

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00607-1 - Titus Andronicus, Volume 35

William Shakespeare

Excerpt

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# TITUS ANDRONICUS

The scene: Rome, and the country near by

### CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

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*

LUCIUS

QUINTUS

MARTIUS

MUTIUS

} *sons to Titus Andronicus*

*Young* LUCIUS, *a boy, son to Lucius*

PUBLIUS, *son to Marcus Andronicus*

ÆMILIUS, *a noble Roman*

ALARBUS

DEMETRIUS

CHIRON

} *sons to Tamora*

AARON, *a Moor, beloved by Tamora*

*A Captain, Tribune, Messenger, and Clown; Romans and Goths*

TAMORA, *Queen of the Goths*

LAVINIA, *daughter to Titus Andronicus*

*Nurse, and a blackamoor Child*

*Kinsmen of Titus, Senators, Tribunes, Officers, Soldiers, and Attendants*

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## TITUS ANDRONICUS

[1. 1.] *An open place in Rome, before the Capitol, beside the entrance to which there stands the monument of the Andronici. Through a window opening on to the balcony of an upper chamber in the Capitol may be seen the Senate in session. Drums and trumpets are heard*

*SATURNINUS and his followers march into the square on one side; BASSIANUS and his followers on the other*

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

*Bassianus.* Romans, friends, followers, favourers of  
 my right,  
 If ever Bassianus, Cæsar's son, 10  
 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.

*MARCUS ANDRONICUS comes forward on to the balcony bearing a crown in his hands*

*Marcus.* Princes, that strive by factions and by friends:  
 Ambitiously for rule and empery,

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## TITUS ANDRONICUS

I. I. 20

- 20 Know that the people of Rome, for whom we stand  
 A special party, have by common voice,  
 In election for the Roman empery,  
 Chosen Andronicus, surnaméd 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,
- 30 Hath yoked a nation strong, trained up in arms.  
 Ten years are spent since first he undertook  
 This cause of Rome, and chastisé with arms  
 Our enemies' pride: five times he hath returned  
 Bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sons  
 In coffins from the field [and as this day  
 To the monument of the 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,  
 Renownéd Titus, flourishing in arms.  
 Let us entreat, by honour of his name,
- 40 Whom worthily you would have now succeed,  
 And in the Capitol and senate's right,  
 Whom you pretend to honour and adore,  
 That you withdraw you and abate your strength,  
 Dismiss your followers, and, as suitors should,  
 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,

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1.1.50      TITUS ANDRONICUS      5

Thy nobler brother Titus and his sons,      50  
 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 fortune's and the people's favour  
 Commit my cause in balance to be weighed.

*[his followers disperse]*

*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.

*[his followers disperse]*

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

*Bassianus.* Tribunes, and me, a poor competitor.*[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 returned,  
 From where he circumscribéd with his sword,  
 And brought to yoke, the enemies of Rome.

*A sound of drums and trumpets. Then enter in procession  
 MUTIUS and MARTIUS, two soldiers bearing a coffin  
 covered with black, QUINTUS and LUCIUS, and TITUS  
 ANDRONICUS, followed by his prisoners TAMORA Queen of  
 the Goths, her sons ALARBUS, CHIRON, and DEMETRIUS,  
 AARON the Moor, and others. The soldiers set down the  
 coffin, and TITUS speaks*

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TITUS ANDRONICUS

I. I. 70

70 *Titus.* Hail, Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds!

Lo, as the bark that hath discharged his fraught  
Returns with precious lading to the bay  
From whence at first she weighed her anchorage,  
Cometh Andronicus, bound with laurel boughs,  
To 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,  
80 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 bretheren.

*[they open the tomb]*

90 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,

100 That so the shadows be not unappeased,

Nor we disturbed with prodigies on earth.

*Titus.* I give him you, the noblest that survives,

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## 1.1.103      TITUS ANDRONICUS      7

The eldest son of this distressed queen.

*Tamora.* Stay, Roman brethren! Gracious conqueror,

Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed,

A mother's tears in passion for her son:

And if thy sons were ever dear to thee,

O, think my son to be as dear to me!

Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome,

To beautify thy triumphs and return, 110

Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke;

But must my sons be slaughtered in the streets,

For valiant doings in their country's cause?

O, if to fight for king and commonweal

Were piety in thine, it is in these:

Andronicus, stain not thy tomb with blood.

Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?

Draw near them then in being merciful:

Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge;

Thrice-noble Titus, spare my first-born son. 120

*Titus.* Patient yourself, madam, and pardon me.

These are their brethren, whom your Goths beheld

Alive and dead, and for their brethren slain

Religiously they ask a sacrifice:

To this your son is marked, and die he must,

T' appease their groaning shadows that are gone.

*Lucius.* Away with him! and make a fire straight,

And with our swords, upon a pile of wood,

Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consumed.

*[the sons of Titus hale Alarbus forth*

*Tamora.* O cruel, irreligious piety! 130

*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 resolved, but hope withal

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## TITUS ANDRONICUS

I. I. 136

The self-same gods that armed the Queen of Troy  
 With opportunity of sharp revenge  
 Upon the Thracian tyrant in her tent  
 May favour Tamora, the Queen of Goths,  
 140 (When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen)  
 To quit the bloody wrongs upon her foes.

*Enter the sons of Andronicus again,  
 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,  
 And with loud 'larums welcome them to Rome.

*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]*

150 In peace and honour rest you here, my sons,  
 Rome's readiest champions, repose you here in rest,  
 Secure from worldly chances and mishaps!  
 Here lurks no treason, here no envy swells,  
 Here grow no damnéd drugs, 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,  
 My noble lord and father, live in fame!  
 Lo, at this tomb my tributary tears  
 160 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,



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I. I. 164      TITUS ANDRONICUS      9

Whose fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud.

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

*Enter above MARCUS ANDRONICUS, SATURNINUS,  
 BASSIANUS, and others*

*Marcus.* Long live Lord Titus, my beloved brother,  
 Gracious triumpher in the eyes of Rome!      170

*Titus.* Thanks, gentle tribune, noble brother Marcus.

*Marcus.* And welcome, nephews, from  
 successful wars,

You that survive, and you that sleep in fame!  
 Fair lords, your fortunes are alike in all,  
 That in your country's service drew your swords,  
 But safer triumph is this funeral pomp,  
 That hath aspired to Solon's happiness,  
 And triumphs over chance in honour's bed.

Titus Andronicus, the people of Rome,  
 Whose friend in justice thou hast ever been,      180  
 Send thee by me, their tribune and their trust,  
 This palliament of white and spotless hue,  
 And name thee in election for the empire  
 With these our late-deceased emperor's sons:  
 Be 'candidatus' then, and put it on,  
 And help to set a head on headless Rome.

*Titus.* 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,      190  
 To-morrow yield up rule, resign my life,  
 And set abroad new business for you all?

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## TITUS ANDRONICUS

1.1.193

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.

200 Upright he held it, lords, that held it last.

*Marcus.* Titus, thou shalt obtain and ask the empery.

*Saturninus.* Proud and ambitious tribune, canst  
 thou tell?

*Titus.* Patience, Prince Saturninus.

*Saturninus.* Romans, do me right.

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

Andronicus, would thou were shipped to hell,  
 Rather than rob me of the people's hearts.

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

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

*Bassianus.* Andronicus, I do not flatter thee,  
 But 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?

220 *Tribune.* 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,