

Titus Andronicus

SYNOPSIS

The Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus

The brothers Saturninus and Bassianus are rivals hoping to become Roman emperors. Titus Andronicus, Rome's most honoured general, returns from wars against the Goths with prisoners: the Goth queen, Tamora, with her sons and her lover Aaron the Moor. When Titus sacrifices her eldest son according to Roman traditions, she swears vengeance. Titus is nominated for the position of emperor by his brother Marcus, one of the Tribunes of Rome. He refuses, and nominates Saturninus instead. The new Emperor offers to marry Titus' daughter Lavinia, but she is already engaged to Bassianus. Saturninus marries Tamora instead.

Encouraged by Aaron, Tamora's sons Chiron and Demetrius avenge their mother by raping Lavinia and mutilating her by cutting out her tongue and cutting off her hands, so that she cannot communicate what has happened to her. They also kill Bassianus. Aaron falsely implicates two of Titus' sons in the murder. Titus is led to believe that his sons will be released if he cuts off his own hand. He does so, but the hand is sent back with the heads of his sons.

Titus vows revenge and sends his surviving son Lucius to the Goths to raise an army. Titus takes revenge on Tamora by inviting her to a feast, where she is made to eat a pie which she discovers contains the cooked bodies of her sons. Titus then kills her. Titus is killed by Saturninus, who is in turn killed by Lucius in revenge. Lucius is finally made emperor.

Media:

DVD:

Titus Andronicus (BBC TV Shakespeare 1985), dir. Jane Howell

Titus Andronicus (1999), dir. Julie Taymor, with Anthony Hopkins

CD Audio:

Titus Andronicus (Arkangel Complete Shakespeare)

[Michael Mitchell]