou shalt hear of me **anon**.^{5.1.90} [soon]
 'Twas her two sons that murdered Bassianus:
 They cut thy sister's tongue, and ravished her,
 And cut her hands, and trimmed her as thou saw'st.

LUCIUS

O detestable villain! Call'st thou that trimming?

AARON

Why, she was washed, and cut, and trimmed; and 'twas
Trim sport for them which had the doing of it. [Top notch]

LUCIUS

O barbarous, beastly villains, like thyself!

AARON

Indeed, I was their tutor to instruct them:
 That **coddling** spirit had they from their mother, [randy]
As sure a card as ever won the set;^{5.1.100} [=without a doubt]
 That bloody mind, I think, they learned of me,
 As true a dog as ever fought **at head**. [head-on]
 Well, let my deeds be witness of my worth.
 I trained thy brethren to that **guileful** hole [deceitful]
 Where the dead corpse of Bassianus lay.
 I wrote the letter that thy father found,
 And hid the gold within that letter mentioned,
Confederate with the queen and her two sons: [In league with]
 And what not done, that thou hast cause to **rue**, [regret]
 Wherein I had no stroke of mischief in't?^{5.1.110}
 I played the cheater for thy father's hand,
 And, when I had it, drew myself apart,
 And almost broke my heart with extreme laughter:
 I pried me through the crevice of a wall
 When, for his hand, he had his two sons' heads,
 Beheld his tears, and laughed so heartily
 That both mine eyes were rainy like to his;
 And when I told the empress of this sport,

She swooned almost at my pleasing tale,
And for my tidings gave me twenty kisses. ^{5.1.120}

FIRST GOTH

What, canst thou say all this and never blush?

AARON

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

LUCIUS

Art thou not sorry for these heinous deeds?

AARON

Aye, 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; ^{5.1.130} [perjure]
Set deadly enmity between two friends;
Make poor men's cattle stray and break their necks;
Set fire on barns and haystacks in the night,
And bid the owners quench them with their tears.
Oft have I digged up dead men from their graves,
And set them upright at their dear friends' 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.' ^{5.1.140}
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**. [now]

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!^{5.1.150}

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,^{5.1.160}
And they shall be immediately delivered.

[wants talks]

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 with a flourish]

ACT 5 SCENE 2

Rome. In front of TITUS'S House.

[In this blackly comic scene Tamora and her sons pose as three avenging spirits in the hope of tricking Titus, who has been madly writing in his own blood, into sending for Lucius. But she has underestimated him, and the sons fall into a terrible trap.



CLASSICAL REFERENCES:

Centaurs – Creatures who were half-man, half-horse. The chief of the Lapithae people invited them to the wedding of Pirithous, where they got drunk, and one threatened Pirithous's wife, leading to a conflict which ended in wholesale slaughter. Chiron, by the way, was the name of a famous centaur.

Hyperion – The Sun God.

Procne – Philomela's sister, who served her rapist and mutilator Tereus the flesh of his son Itylus.

POINTS OF INTEREST. The figure of Revenge was well known to Shakespeare's audience, as it features onstage for the entirety of Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. One could imagine that Tamora would have been kitted out in such a way as to resemble Kyd's character. The female protagonist of his play, Bel-Imperia, also writes in her own blood.

Seneca, who inspired Kyd and the whole revenge tragedy genre, wrote a play called *Thyestes* in which Thyestes is fed one of his children. Seneca was a vegetarian who was forced to eat meat in order not to incur the wrath of the Emperor Tiberius; he ended up serving the corrupt regime of Nero, who forced him to commit suicide.]

[Enter TAMORA, DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, disguised]

TAMORA

Thus, in this strange and sad habiliment,

[dark costume]

I will encounter with Andronicus,
And say I am Revenge, sent from below
To join with him and right his **heinous** wrongs. [grievous]
Knock at his study, where they say he **keeps** [stays]
To **ruminate** strange plots of dire revenge; [brood upon]
Tell him Revenge is come to join with him,
And work confusion on his enemies.

[They knock]

[Enter TITUS, papers in hand, above]

TITUS

Who **doth molest my contemplation**? [disturbs my thoughts]
Is it your trick to make me ope the door,^{5.2.10}
That so my sad **decrees** may fly away [resolutions, papers]
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

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

TAMORA

If thou didst know me, thou wouldst talk with me.^{5.2.20}

TITUS

I am not mad – I know thee well enough.
Witness this wretched stump, witness these crimson lines;
Witness these **trenches** made by grief and care; [furrows]
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^{5.2.30}
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!^{5.2.40}

TITUS

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

TAMORA

I am – therefore come down and welcome me!

TITUS

Do me some service **ere** I come to thee.
Lo, by thy side where Rape and Murder stands.
Now give some surance that thou art Revenge:
Stab them, or tear them on thy chariot wheels,
And then I'll come and be thy waggoner,
And whirl along with thee about the globe,
Provide thee two **proper palfreys**, black as jet,^{5.2.50}
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.

[before]

[fine little horses]

TAMORA

These are my ministers, and come with me. ^{5.2.60}

TITUS

Are they thy ministers? What are they called?

TAMORA

Rapine and Murder; therefore called so
'Cause they take vengeance of such kind of men.

TITUS

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 from above. (Titus comes down the stairs of the tiring house, invisible to the audience, giving a chance for Tamora to speak to her sons.)]

TAMORA

This closing with him fits his lunacy: ^{5.2.70}
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 practice 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. ^{5.2.80}

[unstable]

[“get cracking”]

[Enter TITUS]

TITUS

Long have I been forlorn, and all for thee.

[felt abandoned]

Welcome, dread fury, to my woeful 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 – ^{5.2.90}
 But welcome as you are. What shall we do?

[know; moves]

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 hath done thee wrong,
 And I will be revenged on them all.

TITUS

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. ^{5.2.100}
 Go thou with him, and when **it is thy hap**
 To find another that is like to thee,
 Good Rapine, stab him – he is a **ravisher**.
 Go thou with them, and in the emperor's court
 There is a queen, attended by a Moor –
 Well mayst thou know her by thine 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.

[you chance]

[rapist]

TAMORA

Well hast thou lessoned us – this shall we do.^{5.2.110}
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 shall they stoop and kneel,
And on them shalt thou ease thy angry heart.
What says Andronicus to this device?^{5.2.120}

TITUS

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.^{5.2.130}

[come]

MARCUS

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

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 them] What say you, boys? Will you abide with him,
Whiles I go tell my lord the emperor
How I have **governed** our **determined jest**? [managed; planned hoax]
Yield to his humour, smooth and speak him fair, ^{5.2.140} [Humour him]
And **tarry** with him till I come again. [stay]

TITUS

[Aside] I knew them all, though they suppose me mad,
And will o'er reach them in their own devices –
A pair of cursèd hell-hounds and their **dam**! [mother]

DEMETRIUS

Madam, depart at pleasure – leave us here.

TAMORA

Farewell, Andronicus. Revenge now goes
To lay a **complot** to betray thy foes. [set a plan]

TITUS

I know thou dost – and, sweet Revenge, farewell!

[Exit TAMORA]

CHIRON

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

TITUS

Tut, I have work enough for you to do. ^{5.2.150}
Publius, come hither! Caius, and Valentine!

[Enter PUBLIUS and others]

PUBLIUS

What is your will?

TITUS

Know you these two?

PUBLIUS

The empress' sons, I take them – Chiron, Demetrius.

TITUS

Fie, Publius, fie! Thou art too much deceived:
The one is Murder, 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,^{5.2.160}
And stop their mouths if they begin to cry.

[Exit TITUS. PUBLIUS &c. lay hands 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 ANDRONICUS, with LAVINIA; he bearing a knife and she a basin]

TITUS

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 stained with mud,^{5.2.170}
This goodly summer with your winter mixed.
You killed her husband, and for that vile fault
Two of her brothers were condemned to death,
My hand cut off and made a merry jest.
Both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that, more dear
Than hands or tongue, her spotless chastity,
Inhuman traitors, you constrained and forced.
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.^{5.2.180}

This one hand yet is left to cut your throats,
Whiles that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold
The basin that receives your guilty blood.

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**,

[pie-crust; raise]

And make two pasties of your shameful heads;

And bid that **strumpet**, your **unhallowed dam**,^{5.2.190}

[tart; unholy mother]

Like to the earth, swallow her own **increase**.

[offspring]

This is the feast that I have bid her to,

And this the banquet she shall **surfeit on**;

[fill herself with]

For worse than Philomel you used my daughter,

And worse than Procne 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.^{5.2.200}

Come, come, be every one **officious**

[diligent]

To make this banquet, which I wish may prove

More **stern** and bloody than the Centaurs' feast.

[severe]

So, now bring them in, for I will play the cook,

And see them ready **against** their mother comes.

[by the time]

[Exeunt, bearing the dead bodies]

ACT 5 SCENE 3

Rome. A Pavilion in TITUS'S Gardens, with tables, &c.

[This is the final scene. Lucius and the Goths are in Rome. Now completely mad, Titus (dressed as a chef!) serves up his grisly meal, resulting in a spate of killings which leaves most of the principal characters dead. The Goth soldiers invade the stage to restore order while Titus's surviving family go aloft to explain things to the Roman people, who welcome Lucius as the new emperor. Lucius then has the final word.



CLASSICAL REFERENCES. Titus in his madness demonstrates the folly of the Roman overdependence on their own written tradition (as opposed to feeling tempered by common sense) by putting into practical terms Saturninus's theoretical interpretation of the story of Virginia. She was the daughter of Virginius, who killed her with a knife to preserve what was left of her chastity after the violent attentions of one of the ruling magistrates, Appius Claudius. Appius was seized by the mob, but committed suicide, and the rule of the tyrannical magistrates was ended.

Sinon pretended to be a Greek deserter in the Trojan War, and persuaded the Trojans to take in the Wooden Horse. For the reference to Dido, see the introduction to 3.2.

POINTS OF INTEREST. It wouldn't be a revenge tragedy without a stage littered with bodies at the end, and here, as in *Hamlet*, Shakespeare does not disappoint. Despite the restoration of order and the promise of a new regime, the presence of a new set of Goths – and perhaps even a new Aaron – within the walls of Rome, does not bode well for the Empire.

This edition is almost unique in using the ending from the First Folio, with some emendation; since the discovery of the 1594 edition last century editors almost universally reproduce its Tamora-centred closing lines. It is suggested that readers look at both and make up their own minds on the matter.]

[Enter LUCIUS, MARCUS, and GOTHS, with AARON prisoner]

LUCIUS

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

[return]

FIRST GOTH

And ours with thine, befall what fortune will.

[we're with you]

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.^{5.3.10}

AARON

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

LUCIUS

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

[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 the sun? [use is it you now (patronizing)]

MARCUS

Rome's emperor, and nephew, break the parley:
These quarrels must be quietly debated.^{5.3.20}

[start the talks]

The feast is ready, which the careful Titus
Hath ordained to an honourable end,
For peace, for love, for league, and good to Rome:
Please you, therefore, draw nigh and take your places.

[or, full of cares]
[organized]

SATURNINUS

Marcus, we will.

[Hautboys sound. The company sit at table]

[Enter TITUS, dressed like a cook, LAVINIA, veiled, YOUNG LUCIUS,
and others. TITUS places the dishes on the table]

TITUS

Welcome, my 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.

[food is modest]

SATURNINUS

Why art thou thus attired, Andronicus?^{5.3.30}

[dressed like that]

TITUS

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

TAMORA

We are beholden to you, good Andronicus.

[obliged]

TITUS

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, stained, and deflowered?

[would be]

SATURNINUS

It was, Andronicus.

TITUS

Your reason, mighty lord?

SATURNINUS

Because the girl should not survive her shame,^{5.3.40}
And by her presence still renew his sorrows.

TITUS

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

[Kills LAVINIA]

And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die!

SATURNINUS

What hast thou done, unnatural and unkind?

TITUS

Killed her for whom my tears have made me blind.
I am as woeful as Virginius was,
And have a thousand times more cause than he^{5.3.50}
To do this outrage – and it now is done.

SATURNINUS

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

TITUS

Will't please you eat? Will't please your highness feed?

TAMORA

Why hast thou slain thine only daughter thus?

TITUS

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

SATURNINUS

Go, fetch them hither to us presently.

[immediately]

TITUS

Why, there they are, both bakèd in that pie,

Whereof their mother **daintily** hath fed,^{5.3.60}
 Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred.
 'Tis true, 'tis true – witness my knife's sharp point.

[delightfully]

[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.

[tit for tat]

[Kills SATURNINUS. A great tumult. LUCIUS, MARCUS, and their
 partisans, ascend the steps before TITUS'S house]

MARCUS

You sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome –
 By uproar severed, as a flight of fowl
 Scattered by winds and high tempestuous gusts –
 O let me teach you how to knit again
 This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,^{5.3.70}
 These broken limbs again into one body,
 Lest Rome herself be **bane** unto herself,
 And she whom mighty kingdoms curtsy to,
 Like a forlorn and desperate castaway,
 Do shameful execution on herself.

[poison]

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

[wrinkles]

[To Lucius] Speak, Rome's dear friend, as **erst** our ancestor,
 When with his solemn tongue he did **discourse**^{5.3.80}

[once]

[tell]

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 bewitched our ears,
 Or who hath brought the fatal engine in
 That gives our Troy, our Rome, the civil wound.

My heart is not **compact** of flint nor steel,
 Nor can I utter all our bitter grief,

[compounded]

But floods of tears will drown my oratory
And break my very utterance, even in the time^{5.3.90}
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 [audience]
That cursèd 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, [cruel]
Our father's tears despised, and basely **cozened**^{5.3.100} [tricked]
Of that true hand that fought Rome's quarrel out
And sent her enemies unto the grave.
Lastly, myself unkindly banishèd,
The gates shut on me, and turned weeping out,
To beg relief among Rome's enemies,
Who drowned their enmity in my true tears,
And oped their arms to embrace me as a friend.
I am the **turned-forth**, be it known to you, [outcast]
That have preserved her welfare in my blood,
And from her bosom took the enemy's point,^{5.3.110}
Sheathing the steel in my adventurous body.
Alas! You know I am no **vaunter**, I – [boaster]
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

Now is my turn to speak. Behold the child –

[Pointing to the CHILD in an Attendant's arms]

Of this was Tamora delivered,
The issue of an irreligious Moor,^{5.3.120}
Chief architect and plotter of these woes.
The villain is alive in Titus' house,
Damned 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 have you 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^{5.3.130}
 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.

[common end]

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.

ROMANS

[Several speak] Lucius, all hail, Rome's royal emperor!^{5.3.140}

MARCUS

Go, go into old Titus' sorrowful house,

[To attendants, who go into the house]

And **hither hale** that misbelieving Moor
 To be adjudged some direful slaughtering death,
 As punishment for his most wicked life.

[bring here]

[LUCIUS, MARCUS, &c. descend]

ROMANS

[Several speak] 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,^{5.3.150}

[help guide me]

[apart]

To shed **obsequious tears** upon this trunk.
O, take this warm kiss on thy pale cold lips.

[tears of mourning]

[Kisses TITUS]

These sorrowful drops upon thy blood-stained face,
The last true duties of thy noble son!

MARCUS

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:^{5.3.160}
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.^{5.3.170}

[suitable for]

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 the 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,^{5.3.180}
 For the offence he dies. This is our **doom**.
 Some stay to see him fastened in the earth.

[judgement]

AARON

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

LUCIUS

Some loving friends convey the emperor hence,^{5.3.190}
 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 ravenous tiger, Tamora,
 No funeral rite, nor man in mournful weeds,
 No mournful bell shall ring her burial;
 But throw her forth to beasts and birds of prey.
 *Her life was beast-like, devoid of piety;
 And, being so, shall have like want of pity.
 See justice done on Aaron, that damned Moor,^{5.3.200}
 By whom our heavy haps had their beginning:
 Then, afterwards, to order well the state,
 That like events may ne'er it ruin.

[tomb]

[Exeunt]

