

**УИЛЬЯМ
ШЕКСПИР**

THE TRAGEDY
OF TITUS
ANDRONICUS

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The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus

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The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus:

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William Shakespeare

The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus

Dramatis Personae

SATURNINUS, son to the late Emperor of Rome, afterwards

Emperor

BASSIANUS, brother to Saturninus

TITUS ANDRONICUS, a noble Roman

MARCUS ANDRONICUS, Tribune of the People, and
brother to Titus

Sons to Titus Andronicus:

LUCIUS

QUINTUS

MARTIUS

MUTIUS

YOUNG LUCIUS, a boy, son to Lucius

PUBLIUS, son to Marcus Andronicus

Kinsmen to Titus:

SEMPRONIUS

CAIUS

VALENTINE

AEMILIUS, a noble Roman

Sons to Tamora:

ALARBUS

DEMETRIUS

CHIRON

AARON, a Moor, beloved by Tamora

A CAPTAIN

A MESSENGER

A CLOWN

TAMORA, Queen of the Goths

LAVINIA, daughter to Titus Andronicus

A NURSE, and a black CHILD

Romans and Goths, Senators, Tribunes, Officers, Soldiers,

and

Attendants

SCENE: Rome and the neighbourhood

ACT 1. SCENE I. Rome. Before the Capitol

Flourish. Enter the TRIBUNES and SENATORS aloft; and then enter below

SATURNINUS and his followers at one door, and BASSIANUS and his followers at the other, with drums and trumpets

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

BASSIANUS. Romans, friends, followers, favourers of my right,

If ever Bassianus, Caesar's son,
Were gracious in the eyes of royal Rome,
Keep then this passage to the Capitol;
And suffer not dishonour to approach

The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate,
To justice, continence, and nobility;
But let desert in pure election shine;
And, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice.

Enter MARCUS ANDRONICUS aloft, with the crown

MARCUS. Princes, that strive by factions and by friends
Ambitiously for rule and empery,
Know that the people of Rome, for whom we stand
A special party, have by common voice
In election for the Roman empery
Chosen Andronicus, surnamed Pius
For many good and great deserts to Rome.
A nobler man, a braver warrior,
Lives not this day within the city walls.
He by the Senate is accited home,
From weary wars against the barbarous Goths,
That with his sons, a terror to our foes,
Hath yok'd a nation strong, train'd up in arms.
Ten years are spent since first he undertook
This cause of Rome, and chastised with arms
Our enemies' pride; five times he hath return'd
Bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sons
In coffins from the field; and at this day
To the monument of that Andronici
Done sacrifice of expiation,
And slain the noblest prisoner of the Goths.
And now at last, laden with honour's spoils,

Returns the good Andronicus to Rome,
Renowned Titus, flourishing in arms.
Let us entreat, by honour of his name
Whom worthily you would have now succeed,
And in the Capitol and Senate's right,
Whom you pretend to honour and adore,
That you withdraw you and abate your strength,
Dismiss your followers, and, as suitors should,
Plead your deserts in peace and humbleness.
SATURNINUS. How fair the Tribune speaks to calm my
thoughts.

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

Exeunt the soldiers of BASSIANUS

SATURNINUS. Friends, that have been thus forward in my
right,
I thank you all and here dismiss you all,

And to the love and favour of my country
Commit myself, my person, and the cause.

Exeunt the soldiers of SATURNINUS

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

[Flourish. They go up into the Senate House]

Enter a CAPTAIN

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

Sound drums and trumpets, and then enter MARTIUS and
MUTIUS, two of TITUS' sons; and then two men bearing a
coffin covered with black; then LUCIUS and QUINTUS, two

other sons; then TITUS ANDRONICUS; and then TAMORA the Queen of Goths, with her three sons, ALARBUS, DEMETRIUS, and CHIRON, with AARON the Moor, and others, as many as can be. Then set down the coffin and TITUS speaks

TITUS. Hail, Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds!

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

[They open the tomb]

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 hast thou of mine in store
That thou wilt never render to me more!

LUCIUS. Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths,
That we may hew his limbs, and on a pile
Ad manes fratrum sacrifice his flesh
Before this earthy prison of their bones,
That so the shadows be not unappeas'd,
Nor we disturb'd with prodigies on earth.

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

TAMORA. Stay, Roman brethen! Gracious conqueror,
Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed,
A mother's tears in passion for her son;
And if thy sons were ever dear to thee,
O, think my son to be as dear to me!
Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome
To beautify thy triumphs, and return
Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke;
But must my sons be slaughtered in the streets
For valiant doings in their country's cause?

O, if to fight for king and commonweal
Were piety in thine, it is in these.
Andronicus, stain not thy tomb with blood.
Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?
Draw near them then in being merciful.
Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.
Thrice-noble Titus, spare my first-born son.
TITUS. 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 mark'd, and die he must
T' appease their groaning shadows that are gone.
LUCIUS. Away with him, and make a fire straight;
And with our swords, upon a pile of wood,
Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consum'd.

Exeunt TITUS' SONS, with ALARBUS

TAMORA. O cruel, irreligious piety!
CHIRON. Was never Scythia half so barbarous!
DEMETRIUS. Oppose not Scythia to ambitious Rome.
Alarbus goes to rest, and we survive
To tremble under Titus' threat'ning look.
Then, madam, stand resolv'd, but hope withal
The self-same gods that arm'd the Queen of Troy

With opportunity of sharp revenge
Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent
May favour Tamora, the Queen of Goths-
When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen-
To quit the bloody wrongs upon her foes.

**Re-enter LUCIUS, QUINTUS,
MARTIUS, and MUTIUS, the sons of
ANDRONICUS, with their swords bloody**

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

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

[Sound trumpets and lay the coffin in the tomb]

In peace and 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 drugs, here are no storms,
No noise, but silence and eternal sleep.
In peace and honour rest you here, my sons!

Enter LAVINIA

LAVINIA. In peace and honour live Lord Titus long;
My noble lord and father, live in fame!
Lo, at this tomb my tributary tears
I render for my brethren's obsequies;
And at thy feet I kneel, with tears of joy
Shed on this earth for thy return to Rome.
O, bless me here with thy victorious hand,
Whose fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud!
TITUS. Kind Rome, that hast thus lovingly reserv'd
The cordial of mine age to glad my heart!
Lavinia, live; outlive thy father's days,
And fame's eternal date, for virtue's praise!

**Enter, above, MARCUS ANDRONICUS
and TRIBUNES; re-enter SATURNINUS,
BASSIANUS, and attendants**

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 aspir'd to Solon's happiness
And triumphs over chance in honour's bed.
Titus Andronicus, the people of Rome,
Whose friend in justice thou hast ever been,
Send thee by me, their Tribune and their trust,
This parliament of white and spotless hue;
And name thee in election for the empire
With these our late-deceased Emperor's sons:
Be candidatus then, and put it on,
And help to set a head on headless Rome.

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

MARCUS. Titus, thou shalt obtain and ask the empery.

SATURNINUS. Proud and ambitious Tribune, canst thou tell?

TITUS. Patience, Prince Saturninus.

SATURNINUS. Romans, do me right.

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

Andronicus, would thou were shipp'd to hell
Rather than rob me of the people's hearts!

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

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

BASSIANUS. Andronicus, I do not flatter thee,
But honour thee, and will do till I die.

My faction if thou strengthen with thy friends,
I will most thankful be; and thanks to men
Of noble minds is honourable meed.

TITUS. People of Rome, and people's Tribunes here,
I ask your voices and your suffrages:

Will ye 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 our Emperor's eldest son,
Lord Saturnine; whose virtues will, I hope,
Reflect on Rome as Titan's rays on earth,
And ripen justice in this commonweal.

Then, if you will elect by my advice,
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 till they come down]

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;
And for an onset, Titus, to advance
Thy name and honourable family,
Lavinia will I make my emperess,
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,
The wide world's Emperor, do I consecrate
My sword, my chariot, and my prisoners,
Presents well worthy Rome's imperious lord;
Receive them then, the tribute that I owe,
Mine honour's ensigns humbled at thy feet.

SATURNINUS. Thanks, noble Titus, father of my life.

How proud I am of thee and of thy gifts
Rome shall record; and when I do forget
The least of these unspeakable deserts,
Romans, forget your fealty to me.

TITUS. [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
That I would choose, were I to choose anew. -
Clear up, fair Queen, that cloudy countenance;
Though chance of war hath wrought this change of cheer,
Thou com'st not to be made a scorn in Rome-
Princely shall be thy usage every way.
Rest on my word, and let not discontent
Daunt all your hopes. Madam, he comforts you
Can make you greater than the Queen of Goths.
Lavinia, you are not displeas'd with this?

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

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

[Flourish]

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

[Seizing LAVINIA]

TITUS. How, sir! Are you in earnest then, my lord?

BASSIANUS. Ay, noble Titus, and resolv'd withal
To do myself this reason and this right.

MARCUS. Suum cuique is our Roman justice:

This prince in justice seizeth but his own.

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

TITUS. Traitors, avaunt! Where is the Emperor's guard?

Treason, my lord- Lavinia is surpris'd!

SATURNINUS. Surpris'd! By whom?

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

Exeunt BASSIANUS and MARCUS with LAVINIA

MUTIUS. Brothers, help to convey her hence away,

And with my sword I'll keep this door safe.

Exeunt LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS

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

MUTIUS. My lord, you pass not here.

TITUS. What, villain boy!

Bar'st me my way in Rome?

MUTIUS. Help, Lucius, help!

TITUS kills him. During the fray, exeunt
SATURNINUS,

TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, and AARON

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.

Re-enter aloft the EMPEROR with TAMORA and her two Sons, and AARON the Moor

Traitor, restore Lavinia to the Emperor.

LUCIUS. Dead, if you will; but not to be his wife,

That is another's lawful promis'd 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 saidst I begg'd the empire at thy hands.

TITUS. O monstrous! What reproachful words are these?

SATURNINUS. But go thy ways; go, give that changing
piece

To him that flourish'd for her with his sword.

A valiant son-in-law thou shalt enjoy;

One fit to bandy with thy lawless sons,

To ruffle in the commonwealth of Rome.

TITUS. 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,
If thou be pleas'd with this my sudden choice,
Behold, I choose thee, Tamora, for my bride
And will create thee Emperess 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
I lead espous'd my bride along with me.
TAMORA. And here in sight of heaven to Rome I swear,
If Saturnine advance the Queen of Goths,
She will a handmaid be to his desires,
A loving nurse, a mother to his youth.
SATURNINUS. Ascend, fair Queen, Pantheon. Lords,
accompany
Your noble Emperor and his lovely bride,
Sent by the heavens for Prince Saturnine,
Whose wisdom hath her fortune conquered;
There shall we consummate our spousal rites.

Exeunt all but TITUS

TITUS. I am not bid to wait upon this bride.

TITUS, when wert thou wont to walk alone,
Dishonoured thus, and challenged of wrongs?

Re-enter MARCUS, and TITUS' SONS, 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;

Give Mutius burial with our bretheren.

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 bretheren.

QUINTUS & 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.

TITUS. What, would you bury him in my despite?

MARCUS. No, noble Titus, but entreat of thee

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.

MARTIUS. He is not with himself; let us withdraw.

QUINTUS. Not I, till Mutius' bones be buried.

[The **BROTHER** and the **SONS** 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.

Thou art a Roman- be not barbarous.

The Greeks upon advice did bury Ajax,

That slew himself; and wise Laertes' son

Did graciously plead for his funerals.

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

Be barr'd his entrance here.

TITUS. Rise, Marcus, rise;

The dismal'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 in the tomb]

LUCIUS. There lie thy bones, sweet Mutius, with thy friends,

Till we with trophies do adorn thy tomb.

ALL. [Kneeling] No man shed tears for noble Mutius;

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

MARCUS. My lord- to step out of these dreary dumps-

How comes it that the subtle Queen of Goths

Is of a sudden thus advanc'd 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?

MARCUS. Yes, and will nobly him remunerate.

Flourish. Re-enter the EMPEROR, TAMORA and her two SONS, with the MOOR, at one door; at the other door, BASSIANUS and LAVINIA, with others

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

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

SATURNINUS. Traitor, if Rome have law or we have
power,

Thou and thy faction shall repent this rape.

BASSIANUS. Rape, call you it, my lord, to seize my own,
My true betrothed love, and now my wife?

But let the laws of Rome determine all;
Meanwhile am I possess'd of that is mine.

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

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

By all the duties that I owe to Rome,
This noble gentleman, Lord Titus here,
Is in opinion and in honour wrong'd,
That, in the rescue of Lavinia,
With his own hand did slay his youngest son,
In zeal to you, and highly mov'd to wrath

To be controll'd in that he frankly gave.
Receive him then to favour, Saturnine,
That hath express'd 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 lov'd and honoured Saturnine!

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 forbend
I should be author to dishonour you!

But on mine honour dare I undertake
For good Lord Titus' innocence in all,
Whose fury not dissembled speaks his griefs.

Then at my suit look graciously on him;
Lose not so noble a friend on vain suppose,
Nor with sour looks afflict his gentle heart.

[Aside to SATURNINUS] My lord, be rul'd by me,
be won at last;

Dissemble all your griefs and discontents.
You are but newly planted in your throne;
Lest, then, the people, and patricians too,
Upon a just survey take Titus' part,
And so supplant you for ingratitude,

Which Rome reposes to be a heinous sin,
Yield at entreats, and then let me alone:
I'll find a day to massacre them all,
And raze their faction and their family,
The cruel father and his traitorous sons,
To whom I sued for my dear son's life;
And make them know what 'tis to let a queen
Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain. -
Come, come, sweet Emperor; come, Andronicus.
Take up this good old man, and cheer the heart
That dies in tempest of thy angry frown.

SATURNINUS. Rise, Titus, rise; my Empress hath
prevail'd.

TITUS. 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 reconcil'd your friends and you.
For you, Prince Bassianus, I have pass'd
My word and promise to the Emperor
That you will be more mild and tractable.
And fear not, lords- and you, Lavinia.
By my advice, all humbled on your knees,
You shall ask pardon of his Majesty.

LUCIUS. We do, and vow to heaven and to his Highness
That what we did was mildly as we might,

Tend'ring our sister's honour and our own.

MARCUS. That on mine honour here do I protest.

SATURNINUS. Away, and talk not; trouble us no more.

TAMORA. Nay, nay, sweet Emperor, we must all be friends.

The Tribune and his nephews kneel for grace.

I will not be denied. Sweet heart, look back.

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

And at my lovely Tamora's entreats,

I do remit these young men's heinous faults.

Stand up.

Lavinia, though you left me like a churl,

I found a friend; and sure as death I swore

I would not part a bachelor from the priest.

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

You are my guest, Lavinia, and your friends.

This day shall be a love-day, Tamora.

TITUS. To-morrow, and it please your Majesty

To hunt the panther and the hart with me,

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

SATURNINUS. Be it so, Titus, and gramercy too.

Exeunt. Sound trumpets

ACT II. SCENE I.

Rome. Before the palace

Enter AARON

AARON. Now climbeth Tamora Olympus' top,
Safe out of Fortune's shot, and sits aloft,
Secure of thunder's crack or lightning flash,
Advanc'd above pale envy's threat'ning reach.
As when the golden sun salutes the morn,
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,
Gallops the zodiac in his glistening coach
And overlooks the highest-peering hills,
So Tamora.
Upon her wit doth earthly honour wait,
And virtue stoops and trembles at her frown.
Then, Aaron, arm thy heart and fit thy thoughts
To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress,
And mount her pitch whom thou in triumph long.
Hast prisoner held, fett'red in amorous chains,
And faster bound to Aaron's charming eyes
Than is Prometheus tied to Caucasus.
Away with slavish weeds and servile thoughts!
I will be bright and shine in pearl and gold,
To wait upon this new-made emperess.
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.
Hullo! what storm is this?

Enter CHIRON and DEMETRIUS, braving

DEMETRIUS. Chiron, thy years wants wit, thy wits wants
edge

And manners, to intrude where I am grac'd,
And may, for aught thou knowest, affected be.

CHIRON. Demetrius, thou dost over-ween in all;

And so in this, to bear me down with braves.

'Tis not the difference of a year or two

Makes me less gracious or thee more fortunate:

I am as able and as fit as thou

To serve and to deserve my mistress' grace;

And that my sword upon thee shall approve,

And plead my passions for Lavinia's love.

AARON. [Aside] Clubs, clubs! These lovers will not keep
the

peace.

DEMETRIUS. Why, boy, although our mother, unadvis'd,

Gave you a dancing rapier by your side,

Are you so desperate grown to threat your friends?

Go to; have your lath glued within your sheath

Till you know better how to handle it.

CHIRON. Meanwhile, sir, with the little skill I have,

Full well shalt thou perceive how much I dare.

DEMETRIUS. Ay, boy, grow ye so brave? [They draw]

AARON. [Coming forward] Why, how now, lords!
So near the Emperor's palace dare ye draw
And maintain such a quarrel openly?
Full well I wot the ground of all this grudge:
I would not for a million of gold
The cause were known to them it most concerns;
Nor would your noble mother for much more
Be so dishonoured in the court of Rome.
For shame, put up.

DEMETRIUS. Not I, till I have sheath'd
My rapier in his bosom, and withal
Thrust those reproachful speeches down his throat
That he hath breath'd in my dishonour here.

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

AARON. Away, I say!
Now, by the gods that warlike Goths adore,
This pretty brabble will undo us all.
Why, lords, and think you not how dangerous
It is to jet upon a prince's right?
What, is Lavinia then become so loose,
Or Bassianus so degenerate,
That for her love such quarrels may be broach'd
Without controlment, justice, or revenge?
Young lords, beware; an should the Empress know
This discord's ground, the music would not please.
CHIRON. I care not, I, knew she and all the world:
I love Lavinia more than all the world.

DEMETRIUS. Youngling, learn thou to make some meaner choice:

Lavina is thine elder brother's hope.

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

CHIRON. Aaron, a thousand deaths

Would I propose to achieve her whom I love.

AARON. To achieve her- how?

DEMETRIUS. Why mak'st thou it so strange?

She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;

She is a woman, therefore may be won;

She is Lavinia, therefore must be lov'd.

What, man! more water glideth by the mill

Than wots the miller of; and easy it is

Of a cut loaf to steal a shive, we know.

Though Bassianus be the Emperor's brother,

Better than he have worn Vulcan's badge.

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

DEMETRIUS. Then why should he despair that knows to
court it

With words, fair looks, and liberality?

What, hast not thou full often struck a doe,

And borne her cleanly by the keeper's nose?

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

CHIRON. Ay, so the turn were served.

DEMETRIUS. Aaron, thou hast hit it.

AARON. Would you had hit it too!

Then should not we be tir'd with this ado.

Why, hark ye, hark ye! and are you such fools

To square for this? Would it offend you, then,

That both should speed?

CHIRON. Faith, not me.

DEMETRIUS. Nor me, so I were one.

AARON. For shame, be friends, and join for that you jar.

'Tis policy and stratagem must do

That you affect; and so must you resolve

That what you cannot as you would achieve,

You must perforce accomplish as you may.

Take this of me: Lucrece was not more chaste

Than this Lavinia, Bassianus' love.

A speedier course than ling'ring languishment

Must we pursue, and I have found the path.

My lords, a solemn hunting is in hand;

There will the lovely Roman ladies troop;

The forest walks are wide and spacious,

And many unfrequented plots there are

Fitted by kind for rape and villainy.

Single you thither then this dainty doe,

And strike her home by force if not by words.

This way, or not at all, stand you in hope.

Come, come, our Empress, with her sacred wit

To villainy and vengeance consecrate,

Will we acquaint with all what we intend;

And she shall file our engines with advice

That will not suffer you to square yourselves,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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