

Titus Andronicus

Act V, sc. 1 (line 102 - intercut)

AARON

Indeed, I was their tutor to instruct them:

That coddling spirit had they from their mother,

As sure a card as ever won the set;

That bloody mind, I think, they learn'd of me,

As true a dog as ever fought at head.

Well, let my deeds be witness of my worth.

I train'd thy brethren to that guileful hole

Where the dead corpse of Bassianus lay:

I wrote the letter that thy father found

And hid the gold within the letter mention'd,

Confederate with the queen and her two sons:

And what not done, that thou hast cause to rue,

Wherein I had no stroke of mischief in it?

I play'd the cheater for thy father's hand,

And, when I had it, drew myself apart

And almost broke my heart with extreme laughter:

I pry'd me through the crevice of a wall

When, for his hand, he had his two sons' heads;

Beheld his tears, and laugh'd so heartily,

That both mine eyes were rainy like to his :

And when I told the empress of this sport,

She swooned almost at my pleasing tale,
And for my tidings gave me twenty kisses.

First Goth

What, canst thou say all this, and never blush?

AARON

Ay, like a black dog, as the saying is.

LUCIUS

Art thou not sorry for these heinous deeds?

AARON

Ay, that I had not done a thousand more.
Even now I curse the day--and yet, I think,
Few come within the compass of my curse,--
Wherein I did not some notorious ill,
As kill a man, or else devise his death,
Ravish a maid, or plot the way to do it,
Accuse some innocent and forswear myself,
Set deadly enmity between two friends,
Make poor men's cattle break their necks;
Set fire on barns and hay-stacks in the night,
And bid the owners quench them with their tears.
Oft have I digg'd up dead men from their graves,
And set them upright at their dear friends' doors,
Even when their sorrows almost were forgot;
And on their skins, as on the bark of trees,
Have with my knife carved in Roman letters,
'Let not your sorrow die, though I am dead.'

Tut, I have done a thousand dreadful things

As willingly as one would kill a fly,

And nothing grieves me heartily indeed

But that I cannot do ten thousand more.

LUCIUS

Bring down the devil; for he must not die

So sweet a death as hanging presently.

AARON

If there be devils, would I were a devil,

To live and burn in everlasting fire,

So I might have your company in hell,

But to torment you with my bitter tongue!