Titus Andronicus Act 1 Study Questions

Line numbers are listed for some questions to help you.

I am not collecting this, but if you can answer these questions, you will know enough to do very well on Act 1.

1. Why does Saturninus say he should be Emperor?
2. Why does Bassianus say he should be Emperor?
3. Why does Marcus say Titus should be Emperor?
4. How many sons has Titus lost so far? (82-87)
5. What does Lucius want Titus to allow him to do?
6. What does Tamora beg of Titus?
7. What is Titus’ answer? How do you think this will affect Tamora?
9. In lines 185-189, what does Titus learn the people want him to be?
11. Saturninus backed off before, in lines 207-211, what does he do?
12. Whom do the tribunes allow to decide the next Emperor? (224-226).
13. Who becomes Emperor?
14. What does the new Emperor do to honor Titus? Why would this be a problem?
15. In addition to what is mentioned in Question 14, what does Titus give to the new Emperor?
16. While Saturninus asks Lavinia if she is displeased with the new developments, does she really have a choice?
17. What does Bassianus do that causes trouble for everyone?
18. Who helps Bassianus? How does Titus respond to this?
19. What does Titus do that seems to be WAY over the top?
20. Why would Titus act this way? What does he care about above all?
21. Whom does Saturninus now choose to be empress? (talk about a reversal of fortune?)
22. What do you think the new Empress will want to do with her powers? (Think about what happened in Questions 6-7).
23. Titus and his sons are both motivated by the same thing, but they see it in different ways that leads to conflict. What are they both motivated by?
24. What do Titus’ sons want to do that Titus is 100% against?
25. What is Titus’ final decision (lines 389-391)
27. How does Tamora act starting with line 433? Why does this seem strange?
28. Tamora reveals her real plan in an aside to Saturninus. What is she really planning to do?
29. What is resolved at the end of Act one? Do you think this is really going to end so easily?

Titus Andronicus Act 2 Study Questions

Scene 1.

30. Aaron, the first black character in Shakespeare, gives the play’s first soliloquy. Look at the language. Does he sound like a commoner or someone intelligent?
31. What does it sound like Aaron wants to do near the end of the speech? What trouble could that cause?
32. What are Chiron and Demetrius fighting over? Don’t miss all the sexual jokes. Hint: boys and their “swords.”
33. Why does Aaron tell the boys to stop fighting? (lines 46-54)
34. What is Aaron worried about in line 62?
35. Look at line 90. Aaron wants to do what to Saturninus? (The same thing that the boys want to do to Bassianus...)
36. In lines 95-99, all those things mean just what you think they do...
37. In that long speech by Aaron, what is he telling the boys to do? Whom should they consult for help. Yes, that is pretty sick.

Scene 2.

1. How do you think Titus feels about today? What is he hoping to accomplish?
2. What are Chiron and Demetrius “hunting?” Yes, you’re right. It’s disturbing.

Scene 3.

1. In the beginning of the scene, what does Aaron say will help him to fool people? How does Aaron say people view him?
2. He’s just hidden some gold. Remember that.
3. Woah! Tamora’s into Aaron? This could get interesting...
4. Who’s “Bassianus’ Philomel?” I bet you could find this online. Check Google for the reference.
5. She must lose her tongue today? Surely that must be a metaphor. Right? Right?!?!
6. Keep track of the planning that Aaron does. He does something around line 45 that will be important later.
7. In line 52, Aaron tells Tamora what to do. Who’s pulling all the strings in this plot?
8. Bassianus and Lavinia come and see Tamora. They saw that Aaron was with her. What are the two of them implying about Tamora and Aaron?
9. They’re saying some pretty racist things about Aaron. These are supposed to be the “good guys?”
10. What’s the big threat that Bassianus makes? That’s a pretty big deal, right?
11. At this point, Chiron and Demetrius enter. Watch how the power shifts on stage. Now who’s outnumbered?
12. Tamora tells her sons what has just happened. Is she telling them the truth? Does it matter?
13. Well, there’s another person dead. Now who’s REALLY in trouble?
14. Tamora is about to kill Lavinia, but remember what her sons want.
15. Mom lets her sons have what they want, as long as they do what when they’re done?
16. Lavinia pleads for her life and her dignity. If she was going to convince Tamora, what does she say that makes Tamora completely against her?
17. “The worse to her, the better loved of me.” (167). What does Tamora mean by this? How messed up is this?
18. When they throw Bassianus into the pit and put branches over it, we are reminded again who’s the mastermind behind this whole plan.
19. What does Aaron tell Quintus and Martius that he saw in the pit?
20. What happens to the sons? I’m guessing by now the extent of Aaron’s plan is beginning to dawn on you. He doesn’t mess around.
21. Now Saturninus appears and finds...well, exactly what Aaron wanted him to find. What does Aaron want Saturninus to think has happened?
22. Now the letter and the bag of gold come back into play.
23. Who “found” the letter? As terrible as the plan is, you have to admire the brilliance of it.

Scene 4.

1. What have Chiron and Demetrius done to Lavinia? Why have they done this?
2. “Sorrow concealed like an oven stopped, / Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is.” (36). What do you think Marcus means here?
3. At the end of Act 2, has Tamora gotten her revenge on Titus? Do you think there could possibly be more? Dear God, there’s still 3 more acts!

Titus Andronicus Act 3 Study Questions

Scene 1.

1. In order to understand this part, you need to understand that Titus is starting to act crazy. Remember, he doesn’t even know about Lavinia yet...
2. In the beginning Titus is talking to real people, but keep your eye on the scene direction around line 17. Look at what Lucius says to him. How does Titus sound and act?
3. What does Titus say when Lucius says he’s addressing nobody?
4. What is Titus’ response?
5. What is Lucius planning to do?
6. Does Titus want him to do that?
7. Titus says they are fortunate? Why?
8. Now Marcus enters with Lavinia.
9. Who sees Lavinia first? How can we tell?
10. Titus makes puns about Lavinia not having hands. Black humor?
11. Now they find out that not only has she had her hands cut off, but her tongue has been cut out so that she cannot tell them who did it.
12. This obviously hurts Titus greatly. What is one of the things he says about it?
13. How is Lavinia reacting to what Titus is saying?
14. Now Aaron walks in. This is dramatic irony at its finest. The audience knows way more than Titus and his family know.

15. What does Aaron tell Titus he can do to save his sons? Do you believe Aaron?

16. What does Titus ask Aaron that Aaron would probably have a hard time not laughing at?

17. What do Titus, Lucius, and Marcus fight over?

18. Titus ends up fooling Marcus and Lucius. Yay...Titus...?

19. Just in case you thought that Aaron might not be being wicked here, he tells you.

20. In line 218, Titus asks “If there were reason for these miseries, / Then into limits could I bind my woes.” Is there a reason for these miseries? If so, what?

21. What does Titus get in return for his hand? Hey, he even gets his hand back. That Aaron is such a nice guy.

22. In line 252-264, Marcus is asking Titus what the audience is likely wondering. What’s Titus’ response? Does that make sense to you?

23. What does Titus tell Lucius to do? Wait...what?

24. What is Lucius’ plan? Would we have expected that from the beginning of the play? My, how things have changed...

Scene 2:

1. What does it sound like Titus is telling Lavinia to do? What’s Marcus’ reaction to that?

2. Titus keeps repeating the word “hand.”

3. What does Marcus do in this scene that makes Titus angry?

4. What is Titus’ response when Marcus asks why this makes him upset?

5. To what do you think Titus is comparing the fly?

Titus Andronicus Act 4 Study Questions

Line numbers are listed for some questions to help you.

Scene 1. (Titus’ Garden)

25. Lavinia is running after Young Lucius. Remember that we’re not going to get any lines from Lavinia from now on, so we need
TO LOOK AT STAGE DIRECTIONS AND OTHER PEOPLE’S DIALOGUE TO SEE WHAT SHE IS DOING.

26. So, Lavinia is making some kinds of motions. She’s trying to tell them something.

27. What is Young Lucius scared of? (16-24)

28. What is Lavinia doing in the stage directions?

29. What’s the first thing that Marcus is able to figure out?

30. What book is she reading? If only there was a way for you to learn a little more about that book...

31. What tale does she stop at? You should remember that from earlier in the play.

32. Now, Lavinia is frustrated because she can’t tell them more.

33. Marcus figures out a way for her to tell them. Like I said in class, there is a giant plot hole because she could have told them much earlier.

34. But...she finally is able to tell them.

35. What does Titus swear at this point?

36. What does Young Lucius say that he would do if he were older?

37. What is Titus going to send to Chiron and Demetrius? Whom is he going to use?

38. At the end of the scene, what does Marcus think about Titus’ mental state?

SCENE 2: (THE IMPERIAL PALACE)

6. Young Lucius is bringing messages to C and D. What do they think of the messages? What does Aaron think? What does that tell us about all of them?

7. Does Aaron fight against or embrace his wickedness? What line tells you for sure?

8. Tamora is in childbirth during this scene (the note may be hard to see at the bottom of the page.)

9. Here comes the nurse with a baby. A black baby. Whose baby do you think this is? Well, this won’t cause any problems...

10. How does the Nurse describe the baby? What does that tell you about the nurse?

11. What does Tamora want Aaron to do?

12. I told you there was a variation on the “your mother” joke.

13. When Demetrius tries to kill the baby, what is Aaron’s reaction?
14. Based on Aaron’s speech starting at line 86, do you think that Shakespeare is trying to say something about race? Why or why not?

15. What does Aaron decide here? So far, he’s only acted based on what was best for the plan. How will this affect the plan?

16. How many people does the Nurse say have seen the baby?

17. Another one bites the dust. How do you think that Aaron would kill the nurse? Look at the reaction of Demetrius.

18. What’s Aaron’s plan? What do you think Aaron plans to do with the midwife?

19. How does Aaron treat his baby? Putting aside everything you know about him, would you say he’s a good father?

SCENE 3 (Outside the Emperor’s Palace)

1. Arrows with letters on the end. What do you think Titus is planning to do?
2. To whom does Titus tell Publius and Sempronius to deliver a message? Does this make any sense?
3. Look at Marcus’ reaction. Remember, he’s supposed to help us see how to view Titus.
4. Now we see to whom the letters are addressed. If you don’t know who these people are, look it up. Do you think they’re going to respond?
5. They shoot the arrows into the Emperor’s court. Do you think Titus really thinks the intended recipients are going to see them? Or, does he have another plan?
6. This conversation with the clown is very strange. Just focus on the end result of their talk. What is the clown going to do?

SCENE 4 (The Emperor’s Palace)

1. Saturninus has found the letters that Titus shot at him.
2. Why do you think that Saturninus is so upset? Think about his involvement in the play. Does he have any clue about what’s going on?
3. What does it sound like Tamora thinks Aaron was supposed to do? Look around Line 39.
4. Now the clown enters and gives Saturnine what Titus told him to.
5. What’s the clown’s reward?
6. There are some puns on the words hanged, but it’s not really that important.
7. What does Saturninus want to do at this point?
8. What does Amelius tell Saturninus (and us?)
9. Whom does Saturninus say the Romans want as their Emperor? I think it’s obvious why this would trouble him.
10. Tamora has a plan. What is she going to do? What does she ask Aemilius to do? This is setting up the end of the play.

Titus Andronicus Act 5 Study Questions
Line numbers are listed for some questions to help you.

Scene 1. (Outside Rome)

39. So, Lucius has found the Goths.
40. According to Lucius, what do the people of Rome think/want?
41. The speech by “A Goth” underscores the idea of reversal we keep seeing.
42. How is Aaron caught?
43. What does Lucius want to do to Aaron?
44. “Vengeance rot you all!” — This could be another title of the play, don’t you think?
45. What does Lucius promise Aaron?
46. What does Aaron tell Lucius?
47. What part or parts are particularly messed up?
48. Does Aaron regret doing the things he did?
49. Now Aaron tells Lucius of other things he did before the play started. Wow. What’s the direct reference to Act 3.2. Do you think that’s an accident?
50. Where does Lucius head at the end of the scene?

Scene 2: (Titus’ courtyard)

20. OK, this part is a bit…strange. Remember before how Titus sent messages to the gods? Tamora is playing off of that. She is pretending to be Revenge, the embodiment of that ideal. C and D are Rape and Murder, respectively.
21. First, Tamora tells us her plan.
22. Does Titus sound sane here?
23. Tamora is banking on Titus being so insane that he will believe she is Revenge. Do you think it’ll work?
24. Titus notices the other two. What does he tell “Revenge” to do to prove she is Revenge?
25. Titus says they look like Tamora and her sons. Why does he think that is?
26. Look at line 70 and on. Does Tamora think her plan is working?
27. Well, if there was any question to Tamora whether Titus knew who had done all those things to him...
28. So Tamora’s plan is to have Titus ask Lucius to come. But...Lucius was already coming at the end of the last scene. What does that tell us about Tamora’s plan?
29. Titus asks that Tamora’s sons stay behind. Tamora agrees.
31. It’s not looking good for Chiron and Demetrius.
32. OK, so Titus comes in with a knife and Lavinia has a basin. Are they going to get a sponge bath? That’s nice of Titus.
33. Make sure you read the footnote for line 194. Much of the craziness in this play is based on older stories.
34. Do you feel bad for Chiron and Demetrius? Do you think you’re supposed to? (This is not as easy a question as it seems.)

SCENE 3 (Titus’ courtyard)

1. Lucius has something to show Marcus.
2. Titus is dressed like a cook. Lavinia has a veil over her face. This is a strange meal, no?
3. Titus asks Saturninus about someone named Virginius. Make sure you read the footnote.
4. Look at Saturninus’ answer.
5. Titus 2, Andronicus kids 0.
6. Why would Titus do this? An honor killing? Surely, that doesn’t happen today anywhere in the world, right?
7. Look at Saturninus’ reaction. If you had to rank him on a scale of least evil to most evil, where would he fall as compared to the rest of the characters?
8. And you thought Hamlet had a lot of deaths in quick succession. This is a bloodbath.
9. What does Marcus say Rome needs to learn to do?
10. After the Roman Lord’s speech, Lucius tells everyone what happened.

11. Marcus tells everyone that Aaron is waiting in Titus’ house. Because this play needs more death. Or is it Moor death? I know, I’m ashamed of myself for that one.

12. Marcus says that if Lucius and he acted improperly, the Romans should do away with them.

13. Judging by their response, it looks like they forgive the Andronici.

14. Who’s now Emperor of Rome?

15. So Lucius has the chance to change Rome from this pattern of revenge. Oh, wait. Nevermind. More vengeance. Because that’s worked out great so far.

16. What’s Aaron’s punishment? His response?

17. Look at what the plan is for each dead person. Is that fair?

18. What does the ending of the play say about the future of Rome?