

**A Guide to
TITUS ANDRONICUS**

by William Shakespeare



Alistair McCallum

“The Shakespeare Handbooks open the plays up admirably. Excellent for all levels of reader – everybody will get something from them.” Simon Callow

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Setting the scene

Shakespeare probably wrote *Titus Andronicus* in 1592–3, when he was in his late twenties. The first recorded performance of the play was in 1594; unusually, it was also produced as a printed booklet (a ‘quarto’) in the same year, suggesting it was popular with both audiences and readers.

Few details of Shakespeare’s early career are known, but he had probably arrived in London in the late 1580s intending to establish himself as an actor. Although he undoubtedly had some success, and continued acting for many years, he appears to have turned his attention to writing soon after arriving in the capital, and he quickly made a name for himself as both a poet and a playwright. His earliest plays included histories and comedies; *Titus Andronicus* was his first venture into tragedy, and its success confirmed his reputation as one of England’s leading writers. A few months after the play’s first performances, the thirty-year-old Shakespeare became a member of a theatre company that would prove immensely successful over the next two decades.

Titus Andronicus explores themes of justice, crime and vengeance, and is notorious for its relentless brutality, both offstage and onstage. Such ‘revenge plays’ were hugely popular in Elizabethan England, just as horror films are today; however, the genre fell out of favour towards the end of the 17th century as theatrical tastes became more refined. Critics and scholars generally considered the play primitive and barbaric, and many insisted that it could not have been written by Shakespeare. As a result, the play virtually disappeared from view for over two hundred years.

The second half of the 20th century saw renewed interest in the play, and although it remains a challenging experience for modern audiences it is, in the 21st century, becoming an established part of the theatrical landscape:

“It is little wonder, in a century where nihilism and the absurd have been key artistic and philosophical responses to unspeakable horrors of the world, that Titus Andronicus has re-found its place as one of Shakespeare’s most relevant and prescient works.”

Karin Brown, *Titus Andronicus in Performance*, in the RSC Shakespeare edition of *Titus Andronicus*, 2011

An important decision

The Roman emperor has died, and Rome is in mourning. A new emperor must now be chosen: both the wealthy, aristocratic senators of Rome and the tribunes, representing the Roman people, will have a say in the election of a successor.

The two sons of the late emperor are candidates for election, the older son being the customary choice. However, candidates from outside the imperial family or the world of politics may also be chosen. Military leaders, especially those who have conquered new lands for Rome, are particularly popular with the citizens. One such leader is the general Titus Andronicus: he has just defeated the Goths, Rome's old enemy on the empire's northern frontier, a people regarded by the Romans as troublesome and barbarous.

The choice of a successor will be made in the Capitol, the political heart of Rome. Although in mourning, the area is bustling with activity as senators and tribunes discuss the urgent matter of selecting the next emperor.

Curtain up

A question of succession

I, i

The Roman emperor has died, and the mood in the Capitol, the empire's seat of government, is solemn. The tribunes, representatives of the Roman people, have gathered there, along with the senators, Rome's aristocratic lawmakers.

Just outside the Capitol, however, the atmosphere of solemnity has been disrupted by a confrontation which threatens to erupt into outright violence. The emperor's two sons, Saturninus and Bassianus, each accompanied by an armed gang of supporters, are facing up to one another defiantly. Saturninus, the older son, claims that the title of emperor is now his by right and tradition. He calls out to those around him, and to the senators in the Capitol, to support him with force if necessary:

Saturninus: Noble patricians,¹ patrons² of my right,
Defend the justice of my cause with arms;
And countrymen, my loving followers,
Plead my successive title³ with your swords.

¹ *aristocrats*

² *protectors, guardians*

³ *support my right to succeed as emperor*

“The first scene reveals the play’s central question: what principles should govern a good society? This problem is presented in the conflict between Saturninus and Bassianus, sons of the deceased emperor and rivals for the imperial crown. As the eldest, Saturninus’ claim is based on tradition, custom and primogeniture. He pleads with the citizens of Rome to honor his ‘right’, and defend his ‘successive title’ with their swords. However, the claim of the younger son, Bassianus, is based on personal worth and virtue; his appeal is to justice, honor and freedom of choice. Such a split between rights and merits at the highest level suggests a fundamental fracture in the veneer of Roman society, and projects a sense of the slippery nature of justice itself.”

Judith Bock, *A Wilderness of Tigers*, 1988

Bassianus insists that he is a far more suitable candidate for the title of emperor than his brother, who is known, he claims, to be a corrupt and immoral individual:

Bassianus: ... suffer not dishonour to approach
The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate,
To justice, continence and nobility;¹
But let desert in pure election shine,²
And, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice.

¹ *do not allow the position of emperor, which should be dedicated to virtue, justice, self-control and nobility, to be tainted by dishonour*

² *through your free choice, let the worthier candidate succeed*

The atmosphere grows more and more menacing; but before the dispute can escalate any further, a commanding voice silences the brothers and their supporters. The speaker is Marcus Andronicus, chief Tribune of the People, who has emerged from the Capitol to address the crowd. In his hands is the crown which will be presented to the new emperor.

The citizens of Rome have made their choice, announces Marcus. Ignoring the claims of the late emperor's two sons, the people have nominated Marcus's brother Titus, a highly respected Roman general, as the next emperor:

Marcus: Princes, that strive by factions and by friends
Ambitiously for rule and empery,¹
Know that the people of Rome, for whom we stand
A special party,² have by common voice
In election for the Roman empery
Chosen Andronicus, surnamed Pius³
For many good and great deserts⁴ to Rome.
A nobler man, a braver warrior,
Lives not this day within the city walls.

¹ *who are struggling, along with your friends and supporters, to achieve the status of emperor*

² *whose interests we, the tribunes, represent*

³ *given the honorary name Pius, meaning devout, dutiful and just*

⁴ *deeds worthy of reward*

For the last ten years, Titus has been fighting a long, exhausting campaign against the Goths, Rome's enemy in the north. The war has been arduous and bloody, and Titus has lost several of his sons in the conflict: finally, however, the Goths have been defeated, and Titus is about to return victorious to Rome.

As representative of the Roman people, Marcus intends to propose Titus Andronicus as the next emperor. Saturninus and Bassianus are free to present themselves to the senate as candidates, he declares, but only if they dismiss their armed followers. The brothers willingly do so, and peace descends as the crowd disperses. The two young men follow Marcus as he returns to the Capitol.

An eye for an eye

The calm outside the Capitol is short-lived. The silence is shattered as a large military procession approaches, heralded by the warlike sound of drums and trumpets: the conquering army of Titus Andronicus has returned from the wars.

First in the procession are Titus's four sons, followed by Titus himself. A group of captives is then revealed, including the Queen of the Goths along with her sons and followers. The mood is not purely triumphant, however: in the midst of the procession are two coffins, draped in black cloth, containing the bodies of two of Titus's sons, killed in the fierce fighting against the Goths.

Titus is overcome with emotion as he sets foot in his home city after his long absence. Just as he is grieving for his dead sons, the city is mourning the death of the emperor:

Titus: Hail, Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds! ¹
Lo, as the bark that hath discharged his freight
Returns with precious lading to the bay
From whence at first she weighed her anchorage,²
Cometh Andronicus, bound with laurel boughs,³
To resalute his country with his tears ...

¹ *garments, attire*

² *like a ship that has discharged its original cargo
and returned home carrying precious merchandise*

³ *wearing the symbol of victory*

His first task, Titus announces, will be to bury his two sons, the latest of many to die in battle. He appeals to the god Jupiter, protector of Rome, to look upon him favourably as he carries out the funeral rites.

The tomb of the Andronicus family is nearby. The vault is opened, and Titus reflects sadly on the sons he has lost as he contemplates the bodies within. Lucius, his oldest surviving son, calls for the death of one of their captives, to pacify the spirits of the dead warriors and to prevent the appearance of evil omens in the future:

Titus: O sacred receptacle of my joys,
Sweet cell of virtue and nobility,
How many sons hast thou of mine in store
That thou wilt never render to me more!¹

Lucius: Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths,
That we may hew his limbs and on a pile
*Ad manes fratrum*² sacrifice his flesh
Before this earthly prison of their bones,³
That so the shadows be not unappeased,
Nor we disturbed with prodigies on earth.⁴

¹ *that you, the tomb, will never give back to me*

² *to our brothers' spirits*

³ *in front of their grave*

⁴ *so that their ghosts will be satisfied, and we will not be troubled by unnatural events here on earth*

Titus agrees, and to the horror of Tamora, the Queen of the Goths, he singles out her eldest son Alarbus. She kneels before Titus, begging him to change his mind. Her love for her son is every bit as strong as Titus's for his own sons:

Tamora: [*kneeling*] Stay,¹ Roman brethren! Gracious conqueror,
Victorious Titus, rue² the tears I shed,
A mother's tears in passion for her son.
And if thy sons were ever dear to thee,
O, think my son to be as dear to me!

¹ *stop, wait*

² *have pity on*

Her son is guilty only of fighting for his nation, which Titus must surely regard as a noble activity, pleads Tamora: besides, a leader of his stature should favour mercy, not vengeance. Titus remains firm. He is sympathetic with the queen, even apologetic; but he insists that the young man's death is a religious necessity.

Lucius and his brothers drag Alarbus away, keen to hack up his body and see it devoured by fire. This is barbarity, Tamora declares bitterly, and has nothing to do with religious observance:

Lucius: Away with him, and make a fire straight,¹
 And with our swords upon a pile of wood
 Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consumed.
 [*Titus's sons leave with Alarbus*]

Tamora: [*rising from her knees*] O cruel, irreligious piety!

¹ *immediately*

Tamora turns to her other sons, Demetrius and Chiron, who, like her, are appalled at the Romans' conduct. Speaking aside, Demetrius assures her that she will have her revenge.

A few minutes later, Lucius and his brothers return. The sacrifice has been made, Lucius announces proudly:

Lucius: See, lord and father, how we have performed
 Our Roman rites: Alarbus' limbs are lopped
 And entrails feed the sacrificing fire,
 Whose smoke like incense doth perfume the sky.

"This woman, a queen, a warrior, now conquered and captive, in an instant perceives where true barbarity lies ... Tamora as prisoner has no recourse to justice, but she will teach Titus a lesson, the brutal lesson of revenge. And we don't blame her; in fact, we take her part. We sympathetically become Goth, and for a time prey on this self-righteous and murderous family that cannot bury its own dead without adding another body to the pile."

Dr Susan Willis, *Shakespeare's Double Helix*, 2007

It is time for Titus to lay his two dead sons to rest. As their coffins are placed in the family tomb, military trumpets are sounded, and Titus says his final farewell. His only consolation is that the troubles of this world can no longer harm them:

Titus: In peace and honour rest you here, my sons;
Rome's readiest champions,¹ repose you here in rest,
Secure from worldly chances² and mishaps.
Here lurks no treason, here no envy³ swells,
Here grow no damned drugs,⁴ here are no storms,
No noise, but silence and eternal sleep:
In peace and honour rest you here, my sons.

¹ *most eager defenders*

² *accidents, misfortunes*

³ *malice*

⁴ *poisonous weeds*

A new emperor is chosen

Titus's daughter Lavinia now appears. She greets her father lovingly, tearful both through sorrow at her brothers' death and with joy at her father's return after his long absence. Titus is delighted to be reunited with his only daughter, and his greeting is warm and heartfelt:

Lavinia: Lo, at this tomb my tributary tears
I render for my brethren's obsequies,¹
[*kneeling*] And at thy feet I kneel with tears of joy
Shed on this earth for thy return to Rome.
O bless me here with thy victorious hand,
Whose fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud.

Titus: Kind Rome, that hast thus lovingly reserved²
The cordial³ of mine age to glad my heart.
Lavinia live, outlive thy father's days
And fame's eternal date, for virtue's praise.⁴

¹ *I shed these tears in tribute to my brothers' funeral rites*

² *preserved, protected*

³ *comforting medicine*

⁴ *may your goodness allow you to live longer than your father, and longer even than fame itself*

Marcus Andronicus, Tribune of the People, emerges from the Capitol to welcome his brother Titus back to Rome. Marcus is carrying a pure white robe, the traditional Roman garment of those seeking high political office. The people of Rome want Titus as their emperor, Marcus reveals, and he asks his brother to present himself as a candidate, along with the late emperor's sons, to the Senate:

Marcus: Titus Andronicus, the people of Rome,
Whose friend in justice thou hast ever been,
Send thee by me, their tribune and their trust,
This palliament¹ of white and spotless hue,
And name thee in election for the empire²
With these our late-deceased emperor's sons.
Be *candidatus*³ then, and put it on,
And help to set a head on headless Rome.

¹ *robe, cloak*

² *nominate you as a candidate for emperor*

³ *(Latin) clothed in white*

Titus is taken aback at this unexpected proposal. He makes it clear at once that he would not be a suitable candidate; he is too old, he claims, and in all probability it would not be long before the process of choosing a new emperor would have to start all over again. Besides, although he welcomes the respect of the Roman people, he is not interested in political power:

Titus: A better head her glorious body fits¹
Than his that shakes for age and feebleness.
What² should I don this robe and trouble you?
... Give me a staff of honour for mine age,
But not a sceptre to control the world.

¹ *Rome deserves a better head*

² *why*

Marcus persists, confident that Titus will be chosen as emperor if he puts himself forward. However, the other two candidates, the late emperor's sons Saturninus and Bassianus, are nearby, and they overhear the conversation. Saturninus, more impetuous than his younger brother, responds furiously. He believes the position is his by right, and suspects that Marcus is trying to gain power for his own family:

Marcus: Titus, thou shalt obtain and ask the empery.¹
Saturninus: Proud and ambitious tribune, canst thou tell?²
Titus: Patience, prince Saturninus.
Saturninus: Romans, do me right.
 Patricians, draw your swords, and sheathe them not
 Till Saturninus be Rome's emperor.

¹ *you need only ask, and the title of emperor will be yours*
² *how do you know?*

Titus eventually calms Saturninus down, assuring the young man that he himself has no interest in becoming emperor. Bassianus, Saturninus's brother and rival, now addresses Titus, appealing humbly for his support. However, Titus has made his decision. Once he has established that he has the backing of the assembled politicians, he asks whether they will accept the candidate that he chooses. They agree willingly, and he states that, in accordance with tradition, the emperor's crown should go to Saturninus:

Titus: People of Rome, and people's tribunes here,
 I ask your voices and your suffrages:¹
 Will ye bestow them friendly on Andronicus?

Tribunes: To gratify the good Andronicus
 And gratulate² his safe return to Rome,
 The people will accept whom he admits.³

Titus: Tribunes, I thank you, and this suit⁴ I make,
 That you create⁵ our emperor's eldest son,
 Lord Saturnine, whose virtues will, I hope,
 Reflect on Rome as Titan's⁶ rays on earth ...
 Then if you will elect by my advice,
 Crown him and say, 'Long live our emperor!'

¹ *support and votes*
² *celebrate*
³ *whoever he recognises as emperor*
⁴ *request*
⁵ *appoint, select*
⁶ *the sun-god*

Bright prospects

Rome has a new emperor, and the scene outside the Capitol is one of noisy celebration as the cheering of tribunes, senators, soldiers and citizens is mingled with the beating of drums and the blare of trumpets.

Saturninus, gratified that he has achieved his ambition and inherited his father's crown, turns to Titus. He deserves to be richly rewarded, Saturninus tells him, and as part of that reward his daughter Lavinia will be made Empress of Rome:

Saturninus: Titus Andronicus, for thy favours done
To us in our election this day,
I give thee thanks in part of thy deserts,
And will with deeds requite thy gentleness;¹
And for an onset,² Titus, to advance
Thy name and honourable family,
Lavinia will I make my empress,
Rome's royal mistress ...

¹ *as a partial reward, I now offer you my thanks,
and my future actions will fully repay your nobility*

² *start, first step*

Saturninus intends to marry Lavinia in the Pantheon, Rome's most magnificent temple. Titus is delighted at the prospect, and in recognition of the honour of becoming the emperor's father-in-law he presents his weapons, his chariot and the spoils of war – including his prisoners – to Saturninus.

Titus now turns to Tamora, the captured queen of the Goths, and assures her that the emperor will treat her kindly. Saturninus confirms that he will indeed show the queen the respect that she deserves. He comments appreciatively on her beauty:

Saturninus: A goodly lady, trust me, of the hue¹
That I would choose, were I to choose anew.
Clear up, fair queen, that cloudy countenance:
Though chance of war hath wrought this change of
cheer,²
Thou com'st not to be made a scorn³ in Rome.
Princely shall be thy usage⁴ every way.

Rest on my word, and let not discontent
Daunt all your hopes.

¹ *complexion, appearance*

² *the misfortunes of war have made you unhappy*

³ *mocked, abused*

⁴ *treatment*

Saturninus, aware that he is paying Tamora undue attention, asks Lavinia whether she is offended; she replies graciously that such courtesy befits an emperor. Pleased with her response, Saturninus declares that all the captives are to be released immediately:

Saturninus: Lavinia, you are not displeased with this?

Lavinia: Not I, my lord, sith¹ true nobility
Warrants these words in princely courtesy.

Saturninus: Thanks, sweet Lavinia. Romans, let us go.
Ransomless² here we set our prisoners free.
Proclaim our honours, lords, with trump³ and drum.

¹ *since*

² *without demanding payment from the enemy;*
unconditionally

³ *trumpets*

With a fanfare and noisy celebrations, the prisoners are unchained. Among them are Tamora, the queen; her two sons, Chiron and Demetrius; and her African attendant Aaron.

A fatal blow

Saturninus and his attendants are about to leave. A sudden commotion arises, however, when his younger brother Bassianus takes hold of Lavinia. It now becomes clear that Titus's daughter was already engaged to Bassianus, and the young man refuses to allow her marriage to the emperor:

Bassianus: Lord Titus, by your leave, this maid is mine.
[*he seizes Lavinia*]

Titus: How, sir? Are you in earnest then, my lord?

Bassianus: Ay, noble Titus, and resolved withal
To do myself this reason and this right.¹

¹ *to take this reasonable and just action*

Titus's brother Marcus and his son Lucius both agree that, as the two of them are betrothed, Bassianus is justified in asserting his right to marry Lavinia. Titus is furious: he has promised the emperor his daughter's hand in marriage, and it is unthinkable that he should break his word.

Two of Titus's sons help Bassianus to escape with Lavinia. Titus calls out for assistance as he sets out after them. Another of his sons, Mutius, however, stands in Titus's way and refuses to let him pass. Titus, enraged, strikes the young man with such violence that he dies instantly.

Lucius is horrified at his father's brutality. Titus, unrepentant, denounces his sons as traitors, and demands Lavinia's return. Lucius, equally determined, states that she will never marry Saturninus, come what may:

Lucius: My lord, you are unjust, and more than so;
In wrongful quarrel you have slain your son.

Titus: Nor thou, nor he, are any sons of mine;
My sons would never so dishonour me.
Traitor, restore Lavinia to the emperor.

Lucius: Dead if you will, but not to be his wife
That is another's lawful promised love.¹

¹ *she will never return to him alive, and will never marry anyone other than her beloved Bassianus, to whom she is engaged*

Rejection

Saturninus, humiliated by the departure of Lavinia, addresses Titus sternly. His tone is bitter and resentful as he tells the ageing general that he and his family are no longer welcome in the emperor's company. Titus is horrified:

Saturninus: No, Titus, no, the emperor needs her¹ not;
Nor her, nor thee, nor any of thy stock.²
I'll trust by leisure³ him that mocks me once;
Thee never, nor thy traitorous haughty sons,
Confederates all⁴ thus to dishonour me ...
Titus: O monstrous! What reproachful words are these?

¹ *Lavinia*

² *family*

³ *I'm reluctant to trust*

⁴ *who have all conspired together*

The emperor dismisses Titus contemptuously. His daughter is worthless, he tells him, and his sons are common ruffians. His own brother Bassianus is no better:

Saturninus: But go thy ways,¹ go give that changing piece²
To him that flourished for her with his sword.³
A valiant son-in-law thou shalt enjoy,
One fit to bandy⁴ with thy lawless sons,
To ruffle⁵ in the commonwealth of Rome.
Titus: These words are razors to my wounded heart.

¹ *go away, get out of my sight*

² *worthless, fickle woman*

³ *to Bassianus, who ostentatiously brandished his sword for her*

⁴ *brawl*

⁵ *create a disturbance*

Saturninus now makes a sudden, unexpected announcement. He turns to the foreign queen who, as Titus's prisoner, caught his eye just a few minutes ago:

Saturninus: And therefore, lovely Tamora, queen of Goths,
That like the stately Phoebe 'mongst her nymphs
Dost overshadow the gallant'st dames of Rome,¹
If thou be pleased with this my sudden choice,
Behold, I choose thee, Tamora, for my bride,
And will create thee empress of Rome.

¹ *who surpasses the finest women in Rome, just as the goddess of the moon outshines her attendant spirits*

They should make their way to the Pantheon, declares the emperor, and marry without delay. Tamora is happy to accept his proposal:

Tamora: ... here in sight of heaven to Rome I swear,
If Saturnine advance¹ the queen of Goths,
She will a handmaid be to his desires,
A loving nurse, a mother to his youth.²

¹ *favours, elevates to empress*

² *be a lover, nurse and mother to the young man*

The empress and his new bride set off for the temple. They are followed by their attendants and the assembled senators, tribunes, soldiers and citizens. Titus, no longer welcome in Roman society, remains alone, bewildered at his sudden downfall:

Titus: I am not bid to wait upon¹ this bride.
Titus, when wert thou wont² to walk alone,
Dishonoured thus and challenged³ of wrongs?

¹ *invited to accompany*

² *accustomed*

³ *accused*

“Having just been at the centre of a triumphal procession, Titus suddenly finds himself alone on stage with the body of a son whom he has slain out of a mistaken sense of loyalty to the new emperor – who, at the very same moment, has gone off to marry the queen of Goths, thus further dissolving the distinction between insiders and outsiders, civilized and barbaric.”

Jonathan Bate, Introduction to the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Titus Andronicus*, 2018

A glimmer of hope

Titus's brother Marcus now approaches, along with Titus's sons who had earlier helped Bassianus and Lavinia to escape. They are all appalled at Titus's impetuous killing of his son Mutius, and are determined to give the young man an honourable burial.

Titus, still aggrieved at the part they all played in preventing Lavinia's marriage to the emperor, remains adamant. Mutius must not be placed in the Andronicus family tomb, an edifice that he himself has proudly maintained and embellished:

Titus: Traitors, away! He rests not in this tomb.
This monument five hundred years hath stood,
Which I have sumptuously re-edified.¹
Here none but soldiers and Rome's servitors
Repose in fame; none basely slain in brawls.
Bury him where you can, he comes not here.

Marcus: My lord, this is impiety in you;
My nephew Mutius' deeds do plead for him,
He must be buried with his brethren.

¹ *rebuilt, improved*

Titus's sons join their uncle in demanding a suitable burial for Mutius in the family tomb. Titus responds angrily; his own brother is treating him disrespectfully, he complains, and his sons are failing to show the obedience due to him as their father. Eventually all of them kneel before Titus and plead with him to allow the burial to take place, appealing to his sense of morality.

A show of support

The conversation between Titus and Marcus is interrupted by a loud fanfare of trumpets, heralding the entry of the emperor Saturninus and Tamora, his new wife. They are accompanied by Tamora's two sons, Chiron and Demetrius, and her attendant Aaron.

At another door, the newlyweds Bassianus and Lavinia enter, accompanied by Titus's sons. The atmosphere is calm, but there is hostility in the air as the two parties face one another. The emperor speaks first. He addresses his brother, who replies coldly and formally, and threatens to walk away immediately:

Saturninus: So, Bassianus, you have played your prize.¹
God give you joy, sir, of your gallant bride.

Bassianus: And you of yours, my lord. I say no more,
Nor wish no less, and so I take my leave.

¹ *won this bout; achieved your aim, by marrying Lavinia*

Saturninus accuses his brother of treachery, and warns him that his abduction of Lavinia will be punished under Roman law. Bassianus insists that he was legally betrothed to Lavinia, and was entitled to rescue her from the threat of marriage to Saturninus; he is willing to defend himself in court if necessary. The emperor's response is brief but menacing:

Bassianus: ... let the laws of Rome determine all;
Meanwhile am I possessed of that¹ is mine.

Saturninus: 'Tis good, sir; you are very short with us,
But if we live we'll be as sharp with you.²

¹ *that which*

² *very well; but your dismissive attitude will be met with a harsh response*

Bassianus is unmoved; he will accept death if that is the decision of a Roman court. He now speaks up for Titus, asking the emperor to take the general back into his favour. He argues that Titus was motivated by loyalty to Rome and its emperor when he made his desperate attempt to prevent Lavinia's escape, during which he killed his own son.