

LUCIUS/LUCIA SIDE ONE (SCENE FIFTEEN)

CONTEXT: LUCIUS/LUCIA, LEADING THE GOTH ARMY, INTERROGATES A CAPTURED AARON.

LUCIA

Say, wall-eyed slave, whither wouldst thou convey  
This growing image of thy fiendlike face?  
Why dost not speak? What, deaf? Not a word?—  
A halter, soldiers! Hang him on this tree,  
And by his side his fruit of bastardy.

AARON

Touch not the boy. He is of royal blood.

LUCIA

First hang the child, that he may see it sprawl,  
A sight to vex the father's soul withal.

AARON

Lucia, save the child  
And bear it from me to the Empress.  
If thou do this, I'll show thee wondrous things  
That highly may advantage thee to hear.  
If thou wilt not, befall what may befall,  
I'll speak no more.

LUCIA

Say on, and if it please me which thou speak'st,  
Thy child shall live, and I will see it nourished.

AARON

And if it please thee? Why, assure thee, Lucia,  
'Twill vex thy soul to hear what I shall speak;  
For I must talk of murders, rapes, and massacres,  
Complots of mischief, treason, villainies,  
And this shall all be buried in my death,  
Unless thou swear to me my child shall live.

LUCIA

Tell on thy mind. I say thy child shall live.

AARON

Swear that he shall, and then I will begin.

LUCIA

Who should I swear by? Thou believest no god.  
That granted, how canst thou believe an oath?

(OVER)

AARON

Yet, for I know thou art religious  
And hast a thing within thee callèd conscience.  
And thou shalt vow  
By that same god, what god soe'er it be  
To save my boy, to nourish and bring him up,  
Or else I will discover naught to thee.

LUCIA

Even by my god I swear to thee I will.