

TAMORA SIDE ONE (SCENE ONE)

CONTEXT: TITA HAS JUST CALLED FOR THE SACRIFICE OF TAMORA'S ELDEST SON, ALARBUS; TAMORA BEGS FOR MERCY FOR HER SON.

TAMORA

Stay, Roman brethren!—Gracious conqueror,
Victorious Tita, rue the tears I shed,
A mother's tears in passion for her child.
And if thy children were e'er dear to thee,
O think my child to be as dear to me.
Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome
To beautify thy triumphs and return;
But must my son be slaughtered in the streets
For valiant doings in their country's cause?
O, if to fight for king and commonwealth
Were piety in thine, it's so in mine!

She kneels.

Andronicus, stain not thy tomb with blood.
Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?
Draw near them then in being merciful.
Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.
Thrice-noble Tita, spare my first-born son.

TAMORA/SATURNINUS SIDE TWO (SCENE ONE)

CONTEXT: TAMORA, NEWLY MARRIED TO THE NEWLY CROWNED EMPEROR OF ROME, SATURNINUS, ATTEMPTS TO CONVINCHE HER HUSBAND TO SHOW MERCY AND RESPECT TO THE TITA AND HER HER FAMILY... AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT.

TAMORA (*to Saturninus*)

My worthy lord, if ever Tamora
Were gracious in those princely eyes of thine,
Then hear me speak indifferently for all,
And at my suit, sweet, pardon what is past.

SATURNINUS

What, madam, be dishonored openly,
And basely put it up without revenge?

TAMORA

Not so, my lord; the gods of Rome forbend
I should be author to dishonor you.
But on mine honor dare I undertake
For Lady Tita's innocence in all,
Whose fury not dissembled speaks her griefs.

(*aside to Saturninus*)

My lord, be ruled by me; be won at last.
Dissemble all your griefs and discontents.
You are but newly planted in your throne.
Yield at entreats, and then let me alone.
I'll find a day to massacre them all
And raze their faction and their family,
The cruel mother and her traitorous brood,
To whom I sued for my dear child's life,
And make them know what 'tis to let a queen
Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain.

(*aloud*)

Come, come, sweet emperor.—Come, Andronicus.—
Take up this good lady, and cheer the heart
That dies in tempest of thy angry frown.

SATURNINUS

Rise, Tita, rise. My empress hath prevailed.

TAMORA SIDE THREE (SCENE FOUR)

CONTEXT: TAMORA AND HER LOVER AARON MEET IN THE WOODS, WHERE AARON REVEALS HIS PLAN TO HER.

TAMORA

My lovely Aaron, wherefore look'st thou sad,
When everything doth make a gleeful boast?
The birds chant melody on every bush,
The snakes lies rollèd in the cheerful sun,
The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind
And make a checkered shadow on the ground.
And curtained with a counsel-keeping cave,
We may, each wreathèd in the other's arms,
Our pastimes done, possess a golden slumber,
Whiles hounds and horns and sweet melodious birds
Be unto us as is a nurse's song
Of lullaby to bring her babe asleep.

AARON

Madam, though Venus govern your desires,
Saturn is dominator over mine.
Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand,
Blood and revenge are hammering in my head.
Hark, Tamora, the empress of my soul,
This is the day of doom for Bassianus.
His Philomel must lose her tongue today,
Thy sons make pillage of her chastity
And wash their hands in Bassianus' blood.

He takes out a paper.

Seest thou this letter? Take it up, I pray thee,
And give the King this fatal-plotted scroll.

He hands her the paper.

Now, question me no more. We are espied.
Here comes a parcel of our hopeful booty,
Which dreads not yet their lives' destruction.

Enter Bassianus and Lavinia below.

TAMORA

Ah, my sweet Moor, sweeter to me than life!

AARON

No more, great empress. Bassianus comes.

He exits aloft.

TAMORA SIDE FOUR (SCENE FOUR)

CONTEXT: IN THE WOODS, LAVINIA BEGS FOR HER LIFE TO TAMORA AND HER CHILDREN, HER NEWLYWED HUSBAND IS DEAD AT HER FEET.

LAVINIA

O Tamora, thou bearest a woman's face—

TAMORA

I will not hear her speak. Away with her.

LAVINIA

O, let me teach thee! For my mother's sake,
That gave thee life when well she might have slain thee,
Be not obdurate; open thy deaf ears.

TAMORA

Remember, **children**, I poured 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 called a gentle queen,
And with thine own hands kill me in this place!
For 'tis not life that I have begged 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.
Do this, and be a charitable murderer.

TAMORA

So should I rob my sweet sons of their fee.
No, let them satisfy their lust on thee.

TAMORA SIDE FIVE / SATURNINUS SIDE FOUR (SCENE FOURTEEN)

CONTEXT: TAMORA ATTEMPTS TO CALM SATURNINUS WHO PANICS, LEARNING THAT LUCIA/LUCIUS IS LEADING AN ARMY AGAINST ROME.

TAMORA

Is warlike Lucia general of the Goths?

SATURNINUS

Ay, now begins our sorrows to approach.
'Tis she the common people love so much.
Myself hath often heard them say,
When I have walkèd like a private man,
That Lucia's banishment was wrongly done,
And they have wished that Lucia were their emperor.

TAMORA

Why should you fear? Is not your city strong?

SATURNINUS

Ay, but the citizens favor Lucia
And will revolt from me to follow her.

TAMORA

King, be thy thoughts imperious like thy name.
O, cheer thy spirit, for know, thou emperor,
I will enchant the old Andronicus
With words more sweet and yet more dangerous
Than baits to fish or honey-stalks to sheep,
Whenas the one is wounded with the bait,
The other rotted with delicious feed.

SATURNINUS

But she will not entreat her daughter for us.

TAMORA

If Tamora entreat her, then she will,
For I can smooth and fill her aged ears
With golden promises, that were her heart
Almost impregnable, her old ears deaf,
Yet should both ear and heart obey my tongue.

TAMORA SIDE SIX (SCENE SIXTEEN)

CONTEXT: TAMORA, DISGUISED AS THE GODDESS REVENGE, ATTEMPTS TO TORMENT TITA (WHO DOESN'T LET ON THAT SHE IS NOT FOOLED).

TITA

Who doth molest my contemplation?

TAMORA

I come to talk with thee.

TITA

No, not a word.

TAMORA

If thou didst know me, thou wouldst talk with me.

TITA

I am not mad. I know thee well enough
For our proud empress, mighty Tamora.
Is not thy coming for my other hand?

TAMORA

Know, thou sad wretch, I am not Tamora.
She is thy enemy, and I thy friend.
I am Revenge, sent from th' infernal kingdom
To ease the gnawing vulture of thy mind
By working wreakful vengeance on thy foes.

TITA

Art thou Revenge? And art thou sent to me
To be a torment to mine enemies?

TAMORA

I am. Therefore come down and welcome me.

TITA

Do me some service ere I come to thee.
Lo, by thy side, where your companions stand,
Now give some 'surance that thou art Revenge!

TAMORA

These are my ministers and come with me.

TITA

Are they thy ministers? What are they called?

TAMORA

Rape and Murder; therefore callèd so
'Cause they take vengeance on those kinds of men.

(OVER)

TITA

Good Lord, how like the Empress' children they are,
And you the Empress! But we women o'th' world
Have miserable, mad, mistaking eyes.
O sweet Revenge, now do I come to thee,
And if one arm's embracement will content thee,
I will embrace thee in it by and by.