

TITUS

Based on the play “TITUS Andronicus” by William Shakespeare

Adapted by David Errol Kenworthy

Act 1

Scene 1: Washington D.C. Before the Capitol.

The tomb of Lincoln.

Enter, below, ROBERT Todd Lincoln and his followers (DAVIS)

Enter from the other side, THOMAS Lincoln and his followers

(Captain BRAGG, BENJAMIN Titus and PETER Titus)

ROBERT Noble Senators, Congressmen, defend the justice of my cause. Countrymen, my loving followers, plead my title with your sabers. I am Abraham’s first-born son, and I should take his place as leader of this nation. Let my father's honors live within me, and do not wrong my name with this indignity.

THOMAS Americans, friends, followers, if I, Thomas, the son of our late President, were ever gracious in the eyes of the leaders here in Washington D.C., defend this passage to the Capitol and do not bring dishonor to our country, to justice, but let pure election shine. Those of the Union, fight for freedom with your choice.

MARCUS You children that strive ambitiously for rule, the Legislators of Washington have made their decision by a

majority vote. The people have chosen General Andrew Titus, a noble man, and a braver warrior. He and his family have been a terror to the Confederate traitors, and have together rebuilt a strong nation. Five times he has returned to this Capitol, bearing his valiant sons in coffins. At last, he returns home, and now, by the senate's right, will be sworn in as the new President of these United States. Dismiss your followers, and honor your father by supporting this choice. Our country needs union at this difficult time, not division.

ROBERT You speak the truth, Marcus. I will abide by the laws of this great nation.

THOMAS Senator Titus, I do agree with your uprightness and integrity, and so I love and honor you and your noble brother, General Titus, his family, and, of course, his gracious daughter Laura, Washington's rich ornament. I will dismiss my friends and, by the people's favor, withdraw my cause.

ROBERT Friends, I thank you all and dismiss you all. To the love and favor of my country, I will commit myself, my person, and the cause. I hope all of Washington will be just and gracious to me as I am kind to you.

THOMAS And also, myself, a poor competitor.

BRAGG Make way for the great General Titus, man of virtue and the Union's best champion. Successful in the battles that he fights with honor, he returns from Appomattox, where he has accepted the surrender of General Lee.

TITUS My countrymen, the Union is victorious! I salute this country with my tears of true joy for the reunification of this great nation. You great defenders of this Capitol, bear witness to the those that fought in this dark time. Those that survive should be rewarded, and those that have fallen should be buried with their ancestors. May they rest in peace, their battle finally done! Sweet tomb of virtue and nobility, how many children of mine will you store?

PETER Give us the proudest prisoner of the South so we may execute them for treason!

TITUS I give them to you, the noblest that survives, the eldest born of General Johnston, who fell at the Battle of Shiloh.

TAMARA Please, victorious Titus, see the tears I shed, a mother's tears for her child. If your children were ever dear to you, mine is as dear to me! Do not celebrate by killing to beautify your triumph and return, but acknowledge my children's valiant doings for their country's cause. If

fighting for the common good brought goodness in you,
then spare my child. General Titus, do not stain this tomb
with blood. Be merciful, as God would will. Sweet
mercy is the truest display of nobility. Noble Titus, spare
my first-born.

TITUS Be patient, Tamara, and pardon me. These soldiers have
lost friends and family to your husband and his spawn,
and they demand justice for their slain beloved. Yours is
responsible for many deaths, and must therefore die to
appease their ghosts.

PETER Take them away! And make a fire. They will soon be
nothing but ashes.

TAMARA General, your cruelty is a curse in the eyes of God!

CHAD Were we ever this barbaric in Richmond?

DAVID Don't you dare compare Virginia to this cesspool they
call Washington D.C. Aaron shall rest and we will
survive to await their fall. Stay calm, mother, and hope
that the opportunity of sharp revenge may favor us. Lee
may have surrendered, but our friends in Richmond will
right these bloody wrongs.

PETER General Titus, we have performed our duties. Aaron
suffered a single musket ball to the head, and our sabers
sliced them to pieces. The remains have been thrown on

the bonfire, so their soul will never find rest. And now, father, we shall bury our brothers in the family tombs.

TITUS Let it be so. I will join you, and bid farewell to their souls. My sons, may you rest here in peace and honor, away from the dangers of the world! Here lurks no treason, here no envy nor damned grudges grow. Here are no storms, no noise, but silence and eternal sleep. Rest, my sons.

LAURA Father, thank God you're here, alive and victorious! And Peter, Quincey, my prayers for your safe return have been answered! But what of my other brothers? (*Titus shakes his head*) Oh, father, my tears will soak their grave. But I kneel at your feet, with tears of joy shed on the earth, for you have come home!

TITUS Laura, all I ask is that you live. Outlive your father's days, and the fame my name has gained by death.

MARCUS Long live General Titus, my beloved brother, the next President of the United States!

TITUS Thank you, my noble brother Marcus.

MARCUS And welcome, survivors of this successful war. The entire country is indebted to your service. Brother, Congress has decided that you should ascend to the highest office in the land, after our beloved president was

struck down by a cowardly assassin. His sons have set themselves forward as candidates, and put this election on. But the country has chosen you over all others. Help put a head on our headless nation.

TITUS America's body should have a strong head, rather than one that shakes from age. These last few years of constant strife has taken its toll. I have been a soldier for forty years, and I have led the Union army successfully. I have risen in rank, I have slain in service of my noble country, and I have buried sons in that service. I ask that you honor my duties, but I do not ask for the honor you are offering.

MARCUS Andrew, this is your chance to become the leader you were meant to be.

ROBERT Listen to your brother, General Titus. You would make my father proud by lifting up his mantle!

TITUS Patience, Robert. I would rather see you in the office, and honor the memory of your father.

ROBERT General, I do not flatter you, only honor you, and will do so until I die. If you choose to help me gain the office, I will be most thankful. Cherishing a man with a noble mind is an honorable deed.

TITUS Brother, if I choose a successor to take my place, will the country listen?

MARCUS The people will accept whoever you put into power.

TITUS Then, thank your fellow congressmen for the honor, and tell them I choose Abraham's eldest son, Robert, whose virtues will reflect on this land as the sun's rays reflect on earth. He will bring justice to this republic. If you will elect by my advice, Robert Todd shall be the next president.

MARCUS So be it. I will ensure we elect Robert Todd as the next President of the United States.

ROBERT General Titus, for the favors you have done in our election today, I thank you and will return your kindness. To advance your name and honorable family, I ask for your daughter's hand in marriage and thus make her the First Lady. Would this please you, my friend?

TITUS It would, Robert, and I could not ask for a better son-in-law. (*To TAMARA*) Now, Tamara, you are a prisoner of the state, and the new president will decide the fate of you and your remaining children.

ROBERT Good lady, trust me, I shall not see you abused, no matter what your husband and progeny have done. We must heal this country, for there has been enough blood shed.

Since you are a widow, and therefore have no money or prospects, I will hire you as the Head Housekeeper of the Presidential Mansion, and you will directly serve the First Lady, my new wife to be. Laura, is this acceptable?

LAURA Of course, Robert. What a truly noble gesture! I am truly honored by the actions of my fiancé.

ROBERT Thanks, sweet Laura. Men, we set our prisoners free. Celebrate our honors with triumph and grace.

THOMAS (*Seizing LAURA*) General Titus, I'm sorry, but I believe I should be the one to marry your daughter. So, she will be leaving with me.

TITUS Are you serious, boy?

THOMAS Yes, General. She will be much happier with me than my foolish brother.

MARCUS You think you can simply seize what is not yours?

PETER He will, and shall, if Peter lives.

TITUS Traitors! Where are my soldiers? Treason! On my life, save my daughter!

ROBERT Save her from whom?

THOMAS By he that takes your betrothed away, brother!

BENJAMIN Help them escape and I'll stop father.

TITUS Ben, step aside, or help bring your sister back here!

BENJAMIN Father, I'm sorry, but you will not follow them.

TITUS What? How dare you! (*Stabs BENJAMIN*)

BENJAMIN Help, Peter, help! (*Dies*)

PETER Father, you have unjustly killed Ben. We were trying to save our sister from a foolhardy and hastily made marriage.

TITUS Neither you nor he are any family of mine. My children would never dishonor me. Traitor, give Laura back to the President.

PETER I would rather see her dead than married to a man she doesn't love!

ROBERT No, Titus, I don't need her, or you, or any of you. I'll trust the ones that have shown me true honor!

TITUS What are you saying, Robert?

ROBERT Leave, General. Let my fool of a brother take that worthless baggage you call a daughter. He will be a fitting son-in-law for you. He and your lawless family are obviously traitors, and I now have my doubts about you.

TITUS These words are like razors to my wounded heart.

ROBERT Therefore, lovely Tamara, if you are pleased with my sudden choice, I choose you to be my bride. I will make you the First Lady of the United States. This union will truly heal our nation. Do you approve of my choice?

TAMARA By God and heaven, I swear I will satisfy your desires,
be a loving nurse, and a mother to your children.

ROBERT Leave, Titus. Because of you and your children's
treachery, you are dismissed from service and stripped of
the rank of General. Leave while you still can. Come, my
wife. With our union we will reunify our broken country.

TITUS I cannot believe I have returned from a war, only to have
my family turn against me. Titus, you walk alone,
dishonored and accused of wrongs.

MARCUS General Titus, I heard what happened. Why in God's
name would you kill your virtuous child?

TITUS No, brother, no. No child of mine, or yours, would
dishonor all of our family!

PETER Let us at least give Ben a proper burial.

TITUS Traitors, go away! Benjamin will not rest in this tomb.
None but soldiers and heroes will be buried here. Not a
traitor simply slain in a brawl. Bury them where you can,
for they do not deserve this tomb.

MARCUS Andrew, this is wrong. Benjamin must be buried with our
family.

QUINCEY And they will, or we will accompany them.

TITUS They will? What villain claims this?

QUINCEY The villain that stands before you, father.

TITUS What, would you bury them to spite me?

MARCUS No, brother, we ask you to pardon Benjamin.

TITUS Marcus, even you have betrayed me. With these words,
you have wounded my honor. I renounce every one of
you!

MARCUS He is not acting like himself. We should leave.

QUINCEY I will not leave until Benjamin is buried.

MARCUS Brother, in that name nature pleads—

QUINCEY Father, in that name nature speaks—

TITUS Speak no more!

MARCUS Andrew, my soul cries out—

PETER Dear father, the souls and substance of us all—

MARCUS Your brother Marcus begs you to bury noble Benjamin
here in our family tombs, for they died in honor and in
defense of their sister. Let young Benjamin, that was
your pride and your joy, enter here.

TITUS Rise, Marcus, rise. Today is the day where I am
dishonored by my own children. Well, bury Ben, and
then bury me next.

PETER Here lie your bones, sweet Benjamin, with your friends.

MARCUS No man should shed tears for noble Benjamin, who
lived in fame and died in virtue. Brother, tell me, how is

it that the wife of our enemy now finds herself in the President's House?

TITUS I don't know, Marcus. But I know that the heavens can tell she is not loyal to the man that gave her this position.

ROBERT So, Thomas, you have played your prize. God give you joy, sir, of your bride!

THOMAS Same to you, brother! I say no more, and wish no less. I take my leave.

ROBERT Traitor, if the Union has law or power, you and your faction will repent this outrage.

THOMAS An outrage, you say, to seize my love and now my wife? Let the law determine all. I have what is mine.

ROBERT You are very short with us, but if we live, we'll be as sharp with you.

THOMAS What I've done, I must and will do with my life. This noble gentleman, General Titus here, wrongly murdered his youngest child with his own hand to rescue Laura.

TITUS Thomas, don't plead my deeds. It is you and those that have dishonored me. The righteous heavens are my judge as to how I have loved and honored my family!

TAMARA Dearest husband, if I was ever gracious in those manly eyes of yours, then hear me speak, and pardon what is past.

ROBERT What, Tamara, to be dishonored openly, and without revenge?

TAMARA Not so. On my honor, I dare to plead for the General's innocence. Look graciously on him and do not lose a noble friend in vain. (*Aside to ROBERT*) Give up all your griefs and discontents. You are new to your office. The people and politicians will take Titus' side. Stop these arguments and leave this to me. I'll find a day to massacre them all and destroy their faction and their family. The cruel father and his traitorous children, to whom I sued for my dear child's life, will know what it is to kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain. (*Aloud*) Come, come, my sweet husband. Forgive this good old man and cheer your heart. Happiness dies in your angry frown.

ROBERT Rise, General Titus. My new bride has proved victorious.

TITUS I thank you, Mr. President, and her as well. These words fill me with new life.

TAMARA General Titus, I am now rejoined with these United States, as my fellow Southerners are reunited. I advise that all quarrels end today to help heal this nation, and your family and friends. Gentlemen, I have just now given my word and promise to the President that you will

be calmer and more rational. Please, do not make me a liar.

PETER My lady, I vow to heaven that what we did was for our sister's honor and our own.

MARCUS That, on my honor, I do protest.

ROBERT Trouble us no more. Go away and do not speak.

TAMARA No, my sweet, we must all be friends. The good Senator and his family kneel for grace that I will not deny.

ROBERT Marcus, as my lovely Tamara suggests, for your sake and your brother's, I do revoke these faults. Laura, though you left me, I found a friend. If the Executive Mansion can feast two brides, then you and your friends are my guests. This day will be a love-day.

TITUS If it pleases your majesty, tomorrow we will go hunting on my estate, with horn and hound, to celebrate this day of peace.

ROBERT Be it so, General, and I thank you.

Scene 2: The Presidential Palace (The White House)

ADAM As the golden sun salutes the morn, my lovely Tamara's earthly honor waits, and virtue stoops and trembles at her frown. Her luminous eyes can charm the very angels from heaven. But, away with such thoughts! I will be

bright, and shine in my new finery to wait upon my lady. Behind closed doors, however, I will be impure and unchaste with this belle, this goddess, this nymph. This siren will charm the new President, to reveal his flaws and his weaknesses. What is this?

DAVID Chad, you are too young to be smart, and have no manners, unlike myself, who has lived long enough to be graced with these skills. You ought to know that.

CHAD David, you're overthinking all of this. You try to intimidate me with your words and your brawn. It's not the difference of a year or two that makes me less gracious or you more fortunate. I am as able and as fit as you are to serve, and to deserve revenge.

DAVID Although she shouldn't have, our mother gave you that sword by your side. Keep it glued in the sheath until you know how to handle it, boy. Are you so desperate for revenge, that you threaten your friends?

CHAD With the little skill I have I will fully understand as much as I dare to.

DAVID You think you've grown so brave?

ADAM *(Coming forward)* Why do you do this, you fools? You dare to draw so close to the Presidential Palace, and have

a quarrel openly? The cause of your concerns should not dishonor your noble mother here. For shame, give up.

DAVID I won't give up until I have sheathed my sword deep in his chest, and shoved these dishonorable speeches down his throat.

CHAD I am prepared for that, foul-spoken coward. You will perform nothing with your weapon!

ADAM Stop your fighting, I say! This petty banter will undo us all. Do you not know how dangerous it is? Beware. Should your mother know of your arguments, she will be less than pleased.

CHAD I don't care, I know my mother and her doings.

DAVID Youngling, you should learn to make better choices.

ADAM What, are you mad? Do you not know how furious and impatient they can be here? You will only plot your deaths by arguing over revenge.

CHAD I would die a thousand deaths to avenge the death of Aaron.

DAVID You have hit it.

ADAM You would have hit it too! We should not be making this argument any longer. Would either of you be offended if you both were to stop?

CHAD Not me.

DAVID I wouldn't either.

ADAM For shame, be friends, and join together for a strategy in which you will accomplish your wish. Listen, they are about to start the General's hunt. The forest is wide and spacious, and many plots there are fitted for villainy. You will see and hear this dainty doe, and strike her by force, if not by words. We will acquaint your mother, with everything that we intend to do, and I'm sure she will help us with advice, so you won't have to do everything on your own. The Capitol is like a house of ill fame, full of tongues, eyes, and ears. The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull. There you will speak to her and strike her. There, serve your revenge, out of Heaven's sight.

CHAD Your counsel is wise. We will do as you say.

DAVID Until I find a stream to cool this hate within me, a charm like this will do.

Scene 3: A forest. Horns heard.

TITUS The morning is bright and grey, the hunt is in action, the fields are fragrant and the woods are green. Here we'll wake the President and his lovely bride. The Capitol will echo with the noise. My children, let it be your duty, as it

is ours, to attend the President carefully. I have been troubled in my sleep this night, but I've been comforted by the dawn of a new day. Good morning to you, my friends. Tamara, good morning to you. I promised you bells, didn't I?

ROBERT And you have rung it somewhat too early for new-married ladies, my lord.

THOMAS Laura, what do you say?

LAURA I have been wide awake for at least two hours.

ROBERT Come on, then, to our sport. Tamara, now you will see how good we are at hunting here in Washington.

MARCUS I have dogs that will catch the proudest buck, and climb the highest hill.

TITUS And I have a horse who will follow wherever the hunt is, and run as fast as the quickest game.

DAVID Chad, we will not hunt with horse nor hound, but hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground.

Scene 4: A lonely part of the forest.

ADAM Anyone who had wit would think that I was insane to bury so much gold under a tree. Let him know that this gold is a strategy, which will begin a very excellent piece

of villainy. Hide here, sweet gold, and be waiting for the calamity. (*Hides the gold.*)

TAMARA My love, why do you look sad when everything is such a gleeful show? The birds sing on every bush, the snake lies asleep in the sun, the green leaves quiver with the cooling wind. Let us sit in the shade, and hear the yelping noise of the hunt. We can sleep together, make love in each other's arms, while hounds and horns and birds sing us to sleep.

ADAM Tamara, I know love governs your desires, but revenge is dominant over mine. Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand, blood hammering in my head. This is the day of doom for Thomas and his wife must lose her tongue today, while your children wash their hands in Thomas' blood. Do you see this letter? Take it, and give it to the President. Don't question me anymore, we have company. They don't even realize their destruction.

TAMARA My love, you are sweeter to me than life.

ADAM No more, dear lady. Thomas comes. Speak with him, and I'll go fetch your children.

THOMAS What do we have here? The First Lady, away from her guards? Or did you come out here to see the hunting in the forest?

TAMARA You don't need to be watching my every step, private or not. You are an unmannerly intruder.

LAURA Under your patience, lady, I doubt that you and your servant are only trying experiments. You've come to shield your husband from his hounds today! It's a pity that they'll take him for a stag.

THOMAS Believe me, you should not be separated from your group, dismounted from your steed to wander to an obscure place in the forest, accompanied only by your servant, unless you are here on an impure desire?

LAURA Let us go, and let her enjoy her adulterous love. This valley fits her purpose well.

THOMAS My brother, the President, will hear of this.

LAURA Poor Robert, so mightily abused.

TAMARA Why do I have the patience to endure this?

DAVID How do you do, gracious mother? Why do you look so pale and ill?

TAMARA Don't you think I have reason to look pale? These two have lured me to this place where the sun never shines, and nothing breeds except owls or ravens, and told me that at night, every creature would make desperate cries, so awful that any mortal hearing it will go mad or die suddenly. No sooner than they told me this, they told me

that they would bind me and leave me to this miserable death. And then they accused me of being unfaithful to my own husband, the President. If you hadn't come, they surely would've gone through with their plans. Revenge me, as you love your mother's life, or I will never call you my children again.

DAVID This is a witness that I am yours. (*Stabs THOMAS*)

CHAD And this is to prove that I am yours, and prove my strength. (*Also stabs THOMAS*)

LAURA Barbarous Tamara, no name fits your nature but your own!

TAMARA Give me your dagger. My children, your mother's hand will right your mother's wrong. I will kill this girl.

DAVID Actually, mother, we have planned a better revenge.

CHAD Let's drag her husband into some secret pit and let his ghost watch what we do to his bride.

TAMARA Whatever you do, don't let her live to tell anyone what we have done.

CHAD I assure you, mother, she will never tell a soul of what has happened here.

LAURA Oh Tamara! Even though you have a woman's face—

TAMARA I refuse to hear her speak; away with her.

LAURA Please, convince her to listen to me!

DAVID Mother, it's in your glory that she sees your tears, but your heart is as unimportant as drops of rain to her.

LAURA Since when have a tiger's young been able to teach the parent? You didn't learn her wrath, she taught it to you!
(*To CHAD*) Please, show me pity.

CHAD Would you rather have me prove myself a coward?

LAURA The raven wouldn't hatch a lark, after all. I have heard that a lion moved with pity can put its claws away. Some say that ravens foster miserable children, while their own birds starve in their nests. Even though you had the heart to tell me no, at least pity me!

TAMARA I don't know what she means. Away with her!

LAURA Let me teach you! For my father's life, who granted your life when he could have slain you, open your deaf ears.

TAMARA Even for his sake I am pitiless. Remember, I gave my tears in vain, to save my child from sacrifice. But fierce Titus would not relent. Away with her, and do to her as you wish. The worse you are to her, the more I will love you.

LAURA Oh, Tamara, please, kill me with your own hands! I don't beg for my life. I was killed when Thomas died.

TAMARA What do you beg for, then? Stop bothering me.

LAURA I beg for a quick death.

TAMARA So, I should rob my sweet children of their revenge?

DAVID Away! You've kept us here for too long.

LAURA No grace? No mercy? You beastly creature! You are an enemy to our name! I'll tell—

CHAD No, I'll stop your mouth. Bring her husband. This is the hole where we'll hide him.

TAMARA Farewell, my children. I'll see what you make of her. My heart will never know happiness until all of the Titus name are killed off.

ADAM Come on, my friend, I will show you to the pit where I found the deer fast asleep.

QUINCEY My sight is very dull. I'm tired. Why not let our sport sleep for a while? *(Falls into the pit)*

ADAM Why did you fall? What hole is this, covered with briars, with leaves covered in drops of new-shed blood, as fresh as morning dew on flowers? It seems like a very fatal place to me. Quincey, did you hurt yourself in your fall?

QUINCEY Oh Adam, the only thing hurt is this sight that makes my heart lament!

ADAM *(Aside)* Now I'll get the President and lead him here, so he can guess how it is they killed his brother.

QUINCEY Adam, help me out of this unhallowed and blood-stained hole!

ADAM I'm paralyzed with fear. A chill and sweat coat my trembling joints. My heart suspects more than my eyes can see.

QUINCEY Thomas lies here like a slaughtered lamb. He wears a ring on his bloody finger that lights up the pit and shines on his dead cheeks, and shows the ragged insides of the pit. Oh Adam, help me with your hand. If fear has made you faint, as it has made me faint, help me out of this devouring hole.

ROBERT I'll see what hole is here, and who it is that leapt into it. Say who you are, whoever just descended into this gaping hollow of the earth.

QUINCEY The unhappy son of old Titus. We were brought here in an unlucky hour, to find your brother Thomas dead.

ROBERT My brother, dead? I know you must be joking, for he and his lady both are at the lodge. It hasn't even been an hour since I left him there.

QUINCEY We don't know where you left him, but here we have found him dead.

TAMARA Where is my husband, the President?

ROBERT Here, Tamara, in sorrow with killing grief.

TAMARA Where is your brother, Thomas?

ROBERT Poor Thomas here lies murdered.

TAMARA I wonder what man's face can give a pleasing smile at such murderous tyranny. (*giving ROBERT a letter*)

ROBERT (*Reads*) “If we fail to meet Thomas nicely, we will do so much as to dig the grave for him. We have hired a huntsman to get rid of him. Look for your reward among the nettles of the elder-tree that shades the mouth of that same pit where we decided to bury Thomas. Do this, and call us your friends.” This is the pit, and this the elder-tree. We will find out which huntsman has murdered Thomas here.

ADAM My lord, here is the bag of gold.

ROBERT (*To TITUS*) Your son has taken my brother’s life. Sirs, drag them from the pit into the prison. Let them stay there until we come up with a never heard way to torture them.

TAMARA They’re in this pit? How easily murder can be discovered!

TITUS Mr. President, with tears not lightly shed, if this is the fault of my accursed children, if it’s proven to be them—

ROBERT If it’s proven? It’s obvious! Who found this letter? Tamara, was it you?

TITUS Let me be their bail, they will be ready to answer the questions to clear the suspicion of their life.

ROBERT You will not bail them. Follow me. Bring the body and the murderer, and don't let them speak. If there were an end worse than death, that will be used to execute them.

TAMARA General Titus, I will beg the President. Don't fear for your child, for they will be well.

TITUS Come, Peter. Don't stay to talk with them.

Scene 5: Another part of the forest.

DAVID So, now go tell who it was that cut your tongue out, if you can speak!

CHAD Write it down, even, if those stumps of yours will hold a quill!

DAVID See how well she can tell her tale without words.

CHAD Go home, wash your hands.

DAVID She has no tongue to speak, nor hands to wash. Let's leave her in her silence.

CHAD If I were you, I would surely hang myself.

DAVID Only if you had hands to tie the rope.

MARCUS Who is this? My niece, why do you run away so fast? Where is your husband? Speak, gentle niece, what stern ungentle hands have hacked and chopped your hands off? Why aren't you answering me? Alas, a crimson river of warm blood falls between your rosy lips, coming and

going with your breath. Someone has cut your tongue out. Should I speak for you? Oh, I wish I knew the beast, so I could kill him to ease my mind! Come, let's go, and make you father blind with the sight of you. You will bring the whole month of tears to your father's eyes. We will mourn with you, if only our mourning could ease your misery!

Intermission

Act 2

Scene 1: A street.

TITUS Hear me, noble judges! For the pity of my age, whose youth was spent in dangerous wars while you safely slept. For all the blood I have shed, for all the frosty nights that I have watched. And now, for these bitter tears, which you see filling the aged wrinkles in my cheeks. Have pity on my condemned children, whose souls are not as corrupted as it seems. Let my tears quench the earth's dry appetite. My children's sweet blood will bring it shame and make it blush. O earth, I will befriend you if you refuse to drink my dear family's blood. Oh, gentlemen, unbind my kin, grant them life, and let me say that I never wept before.

PETER Noble father, you speak in vain. No one is around to hear you.

TITUS Ah, Peter, let me plead for your siblings. Grave judges, once more I beg of you—

PETER Father, no judge can hear you speak.

TITUS It doesn't matter. If they were around, they would not listen, and if they did listen, they wouldn't pity me. I must still plead. I tell my sorrows to the stones, even though they can't answer my distress. They are better than judges. When I weep, they humbly receive my tears and seem to weep with me. This country could never afford judges like these. A stone is as soft as wax, whereas judges are as hard as stones. A stone is silent, and does not offend me, while judges doom men to death with their tongues. *(Rises)* But why do you stand with your weapon drawn?

PETER To rescue them from their death. For which, the judges have given me banishment as my everlasting doom.

TITUS Oh, happy man! They have befriended you. Why, foolish Peter, do you not understand that this place is as wild as tigers? Tigers must prey, and they can afford no prey, except for me and mine. How happy are you that you

have been banished from these devourers? Who does
Marcus bring with him?

MARCUS Andrew, prepare your aged eyes to weep, or your noble
heart to break. I bring consuming sorrow to you.

TITUS Will it consume me? Let me see, then.

MARCUS This was your daughter.

TITUS Why, Marcus, so she is.

PETER This kills me!

TITUS Faint-hearted child, look at her. Speak, Laura, what hand
has made you handless in your father's sight? What fool
has added water to the sea, or brought a stick into fire?
My grief was at its height before you came, and now I
am filled with even more. Give me a sword, I'll chop off
my hands too. They've fought for this country, but all in
vain. And they have yet to be effective. Laura, its fine
that you don't have hands. Hands that service this land
are all in vain.

PETER Speak, gentle sister, who has done this to you?

MARCUS Her tongue, the engine of her thoughts, has been torn
from that pretty hollow cage.

PETER Say it for her, then. Who did this to her?

MARCUS I found her like this, trying to hide herself like a deer
trying to hide a wound.

TITUS It's my dear, and he who has wounded her has hurt me more than if he had killed me. Most of my wretched children are gone, one stands here, banished, and my brother is here, weeping at my woes. But what gives my soul the greatest pain is dear Laura. What shall I do now that I behold your body? You have no hands to wipe away your tears, nor a tongue to tell me who mutilated you. Your husband is dead, and your siblings are executed for his death. Look, Marcus! Peter, look at her! When I mentioned her siblings, fresh tears stood on her cheeks.

MARCUS Perhaps she weeps because they killed her husband. Perhaps it's because she knows they're innocent.

TITUS If they did kill your husband, be joyful because law has taken revenge on them. No, they would never do such a foul deed. Gentle Laura, let me hold you, or at least give me a sign how I can ease your pain. Should we cut off our hands, like yours? Or should we bite our tongues off, and mutely live the remainder of our hateful days? What should we do? Let us, that have our tongues, plot some further misery.

PETER Sweet father, stop your tears. My wretched sister sobs and weeps at your grief.

MARCUS Patience, dear niece. Andrew, dry your eyes.

TITUS Brother, your handkerchief can't drink a drop of my tears. You've drowned it with your own.

PETER Ah, Laura, I will wipe your cheeks.

TITUS I understand her signs. If she had a tongue to speak, she would say the same as I have said.

ADAM Titus, the President sends you this message. If you love your sons, let Marcus, Peter, or yourself, chop off your hand and send it to the President. He will send you both your sons alive, and that hand will be the ransom for their fault.

TITUS Oh, gracious President! A raven has never sounded more similar to a lark until now. With all my heart, I'll send the President my hand. Will you help me chop it off?

PETER Stop, father! Your noble hand has killed so many enemies. Let my hand serve the turn. My youth can spare my blood better than you can spare yours. My hand shall save their lives.

MARCUS Which of your hands has not defended this country? My hand has been idle here in the Senate. Let it serve as ransom for your children, my kin.

ADAM Come on, agree on whose hand will go. I fear they'll die before their pardon comes.

MARCUS My hand shall go.

PETER By heaven, it will not!

TITUS They were raised by me, therefore are my responsibility.

PETER Father, let me redeem them from death.

MARCUS For our father's sake and our mother's care, let me show you a brother's love.

TITUS Between the both of you, I will spare my hand.

PETER I'll go fetch the axe.

MARCUS But I will use the axe.

TITUS Come here. I'll deceive them both. Lend me a hand, and I'll give you mine.

ADAM *(Aside)* If that's what he calls deceit, I'll be honest. *(Cuts off TITUS's hand)*

TITUS Now, stop your arguing. Give the President my hand. Tell him it was a hand that saved him from a thousand dangers. As for my children, I bought my own.

ADAM I go, Titus. For your hand you will have your sons with you. *(Aside)* Their heads, I mean. Oh, this villainy brings me joy with the very thought of it! Let fools do good, but I will trade good for revenge.

TITUS Here I lift this one hand up to heaven. I call to any power that pities my tears. *(To LAURA)* Will you kneel with

me? Do then, dear. All of heaven will hear our prayers,
and with our sighs we'll stain the sun with fog.

MARCUS Brother, don't give up. Keep in mind all the possibilities.

TITUS My sorrow has no bottom. Let my passions be
bottomless with them.

MARCUS At least let reason rule your sorrow.

TITUS If there were reason for these miseries, then I could bind
my woes. When heaven weeps, does the earth not
overflow? If the winds rage, does the sea not go mad?
And will you ever have a reason for this? I am the sea,
how her sighs do blow! She is the weeping heavens, and
I am the earth. My sea is moved with her sighs, and my
earth will become overflowed and drowned. I cannot
hide her woes, but like a drunkard, I vomit them. Let me
leave, for losers will have to go ease their stomachs with
their bitter tongues.

Messenger Andrew Titus, you are repaid for the hand you sent the
President. Here are the heads of your two noble sons, and
here is your hand you sent back in scorn. You mocked
their resolution. Woe to you for your foolishness!

MARCUS My heart is an ever-burning hell! To weep at this misery
may ease my mind, but I am filled with sorrow at this
double death.

PETER This sight makes a deep wound. Detested death will not stop, and life has no interest but to breathe!

MARCUS Alas, poor heart, that kiss is as comfortless as frozen water is to a thirsty deer.

TITUS When will this fearful death end?

MARCUS Andrew, you see your children's heads, your own warlike hand, and your mangled daughter. Your other child banished, with this sight has been struck pale and bloodless. And I, your brother, am cold and numb. I will no longer control your grief. Now is a time to yell; why are you still? Why do you laugh? It isn't a time to laugh.

TITUS Because I don't have any more tears to shed. Sorrow is my enemy. Which way will I find revenge's cave? These two heads seem to speak to me, and tell me that I will never find happiness until I avenge their deaths. Let me see what tasks I have to do. I swear on my soul that I will right these wrongs. Come, brother, and Laura, take my hand between your teeth. As for you, Peter, get yourself out of my sight. You have been banished, so you can't stay. Go and stay with my loyal troops in their barracks, and tell them what has happened here. If you love me as I think you do, let us part. We have much to do.

PETER Farewell, my noble father, the most woeful man that ever lived in America. Farewell, proud Washington. Until I come again, I leave my pledge dearer than my life. Farewell, Laura, my noble sister, living in oblivion and hateful grief. If I live, I will repay your wrongs, and make the President and his wretched wife beg in the streets. I will indeed speak to my father's men, and then I will have my revenge.

Scene 2: A room in TITUS's house. A banquet set out.

TITUS So now sit, and eat no more than will preserve our strength, so we can revenge these bitter sorrows of ours. My poor right hand remains to seek justice for the left. When my heart is mad with misery, it beats in this hollow prison of my flesh. (*To LAURA*) You are forced to talk in signs! When your poor heart beats with outrageous beating, you can't strike it to make it still. Wound it with sighing, girl, kill it with groans. Or get some knife between your teeth, and make yourself a hole that all the tears you let fall, can run into.

MARCUS Don't teach her to use such violent hands against a tender life.

TITUS Marcus, no man should be mad but myself. What violent hands can she lay on her life? Ah, why do you talk about

hands to her? Remember that we still don't have any. As if *we* should forget we had no hands, if Marcus didn't remind us! Gentle girl, eat this. You get no drink. I can interpret her signs. She says she drinks no drink but the tears from her sorrow, spilling down her cheeks.

Speechless complainer, I will learn your thoughts. You won't sigh, or hold your stumps to heaven. You will not wink, nod, kneel, or make a sign. Nonetheless, I will learn what you mean.

LUKE Good Uncle, stop these bitter laments. Make my cousin happy with some pleasing tale.

MARCUS Alas, my child weeps to see their uncle's sadness.

TITUS Peace, child. You are made of tears and tears will melt your life away. What do you strike at, Marcus?

MARCUS I have killed a fly, my lord.

TITUS Murderer! You kill my heart. Mine eyes are clouded with tyranny. Whoever does a deed of death on the innocent is not my brother. Get out. You are not fit for my company.

MARCUS But, my lord, I have only killed a fly.

TITUS But what if that fly had a father and mother? Poor harmless fly, that came here to make us merry with his buzzing! And you have killed him.

MARCUS Pardon me, sir, it was an evil, ill-minded fly, like Tamara and her servant. That's why I killed him.

TITUS Oh, oh, oh, then pardon me for getting mad at you. You have done a charitable deed. Give me your knife, I will insult him as if it were that villainous Adam, come here to poison me. *(Grabs a knife, stabs table)* There's for you, and that's for Tamara! Between us, we can kill a fly that is like those wicked souls.

MARCUS Poor man! Grief has made him see false shadows in the truth.

TITUS Laura, come with me. I'll to your room and read you sad stories. Come with us, Luke. Your sight is young, and you will read when my eyes begin to fail.

Scene 3: TITUS's garden.

LUKE Help, Uncle Andrew, help! My cousin Laura follows me everywhere, and I don't know why. Father, look how quickly she chases me. Sweet cousin, I don't know what you mean.

MARCUS Stand by me, Luke. Don't fear your own cousin.

TITUS She loves you too much to hurt you.

LUKE When my father was in Washington, she did.

MARCUS What does Laura mean by these signs?

TITUS Don't fear her, Luke. See how much she cares about you?

MARCUS Can you guess why she follows you?

LUKE I don't know, nor can I guess, unless she's having a fit. I have heard my uncle say that grief makes men mad. I know my cousin Laura loves me as much as my mother did, and would not hurt me. Laura, even if my uncle and my father leave, I will stay with you.

TITUS What now, Laura? Marcus, what does this mean? She wants to see one of these books. Which is it, girl? Open them, Luke, you are deeper read and better skilled. Why does she lift her arms like this?

MARCUS I think she means that there was more than one person guilty in the fact. Yes, that's it. Or else she asks heaven for revenge.

TITUS What book is that she's looking through?

LUKE It's Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. My mother gave it to me.

MARCUS Perhaps she chose it from the rest, for her love that's gone.

TITUS Wait! Look how quickly she turns the pages! (*Helping her*) What will you find? Laura, should I read? This is the tragic tale of Philomela's treason and mutilation. This is the root of your tragedy.

MARCUS Look, brother. Look how she reads the pages.

TITUS Laura, were you as surprised and wronged as Philomela was, forced into the gloomy woods? Where we hunted? Oh, if we had never hunted there! Here the poet describes the nature of the woods, made for murder.

MARCUS Why would nature build such a foul den, unless God delights in tragedies?

TITUS Give signs, we're all your friends here. Who did these deeds?

MARCUS Sit down, sweet niece. Brother, sit by me. Laura, copy after me when I write my name without any hands at all. *(He writes his name with his staff, and guides it with feet and mouth)* Curse whoever forced us to these ways! Write, good niece, and display what God will have discovered for revenge. Heaven guides your pen to print your sorrows. We will finally know the traitors and the truth!

TITUS Do you read, my lord, what she wrote? 'Chad. David.'

MARCUS The children of Tamara are the performers of this bloody deed?

TITUS Dear God in Heaven, why are you so slow to see and hear these crimes?

MARCUS Calm yourself, brother, though I know there is enough written here to stir mutiny in the mildest of thoughts. Kneel down with me, Andrew. And kneel Laura, and my sweet child, and swear with me, that we will prosecute these traitors with mortal revenge, and see their blood, or die on this promise.

TITUS If you hunt these bears, beware, for the mother bear will wake. She will lure anyone to her, and kill him while he sleeps. You're a huntsman, Marcus, so leave it alone for now. Come with me so I can write a letter. Luke, what say you?

LUKE I say, uncle, that if I were older, their mother's bed should not be safe.

MARCUS That's my boy! Your uncle would do the same for this ungrateful country. He has taught you well.

LUKE And so will I, if I live.

TITUS Come with me, Luke, and I'll give you presents that I intend to send them both. You'll give them the message, won't you?

LUKE Yes, with my dagger in their chests, uncle.

TITUS No, boy. I'll teach you another way. Laura, come. Marcus, look after my house. Luke and I will go to the White House.

MARCUS Oh, heavens, can you hear a good man groan, and not give him any compassion at all? I should follow my brother. He has more scars of sorrow in his heart than marks upon his body from his enemies. Revenge, heavens, for my brother!

Scene 4: A room in the palace.

CHAD David, here's the son of old Marcus Titus. He has some message to deliver to us.

ADAM Yes, some crazy message from his mad Uncle.

LUKE Sirs, with all the humbleness in the world, I greet you honorably from General Titus. *(Aside)* And pray that God punishes you both!

DAVID Young Luke, what's the news?

LUKE *(Aside)* That you are both cursed, that's the news. Villains marked by Death! *(to them)* My Uncle has sent me with the best weapons of his armory to gratify your honorable youth, the hope of our nation. And so, he presents you with his gifts. Whenever you're in need, you'll be armed and appointed well. I leave you both... *(Aside)* like bloody villains.

DAVID What's here? A letter? Let's see: "The man of upright life, and free from crime, has no need of the servant's javelins or arrows.'

ADAM Right, you have it. Just an old saying, a poem. (*Aside*) They are fools! The old man found their guilt and sends them weapons wrapped with lines that point to our plot. If Tamara were here, she would applaud Titus and his guile. But let her rest in her unrest for a while, for soon she gives the President a new child. (*To them*) Young masters, a star led us to Washington as captives, and advanced you to your new status. It did me well, to brave the judge in the trial.

DAVID It did me better, to see Titus send us gifts.

ADAM Did he not have a reason, David? Did you not use his daughter very kindly?

CHAD A charitable wish, full of love.

ADAM Your mother would say amen.

CHAD And that she would, for twenty thousand more.

DAVID Come, let us go. Pray for our beloved mother in pain, as she brings us a new brother or sister.

ADAM (*Aside*) Pray to the Devil. God has given up on us.

DAVID Why do the President's trumpets flourish now?

CHAD Because the President has a son.

DAVID Who's here?

NURSE Good day, sirs. Did you happen to see Adam, Tamara's servant?

ADAM More or less, here I am. Why do you want me?

NURSE Oh, sir, we're all undone! Now help!

ADAM Why do you keep yelling? What do you have in your arms?

NURSE I have what I would hide from heaven's eye. It's Tamara's shame, and the country's disgrace! She has delivered, sir, delivered!

ADAM To whom?

NURSE I mean she has given birth.

ADAM Well, give her good rest! What has God sent her?

NURSE A devil that looks just like you, the spitting image of yourself!

ADAM Why, then she is the devil's woman. What a joyful issue.

NURSE A joyless, dismal and sorrowful issue. Here's the baby, and Tamara sends it to you, and bids you to kill it with your dagger.

ADAM Kill him? Never! Sweet baby, you are a beautiful blossom, sure.

DAVID Villain, what have you done?

ADAM I have done what I can't undo.

CHAD You have undone our mother.

ADAM Villain, I have done your mother.

DAVID And thereby, hellish dog, you have undone her. Damn her loathed choice! Curse the offspring of such a fiend!

CHAD It shall not live.

ADAM It shall not die.

NURSE It has to, the mother demands so.

ADAM It has to, nurse? Then let me execute my own flesh and blood.

DAVID I'll kill the tadpole on my sword's point. Nurse, give it me. My sword will soon put it to an end.

ADAM No sooner than this sword will stab you. Stay, villains! Will you kill your brother? Whoever touches my first-born son and heir will die by my dagger's point! I tell you, younglings, no one will take this child from his father's hands. Tell Tamara that I am of age to keep my own son.

DAVID Will you betray your noble mistress, then?

ADAM My mistress is my mistress; this baby is the picture of my youth. I love it more than I love all of the world. I will keep it safe, or some of you will die for it.

DAVID Our mother will be forever shamed by this.

CHAD Everyone will despise her for this.

NURSE The President, in his rage, will doom her to death.

CHAD I blush with fury to think of her death.

ADAM Look, how this boy smiles at his father, as if to say 'Old man, I am your own.' He is your brother, from the same blood that first gave you life, and from the same womb where you were imprisoned.

NURSE What should I tell their mother?

DAVID You told us what is to be done, and we will listen to your advice. Save your child so we can all be safe.

ADAM Let's all calm down and think about this. My son and I will be safe, so you can talk of your safety with pleasure.

DAVID How many people saw this child?

NURSE The midwife and myself. Besides that, no one else but his mother.

ADAM Tamara, the midwife, and yourself. Two will keep quiet when the third one is gone. Go to First Lady and tell her I said this. You cry like a pig being prepared for the spit.

DAVID What do you mean? Why did you do this?

ADAM It was necessary. If she lived to betray this guilt of ours, there would be long-tongued babbling gossip. No, my friends, tell the President and his wife the circumstance of all this, and how the President's heir was kidnapped, and the kidnapper murdered the nurse. I will go and find

the midwife. When these two have been put in a hole together, they can gossip as much as they'd like.

CHAD I see you wouldn't even trust the wind with secrets.

DAVID This is for Tamara, and her reputation.

ADAM Now back to Virginia, swiftly. There I will care for this treasure in my arms. I'll raise you here, and make you feed on berries, roots, and game. We'll have a cabin in the woods, and I'll bring you up to be a warrior.

Scene 5: The woods.

TITUS Come, Marcus, this is the way. Luke, let me see your archery. Draw straight and true. Ah, you missed! Marcus, she's gone, she's fled. Sirs, take after the deer. Go to the ocean, and cast your nets. Perhaps you may catch her in the sea, for there's as little justice there as on land. Then you must dig with shovel and with spade and pierce the center of the earth. Then, when you get to Hell, I pray you, deliver the Devil this petition. Tell him, it is for justice and for aid, and that it comes from old Andrew Titus! Go, get you gone, and pray be careful all!

MARCUS Peter, is it not hard to see your noble father gone mad?

PETER Indeed, uncle, and therefore by day and night we must attend him carefully and humor him until we find some remedy.

MARCUS His sorrows are past remedy. Take his former troops and lead a rebellion against the President and his wicked wife!

TITUS Peter, how now! What, have you met with the Devil?

PETER No, father, but he sends you a message that, if you will have revenge from hell, you shall. But the wheels of justice grind slowly, so you must be patient.

TITUS He wrongs me to feed me with delays. I'll dive into the burning lake below and pull the Devil out by the heels. Marcus, we are but shrubs, not trees. Since there's no justice in earth nor hell, we will ask heaven to send down justice for our wrongs. News from heaven! Marcus, the post has come. What do you bring? Do you have any letters? Will I have justice? What does God say?

CLETUS The hangman says that he's taken them down again, and that another won't be hanged until next week.

TITUS But what does God say, I ask you?

CLETUS I don't know Him personally. I've never drank with him in all my life.

TITUS Are you not the carrier?

CLETUS Yes, of my pigeons and nothing else.

TITUS Did you not come from heaven?

CLETUS From heaven? I would never come from there. God forbid I should ask to be in heaven with nothin' to drink. I'm going to the Capitol with my pigeons, to take up a matter of a fight between my uncle and one of the President's men.

MARCUS That is fitting and can serve your request. He could deliver the pigeons to the President from you.

TITUS Tell me, can you deliver a message to the President with a grace?

CLETUS I could never say grace in all my life.

TITUS Come here. Give your pigeons to the President. You will have justice at his hands. Here's money for your charges. Give me quill and ink. Can you deliver a letter?

CLETUS Yes, sir.

TITUS Then here, deliver this. When you first meet the President, you must kneel at his feet, deliver your pigeons, and look for your reward. I'll be at hand. I hope you can do it bravely.

CLETUS I'll be on my way, then.

TITUS Do you have a knife? Let me see it. Here, Marcus, fold it in the message. You have been a great help. When you

have given it to the President, knock at my door and tell me what he says.

CLETUS God be with you, sir. I will.

TITUS Come, Marcus, let's go. Peter, follow me.

Scene 6: Before the palace.

ROBERT Lords, what wrongs are these? Have you ever seen the President of these United States as troubled as I am? These disturbers of our peace buzz in the people's ears, even with the law against the Titus family. What if his sorrows have overwhelmed him to the point that his wits are turned into fits, frenzy and bitterness? Now he writes to heaven! He is telling everyone of our injustice. It's humorous, is it not, my friends? As he would say, here there is no justice.

TAMARA My gracious husband, calm yourself, and think of Titus' age. His sorrows worsened his plight, instead of calming him. (*Aside*) I shouldn't gloat, but, Titus, I have cut you to the quick. Your life-blood is running out. If you are wise, then you best give up. How do you do, sir? Are you here to speak with us?

CLETUS Yes, you're the President's lady, right?

TAMARA I am the First Lady, but here is the President.

CLETUS God bless you. I have brought you a letter and a couple of pigeons.

ROBERT Go, take him away, and hang him.

CLETUS How much money do I get?

TAMARA Come, you must be hanged.

CLETUS Hanged! But your lady, I brought my neck to be rewarded, not hung!

ROBERT Despiteful and intolerable. Should I endure this monstrous villainy? My patience has been butchered as swiftly as his children. Go, drag the villain by the hair. Neither age nor honor will save him. I'll be your executioner for this, you sly, frantic wretch! You try to hold me back from greatness, in hope that you will divide this nation again. What news do you bring, Captain?

BRAGG Titus' troops have gathered, and march under the orders of Peter, son of old Titus. In revenge, he threatens to do as much as his father ever did.

ROBERT Is warlike Peter now a general? Now our sorrows begin to approach. It's him that the common people love so much. I have heard them say that Peter's banishment was wrong, and that they wish that Peter was their President.

TAMARA Why should you be afraid? Your soldiers are strong!

ROBERT Yes, but the citizens favor Peter and will revolt to help him.

TAMARA Cheer up. You should know, I will enchant old Titus with words that are sweeter and more dangerous than baits are to fish. When one is wounded by the bait, the other will be fed.

ROBERT He won't stop his son for us.

TAMARA If I beg him, he will. I will fill his ear with golden promises. Both ear and heart obey my tongue. (*To BRAGG*) Go before Congress and be our ambassador. Say that the President requests to speak with Peter, and appoint the meeting at his father's house.

ROBERT Captain, give this message honorably. If he fears for his safety, ask him what pledge will please him best.

BRAGG I will do your bidding, Mr. President.

TAMARA I will go to that old fool and temper him with all the art I have. And now, sweet husband, bury all your fear.

ROBERT Then go and plead to him.

Scene 7: Outside the Capitol.

PETER Warriors, and my friends, I have received letters from Congress that signify the hate they have for their

President. Therefore, be patient, and soon we will regain control of this lost nation.

DAVIS General Titus, we'll follow where you lead us, like stinging bees on a hot summer's day to the flowered fields. We will avenge your family on cursed Tamara.

PETER I humbly thank you all. But who is this?

DAVIS General Titus, I stopped at a church to pray and suddenly heard a child cry underneath a wall. I followed the noise, and saw this traitor with a child in his arms. I brought him here for you to use however you wish.

PETER This is the devil that robbed my father of his good hand. So, this is the baby you had with Tamara. I have heard all about it. Gossip moves fast in Washington, you villain. Why don't you speak? Are you deaf? Not a word? Soldiers, hang him on a tree. Next to him, hang his bastard child.

ADAM Don't touch the boy, he is the First Lady's child!

PETER First hang the child, so he can see it die. A sight to pain the father's soul. Get me a rope!

ADAM Peter, save my child, and give him to Tamara. If you do this, I'll show you wondrous things that will give you advantage.

PETER Keep going. If what you say pleases me, your child will live, and I will make sure he is cared for.

ADAM If it pleases you? I assure you, Peter, it will vex your soul to hear what I have to say. I will talk of murder, mutilation and massacre, acts of black night, abominable deeds. I will tell you about plots of mischief, treason, villainies performed. This will all be buried by my death, unless you swear to me that my child will live.

PETER Tell me. I say your child will live.

ADAM Swear that he will, and then I will begin.

PETER Who should I swear by? You don't believe in God, so how can you believe an oath?

ADAM What if I don't? I do not, but I know that you are religious and have a thing within you called a conscience. I urge you to give an oath, for that I know that, if you swear to the God you believe in, you will honor it. Swear to save my boy, and raise him, or I will tell you nothing.

PETER I swear to God that I will.

ADAM First know this. It is true. I had this child with Tamara.

PETER Unfaithful, wanton woman!

ADAM It was her children that murdered Thomas, and that cut out your sister's tongue and cut her hands off. They are the ones that trimmed her as you saw.

PETER Detestable villain! You call that trimming?

ADAM She was washed and cut and trimmed. It was a sport for them to do it.

PETER Oh, barbarous, beastly villains, like yourself!

ADAM Indeed, I was their tutor. They learned their bloody mind from me. Let my deeds be witness of my worth. I tricked your brothers into the hole where the dead corpse of Thomas lay. I wrote the letter that your father found and hid the gold that was mentioned in the letter. Everything that happened, I had a part in. I lied for your father's hand and, when I had it, I almost broke my heart with laughter. When he had his two sons' heads, I saw his tears and laughed so hard that my eyes were filled with just as many tears as his were. When I told Tamara, she swooned and gave me twenty kisses for my actions.

DAVIS How can you say this and never blush?

PETER Are you not sorry for any of these deeds?

ADAM Not at all. I have done a thousand more deeds. I have killed a man, or at least planned his death, murdered a maid, accused the innocent, and set friends against each

other. I have done a thousand dreadful things. I don't regret anything except not being able to do more.

PETER You don't deserve a death as sweet as hanging.

ADAM When I see you in hell, I will torment you more with my bitter tongue.

PETER Stop his mouth. Let him speak no more.

DAVIS My lord, there's a messenger from the Capitol who desires your presence.

PETER Let them come to me. Welcome, Captain. What's the news from Congress?

BRAGG Peter, the President greets you. He would like to meet at your father's house and discuss your terms for a peaceful resolution to this conflict.

DAVIS What does our general say?

PETER Captain, we will come.

Scene 8: TITUS's house.

TAMARA I will find Titus and say that I am Revenge, sent from below to right his wrongs. Knock at his study where they say he keeps plots of his revenge. Tell him that revenge has come to join him and work against his enemies.

TITUS Who disturbs me? Are you trying to make it so that my studies never get to take action?

TAMARA Titus, I have come to talk with you.

TITUS No, not a word. I can't just talk when I want a hand to give my words action.

TAMARA If you knew who I was, you would talk to me.

TITUS I'm not crazy, I know you well enough. I know you well enough to know that you are the proud Tamara. Have you come for my other hand?

TAMARA I am not Tamara. She is your enemy, and I am your friend. I am Revenge, sent from Hell to bring vengeance on your foes. Welcome me to this world's light. I will find out every bloody murder and detested evil. I am Revenge, who strikes fear into the heart of the enemy.

TITUS You are Revenge? And you have been sent to me to torment my enemies?

TAMARA I am. Come and welcome me.

TITUS Assure me that you are Revenge, and stab my enemies, or trample them with your steed. Find murderers, and when your cart is loaded with their heads, I will meet you.

TAMARA These are my helpers who have come with me.

TITUS These are your helpers? What are their names?

TAMARA Mutilation and Murder. They are called so, because they take vengeance on those who commit these acts.

TITUS Good Lord, they are so much like Tamara's children!
And you look just like her! Sweet Revenge, now I come to you.

TAMARA (*Aside*) The old lunatic fell for it! He believes I am Revenge. I'll make him send for Peter his son, and make his men his enemies.

TITUS Welcome, Revenge, to my woeful house. Mutilation and Murder, you are welcome too. You look so much like the Johnstons it makes me look twice. But you are welcome. What should we do?

TAMARA What would you have us do, Titus?

DAVID Show me a murderer, I'll deal with him.

CHAD Show me a villain that has mutilated, and I am sent to bestow revenge on him.

TAMARA Show me a thousand men that have done you wrong, and I will bestow revenge on them.

TITUS Look around the streets, Murder, and when you see a man that looks like you, stab him; he's a murderer. Go with him, Mutilation, and when you see a man that looks like you, stab him; he destroyed my daughter's hands and mouth. Go with them. In the President's house there's a woman attended by a servant. Up and down she

resembles you. Do onto them some violent death. They have been violent to me and mine.

TAMARA We will do this. Would it please you if we sent your son Peter to a banquet at your house? When he is here, I will bring in Tamara and her sons, the President himself, and all your enemies, and they will ease your angry heart. What do you think about this plan?

TITUS Marcus, my brother! Go to Peter. You will find him outside the city. Tell him to come to me, and bring some of his troops. Tell him to camp his other soldiers wherever they are right now. Tell him that he'll feast at my house with the President and his wife. He should do this in regards for his father's life.

MARCUS I'll do this and return to you.

TAMARA I should get going to do your business. My assistants will come with me.

TITUS Don't worry about them. Let Mutilation and Murder stay with me for now.

TAMARA (*Aside to her sons*) Boys, can you entertain the old man while I go tell the President that my plan has succeeded? Talk with him until I return.

DAVID Don't worry, mother, we can handle this buffoon.

TAMARA Farewell, Titus. Revenge will betray your enemies.

TITUS I know you will. Farewell, sweet Revenge.

CHAD Tell us, old man, what will we be doing?

TITUS I have enough work for you to do. Peter, come here!

PETER What do you want, father?

TITUS Do you know these two?

PETER Tamara's children, Chad and David.

TITUS No, Peter, you're too easily deceived. This one is Murder, and this one is Mutilation. Tie them up, Peter. If they begin to cry, shut them up.

CHAD Villains, wait! We are children of the First Lady!

PETER And therefore we do what we are commanded to do. Close their mouths, don't let them speak a word. Is he bound? Make sure you bind them quickly.

TITUS Come, Laura. Look, your foes are bound. Sirs, stop their mouths, don't let them speak to me, but let them hear what fearful words I utter. Chad and David! Here stands the spring whom you have stained with mud. You killed her husband, and got her two brothers executed for his death, my hand and both of hers cut off, and her tongue cut out. What would you say, if I were to let you speak? You could not beg for grace. This hand is left to cut your throats, while Laura holds the basin that will receive your blood, between her stumps. You know your mother is

supposed to feast with me, and calls herself Revenge,
and thinks I'm mad. Oh, villains. I'll make two pies from
your shameful heads. And I'll serve those pies at the
feast your mother will be attending. You abused my kin
and I will be revenged. Prepare your throats. Laura,
come, and I'll play the cook.

Scene 9: TITUS's house. A banquet set out.

PETER Uncle Marcus, since it is my father's idea, I am content.

DAVIS Fortune favors the brave.

PETER We have in custody Tamara's servant, this ravenous tiger,
this cursed devil. Let him receive no food or water, until
he gives sworn testimony of her foul doings.

ROBERT Do the heavens have more suns than one?

PETER Does it fit to call yourself a sun?

MARCUS Mr. President, nephew, please don't argue. The feast is
ready, which my brother has set up to make peace here in
the Capitol. Please, take your places.

ROBERT Thank you, Marcus, we will.

TITUS Welcome, Mr. President. And welcome to the Last Lady.
Welcome all! Although there isn't much, it'll fill your
stomachs. Please, eat.

ROBERT Why are you dressed like this, Titus?

TITUS To entertain you and your wife, of course.

TAMARA We are thankful to you, General Titus.

TITUS No longer a general, thanks to you, my lady. If you knew my heart, you would thank me no thankings. Mr. President, tell me this. If your favorite horse broke its leg, what would you do?

ROBERT Simple. I would shoot it.

TITUS Your reason, sir?

ROBERT The horse would suffer because of its injury, and never be the same again.

TITUS A good reason. Die, Laura, and take your shame with you. And, with your death, my sorrows die!

ROBERT What have you done?

TITUS I killed her. I am as woeful as you would be if it was your steed, and I have a thousand times more reason, so now it's done.

TAMARA Why have you slain your daughter?

TITUS I didn't, it was Chad and David. They mutilated her and ruined any chance of happiness in her life. They did all of this wrong to her.

ROBERT Go get them immediately.

TITUS There they are, baked in that pie, which their mother has eaten, eating the flesh that she herself bred. It's true, it's true. Witness my knife's sharp point!

ROBERT Die, you insane bastard!

PETER Can a son's eye watch his father bleed? There's death for a deadly deed!

MARCUS You sad-faced men, people of these United States, let me teach you how to rebuild this country. She has done a shameful execution of herself. If my age and true experience don't convince you, listen to someone else.
(To PETER) Speak, nephew. Tell the captain your tale.
Your hearts will throb and weep to hear him speak.

PETER Let it be known to you that Chad and David were the ones who killed Thomas, and the ones who mutilated our sister Laura. Our brothers were beheaded for their faults, my father's tears shed, and his hand cut off. And I was banished, the gates shut on me. Be sure that my report is just and full of truth.

MARCUS Now it's my turn to speak. Behold this child! *(Pointing to the Child in the arms of an Attendant)* Tamara delivered this child, and the father was the chief architect and plotter of these wrongs. The villain is alive in Titus' house to witness this is true. My dear brother had reason

to revenge these wrongs, more than any living man could bear. Now that you have heard the truth, what do you say? Who is left to be punished? Speak, and if you say the Titus family should all die for these wrongs, then Peter and I will fall.

Senator Peter, the people's voice will be heard. You shall be President!

PETER Thank you, my friends. I will heal this country's wounds and wipe away her woe! But nature gives me a difficult task. I must first pay respect to this wronged man's body. Father, these sorrowful tears fall on your blood-stained face, the last true duties of your noble son!

MARCUS Tear for tear, your brother Marcus sheds for you. Even if the cost of my tears were infinite, I would pay them.

PETER Come here, Luke. Your uncle loved you very much. He danced you on his knee, sung you asleep, and told you many stories. You met in your infancy, and always loved him. Cry for him, because nature requires it. Bid him farewell and commit him to the grave in kindness.

LUKE Oh Uncle! I wished with all my heart than I were dead, so you could live again. Oh Lord, I'm crying too hard to speak to him. My tears will choke me if I open my mouth.

BRAGG We have heard this rat's testimony. What should we do with him?

PETER Bury him breast-deep in earth, and starve him. Let him sit there and cry for food. If anyone relieves or pities him, they will die for it.

ADAM Why should wrath be mute, and fury dumb? I am no child. I know I should repent the evils I have done. But I would perform ten thousand evils worse than any I have already done, if I could have my way. If I ever did one good deed in all my life, I do repent it from my soul.

PETER Take the former President, and bury him in his father's grave. My father and Laura will be buried in our household's monument. As for Tamara, throw her to the beasts and birds of prey. Her life was beast-like, and devoid of pity. Make sure justice is done. I promise that the state will meet on these events, and make sure nothing like this ever happens again. The United States of America will live on.