A THOUSAND DREADFUL THINGS:
A READER'S GUIDE TO ACTS IV & V of
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
TITUS ANDRONICUS
(c. 1592-1594)

questions on Acts Four & Five
Now that you've finished the play . . .

scene-by-scene plot summary

sources

1. Questions on Act Four

Stay, murderous villains, will you kill your brother?
Now, by the burning tapers of the sky
That shone so brightly when this boy was got,
He dies upon my scimitar's sharp point
That touches this, my first-born son and heir.

. . .

What, ye sanguine, shallow-hearted boys,
Ye white-limed walls, ye alehouse painted signs,
Coal-black is better than another hue;
For all the water in the ocean
Can never turn the swan's black legs to white,
Although she lave them hourly in the flood.
Tell the Empress from me I am of age
To keep mine own, excuse it how she can.

--Aaron to Chiron and Demetrius, 4.2.87-104

reading for plot

p. 63 / 4.1.42-58 Pelican
Lavinia has been following Young Lucius from school and starts paging through one of the startled boy's schoolbooks; why? What does she reveal to her father, nephew, and uncle by doing so?

p. 64 / 4.1.78 Pelican
How does speechless Lavinia reveal the names of her assailants?

pp. 67-68 / 4.2.0-40 Pelican
What gift does Titus have delivered to Tamara's sons? What does Aaron perceive about it that Chiron and Demetrius not?

pp. 68-69 / 4.2.46-70 Pelican
What "pains" does Tamora suffer (line 47), and what is their end result? What does Tamora wish to be done (lines 69-70)?

pp. 71-74 / 4.2.84-96, 152-162 Pelican
How do Chiron and Demetrius respond? The Nurse? Aaron? What are Aaron's plans for the newest arrival?
Why does Titus want arrows shot up to the heavens? And where does Marcus tell the archers to aim, and why?

Why is the Clown headed for the imperial court, and what does Titus ask him to do?

How does Saturninus respond to the messages Titus' arrows have brought to his court? What does he do to the Clown who delivers another message from Titus?

What does Saturninus learn about Lucius, and how does he respond?

**reading for meaning**

~~NOTE--the scrolled arrows~~

4.2.18

As Heather James puckishly notes, the verse from Horace written on the scroll wrapped around the arrow's shaft is "quite literally a barbed allusion" (132).

**two fathers, two sons**

pp. 15-17, 70-71 / 1.1.290-358, 4.2.80-96 Pelican

How can we compare Titus' relationship with Lucius to Aaron's with his own son? What are the thematic implications of the comparison? (See Maus 376.)

"Terras Astraea reliquit": Titus & the myth of the Titans

p. 75 / 4.3.4 Pelican

Russell Kornblith '02 suggests that the name Titus alludes to the myth of the Titans; according to Edward Tripp, the Titans were children of Uranus [heaven] and Gaia [earth]. They included Hyperion (a sun god), Themis and Rhea (earth goddesses), and Cronus,

the boldest and wiliest of the lot. Gaia persuaded him to rebel against his father. Alone, or with the aid of the other Titans, he castrated Uranus and usurped the rule of Olympus. He was in turn overthrown,, together with those among his brothers and nephews who supported him, by his son Zeus. (579)

After ten years of was, Cronus and other key rebels are defeated and imprisoned in Tartarus forever. Ovid alludes to the rebellion against Saturn and the consequent decline from the perpetual springtime of the peaceful Golden Age to the Silver, when the cycle of the seasons originated:

After Saturn
Was driven to the shadowy land of death,
And the world was under Jove, the Age of Silver
Came in, lower than gold, better than bronze.
Jove made the springtime shorter, added winter,
Summer, and autumn, the seasons as we know them.
That was the first time when the burnt air glowed
White-hot, or icicles hung down in winter.
And men built houses for themselves; the caverns,
The woodland thickets, and the bark-bound shelters
No longer served; and the seeds of grain were planted
In the long furrows, and the oxen struggled
Groaning and laboring under the heavy yoke.
Then came the Age of Bronze, and dispositions
Took on aggressive instincts, quick to arm,
Yet not entirely evil. And last of all,
The Iron Age succeeded, whose base vein
Let loose all evil: modesty and truth
And righteousness fled earth, and in their place
Came trickery and slyness, plotting, swindling,
Violence and the damned desire of having.

. . . .

. . . And War came forth
That uses both [gold and iron] to fight with; bloody hands
Brandished the clashing weapons. Men lived on plunder.
Guest was not safe from host, nor brother from brother,
A man would kill his wife, a wife her husband,
Stepmothers, dire and dreadful, stirred their brews
With poisonous aconite, and sons would hustle
Fathers to death, and piety lay vanquished,
And the maiden Justice, last of all immortals,
Fled from the bloody earth.
(Metamorphoses 1.113-151, Humphries trans.)

The maiden Justice was called Astraea; in 4.3.4, Titus himself quotes the relevant phrase from this passage: "Terras Astraea reliquit." How can we link the myth of the Titans to Shakespeare's title character?

2. Questions on Act Five

Know, thou sad man, 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.
Come down, and welcome me to this world's light.
Confer with me of murder and of death.
There's not a hollow cave or lurking-place,
No vast obscurity or misty vale
Where bloody murder or detested rape
Can couch for fear, but I will find them out,
And in their ears tell them my dreadful name,
Revenge, which makes the foul offender quake.
--Tamora to Titus, 5.2.28-40

reading for plot

p. 84 / 5.1.16 Pelican
What has motivated the Goths to join forces led by Lucius, their former enemy?

p. 85 / 5.1.20-39 Pelican
Whom has the Second Goth apprehended, having spotted him doing what?

pp. 88-89 / 5.1.98-145 Pelican
What does Aaron reveal about himself to Lucius?
Tamora comes to Titus’ house with her sons; they are all in disguise—as what? And for what purpose? What does Titus reveal to us in his aside—as what do we know that Tamora, Chiron, and Demetrius do not?

What does Titus do to Chiron and Demetrius? Who helps him?

Who dies in this scene, and how?

Who promises to restore order to beleaguered, bloodied Rome?

What are the ultimate fates of Aaron and Tamora?

Troubling boundaries (III): Aaron vs. Chiron & Demetrius

Francesca Royster argues that, while the play’s Romans unhesitatingly think of Goth and Moor alike as equally un-Roman and therefore equally dangerous, equally evil, Shakespeare himself is not so indiscriminate. For example, who is more likely to give free rein to sexual desire, no matter how dangerous indiscretion can be—Aaron on the one hand or his Gothic lover and her sons on the other? (See the questions “ad manes fratrum?” and “troubling boundaries (II)” in Act Two’s “reading for meaning.”)

And who finds Roman culture less alien? For example, who is the more adept and insightful reader of Ovid—Aaron on the one hand or Chiron and Demetrius on the other? And which one of the three has “with my knife carved in Roman letters / ‘Let not your sorrow die, though I am dead’” (5.1.139-140; see Royster 438)?

"worse than Philomel you used my daughter, / And worse than Procne I will be revenged"

Is Chiron and Demetrius’ attack on Lavinia indeed “worse,” as Titus says, than Tereus’ upon Philomela? And does Titus’ revenge thus exceed Procne’s? Does the punishment reflect the crime?

---NOTE—"Why art thou thus attired, Andronicus?": the final banquet

5.3

Jackson and Russell note that Deborah Warner’s 1987 production of the play with the Royal Shakespeare Company was starkly simple; the actors supplied any music necessary—and there was little beyond the notorious whistling of a certain ‘merry tune’ from Snow White as the company prepared the final banquet” (181).

Terrence O’Brien’s actors played the “denouement in slow motion, a splatter scene in which the actors—clutched spurting bladders filled with a mixture of red food dye, chocolate syrup, and laundry detergent” (Marks, “A Festival” “E4).

In a sardonic flourish that seems to have become de rigueur for modern productions, following to the letter the stage directions: “enter Titus like a cook,” Deborah Warner’s, Terrence O’Brien’s, and Julie Taymor’s featured Titus sporting a chef’s toque as he served up the meat pie to Tamora and Saturninus (Bate and Jackson 182; Marks; Taymor 163). Before the guests arrive, Taymor’s script reads, "Two pies sit cooling on the open" windowsill a la 'Betty Crocker'” (163).
the body politic: Marcus' appeal to shattered Rome

pp. 101-102 / 5.3.67-72

After the atrocities of the banquet table have run their course, Marcus steps in, appealing to the survivors to restore some stability to Rome:

0, let me teach you how to knit again
This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,
These broken limbs again into one body.

How does this passage—particularly the last line—echo other images and episodes in the play? Or, to put the question differently, can we read central episodes in the play as political metaphors, reinforcing, Marcus' comparison of shattered Rome to a body's broken limbs? (See Waith 44.)

Aaron's son

p. 87 / 5.1.81-86 Pelican

In her study of Shakespeare's history plays, Barbara Hodgdon says of the end of Titus that—in spite of "overrepresentation in the bloodbath finale"—it suggests that the future holds some hope for beleagured Rome: "Indeed, . . . the possibility exists that two children—Aaron's child and young Lucius”—embody that hope for the future. Even as they do so, Hodgdon remarks, they renew one of the oppositions central to the play: Roman vs. Goth (Hodgdon 248 n. 39). Is the end of the play as optimistic as Hodgdon suggests?

Aaron's punishment and the disposition of Tamora's corpse

pp. 105-106 / 5.3.179-182, 195-200 Pelican

In his wide-ranging analysis of Titus Andronicus, Francis Barker draws upon the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas. Douglas develops models that allow us to better understand the way a given society expresses and defends its fundamental values. For example, she suggests that we can best understand the principle underlying a state's banishment of a prisoner to the state "cleansing" itself of the "dirt" that disorders, defiles, pollutes it.

Is Douglas's model applicable to the Rome of the play, Barker asks? For example, consider the fates of Aaron and Tamora. While Titus and Lavinia will be ceremonially interred in the family tomb within Rome's walls, what does Lucius command be done with Tamora's body? What is to happen to Aaron? (Similarly see Malis 377.)

Tamora's corpse and Jezebel's

pp. 105-106 / 5.3.179-182, 195-200 Pelican

Shakespeare arguably alludes to the Old Testament figure Jezebel, wife of Ahab, one of the ancient Israelite kings, whose evil influence in the land of Israel, especially in combating the religion of Yahweh in the interests of Baal-worship was exercised not only during the twenty-two years of Ahab's reign, but also during the thirteen years of the rule of her two sons, Ahaziah and Joram. (Hastings)

James Hastings, in Scribner's Dictionary of the Bible (Rev. ed. Frederick C. Grant and H. H. Rowley; New York: Scribner's, 1963; DS Library Ref 220.3 H) memorably characterizes Jezebel:

In her ruthlessness of character, her lust for power, . . . her remorseless brushing aside of anything and everything that interfered with the carrying out of her designs, she was the veritable prototype of Catherine de Medici.

We read in 2 Kings that in the final years of [war breaks out] . . . The prophet Elisha sends one of his followers to anoint Jehu, one of the commanders of the Israelite army, as king, and the Israelites assassinate not only Ahab's sons but Jezebel as well:
When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her eyes, and adorned her head, and looked out of the window. And as Jehu entered the gate, she said, "Is it peace, you Zimri [an allusion to another man in 1 Kings 16:8-12 notorious for brutally assassinating his enemies], murderer of your master?" And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" . . . [Jezebel's servants throw her out of the window] and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on her horses, and they trampled on her. Then he went in and ate and drank; and he said, "See now to this cursed woman, and bury her, for she is a king's daughter." But when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. When they came back and told him, he said, "This is the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servant Elijah . . . , "In the territory of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel, and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the territory of Jezreel, so that no one can say, "This is Jezebel." (2 Kings 9:30-37)

Why do you suppose Shakespeare, in the reference to the disposal of Tamara's corpse, alludes to Jezebel?

3. Now that you've finished the play . . .

% patterns in the play

Trouble first erupts in the play, the Arden editor notes, with the arguments swirling around the proper burial of Titus' sons and the sacrifice of Alarbus; how does the play conclude concerning the final fates of Tamora and Aaron? (See p. 15 of the Arden edition.)

\&\& assessing Titus (I)

The Arden editor quotes the actress Anna Calder-Marshall, Lavinia in the 1985 BBC production, who remarks, although the play is "very, very frightening," that "somehow we've found--or I think we have--that the characters through their suffering get closer. Titus has committed "the most appalling deeds and it isn't "until he's maimed and his daughter's maimed that he learns anything about love" (2). Do you agree? Or does Calder-Marshall sentimentalize the play, turning atrocious suffering into an occasion for a patly moral "lesson"?

\&\& assessing Titus (II)

Eugene Waith writes, "We see Titus at the beginning a man of absolute integrity but cursed, somewhat like Coriolanus, with an unbending and blind fixity of character" (45). Is this assessment legitimate? (Caius Marcius Coriolanus, incidentally, himself the title character of a play later in Shakespeare's career, was a ferociously efficient Roman soldier--a "thing of blood," one character calls him. His downfall is precipitated by his being thrust into political office. What is intended to be a reward for his military service to the state dooms him; Coriolanus finds himself outspoken in his contempt for the plebians and incapable of the tact, williness, and patience that typify the skillful politicians around him.)

\$ characterizing the Moor

Emily C. Bartels argues that Aaron (unlike Shakespeare's other Moor, the much more complex and sympathetic Othello) adheres to the 16th century's prevailing stereotype of the Moor as the malignant outsider. In fact, she writes, Aaron's perfidy "is consistently recognized and easily categorized by all, including himself and his allies"; Aaron, then, is the play's "one stable and unambiguous sign of Otherness within a 'wilderness' of meanings" (442).

Does the play support Bartels' contention? For example, Bartels argues that revenge motivates Tamora's deeds just as lust motivates her sons--yet "Aaron's motives are . . . slippery and obscure" (445). Are they? Does Aaron relish evil for its own sake, rationalize his deeds as he may? (In this respect, Bartels characterizes Aaron as an anticipation of Iago--Shakespeare's other "motiveless malignity," to paraphrase Auden.) And how are we to interpret the survival of Aaron's son at the end
of the play? Bartels suggests the ambiguity of the child's fate "leaves the threat of Moorish evil ever-present" (447 n. 54).

&& who is the cannibal?
As we have seen, fundamental antitheses in the play oppose the civility of Rome to the wildness of the Goths; the order of the city to the chaos of the forest. Yet how hard and fast can such contrasts be in a play where it is the Roman whom the Goth accuses of "cruel, irreligious piety"? So says Tamora before Titus has Alarbus, her eldest son, led offstage to be sacrificed. Consider the following elements that, Francis Barker contends, need to be considered before we reach any conclusions about the play's opposition between the civil and the barbarous:

--What place does Titus describe as "a wilderness of tigers" (3.1.55)?
--At the end of the play when Lucius reenters Rome, who are the men who comprise his army? (5.1.1 s. d.)
--And consider the horrific banquet Titus prepares: Barker writes,

What is to be made of the fact that Titus cooks Tamara's sons but does not eat; while Tamora eats but does not know what she eats? who, in such circumstances, is the cannibal, and where, in such circumstances, is the line between civilization and barbarism?

Are the ambiguities Barker notes in these episodes at the end of the play typical of Titus as a whole? What is the thematic significance of these terminal episodes about the difference between the civil and the barbarous?

4. Scene-by-scene plot summary

ACT ONE (pp. 3-35 Pelican)

1.1 THE CONQUERING HERO, EMBRACED AND DISGRACE

Two brothers, Saturninus and Bassianus, have become rivals in their pursuit of power. Both wish to serve Rome as their late father did: as the emperor. They confront each other (surrounded by their supporters) on the steps of the Capitol.

Saturninus tells the noblemen, commoners, and soldiers assembled on his behalf that he, eldest son of the late emperor, deservedly should inherit the empire. Bassianus (Saturninus' brother and rival) appeals to his followers: let the just and virtuous man win the position in open election.

Marcus Andronicus enters with the crown and tells the rivals that the commoners have made their choice: they have elected Titus to enter an election against Bassianus and Saturninus. The rivals agree and bid their followers to disperse peaceably.

Titus Andronicus, who has fought on Rome's behalf for forty years (1.1.196), enters battered but victorious in his battle against the Goths. He comes with soldiers leading Tamara (the captured Queen of the Goths) and her sons and bearing the bodies of 21 of Titus' sons who have fallen in battle. In order to restore peace to Rome as well as to the spirits of his slain sons, Titus orders that Alarbus, eldest son of Tamora, be sacrificed.

Tamora's entreaties to Titus for mercy go unheeded. Lucius and Titus' other surviving sons lead Alarbus away and slay him.

Titus' brother Marcus urges him to enter the election, but Titus declines: Rome, he says, deserves a ruler younger and more vital than a soldier wearied by four decades of battle. Titus says in essence (220-232), "Let me choose on behalf of the people who would choose me: let Saturninus be the new emperor of Rome." A grateful Saturninus tells Titus that Lavinia (Titus' daughter) will become the new emperor's bride. Although Titus thinks the match honors his family, Lavinia and the man she loves, Bassianus, do not agree. Titus is alarmed and offended to see Bassianus takes Lavinia away in treasonous defiance of Saturninus' public proclamation of his intent to marry her himself.
Events quickly turn against Titus, who only moments before had reentered Rome as a hero:
--Mutius, one of Titus’ sons, tries to prevent his father from retrieving Lavinia; Titus slays Mutius for interfering (291-294).
--Saturninus accuses Titus of conspiring with his sons to humiliate him; therefore Tamora, not Lavinia, shall be the emperor’s new bride. (302-340)
--Marcus and his nephews tell Titus, even threaten him, to inter the slain Mutius in the family tomb. Titus eventually agrees, but the strain between Titus and his family is palpable (344-393)
--Although Bassianus and Lavinia’s hasty offstage marriage threatens to strain the quarreling factions in Rome even more, Tamora intercedes.
She encourages the emperor to forgive Titus and his kin—yet she tells him privately that to attack the popular soldier would be unwise for so newly appointed an emperor. But Titus and his defiant family are not safe: Tamora pledges to "find a day to massacre them all" (458).

ACT TWO
(pp. 24–46 Pelican)

2.1 ANOTHER BROTHERS’ QUARREL, CHIRON & DEMETRIUS VIE FOR LAVINIA
lines 1-25
Aaron, alone onstage, realizes that Tamora, whom he has "fettered in amorous chains," is temporarily safe from her enemies. As the new bride of Saturninus, she is perfectly poised to destroy hated Rome, even as she appears to have made peace with it.

lines 26-78
Chiron and Demetrius, Tamora’s surviving sons, enter quarreling; each desires Lavinia (new wife of Bassianus). Their violent and noisy brawl, Aaron tells them, is dangerous, particularly since the woman they desire is kin to the new emperor.

lines 98-135
Because neither brother cares if the other has sex with Lavinia if they both do, and because sexual satisfaction rather than lasting romance is their goal, Aaron tells them to get what they want by stealth.
Specifically, he tells the brothers, abduct and rape her in the forest tomorrow when she is hunting; the woods, far from the court, will easily allow them to have their way with her, undetected.

2.2 THE HUNT BEGINS
Lavinia and her husband, Bassianus; Saturninus, Tamora and her sons; and Titus, his sons Martius and Quintus, and his brother Marcus go hunting.

2.3 SCORNING THE LOVERS & PAYING THE PRICE
lines 1-87
Aaron enters with a bag of gold that he buries under a tree--part of a "stratagem," he tells us, that will lead to "a very excellent piece of villainy."
Tamora appears, eager to make love to Aaron, but he has the destruction of Bassianus and Lavinia on his mind. He tells Tamora to give Titus a scroll (another object to further his conspiracy against the Romans).
Aaron exits as Bassianus and Lavinia approach; the Roman newlyweds are gleefully contemptuous to Tamara, describing Aaron in blatantly racist terms and sarcastically comparing Tamora to Diana (goddess of chastity).

lines 88-191
When Chiron and Demetrius enter, their mother tells them that Bassianus and Lavinia have trapped her there, telling her that they swore they would bind her to a tree, to be driven mad by the terrifying creatures of the nighttime forest.
Demetrius promptly stabs Bassianus for his supposed treachery;
Lavinia, whom Demetrius and Chiron threaten with rape, appeals to Tamora for mercy. But Tamora is unmoved: Titus ignored her tearful pleas for mercy, so out of vengeance Tamora will not heed Lavinia’s. Demetrius throws Bassianus’ corpse into a pit in the earth before he and Chiron take away Lavinia to assault her.

**lines 192-306**

Aaron reenters, accompanied by Titus’ sons Quintus and Martius; Aaron has told them he has seen a panther asleep in the pit. When Martius leans over to investigate, he falls in and is horrified to discover the body of Bassianus there. In an attempt to rescue his brother, Quintus falls in. Tamora, reentering with Titus, gives Saturninus the scroll that Aaron had given her previously; line 47. The scroll supposedly reveals a plot to be executed by Quintus and Martius against Bassianus’ life. Their reward? A bag of gold, buried under an elder tree, which Aaron “discovers” and reveals as evidence. Saturninus has Quintus and Martius arrested; they are to be executed for Bassianus’ murder.

2.4 **LAVINIA IS DISCOVERED**

Not only have Chiron and Demetrius raped Lavinia; they have also cut out her tongue and chopped off her hands. They mock her and run away.

Lavinia’s uncle, Marcus Andronicus, enters, horrified to discover her fate. He offers her what comfort he can, leading her to her father’s home.

**ACT THREE**

(pp. 46-61 Pelican)

3.1 **TITUS’ VAIN APPEAL & AARON’S OFFER**

**lines 1-135**

As his sons are taken away to be executed, Titus cries out to the judges and senators for mercy—but they walk silently past them. His appeal continues even after they’ve gone.

Titus’ son Lucius appears, his sword drawn: he has tried but failed to rescue his brothers. The senate has banished him from Rome as punishment.

When Marcus enters with Lavinia, Lucius finds the sight of his mutilated sister too painful to behold. But Titus tries to comfort his daughter: he promises to “plot some device of further misery” to avenge his family on their enemies.

**lines 136-265**

Aaron enters with a proposal, supposedly from Saturninus. If either Titus, his son, or his brother chops off a hand, Quintus and Martius will be spared. Lucius and Martius quarrel; each is willing to lose one of his hands and is unwilling that the other, much less Titus, should do so. Titus tricks them: he sends them off for an ax and, when they are gone, chops off one of his own hands, with Aaron’s assistance.

A messenger enters, bringing Titus’ hand and not Quintus and Martius themselves but their heads. When Titus realizes the extent of Aaron’s villainy, he reacts the only way he feels he can: he starts to laugh.

**lines 266-300**

Titus sends Lucius away to the Goths; he is to raise an army and to return with them to Rome, poised to overthrow Saturninus and his decadent court. Marcus and Titus leave the stage, each carrying a head of the executed sons. Titus gives Lavinia something to carry, too: his hand, which he tells her to carry between her teeth.

3.2 **AN UNEXPECTED GUEST JOINS THE FAMILY FOR A MEAL**

As the Andronicus eat, Titus is alarmed to see his brother Marcus kill a fly: “A deed of death done on the innocent / Becomes not Titus’ brother” (56-57). When Marcus makes a racist comparison between the fly and the villainous Moor, Titus strikes again and again at the fly (as if, his brother thinks, Titus mistakes the fly for Aaron himself).
ACT FOUR
(pp. 61-105 Pelican)

4.1 AVID OVIDIANS
lines 1-82
Titus’ grandson, Young Lucius, enters, startled that his aunt Lavinia is following him everywhere. But Lavinia tries to turn the pages of one of the books that Lucius has dropped: Ovid’s Metamorphoses. When she gestures Marcus to stop turning the pages of the book upon reaching the story of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela, they realize why she’d followed her nephew carrying his schoolbooks. Her gestures in response to the family clarify that more than one assailant brutalized her. After Marcus demonstrates, she takes a staff in her mouth and guides it with her feet, tracing the names of her attackers in the sand.

lines 83-129
The family kneels, vowing to exact “mortal revenge upon these traitorous Goths” (93). Titus cautions that to attack the sons is to rouse the mother—and, while Saturninus is elsewhere, she will do as she pleases.

Titus, proposing a plan that strikes Marcus as evidence of madness, will engrave on sheets of brass damning messages about the imperial family, messages that the winds will blow freely about (lines 102-106). He also says Lucius and Young Lucius should come with him to the armory, where Lucius will be furnished with armor and weapons and where his son will get some weapons to bring to Chiron and Demetrius. (Why? See 4.2.1-30.)

4.2 AARON BECOMES A FATHER
lines 1-38
Young Lucius comes to the imperial palace to give Chiron and Demetrius gifts from Titus: specifically, weapons from his armory wrapped with paper inscribed with Latin verses. (See 4.1.113-117.) Aaron shrewdly perceives that Titus’ gift is not evidence of Titus attempting to ingratiate himself with the empress’ sons. Instead, it show that “the old man hath found their guilt” (26), even though the significance of Titus’ gift is lost on Tamora’s doltish sons.

lines 40-181
The Nurse enters, having attended Tamora as she gave birth. The child’s father, it is clear, is not Saturninus but Aaron. Chiron and Demetrius, accosting the man who has shamed their mother, vow that Aaron’s son shall be killed, just as Tamora has instructed.

Aaron swiftly puts another plan to work: he stabs the Nurse and later will stab the midwife—the only two to witness the birth of Aaron and Tamora’s child. He tells Chiron and Demetrius that Mulihtes, another Moor, is also a recent father—but his child (as fair-skinned as his mother) will take the place of Aaron’s son in the imperial palace. Aaron meanwhile exits to have the Goths conceal his son—a son who, Aaron vows, will someday “be a warrior and command a camp” (181).

4.3 MESSAGES FOR THE EMPEROR
lines 1-76
Titus enters with Young Lucius, Marcus, and others, carrying arrows with messages written on papers fastened to them. To Titus, the arrows will ideally reach the gods in the heavens, whom the letters invite to restore justice to Rome. To Titus’ brother, the arrows, aimed towards the imperial palace, “will afflict the emperor in his pride” (63).

lines 77-121
The Clown enters on his way to the palace where he hopes to settle a quarrel between his uncle and the emperor’s men. Titus asks the Clown to take a message to the emperor: the clown agrees, and Titus wraps his letter to Saturninus around a knife.

4.4 THE EMPEROR IS NOT PLEASED
Saturninus is furious by Titus’ latest act of defiance and wonders at the fact that Titus’ blatant acts (libeling the Senate and publicizing the imperial court’s crimes) have so far gone unpunished. But Titus’ madness, whether real or feigned, will not shield him from Saturninus’ wrath. While Tamora comforts the emperor, her aside reveals that, once Titus is dead, she and Aaron will flee (34-38).
The Clown enters, bearing the message from Titus; Saturninus rewards the Clown with death for his pains. Saturninus is even more vexed to hear from Aemilius that Lucius has raised an army of Goths. Saturninus fears that Lucius (always popular with the commoners, many of whom feel that his banishment was unjust) will be favored by the commoners, weakening Saturninus' hold on the throne.

Tamora chastises her husband: act more like the emperor you are, she says. She also promises to manipulate Titus into persuading Lucius to surrender command of the army of Goths he's raised—an army, the implication is, that will be loyal to Tamora.

**ACT FIVE** (pp. 84-106 Pelican)

### 5.1 A PARENT'S ENTREATY: "SPARE MY CHILD"
**lines 1-86**
Lucius enters, leading an army of Goths prepared to overthrow Saturninus "and cursed Tamora" (16). The Second Goth enters, having captured Aaron while the Moor attempted to safely conceal his son.

When Lucius commands that both father and child be hanged--the child first, so that Aaron "may see it sprawl" (51)--Aaron entreats Lucius to save the boy. In return, Aaron will confess to his innumerable crimes—horrid crimes, he tells Lucius, "that highly may advantage thee to hear" (56). Lucius agrees, and Aaron's recitation begins.

**lines 87-165**
Aaron reveals the fact that the mother of his child is none other than Tamara and that her sons are the murderers of Bassianus and Lavinia's assailants. Aaron boasts, too, that he was the Goths' "tutor," devising the strategies that allowed them to fulfill their desires; and that he successfully tricked Titus into severing his hand and beheaded Martius and Quintus. Hanging, Lucius decides, is too swift and merciful a death for so unrepentant a one as Aaron.

### 5.2 REVENGE, RAPE, & MURDER MAKE A HOUSE CALL
**lines 1-144**
Tamara enters, having disguised herself as Revenge and her sons as Rape and Murder. She tells Titus she has come to "wor[k] wreakful vengeance" on his enemies (32). Titus, who says he needs proof that his visitor is indeed revenge, asks her to kill Rape and Murder; she does not because, she says, Rape and Murder are the servants of Revenge (60-63).

Tamora hopes that distracting "brainsick" Titus will give her an opportunity to either disperse the army of Goths whom Lucius has brought to destroy her or return their allegiance away from Rome and back to her (71-89). However, it is clear that Titus is fully aware of Tamara's ruse (142-144). In fact, he persuades "Revenge" to leave her sons with him even as he seeks out and destroys Aaron and Tamara ("Well shalt thou know her, . . . / For up and down she doth resemble thee"; 106-107).

**lines 145-204**
Titus calls in three of his kinsmen (Sempronius, Caius, and valentine) and has them tie up and gag Chiron and Demetrius. He then calls in Lavinia and confronts the Goths with their victim. Titus vows that he will cut their throats, grind their bodies up, and bake them into pies which he will serve to their mother. He cuts their throats and has the corpses taken into the kitchen, where "I'll play the cook" (204).

### 5.3 DINNER & JUSTICE ARE SERVED
**lines 1-47**
Lucius tells his uncle Marcus to have Aaron imprisoned without food until he brought before Tamara to testify to their relationship. He suggests, too, that the army of the Goths be prepared for attack from Saturninus.

The emperor, along with Tamora and others, sits down at the table for the banquet Titus has prepared. Titus enters, dressed as a cook (along with his daughter, concealed by a veil). As he sets the food before them, Titus asks Saturninus if Virginius, who killed his daughter after she was raped, was in fact justified. Saturninus agreed: to die would be preferable than to live with shame, and to kill one's daughter preferable to having her presence keep the father's sorrows fresh. Titus then promptly kills Lavinia before the astonished guests (34-47).
lines 48-49
Titus reveals that not he but Chiron and Demetrius are the true authors of Lavinia's destruction. When Saturninus bids that the villainous brothers be sent for, Titus reveals that they are already present, "both baked in this pie, / Whereof their mother hath daintily fed" (60-61). Titus then stabs Tamora, prompting Saturninus to stab Titus, itself a crime that prompts Lucius to kill Saturninus. Marcus bids the tribunes, survivors of the flurry of violence, to help him restore order and stability to Rome. He promises that, were they to find Titus’ surviving kin guilty of having done anything amiss, the Andronici will kill themselves "and make a mutual closure of our house" (134). Lucius and Marcus summarize the assaults visited upon the Andronici by Aaron and the Goths. The tribunes proclaim Lucius the new emperor of Rome. Lucius sentences Aaron to death; he is to be buried in the earth up to his neck and left to starve. Tamora will not be buried; instead, her body will be "thrown forth to beasts and birds of prey" to devour (198).

sources


