

QNY GWGZT LYL XGZGZGZGZGZ VPTD QNY'NS LYL BT Z  
BT GWGZGZGZGZGZ

(You haven't read Shakespeare until you've read it in its native Klingon)

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*Titus Andronicus* is a story of honor and valor. The entire story is ridden with acts of honor, both individual honor and family honor. Honor has been an important facet of Roman society since the beginning. In order to be an honorable citizen, one must join the military. Once in the military, a soldier is expected to fight with valor, which, in turn, brings honor to his family. The cycle is complete.

In *Titus Andronicus*, the protagonist, Titus, speaks to the citizens of Rome, “Rome, I have been thy soldier forty years, // And Led my country’s strength successfully // ... Give me a staff of honour for mine age, // But not a scepter to control the world.”<sup>1</sup> Titus has stated not only his loyalty, but also his honor to Rome. It would not be usual for Titus to become King of Rome, however, Titus does not want that responsibility. Declining such a role almost gives Titus *more* power over the people than if he *had* accepted the crown. An example of Titus’s honor for his family is given when Bassianus seizes Lavinia. Titus literally commands Lord Saturninus, “Follow, my lord, and I’ll soon bring her back.” As Titus is exiting, he encounters his son, Mutius, who informs Titus, “My lord, you pass not here.” Titus responds, “What, villain boy, barr’st me my way in Rome? [*He kills him.*]<sup>2</sup>” Mutius dishonors his father by aiding in the seizure of Lavinia *and* by refusing to listen to his father and let him pass. Another example of family honor is when Titus kills Lavinia, his only daughter. Titus asks Saturninus, “Your reason, mighty lord?” Saturninus responds, “Because the girl should not survive her shame, // And by her presence still renew his sorrows.” To this, Titus answers, “A reason mighty, strong, and effectual; // A pattern, precedent, and lively warrant // For me, most wretched, to perform the like.” Titus unveils Lavinia, then continues, “Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee, // And with thy shame, thy father’s sorrow die.” Titus kills Lavinia.<sup>3</sup> The scene is interesting because Titus states, “. . .and thy shame with thee.” Titus is publicly stating that Lavinia has brought shame to the Andronicus family, despite the fact that Lavinia did nothing to bring it upon herself. By killing Lavinia, Titus is able to reclaim his family’s honor.

Similar to Roman honor is Klingon honor. Klingons recognize the aspects of personal honor and family honor. If a Klingon family has dishonor brought upon their name, it will viewed with disrespect for many generations. Klingons take pride in their ability to fight and win. “A true warrior fights to the death and would rather be killed than taken hostage — an act which brings dishonor on himself and his family for three generations.”<sup>4</sup> A notable example of this is when Klag, an officer on the Klingon cruiser Pagh, refuses to speak with “his father, who is slowly dying on the [Klingong] homeworld[sic] [ Kronos] without honor”<sup>5</sup> because he had escaped his Romulan captors “who would not allow him to die as a Klingon should die — in battle.”<sup>6</sup> Klingon believe that a when fellow brother is killed in the line of duty, the experience should be a joyful one, honoring the release of a “dead spirit rather than grieving over what they consider to be the empty shell of the body.”<sup>7</sup>

Despite the fact the Romans and Klingons are fifty light-years apart, they share many cultural aspects, most notably, the system of honor. Granted, Klingons are not a “real” species, however, they have been well established in American television for almost half a century. Furthermore, the Klingon language is remarkable established, with rules for grammar, pronunciation, and thousands of words. *Hamlet* has even been translated into Klingon. Klingons can not get much closer to Romans without actually being Roman and real. Heghlu'meH QaQ jajvam!<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1.1.196-202, *Titus Andronicus*

<sup>2</sup> 1.1.293-295, *Titus Andronicus*

<sup>3</sup> 5.3.39-46, *Titus Andronicus*

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.startrek.com/startrek/view/library/aliens/article/70638.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.startrek.com/startrek/view/library/aliens/article/70638.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.startrek.com/startrek/view/library/aliens/article/70638.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.startrek.com/startrek/view/library/aliens/article/70638.html>

<sup>8</sup> *Today is a good day to die!* – a common Klingon phrase