

Timon/ActIV

1

ACT IV, SCENE I.

[Without the walls of Athens. Enter TIMON.]

TIMON.

Let me look back upon thee. O thou wall,
That girdlest in those wolves, dive in the earth,
And fence not Athens! Matrons, turn incontinent!
Obedience fail in children! slaves and fools,
Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench,
And minister in their steads! to general filths
Convert o' the instant, green virginity,-
Do't in your parents' eyes! bankrupts, hold fast
Rather than render back, out with your knives,
And cut your trusters' throats! bound servants, steal!
Large-handed robbers your grave masters are,
And pill by law: maid, to thy master's bed,-
Thy mistress is o' the brothel! son of sixteen,
Pluck the lined crutch from thy old limping sire,
With it beat out his brains! piety, and fear,
Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,
Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,
Decline to your confounding contraries,
And let confusion live!- Plagues incident to men,
Your potent and infectious fevers heap
On Athens, ripe for stroke! thou cold sciatica,
Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt
As lamely as their manners! lust and liberty,
Creep in the minds and marrows of our youth,
That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive,
And drown themselves in riot! itches, blains,
Sow all the Athenian bosoms; and their crop
Be general leprosy! breath infect breath;
That their society, as their friendship, may
Be merely poison! Nothing I'll bear from thee
But nakedness, thou detestable town!
Take thou that too, with multiplying bans!
Timon will to the woods; where he shall find
The unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.
The gods confound- hear me, you good gods all-
The Athenians both within and out that wall!
And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow
To the whole race of mankind, high and low!

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Amen.[Exit.]

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ACT IV, SCENE II.

[Athens. A room in Timon's house. Enter FLAVIUS, with two or three SERVANTS.]

FIRST SERVANT.

Hear you, master steward,- where's our master?
Are we undone? cast off? nothing remaining?

FLAVIUS.

Alack, my fellows, what should I say to you?
Let me be recorded by the righteous gods,
I am as poor as you.

FIRST SERVANT.

Such a house broke!
So noble a master fall'n! All gone! and not
One friend to take his fortune by the arm,
And go along with him!

SECOND SERVANT.

As we do turn our backs
From our companion thrown into his grave,
So his familiars from his buried fortunes
Slink all away; leave their false vows with him,
Like empty purses pick'd; and his poor self,
A dedicated beggar to the air,
With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,
Walks, like contempt, alone.- More of our fellows.
[Enter other SERVANTS.]

FLAVIUS.

All broken implements of a ruin'd house.

THIRD SERVANT.

Yet do our hearts wear Timon's livery;
That see I by our faces; we are fellows still,
Serving alike in sorrow: leak'd is our bark;
And we, poor mates, stand on the dying deck,
Hearing the surges threat: we must all part
Into this sea of air.

FLAVIUS.

Good fellows all,
The latest of my wealth I'll share amongst you
Wherever we shall meet, for Timon's sake
Let's yet be fellows; let's shake our heads, and say,
As 'twere a knell unto our master's fortunes,

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"We have seen better days." Let each take some;[Giving them money.]

Nay, put out all your hands. Not one word more:
Thus part we rich in sorrow, parting poor.[SERVANTS embrace, and part several ways.]

O, the fierce wretchedness that glory brings us!
Who would not wish to be from wealth exempt,
Since riches point to misery and contempt?
Who'd be so mock'd with glory? or to live
But in a dream of friendship?

To have his pomp, and all what state compounds,
But only painted, like his varnish'd friends?
Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,
Undone by goodness! Strange, unusual blood,
When man's worst sin is, he does too much good!
Who, then, dares to be half so kind agen?

For bounty, that makes gods, does still mar men.
My dearest lord,- bless'd, to be most accurst,
Rich, only to be wretched,- thy great fortunes
Are made thy chief afflictions. Alas, kind lord!
He's flung in rage from this ingrateful seat
Of monstrous friends; nor has he with him to
Supply his life, or that which can command it.
I'll follow, and inquire him out:
I'll ever serve his mind with my best will;
Whilst I have gold, I'll be his steward still.[Exit.]

ACT IV, SCENE III.

[The woods. Before Timon's cave. Enter TIMON.]

TIMON.

O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth
Rotten humidity; below thy sister's orb
Infect the air! Twinn'd brothers of one womb,-
Whose procreation, residence, and birth,
Scarce is dividant,- touch them with several fortunes;
The greater scorns the lesser: not nature,
To whom all sores lay siege, can bear great fortune,
But by contempt of nature.
Raise me this beggar, and deny't that lord;
The senator shall bear contempt hereditary,
The beggar native honour.
It is the pasture lards the rother's sides,

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The want that makes him lean. Who dares, who dares,
In purity of manhood stand upright,
And say, "This man's a flatterer"? if one be,
So are they all; for every grise of fortune
Is smooth'd by that below: the learned pate
Ducks to the golden fool: all is oblique;
There's nothing level in our cursed natures,
But direct villainy. Therefore, be abhorr'd
All feasts, societies, and throngs of men!
His semblable, yea, himself, Timon disdains:
Destruction fang mankind!- Earth, yield me roots!
[Digging.]

Who seeks for better of thee, sauce his palate
With thy most operant poison!- What is here?
Gold? yellow, glittering, precious gold? No, gods,
I am no idle votarist: roots, your clear heavens!
Thus much of this will make black white; foul, fair;
Wrong, right; base, noble; old, young; coward, valiant.
Ha, you gods! why this? what this, you gods? Why, this
Will lug your priests and servants from your sides;
Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:
This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions; bless th'accurst;
Make the hoar leprosy adored; place thieves,
And give them title, knee and approbation,
With senators on the bench: this is it
That makes the wappen'd widow wed again;
She, whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores
Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices
To th'April day again. Come, damned earth,
Thou common whore of mankind, that putt'st odds
Among the rout of nations, I will make thee
Do thy right nature.- [March within.]Ha! a drum?- Th'art
quick,

But yet I'll bury thee: thou'lt go, strong thief,
When gouty keepers of thee cannot stand:-
Nay, stay thou out for earnest.[Keeping some gold.]

[Enter ALCIBIADES, with drum and fife, in warlike
manner; PHRYNIA and TIMANDRA.]

ALCIBIADES.

What art thou there? speak.

TIMON.

A beast, as thou art. The canker gnaw thy heart,

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For showing me again the eyes of man!

ALCIBIADES.

What is thy name? Is man so hateful to thee,
That art thyself a man?

TIMON.

I am 'misanthropos', and hate mankind.

For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,
That I might love thee something.

ALCIBIADES.

I know thee well;

But in thy fortunes am unlearn'd and strange.

TIMON.

I know thee too; and more than that I know thee,
I not desire to know. Follow thy drum;
With man's blood paint the ground, gules, gules:
Religious canons, civil laws are cruel;
Then what should war be? This fell whore of thine
Hath in her more destruction than thy sword,
For all her cherubin look.

PHRYNIA.

Thy lips rot off!

TIMON.

I will not kiss thee; then the rot returns
To thine own lips again.

ALCIBIADES.

How came the noble Timon to this change?

TIMON.

As the moon does, by wanting light to give:
But then renew I could not, like the moon;
There were no suns to borrow of.

ALCIBIADES.

Noble Timon, what friendship may I do thee?

TIMON.

None, but to maintain my opinion.

ALCIBIADES.

What is it, Timon?

TIMON.

Promise me friendship, but perform none: if thou wilt not
promise, the gods plague thee, for thou art a man! if thou
dost perform, confound thee, for thou art a man!

ALCIBIADES.

I have heard in some sort of thy miseries.

TIMON.

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Thou saw'st them, when I had prosperity.

ALCIBIADES.

I see them now; then was a blessed time.

TIMON.

As thine is now, held with a brace of harlots.

TIMANDRA.

Is this th'Athenian minion, whom the world
Voiced so regardfully?

TIMON.

Art thou Timandra?

TIMANDRA.

Yes.

TIMON.

Be a whore still: they love thee not that use thee;
Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust.
Make use of thy salt hours: season the slaves
For tubs and baths; bring down rose-cheek'd youth to
The tub-fast and the diet.

TIMANDRA.

Hang thee, monster!

ALCIBIADES.

Pardon him, sweet Timandra; for his wits
Are drown'd and lost in his calamities.-
I have but little gold of late, brave Timon,
The want whereof doth daily make revolt
In my penurious band: I have heard, and grieved,
How cursed Athens, mindless of thy worth,
Forgetting thy great deeds, when neighbour states,
But for thy sword and fortune, trod upon them,-

TIMON.

I prithee, beat thy drum, and get thee gone.

ALCIBIADES.

I am thy friend, and pity thee, dear Timon.

TIMON.

How dost thou pity him whom thou dost trouble?
I had rather be alone.

ALCIBIADES.

Why, fare thee well:
Here's some gold for thee.

TIMON.

Keep it, I cannot eat it.

ALCIBIADES.

When I have laid proud Athens on a heap,-

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TIMON.

Warr'st thou 'gainst Athens?

ALCIBIADES.

Ay, Timon, and have cause.

TIMON.

The gods confound them all in thy conquest;

And thee after, when thou hast conquer'd!

ALCIBIADES.

Why me,

Timon?

TIMON.

That, by killing of villains,

Thou wast born to conquer my country.

Put up thy gold: go on,- here's gold,- go on;

Be as a planetary plague, when Jove

Will o'er some high-iced city hang his poison

In the sick air: let not thy sword skip one:

Pity not honour'd age for his white beard,-

He is an usurer: strike me the counterfeit matron,-

It is her habit only that is honest,

Herself's a bawd: let not the virgin's cheek

Make soft thy trenchant sword; for those milk-paps,

That through the window-bars bore at men's eyes,

Are not within the leaf of pity writ,

But set down horrible traitors: spare not the babe,

Whose dimpled smiles from fools exhaust their mercy;

Think it a bastard, whom the oracle

Hath doubtfully pronounced thy throat shall cut,

And mince it sans remorse: swear against objects;

Put armour on thine ears and on thine eyes,

Whose proof, nor yells of mothers, maids, nor babes,

Nor sight of priests in holy vestments bleeding,

Shall pierce a jot. There's gold to pay thy soldiers:

Make large confusion; and, thy fury spent,

Confounded be thyself! Speak not, be gone.

ALCIBIADES.

Hast thou gold yet? I'll take the gold thou givest me,

Not all thy counsel.

TIMON.

Dost thou, or dost thou not, heaven's curse upon thee!

PHRYNIA AND TIMANDRA.

Give us some gold, good Timon: hast thou more?

TIMON.

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Enough to make a whore forswear her trade,
And to make whores, a bawd. Hold up, you sluts,
Your aprons mountant: you are not oathable,-
Although, I know, you'll swear, terribly swear,
Into strong shudders and to heavenly agues,
Th'immortal gods that hear you,- spare your oaths,
I'll trust to your conditions: be whores still;
And he whose pious breath seeks to convert you,
Be strong in whore, allure him, burn him up;
Let your close fire predominate his smoke,
And be no turncoats: yet may your pains, six months,
Be quite contrary: and thatch your poor thin roofs
With burdens of the dead;- some that were hang'd,
No matter:- wear them, betray with them: whore still;
Paint till a horse may mire upon your face:
A pox of wrinkles!

PHRYNIA AND TIMANDRA.

Well, more gold:- what then?-

Believe't, that we'll do any thing for gold.

TIMON.

Consumptions sow

In hollow bones of man; strike their sharp shins,
And mar men's spurring. Crack the lawyer's voice,
That he may never more false title plead,
Nor sound his quilllets shrilly: hoar the flamen,
That scolds against the quality of flesh,
And not believes himself: down with the nose,
Down with it flat; take the bridge quite away
Of him that, his particular to foresee,
Smells from the general weal: make curl'd-pate ruffians
bald;

And let the unscarr'd braggarts of the war
Derive some pain from you: plague all;
That your activity may defeat and quell
The source of all erection.- There's more gold:-
Do you damn others, and let this damn you,
And ditches grave you all!

PHRYNIA AND TIMANDRA.

More counsel with more money, bounteous Timon.

TIMON.

More whore, more mischief first; I've given you earnest.

ALCIBIADES.

Strike up the drum towards Athens!- Farewell, Timon:

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If I thrive well, I'll visit thee again.

TIMON.

If I hope well, I'll never see thee more.

ALCIBIADES.

I never did thee harm.

TIMON.

Yes, thou spokest well of me.

ALCIBIADES.

Call'st thou that harm?

TIMON.

Men daily find it. Get thee away, and take

Thy beagles with thee.

ALCIBIADES.

We but offend him.- Strike! [Drum
beats. Exeunt ALCIBIADES, PHRYNIA, and TIMANDRA.]

TIMON.

That nature, being sick of man's unkindness,
Should yet be hungry!- Common mother, thou, [Digging.]

Whose womb unmeasurable, and infinite breast,

Teems and feeds all; whose self-same mettle,

Whereof thy proud child, arrogant man, is puff'd,

Engenders the black toad and adder blue,

The gilded newt and eyeless venom'd worm,

With all th'abhorred births below crisp heaven

Whereon Hyperion's quickening fire doth shine;

Yield him, who all thy human sons doth hate,

From forth thy plenteous bosom, one poor root!

Ensear thy fertile and conceptious womb,

Let it no more bring out ingrateful man!

Go great with tigers, dragons, wolves, and bears;

Teem with new monsters, whom thy upward face

Hath to the marbled mansion all above

Never presented!- O, a root,- dear thanks!-

Dry up thy marrows, vines, and plough-torn leas;

Whereof ingrateful man, with liquorish draughts

And morsels unctuous, greases his pure mind,

That from it all consideration slips!-

[Enter APEMANTUS.]

More man? plague, plague!

APEMANTUS.

I was directed hither: men report

Thou dost affect my manners, and dost use them.

TIMON.

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'Tis, then, because thou dost not keep a dog,
Whom I would imitate: consumption catch thee!

APEMANTUS.

This is in thee a nature but infected;
A poor unmanly melancholy sprung
From change of fortune. Why this spade? this place?
This slave-like habit; and these looks of care?
Thy flatterers yet wear silk, drink wine, lie soft;
Hug their diseased perfumes, and have forgot
That ever Timon was. Shame not these woods,
By putting on the cunning of a carper.
Be thou a flatterer now, and seek to thrive
By that which has undone thee: hinge thy knee,
And let his very breath, whom thou'lt observe,
Blow off thy cap; praise his most vicious strain,
And call it excellent: thou wast told thus;
Thou gavest thine ears like tapsters that bid welcome
To knaves and all approachers: 'tis most just
That thou turn rascal; hadst thou wealth again,
Rascals should have't. Do not assume my likeness.

TIMON.

Were I like thee, I'd throw away myself.

APEMANTUS.

Thou hast cast away thyself, being like thyself;
A madman so long, now a fool. What, think'st
That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain,
Will put thy shirt on warm? will these moss'd trees,
That have outlived the eagle, page thy heels,
And skip when thou point'st out? will the cold brook,
Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste,
To cure thy o'er-night's surfeit? Call the creatures
Whose naked natures live in all the spite
Of wreakful heaven, whose bare unhoused trunks,
To the conflicting elements exposed,
Answer mere nature, bid them flatter thee;
O, thou shalt find-

TIMON.

A fool of thee: depart.

APEMANTUS.

I love thee better now than e'er I did.

TIMON.

I hate thee worse.

APEMANTUS.

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Why?

TIMON.

Thou flatter'st misery.

APEMANTUS.

I flatter not; but say thou art a caitiff.

TIMON.

Why dost thou seek me out?

APEMANTUS.

To vex thee.

TIMON.

Always a villain's office or a fool's.

Dost please thyself in't?

APEMANTUS.

Ay.

TIMON.

What! a knave too?

APEMANTUS.

If thou didst put this sour-cold habit on

To castigate thy pride, 'twere well: but thou

Dost it enforcedly; thou'ldst courtier be again,

Wert thou not beggar. Willing misery

Outlives incertain pomp, is crown'd before:

The one is filling still, never complete;

The other, at high wish: best state, contentless,

Hath a distracted and most wretched being,

Worse than the worst, content.

Thou shouldst desire to die, being miserable.

TIMON.

Not by his breath that is more miserable.

Thou art a slave, whom Fortune's tender arm

With favour never clasp'd; but bred a dog.

Hadst thou, like us from our first swath, proceeded

The sweet degrees that this brief world affords

To such as may the passive drugs of it

Freely command, thou wouldst have plunged thyself

In general riot; melted down thy youth

In different beds of lust; and never learn'd

The icy precepts of respect, but follow'd

The sugar'd game before thee. But myself,

Who had the world as my confectionary;

The mouths, the tongues, the eyes, and hearts of men

At duty, more than I could frame employment;

That numberless upon me stuck, as leaves

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Do on the oak, have with one winter's brush
Fell from their boughs, and left me open, bare
For every storm that blows;- I, to bear this,
That never knew but better, is some burden:
Thy nature did commence in sufferance, time
Hath made thee hard in't. Why shouldst thou hate men?
They never flatter'd thee: what hast thou given?
If thou wilt curse,- thy father, that poor rag,
Must be thy subject; who, in spite, put stuff
To some she-beggar, and compounded thee
Poor rogue hereditary. Hence, be gone!-
If thou hadst not been born the worst of men,
Thou hadst been a knave and flatterer.

APEMANTUS.

Art thou proud yet?

TIMON.

Ay, that I am not thee.

APEMANTUS.

I, that I was

No prodigal.

TIMON.

I, that I am one now:

Were all the wealth I have shut up in thee,
I'd give thee leave to hang it. Get thee gone.-
That the whole life of Athens were in this!
Thus would I eat it.[Gnawing a root.]

APEMANTUS.

Here; I'll mend thy feast. [Offering him something.]

TIMON.

First mend my company, take away thyself.

APEMANTUS.

So I shall mend mine own, by the lack of thine.

TIMON.

'Tis not well mended so, it is but botch'd;

If not, I would it were.

APEMANTUS.

What wouldst thou have to Athens?

TIMON.

Thee hither in a whirlwind. If thou wilt,
Tell them there I have gold; look, so I have.

APEMANTUS.

Here is no use for gold.

TIMON.

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The best and truest;

For here it sleeps, and does no hired harm.

APEMANTUS.

Where liest o' nights, Timon?

TIMON.

Under that's above me.

Where feed'st thou o' days, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS.

Where my stomach finds meat; or, rather, where I eat it.

TIMON.

Would poison were obedient, and knew my mind!

APEMANTUS.

Where wouldst thou send it?

TIMON.

To sauce thy dishes.

APEMANTUS.

The middle of humanity thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends: when thou wast in thy guilt and thy perfume they mock'd thee for too much curiosity; in thy rags thou know'st none, but art despised for the contrary. There's a medlar for thee; eat it.

TIMON.

On what I hate I feed not.

APEMANTUS.

Dost hate a medlar?

TIMON.

Ay, though it look like thee.

APEMANTUS.

An th'hadst hated meddlers sooner, thou shouldst have loved thyself better now. What man didst thou ever know unthrift that was beloved after his means?

TIMON.

Who, without those means thou talk'st of, didst thou ever know beloved?

APEMANTUS.

Myself.

TIMON.

I understand thee; thou hadst some means to keep a dog.

APEMANTUS.

What things in the world canst thou nearest compare to thy flatterers?

TIMON.

Women nearest; but men, men are the things themselves. What

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wouldst thou do with the world, Apemantus, if it lay in thy power?

APEMANTUS.

Give it the beasts, to be rid of the men.

TIMON.

Wouldst thou have thyself fall in the confusion of men, and remain a beast with the beasts?

APEMANTUS.

Ay, Timon.

TIMON.

A beastly ambition, which the gods grant thee t'attain to! If thou wert the lion, the fox would beguile thee: if thou wert the lamb, the fox would eat thee: if thou wert the fox, the lion would suspect thee, when, peradventure, thou wert accused by the ass: if thou wert the ass, thy dulness would torment thee; and still thou livedst but as a breakfast to the wolf: if thou wert the wolf, thy greediness would afflict thee, and oft thou shouldst hazard thy life for thy dinner: wert thou the unicorn, pride and wrath would confound thee, and make thine own self the conquest of thy fury: wert thou a bear, thou wouldst be kill'd by the horse: wert thou a horse, thou wouldst be seized by the leopard: wert thou a leopard, thou wert german to the lion, and the spots of thy kindred were jurors on thy life: all thy safety were remotion, and thy defence absence. What beast couldst thou be, that were not subject to a beast? and what a beast art thou already, that seest not thy loss in transformation!

APEMANTUS.

If thou couldst please me with speaking to me, thou mightst have hit upon it here: the commonwealth of Athens is become a forest of beasts.

TIMON.

How has the ass broke the wall, that thou art out of the city?

APEMANTUS.

Yonder comes a poet and a painter: the plague of company light upon thee! I will fear to catch it, and give way: when I know not what else to do, I'll see thee again.

TIMON.

When there is nothing living but thee, thou shalt be welcome. I had rather be a beggar's dog than Apemantus.

APEMANTUS.

Thou art the cap of all the fools alive.

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TIMON.

Would thou wert clean enough to spit upon!

APEMANTUS.

A plague on thee, thou art too bad to curse!

TIMON.

All villains that do stand by thee are pure.

APEMANTUS.

There is no leprosy but what thou speak'st.

TIMON.

If I name thee.-

I'll beat thee, but I should infect my hands.

APEMANTUS.

I would my tongue could rot them off!

TIMON.

Away, thou issue of a mangy dog!

Choler does kill me that thou art alive;

I swoond to see thee.

APEMANTUS.

Would thou wouldst burst!

TIMON.

Away, thou tedious rogue! I am sorry I shall lose a stone by thee.[Throws a stone at him.]

APEMANTUS.

Beast!

TIMON.

Slave!

APEMANTUS.

Toad!

TIMON.

Rogue, rogue, rogue!

I am sick of this false world; and will love naught

But even the mere necessities upon't.

Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave;

Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat

Thy grave-stone daily: make thine epitaph,

That death in me at others' lives may laugh.[Looking on the gold.]

O thou sweet king-killer, and dear divorce

'Twixt natural son and sire! thou bright defiler

Of Hymen's purest bed! thou valiant Mars!

Thou ever young, fresh, loved, and delicate wooer,

Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow

That lies on Dian's lap! thou visible god,

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That solder'st close impossibilities,
And makest them kiss! that speak'st with every tongue,
To every purpose! O thou touch of hearts!
Think, thy slave man rebels; and by thy virtue,
Set them into confounding odds, that beasts
May have the world in empire!
APEMANTUS [coming forward].

Would 'twere so!-

But not till I am dead.- I'll say thou'st gold:
Thou wilt be throng'd to shortly.

TIMON.

Throng'd to!

APEMANTUS.

Ay.

TIMON.

Thy back, I prithee.

APEMANTUS.

Live, and love thy misery!

TIMON.

Long live so, and so die! [Exit APEMANTUS.] I am quit.-

More things like men?- Eat, Timon, and abhor them.

[Enter BANDITTI.]

FIRST BANDIT.

Where should he have this gold? It is some poor fragment,
some slender ort of his remainder: the mere want of gold,
and the falling-from of his friends, drove him into this
melancholy.

SECOND BANDIT.

It is noised he hath a mass of treasure.

THIRD BANDIT.

Let us make the assay upon him: if he care not for't, he
will supply us easily; if he covetously reserve it, how
shall's get it?

SECOND BANDIT.

True; for he bears it not about him, 'tis hid.

FIRST BANDIT.

Is not this he?

BANDITTI.

Where?

SECOND BANDIT.

'Tis his description.

THIRD BANDIT.

He; I know him.

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BANDITTI.

Save thee, Timon.

TIMON.

Now, thieves?

BANDITTI.

Soldiers, not thieves.

TIMON.

Both too; and women's sons.

BANDITTI.

We are not thieves, but men that much do want.

TIMON.

Your greatest want is, you want much: of meat
Why should you want? Behold, the earth hath roots;
Within this mile break forth a hundred springs;
The oaks bear mast, the briers scarlet hips;
The bounteous housewife, nature, on each bush
Lays her full mess before you. Want! why want?
FIRST BANDIT.

We cannot live on grass, on berries, water,
As beasts and birds and fishes.

TIMON.

Nor on the beasts themselves, the birds, and fishes;
You must eat men. Yet thanks I must you con,
That you are thieves profess'd; that you work not
In holier shapes: for there is boundless theft
In limited professions. Rascal thieves,
Here's gold. Go, suck the subtle blood o' the grape,
Till the high fever seethe your blood to froth,
And so scape hanging: trust not the physician;
His antidotes are poison, and he slays
More than you rob: take wealth and lives together;
Do villainy, do, since you protest to do't,
Like workmen. I'll example you with thievery:
The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
Robs the vast sea: the moon's an arrant thief,
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:
The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves
The moon into salt tears: the earth's a thief,
That feeds and breeds by a composture stol'n
From general excrement: each thing's a thief:
The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power
Have uncheck'd theft. Love not yourselves: away,
Rob one another. There's more gold. Cut throats;

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All that you meet are thieves. To Athens go:
Break open shops; nothing can you steal, but thieves
Do lose it: steal not less for this I give you;
And gold confound you howsoe'er! Amen.

THIRD BANDIT.

'Has almost charm'd me from my profession, by persuading me
to it.

FIRST BANDIT.

'Tis in the malice of mankind that he thus advises us; not
to have us thrive in our mystery.

SECOND BANDIT.

I'll believe him as an enemy, and give over my trade.

FIRST BANDIT.

Let us first see peace in Athens; there is no time so
miserable but a man may be true.[Exeunt BANDITTI.]

[Enter FLAVIUS.]

FLAVIUS.

O you gods!

Is yond despised and ruinous man my lord?

Full of decay and failing?

O monument and wonder of good deeds

Evilly bestow'd!

What an alteration of honour

Has desperate want made!

What viler thing upon the earth than friends

Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends!

How rarely does it meet with this time's guise,

When man was wish'd to love his enemies!

Grant I may ever love, and rather woo

Those that would mischief me than those that do!

'Has caught me in his eye: I will present

My honest grief unto him; and, as my lord,

Still serve him with my life.- My dearest master!

TIMON.

Away! what art thou?

FLAVIUS.

Have you forgot me, sir?

TIMON.

Why dost ask that? I have forgot all men;

Then, if thou grant'st th'art man, I have forgot thee.

FLAVIUS.

An honest poor servant of yours.

TIMON.

Then I know thee not:

I never had honest man about me, I; all

I kept were knaves, to serve in meat to villains.

FLAVIUS.

The gods are witness,
Ne'er did poor steward wear a truer grief
For his undone lord than mine eyes for you.

TIMON.

What, dost thou weep?- come nearer;- then I love thee,
Because thou art a woman, and disclaim'st
Flinty mankind; whose eyes do never give
But thorough lust and laughter. Pity's sleeping:
Strange times, that weep with laughing, not with weeping!

FLAVIUS.

I beg of you to know me, good my lord,
T'accept my grief, and, whilst this poor wealth lasts,
To entertain me as your steward still.

TIMON.

Had I a steward
So true, so just, and now so comfortable?
It almost turns my dangerous nature mild.
Let me behold thy face. Surely, this man
Was born of woman.-
Forgive my general and exceptless rashness,
You perpetual-sober gods! I do proclaim
One honest man,- mistake me not,- but one;
No more, I pray,- and he's a steward.-
How fain would I have hated all mankind!
And thou redeem'st thyself: but all, save thee,
I fell with curses.
Methinks thou art more honest now than wise;
For, by oppressing and betraying me,
Thou mightst have sooner got another service:
For many so arrive at second masters,
Upon their first lord's neck. But tell me true,-
For I must ever doubt, thou ne'er so sure,-
Is not thy kindness subtle-covetous,
A usuring kindness, and, as rich men deal gifts,
Expecting in return twenty for one?

FLAVIUS.

No, my most worthy master; in whose breast
Doubt and suspect, alas, are placed too late:
You should have fear'd false times when you did feast:
Suspect still comes where an estate is least.
That which I show, heaven knows, is merely love,
Duty and zeal to your unmatched mind,
Care of your food and living; and, believe it,
My most honour'd lord,
For any benefit that points to me,
Either in hope or present, I'd exchange
For this one wish,- that you had power and wealth

To requite me, by making rich yourself.

TIMON.

Look thee, 'tis so!- Thou singly honest man,
Here, take:- the gods, out of my misery,
Have sent thee treasure. Go, live rich and happy,
But this condition'd:- thou shalt build from men;
Hate all, curse all; show charity to none;
But let the famish'd flesh slide from the bone,
Ere thou relieve the beggar: give to dogs
What thou deny'st to men; let prisons swallow 'em,
Debts wither 'em to nothing: be men like blasted woods,
And may diseases lick up their false bloods!
And so, farewell, and thrive.

FLAVIUS.

O, let me stay,
And comfort you, my master.

TIMON.

If thou hatest
Curses, stay not; fly, whilst thou art bless'd and free:
Ne'er see thou man, and let me ne'er see thee.[Exeunt severally.]