

## The Vengeance of Titus

- Titus had been pushed to the edge of sanity and been kicked on his backside over it. Everything (save classical texts) ceased to make any sense to him.
- He exchanged passivity for aggression and took on the role of aggressor: he was determined to play the game with the same weapons as his enemies—only being much more devious than they could have ever imagined
- His mind confused and unsettled, he shifted unpredictably from love to hate and back again towards his family
- Rejected and marginalized by an ungrateful Rome, Titus began to think independently (not strictly relying upon the precedents of classical texts).
- Rather than continue in the service of others, Titus, for the first time in his life, began to act in his own best interests. He stopped playing roles that had been assigned to him by other (less worthy) people: he became a dramatist, conceiving a revenge play in which he cast and assigned roles to his family and to his enemies. He plotted out the scenes, provided directions and wrote dialogue. He cast himself as Justice (or Retribution), the chief protagonist. Though he cast his family, he kept secret from them how his play was going to end.
- Both he and Lucius implored the empire's bitter enemies, the Goths, to wage war against the city and do whatever was necessary to dethrone Saturninus. Having been won over by Lucius, the Goths repudiated their queen, embraced the Romans as brothers, and became instruments of the Andronici's revenge.
- The Andronici believed that as a consequence of the egregious calumny that befell the throne under Saturninus, that the Roman gods, in their desire to restore justice, utilized them as their human agents of vengeance. When the identities of Lavinia's assailants were revealed the Andronici attributed it to divine agency; the revelation was interpreted by the Andronici as divine sanction for their revenge. Throughout his undertaking, Titus publically correlated his actions as the behest of the gods.
- Titus had young Lucius deliver a scroll to Chiron and Demetrius which contained a quotation from an Ode by Horace: "The man of upright life, and free from crime, has no need of the moor's javelins or arrows." Being ignorant of the classics, the two boys failed to recognize its significance:

Aaron, being well versed in them, immediately recognized that they had all been discovered.

- Having written notes enlisting the help of the gods in his vengeance, Titus affixed them to arrows, and with the assistance of family and friends, shot them into the Heavens.
- When, dressed in their disguises, Tamora and her two sons pretended to be Revenge, Rape, and Murder, Titus recognized full well their intent was to lure him to his death: Tamora (as Revenge, risen from her kingdom—Hell itself) beckoned him to join her below, in Hell. However, while feigning madness, Titus outwitted her by separating her from her two sons
- As a sacrificial ritual undertaken for *and with* Lavinia, Titus slit the throats of Chiron and Demetrius. Lavinia held a basin between her stumps to collect their dripping blood as an ingredient for the pies. Symbolically, Titus made them suffer what they had done to his daughter: he deprived them of the use of their hands and tongues.
- The pasties into which the ground up torsos of Chiron and Demetrius had been baked represented a symbolic return of children to the womb of their mother. The pasties represented their coffins, and Tamora's stomach became their graves, symbolically tied to the Andronici tomb and the pit (i.e. Bassianus' grave).
- . Tamora, being Evil, had to be stopped by getting her to consume herself.