

# Titus Andronicus

## 2.4

*Enter the Empress' sons, Chiron and Demetrius,  
with Lavinia, her hands cut off and her tongue cut  
out, and ravished*

**DEMETRIUS**

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

**CHIRON**

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

**DEMETRIUS**

See how with signs and tokens she can scrawl.

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**CHIRON** *(to Lavinia)*

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 cause I should go hang myself.

**DEMETRIUS**

If thou hadst hands to help thee knit the cord.

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*Exeunt Chiron and Demetrius*

*[Wind horns.] Enter Marcus from hunting to  
Lavinia*

**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.

15

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

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 roseÁd lips,  
 Coming and going with thy honey breath. 25  
 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, 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! 35  
 Sorrow concealeÁd, like an oven stopped,  
 Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is.  
 Fair Philomel, why she but lost her tongue  
 And in a tedious sampler sewed her mind.  
 But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee. 40  
 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 45  
 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, 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:  
 What will whole months of tears thy father's eyes? 55  
 Do not draw back, for we will mourn with thee.  
 O, could our mourning ease thy misery!

*Exeunt*