

Extracts for auditions.

Extract for Chiron, Demetrius and Aaron:

DEMETRIUS

Why, boy, although our mother, unadvised,
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 you 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 dishonour'd in the court of Rome.
For shame, put up.

DEMETRIUS

Not I, till I have sheathed
My rapier in his bosom and withal
Thrust these 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 darest perform!

AARON

Away, I say!
Now, by the gods that warlike Goths adore,
This petty 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! and 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:
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?
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 makest 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 loved.
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.

Extracts for auditions.

Extract for Tamora, Aaron, Bassianus and Lavinia

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.

Exit

Enter BASSIANUS and LAVINIA

BASSIANUS

Who have we here? Rome's royal empress,
Unfurnish'd 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?

TAMORA

Saucy controller of our private steps!
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-transformed limbs,
Unmannerly intruder as thou art!

LAVINIA

Under your patience, gentle empress,
'Tis thought you have a goodly gift in horning;
And to be doubted that your Moor and you
Are singled forth to try experiments:
Jove shield your husband from his hounds to-day!
'Tis pity they should take him for a stag.

BASSIANUS

Believe me, queen, your swarth Cimmerian
Doth make your honour of his body's hue,
Spotted, detested, and abominable.
Why are you sequester'd from all your train,
Dismounted from your snow-white goodly steed.
And wander'd 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,
Great reason that my noble lord be rated
For sauciness. I pray you, let us hence,
And let her joy her raven-colour'd love;
This valley fits the purpose passing well.

BASSIANUS

The king my brother shall have note of this.

LAVINIA

Ay, for these slips have made him noted long:
Good king, to be so mightily abused!

TAMORA

Why have I patience to endure all this?

Extracts for auditions.

Extract for Titus, Marcus and Lavinia

Enter LAVINIA running in and making signs with her hands, and letting books fall from her arms. Enter TITUS and MARCUS

MARCUS ANDRONICUS

What means my niece Lavinia by these signs?

LAVINIA turns over with her stumps the books which she has let fall

TITUS ANDRONICUS

How now, Lavinia! Marcus, what means this?
Some book there is that she desires to see.
Which is it, girl, of these? Open them, Marcus.
But thou art deeper read, and better skill'd
Come, and take choice of all my library,
And so beguile thy sorrow, till the heavens
Reveal the damn'd contriver of this deed.
Why lifts she up her arms in sequence thus?

MARCUS ANDRONICUS

I think she means that there was more than one
Confederate in the fact: ay, more there was;
Or else to heaven she heaves them for revenge.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

Soft! see how busily she turns the leaves!

Helping 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 thine annoy.

MARCUS ANDRONICUS

See, brother, see; note how she quotes the leaves.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

Lavinia, wert thou thus surprised, sweet girl,
Ravish'd and wrong'd, 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!--
Pattern'd by that the poet here describes,
By nature made for murders and for rapes.

MARCUS ANDRONICUS

O, why should nature build so foul a den,

Unless the gods delight in tragedies?

TITUS ANDRONICUS

Give signs, sweet girl, for here are none
but friends,

What Roman lord it was durst do the deed:

MARCUS ANDRONICUS

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.

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

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, and guides it with her stumps, and writes

TITUS ANDRONICUS

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

'Stuprum. Chiron. Demetrius.'

Extracts for auditions.

Extract for Marcus and Lucius:

MARCUS ANDRONICUS

You sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome,
By uproar sever'd, like a flight of fowl
Scatter'd by winds and high tempestuous gusts,
O, let me teach you how to knit again
This scatter'd corn into one mutual sheaf,
These broken limbs again into one body;
Lest Rome herself be bane unto herself,
And she whom mighty kingdoms court'sy to,
Like a forlorn and desperate castaway,
Do shameful execution on herself.
But if my frosty signs and chaps of age,
Grave witnesses of true experience,
Cannot induce you to attend my words,

To LUCIUS

Speak, Rome's dear friend, as erst our ancestor,
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,
That cursed 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;
Our father's tears despised, and basely cozen'd
Of that true hand that fought Rome's quarrel out,
And sent her enemies unto the grave.
Lastly, myself unkindly banished,
The gates shut on me, and turn'd weeping out,
To beg relief among Rome's enemies:
Who drown'd 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,
That have preserved her welfare in my blood;
And from her bosom took the enemy's point,
Sheathing the steel in my adventurous body.
Alas, you know I am no vaunter, I;
My scars can witness, dumb although they are,
That my report is just and full of truth.

MARCUS ANDRONICUS

Now you have 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
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.

Extracts for auditions.

Extract for Titus:

TITUS ANDRONICUS

Hail, Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds!
Lo, as the bark, that hath discharged her fraught,
Returns with precious jading 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.

The tomb is opened

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!

Extracts for auditions.

Extract for Tamora, Saturninus and Messenger:

TAMORA

My gracious lord, my lovely Saturnine,
Lord of my life, commander of my thoughts,
Calm thee, and bear the faults of Titus' age,

And rather comfort his distressed plight
Than prosecute the meanest or the best
For these contempts.

Aside

Why, thus it shall become
High-witted Tamora to gloze with all:

Enter Messenger

How now, good fellow! wouldst thou speak with us?

Messenger

Yea, forsooth, an your mistership be emperial.

TAMORA

Empress I am, but yonder sits the emperor.

Messenger

I have brought you a letter here.

SATURNINUS reads the letter

SATURNINUS

Go, take him away, and hang him presently.

Messenger

How much money must I have?

TAMORA

Come, sirrah, you must be hanged.

Messenger

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

Exit, guarded

SATURNINUS

Despiteful and intolerable wrongs!
Shall I endure this monstrous villany?
I know from whence this same device proceeds:
May this be borne?--as if his traitorous sons,

That died by law for murder of our brother,
Have by my means been butcher'd wrongfully!
Go, drag the villain hither by the hair;
Nor age nor honour shall shape privilege:
For this proud mock I'll be thy slaughterman;
Sly frantic wretch, that holp'st to make me great,
In hope thyself should govern Rome and me.

Extracts for auditions.

Extract for Aaron, Quintus and Martius

AARON

Come on, my lords, the better foot before:
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.

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 fall'n? What subtle hole is this,
Whose mouth is cover'd with rude-growing briars,
Upon whose leaves are drops of new-shed blood
As fresh as morning dew distill'd 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 give a likely guess
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?

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.

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.

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 how it is; for ne'er till now
Was I a child to fear I know not what.

MARTIUS

Lord Bassianus lies embrewed here,
All on a heap, like to a slaughter'd lamb,
In this detested, dark, blood-drinking pit.

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:
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.

QUINTUS

Reach me thy hand, that I may help thee out;
Or, wanting strength to do thee so much good,
I may be pluck'd into the swallowing womb
Of this deep pit, poor Bassianus' grave.
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 loose again,
Till thou art here aloft, or I below:
Thou canst not come to me: I come to thee.

Falls in

Extracts for auditions.

Extract for Saturninus, Lucius and Titus:

LUCIUS

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

TITUS ANDRONICUS

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,
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 begg'd the empire at thy hands.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

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 ANDRONICUS

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 pleased with this my sudden choice,
Behold, I choose thee, Tamora, for my bride,

Extracts for auditions.

Optional extra; Livinia and Tamora:

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.

DEMETRIUS

Listen, fair madam: let it be your glory
To see her tears; but be your heart to them
As unrelenting flint to drops of rain.

LAVINIA

When did the tiger's young ones teach the dam?
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 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!--
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.

TAMORA

Hadst thou in person ne'er offended me,
Even for his sake am I pitiless.

Remember, boys, I pour'd 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 call'd a gentle queen,
And with thine own hands kill me in this place!
For 'tis not life that I have begg'd so long;
Poor I was slain when Bassianus died.

TAMORA

What begg'st thou, then? fond woman, let me go.

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.