

Poet. Then this breaking of his has been but a try for his friends.

Pain. Nothing else; you shall see him a palm in Athens again, and flourish with the highest. Therefore 'tis not amiss we tender our loves to him, in this supposed distress of his: it will show honestly in us, and is very likely to load our purposes with what they travel for, if it be a just and true report that goes of his having.

Poet. Whathaveyounowtopresentuntohim?

Pain. Nothing at this time but my visitation; only, I will promise him an excellent piece. 22
Poet. I must serve him so too; tell him of an intent that's coming towards him.

Pain. Good as the best. Promising is the very air o' the time; it opens the eyes of expectation; performance is ever the duller for his act; and, but in the plainer and simpler kind of people, the deed of saying is quite out of use. To promise is most courtly and fashionable; performance is a kind of will or testament which argues a great sickness in his judgment that makes it. 33

Enter TIMON from his cave.

Tim. [Aside.] Excellent workman! Thou canst not paint a man so bad as is thyself.

Poet. I am thinking what I shall say I have provided for him: it must be a personating of himself; a satire against the softness of prosperity, with a discovery of the infinite flatteries that follow youth and opulency. 40

Tim. [Aside.] Must thou needs stand for a villain in thine own work? Wilt thou whip thine own faults in other men? Do so, I have gold for thee. 44

Poet. Nay, let's seek him:
Then do we sin against our own estate,
When we may profit meet, and come too late.

Pain. True; 48
When the day serves, before black-corner'd night,
Find what thou want'st by free and offer'd light.
Come.

Tim. [Aside.] I'll meet you at the turn. What a god's gold, 52
That he is worshipp'd in a baser temple
Than where swine feed!

'Tis thou that rigg'st the bark and plough'st the foam,

Settlest admired reverence in a slave: 56
To thee be worship; and thy saints for aye
Be crown'd with plagues that thee alone obey.
Fit I meet them. [Advancing.]

Poet. Hail, worthy Timon!

Pain. Our late noble master! 60

Tim. Have I once liv'd to see two honest men?

Poet. Sir,

Having often of your open bounty tasted, 63
Hearing you were retir'd, your friends fall'n off,
Whose thankless natures—O abhorred spirits!

Not all the whips of heaven are large enough—
What! to you,

Whose star-like nobleness gave life and influence
To their whole being! I am rapt, and cannot cover 69

The monstrous bulk of this ingratitude
With any size of words.

Tim. Let it go naked, men may see't the better: 72

You, that are honest, by being what you are,
Make them best seen and known.

Pain. He and myself
Have travell'd in the great shower of your gifts,
And sweetly felt it.

Tim. Ay, you are honest men. 76

Pain. We are hither come to offer you our service.

Tim. Most honest men! Why, how shall I requite you?

Can you eat roots and drink cold water? no.

Both. What we can do, we'll do, to do you service. 80

Tim. Ye're honest men. Ye've heard that I have gold;

I am sure you have: speak truth; ye're honest men.

Pain. So it is said, my noble lord; but therefore 84

Came not my friend nor I.

Tim. Good honest men! Thou draw'st a counterfeit

Best in all Athens: thou'rt, indeed, the best;
Thou counterfeit'st most lively.

Pain. So, so, my lord.

Tim. E'en so, sir, as I say. And, for thy fiction, 88

Why, thy verse swells with stuff so fine and smooth

That thou art even natural in thine art.
But for all this, my honest-natur'd friends,

I must needs say you have a little fault: 92
Marry, 'tis not monstrous in you, neither wish I
You take much pains to mend.

Both. Beseech your honour
To make it known to us.

Tim. You'll take it ill.

Both. Most thankfully, my lord.

Tim. Will you indeed? 96

Both. Doubt it not, worthy lord.

Tim. There's never a one of you but trusts a knave,

That mightily deceives you.

Both. Do we, my lord?

Tim. Ay, and you hear him cog, see him dissemble, 100

Know his gross patchery, love him, feed him,
Keep in your bosom; yet remain assur'd
That he's a made-up villain.

Pain. I know none such, my lord.

Poet. Nor I. 104

Tim. Look you, I love you well; I'll give you gold,

Rid me these villains from your companies:
Hang them or stab them, drown them in a draught,

Confound them by some course, and come to me, 108

I'll give you gold enough.

Both. Name them, my lord; let's know them.

Tim. You that way and you this, but two in company;

Each man apart, all single and alone, 112
Yet an arch-villain keeps him company.

If, where thou art two villains shall not be,
Come not near him. [To the Poet.] If thou

would not reside
But where one villain is, then him abandon.

Hence! pack! there's gold; ye came for gold,
ye slaves: 117

You have done work for me, there's payment:
hence!

You are an alchemist, make gold of that.

Out, rascal dogs! 120
[Beats them out and then returns to his cave.

Enter FLAVIUS and two Senators.

Flav. It is in vain that you would speak with Timon;

For he is set so only to himself
That nothing but himself, which looks like man,
Is friendly with him.

First Sen. Bring us to his cave: 124
It is our part and promise to the Athenians
To speak with Timon.

Sec. Sen. At all times alike
Men are not still the same: 'twas time and griefs
That fram'd him thus: time, with his fairer

hand, 128
Offering the fortunes of his former days,
The former man may make him. Bring us to him,

And chance it as it may.

Flav. Here is his cave. 131
Peace and content be here! Lord Timon!

Timon!

Look out, and speak to friends. The Athenians,
By two of their most reverend senate, greet thee:
Speak to them, noble Timon.

Enter TIMON, from his cave.

Tim. Thousun, that comfort'st, burn! Speak,
and be hang'd: 136

For each true word, a blister! and each false
Be as a cauterizing to the root o' the tongue,
Consuming it with speaking!

First Sen. Worthy Timon,—
Tim. Of none but such as you, and you of Timon. 140

Sec. Sen. The senators of Athens greet thee, Timon.

Tim. I thank them; and would send them back the plague,

Could I but catch it for them.

First Sen. O! forget
What we are sorry for ourselves in thee. 144

The senators with one consent of love
Entreat thee back to Athens; who have thought
On special dignities, which vacant lie
For thy best use and wearing.

Sec. Sen. They confess 148
Toward thee forgetfulness too general, gross;
Which now the public body, which doth seldom
Play the recanter, feeling in itself
A lack of Timon's aid, hath sense withal 152

Of its own fail, restraining aid to Timon;
And send forth us, to make their sorrow'd
render,

Together with a recompense more fruitful

Than their offence can weigh down by the dram;
Ay, even such heaps and sums of love and wealth
As shall to thee block out what wrongs were theirs,
And write in thee the figures of their love,
Ever to read them thine.

Tim. You witch me in it; 160
Surprise me to the very brink of tears:
Lend me a fool's heart and a woman's eyes,
And I'll beweepe these comforts, worthy senators.

First Sen. Therefore so please thee to return with us, 164

And of our Athens—thine and ours—to take
The captainship, thou shalt be met with thanks,
Allow'd with absolute power, and thy good name

Live with authority: so soon we shall drive back
Of Alcibiades the approaches wild; 169
Who, like a boar too savage, doth root up
His country's peace.

Sec. Sen. And shakes his threat'ning sword
Against the walls of Athens.

First Sen. Therefore, Timon,— 172
Tim. Well, sir, I will; therefore, I will, sir; thus:—

If Alcibiades kill my countrymen,
Let Alcibiades know this of Timon,
That Timon cares not. But if he sack fair Athens, 176

And take our goodly aged men by the beards,
Giving our holy virgins to the stain
Of contumelious, beastly, mad-brain'd war;
Then let him know, and tell him Timon speaks it, 180

In pity of our aged and our youth
I cannot choose but tell him, that I care not,
And let him take't at worst; for their knives care not

While you have throats to answer: for myself,
There's not a whittle in the unruly camp 185
But I do prize it at my love before
The reverend'st throat in Athens. So I leave you

To the protection of the prosperous gods, 188
As thieves to keepers.

Flav. Stay not; all's in vain.

Tim. Why, I was writing of my epitaph;
It will be seen to-morrow. My long sickness
Of health and living now begins to mend, 192
And nothing brings me all things. Go; live still:

Be Alcibiades your plague, you his,
And last so long enough!

First Sen. We speak in vain.

Tim. But yet I love my country, and am not 196

One that rejoices in the common wrack,
As common bruit doth put it.

First Sen. That's well spoke.

Tim. Commend me to my loving countrymen,—

First Sen. These words become your lips as they pass through them. 200

Sec. Sen. And enter in our ears like great triumphers

In their applauding gates.

Tim. Commend me to them; And tell them, that, to ease them of their griefs, Their fears of hostile strokes, their aches, losses, Their pangs of love, with other incident throes That nature's fragile vessel doth sustain In life's uncertain voyage, I will some kindness do them:

I'll teach them to prevent wild Alcibiades' wrath. ²⁰⁸

Sec. Sen. I like this well; he will return again.

Tim. I have a tree which grows here in my close, That mine own use invites me to cut down, And shortly must I fell it; tell my friends, ²¹² Tell Athens, in the sequence of degree, From high to low throughout, that whoso please

To stop affliction, let him take his haste, Come hither, ere my tree hath felt the axe, ²¹⁶ And hang himself. I pray you, do my greeting.

Flav. Trouble him no further; thus you still shall find him.

Tim. Come not to me again; but say to Athens,

Timon hath made his everlasting mansion ²²⁰ Upon the beached verge of the salt flood; Who once a day with his embossed froth

The turbulent surge shall cover: thither come, And let my grave-stone be your oracle. ²²⁴

Lips, let sour words go by and language end: What is amiss plague and infection mend!

Graves only be men's works and death their gain!

Sun, hide thy beams! Timon hath done his reign. ^[Exit.]

First Sen. His discontents are unremovably Coupled to nature.

Sec. Sen. Our hope in him is dead: let us return,

And strain what other means is left unto us ²³² In our dear peril.

First Sen. It requires swift foot. ^[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—Before the Walls of Athens.

Enter two Senators and a Messenger.

First Sen. Thou hast painfully discover'd: are his files

As full as thy report?

Mess. I have spoke the least; Besides, his expedition promises

Present approach. ⁴

Sec. Sen. We stand much hazard if they bring not Timon.

Mess. I met a courier, one mine ancient friend,

Whom, though in general part we were oppos'd, Yet our old love made a particular force, ⁸

And made us speak like friends: this man was riding

From Alcibiades to Timon's cave, With letters of entreaty, which imported

His fellowship i' the cause against your city, ¹² In part for his sake mov'd.

First Sen. Here come our brothers.

Enter Senators from TIMON.

Third Sen. No talk of Timon, nothing of him expect.

The enemies' drum is heard, and fearful scouring Doth choke the air with dust. In, and prepare: Ours is the fall, I fear; our foes the snare. ¹⁷ ^[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—The Woods. TIMON'S Cave, and a rude Tomb seen.

Enter a Soldier, seeking TIMON.

Sold. By all description this should be the place.

Who's here? speak, ho! No answer! What is this?

Timon is dead, who hath outstretch'd his span: Some beast rear'd this; here does not live a man. ⁴

Dead, sure; and this his grave. What's on this tomb

I cannot read; the character I'll take with wax: Our captain hath in every figure skill;

An ag'd interpreter, though young in days. ⁸ Before proud Athens he's set down by this,

Whose fall the mark of his ambition is. ^[Exit.]

SCENE IV.—Before the Walls of Athens.

Trumpets sound. Enter ALCIBIADES with his Powers.

Alcib. Sound to this coward and lascivious town

Our terrible approach. ^[A parley sounded.]

Enter Senators, on the Walls.

Till now you have gone on, and fill'd the time With all licentious measure, making your wills ⁴

The scope of justice; till now myself and such As slept within the shadow of your power

Have wander'd with our traver's'd arms, and breath'd

Our sufferance vainly. Now the time is flush, ⁸ When crouching marrow, in the bearer strong,

Cries of itself, 'No more: now breathless wrong Shall sit and pant in your great chairs of ease,

And pury insolence shall break his wind ¹² With fear and horrid flight.

First Sen. Noble and young, When thy first griefs were but a mere conceit,

Ere thou hadst power or we had cause of fear, We sent to thee, to give thy rages balm, ¹⁶

To wipe out our ingratitude with loves Above their quantity.

Sec. Sen. So did we woo Transformed Timon to our city's love

By humble message and by promis'd means: ²⁰ We were not all unkind, nor all deserve

The common stroke of war.

First Sen. These walls of ours Were not erected by their hands from whom

You have receiv'd your grief; nor are they such That these great towers, trophies, and schools

should fall ²⁵ For private faults in them.

Sec. Sen. Nor are they living Who were the motives that you first went out;

Shame that they wanted cunning in excess ²⁸ Hath broke their hearts. March, noble lord,

Into our city with thy banners spread: By decimation, and a tithed death,—

If thy revenges hunger for that food ³² Which nature loathes,—take thou the destin'd

tenth, And by the hazard of the spotted die Let die the spotted.

First Sen. All have not offended; For those that were, it is not square to take ³⁶

On those that are, revenges: crimes, like lands, Are not inherited. Then, dear countryman,

Bring in thy ranks, but leave without thy rage: Spare thy Athenian cradle, and those kin ⁴⁰

Which in the bluster of thy wrath must fall With those that have offended: like a shepherd,

Approach the fold and cull th' infected forth, But kill not all together.

Sec. Sen. What thou wilt, ⁴⁴ Thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile

Than hew to't with thy sword.

First Sen. Set but thy foot Against our rampir'd gates, and they shall ope,

So thou wilt send thy gentle heart before, ⁴⁸ To say thou'lt enter friendly.

Sec. Sen. Throw thy glove, Or any token of thine honour else,

That thou wilt use the wars as thy redress And not as our confusion, all thy powers ⁵²

Shall make their harbour in our town, till we Have seal'd thy full desire.

Alcib. Then there's my glove; Descend, and open your uncharged ports:

Those enemies of Timon's and mine own ⁵⁶ Whom you yourselves shall set out for reproof,

Fall, and no more; and, to atone your fears With my more noble meaning, not a man

Shall pass his quarter, or offend the stream ⁶⁰ Of regular justice in your city's bounds,

But shall be render'd to your public laws At heaviest answer.

Both. 'Tis most nobly spoken.

Alcib. Descend, and keep your words. ⁶⁴ ^[The Senators descend, and open the gates.]

Enter a Soldier.

Sold. My noble general, Timon is dead; Entomb'd upon the very hem o' the sea:

And on his grave-stone this insculpture, which With wax I brought away, whose soft impression

Interprets for my poor ignorance. ⁶⁹ *Alcib.* Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched

soul bereft: Seek not my name: a plague consume you wicked

caitiffs left! Here lie I, Timon; who, alive, all living men did

hate: ⁷² Pass by, and curse thy fill; but pass and stay not

here thy gait. These well express in thee thy latter spirits:

Though thou abhor'st in us our human griefs, Scorn'st our brain's flow and those our drop-

lets which ⁷⁶ From niggard nature fall, yet rich conceit

Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye On thy low grave, on faults forgiven. Dead

Is noble Timon; of whose memory ⁸⁰ Hereafter more. Bring me into your city,

And I will use the olive with my sword; Make war breed peace; make peace stint war;

make each Prescribe to other as each other's leech. ⁸⁴

Let our drums strike. ^[Exeunt.]