

Titus Andronicus

4.1

*Enter Lucius' son and Lavinia running after him,
and the boy flies from her with his books under his
arm. Enter Titus and Marcus*

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.
[He drops his books]

MARCUS

Stand by me, Lucius. Do not fear thine aunt.

5

TITUS

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

YOUNG LUCIUS

Ay, 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.

[MARCUS]

See, Lucius, see how much she makes of thee.

10

Somewhither would she have thee go with her.

Ah, boy, Cornelia never with more care

Read to her sons than she hath read to thee

Sweet poetry and Tully's *Orator*.

Canst thou not guess wherefore she plies thee thus?

15

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

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,

25

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 the books over with her stumps

TITUS

How now, Lavinia? Marcus, what means this? 30
Some book there is that she desires to see.
Which is it, girl, of these?±±Open them, boy.
(*To Lavinia*) But thou art deeper read and better
skilled.

Come and take choice of all my library,
And so beguile thy sorrow till the heavens 35
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. Ay, more there was,
Or else to heaven she heaves them for revenge. 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. 45
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. 50

TITUS

Lavinia, wert *thou* thus surprised, sweet girl,
Ravished and wronged as Philomela was,
Forced in the ruthless, vast, and gloomy woods?
See, see. Ay, such a place there is where we did hunt±±
O, had we never, never hunted there!±± 55
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, 60
What Roman lord it was durst do the deed.
Or slunk not Saturnine, as Tarquin erst,
That left the camp to sin in Lucrece' bed?

MARCUS

Sit down, sweet niece. Brother, sit down by me.

They sit

Apollo, Pallas, Jove, or Mercury 65
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.

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

I here have writ my name

Without the help of any hand at all. 70

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. 75

*She takes the staff in her mouth, and guides it with
her stumps, and writes*

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

[TITUS] `Stuprum±±Chiron±±Demetrius.'

MARCUS

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

TITUS

*Magni dominator poli, 80
Tam lentus audis scelera, tam lentus vides?*

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 exclaims. 85

My lord, kneel down with me; Lavinia, kneel;
And kneel, sweet boy, the Roman Hector's hope,
All kneel

And swear with me—as, with the woeful fere
And father of that chaste dishonoured dame
Lord Junius Brutus sware for Lucrece' rape— 90
That we will prosecute by good advice
Mortal revenge upon these traitorous Goths,
And see their blood, or die with this reproach.
They rise

TITUS

'Tis sure enough an you knew how,
But if you hunt these bear-whelps, then beware. 95
The dam will wake, and if she wind ye 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, 100
And come, I will go get a leaf of brass
And with a gad of steel will write these words,
And lay it by. The angry northern wind
Will blow these sands like Sibyl's leaves abroad,
And where's our lesson then? Boy, what say you? 105

YOUNG LUCIUS

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

MARCUS

Ay, that's my boy! Thy father hath full oft
For his ungrateful country done the like. 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. 115
Come, come, thou'lt do my message, wilt thou not?

YOUNG LUCIUS

Ay, with my dagger in their bosoms, grandsire.

TITUS

No, boy, not so. I'll teach thee another course.
Lavinia, come. Marcus, look to my house.
Lucius and I'll go brave it at the court. 120
Ay, marry, will we, sir, and we'll be waited on.
Exeunt all but Marcus

MARCUS

O heavens, can you hear a good man groan
And not relent, or not compassion him?
Marcus, attend him in his ecstasy,
That hath more scars of sorrow in his heart 125
Than foemen's marks upon his battered shield,
But yet so just that he will not revenge.
Revenge the heavens for old Andronicus!
Exit