

Timon/ActV 1

ACT V, SCENE I.

[The woods. Before Timon's cave. Enter POET and PAINTER; TIMON watching them from his cave.]

PAINTER.

As I took note of the place, it cannot be far where he abides.

POET.

What's to be thought of him? does the rumour hold for true, that he's so full of gold?

PAINTER.

Certain: Alcibiades reports it; Phrynia and Timandra had gold of him: he likewise enrich'd poor straggling soldiers with great quantity: 'tis said he gave unto his steward a mighty sum.

POET.

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

PAINTER.

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 travail for, if it be a just and true report that goes of his having.

POET.

What have you now to present unto him?

PAINTER.

Nothing at this time but my visitation: only I will promise him an excellent piece.

POET.

I must serve him so too,- tell him of an intent that's coming toward him.

PAINTER.

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 judgement that makes it.

[Enter TIMON from his cave.]

TIMON [aside].

Excellent workman! thou canst not paint a man so bad as is

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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.

TIMON [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.

POET.

Nay, let's seek him:

Then do we sin against our own estate,
When we may profit meet, and come too late.

PAINTER.

True;

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

Come.

TIMON [aside].

I'll meet you at the turn.- What a god's gold,
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:

To thee be worship! and thy saints for aye
Be crown'd with plagues, that thee alone obey!-
Fit I meet them.[Comes forward.]

POET.

Hail, worthy Timon!

PAINTER.

Our late noble master!

TIMON.

Have I once lived to see two honest men?

POET.

Sir,

Having often of your open bounty tasted,
Hearing you were retired, 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

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

TIMON.

Let it go naked, men may see't the better:
You that are honest, by being what you are,
Make them best seen and known.

PAINTER.

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

TIMON.

Ay, you are honest men.

PAINTER.

We are hither come to offer you our service.

TIMON.

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.

TIMON.

Y'are honest men: y'have heard that I have gold;
I am sure you have: speak truth; y'are honest men.

PAINTER.

So it is said, my noble lord: but therefore
Came not my friend nor I.

TIMON.

Good honest men!- Thou draw'st a counterfeit
Best in all Athens: th'art, indeed, the best;
Thou counterfeit'st most lively.

PAINTER.

So, so, my lord.

TIMON.

E'en so, sir, as I say.- And, for thy fiction,
Why, thy verse swells with stuff so fine and smooth,
That thou art even natural in thine art.-

But, for all this, my honest-natured friends,

I must needs say you have a little fault:

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.

TIMON.

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You'll take it ill.

BOTH.

Most thankfully, my lord.

TIMON.

Will you, indeed?

BOTH.

Doubt it not, worthy lord.

TIMON.

There's never a one of you but trusts a knave,
That mightily deceives you.

BOTH.

Do we, my lord.

TIMON.

Ay, and you hear him cog, see him dissemble,
Know his gross patchery, love him, feed him,
Keep in your bosom: yet remain assured
That he's a made-up villain.

PAINTER.

I know none such, my lord.

POET.

Nor I.

TIMON.

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,
I'll give you gold enough.

BOTH.

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

TIMON.

You that way, and you this,- but two in company:
Each man apart, all single and alone,
Yet an arch-villain keeps him company.

[To the PAINTER.]If, where thou art, two villains shall
not be,

Come not near him.- [To the POET.]If thou wouldst not
reside

But where one villain is, then him abandon.-

Hence, pack! there's gold,- you came for gold, ye slaves:

[To the PAINTER]You have work for me, there's payment:
hence.-

[To the POET.]You are an alchemist, make gold of that:-
Out, rascal dogs![Beats and drives them out, and then

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retires to his cave.]

[Enter FLAVIUS and two SENATORS.]

FLAVIUS.

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 SENATOR.

Bring us to his cave:

It is our pact and promise to th'Athenians
To speak with Timon.

SECOND SENATOR.

At all times alike

Men are not still the same: 'twas time and griefs
That framed him thus: time, with his fairer hand,
Offering the fortunes of his former days,
The former man may make him. Bring us to him.
And chance it as it may.

FLAVIUS.

Here is his cave.-

Peace and content be here! Lord Timon! Timon!
Look out, and speak to friends: th'Athenians,
By two of their most reverend senate, greet thee:
Speak to them, noble Timon.

[Enter TIMON out of his cave.]

TIMON.

Thou sun, that comfort'st, burn!- Speak, and be hang'd:
For each true word, a blister! and each false
Be as a cauterizing to the root o' the tongue,
Consuming it with speaking!

FIRST SENATOR.

Worthy Timon,-

TIMON.

Of none but such as you, and you of Timon.

FIRST SENATOR.

The senators of Athens greet thee, Timon.

TIMON.

I thank them; and would send them back the plague,
Could I but catch it for them.

FIRST SENATOR.

O, forget

What we are sorry for ourselves in thee.

The senators with one consent of love

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Entreat thee back to Athens; who have thought
On special dignities, which vacant lie
For thy best use and wearing.

SECOND SENATOR.

They confess

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
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 blot out what wrongs were theirs,
And write in thee the figures of their love,
Ever to read them thine.

TIMON.

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

FIRST SENATOR.

Therefore, so please thee to return with us,
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 th'approaches wild;
Who, like a boar too savage, doth root up
His country's peace.

SECOND SENATOR.

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

FIRST SENATOR.

Therefore, Timon,-

TIMON.

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,
And take our goodly aged men by the beards,
Giving our holy virgins to the stain

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Of contumelious, beastly, mad-brain'd war,
Then let him know, and tell him Timon speaks it,
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 th'unruly camp
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,
As thieves to keepers.

FLAVIUS.

Stay not, all's in vain.

TIMON.

Why, I was writing of my epitaph;
It will be seen to-morrow: my long sickness
Of health and living now begins to mend,
And nothing brings me all things. Go, live still;
Be Alcibiades your plague, you his,
And last so long enough!

FIRST SENATOR.

We speak in vain.

TIMON.

But yet I love my country; and am not
One that rejoices in the common wrack,
As common bruit doth put it.

FIRST SENATOR.

That's well spoke.

TIMON.

Commend me to my loving countrymen,-

FIRST SENATOR.

These words become your lips as they pass thorough them.

SECOND SENATOR.

And enter in our ears like great triumphers
In their applauding gates.

TIMON.

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

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Wild Alcibiades' wrath.

FIRST SENATOR.

I like this well: he will return again.

TIMON.

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,
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,
And hang himself:- I pray you, do my greeting.

FLAVIUS.

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

TIMON.

Come not to me again: but say to Athens,
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
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.-
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 SENATOR.

His discontents are unremovably
Coupled to nature.

SECOND SENATOR.

Our hope in him is dead: let us return,
And strain what other means is left unto us
In our dear peril.

FIRST SENATOR.

It requires swift foot.[Exeunt.]

ACT V, SCENE II.

[Before the walls of Athens. Enter two SENATORS and a MESSENGER.]

FIRST SENATOR.

Thou hast painfully discover'd: are his files
As full as thy report?

MESSENGER.

I have spoke the least:

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Besides, his expedition promises

Present approach.

SECOND SENATOR.

We stand much hazard, if they bring not Timon.

MESSENGER.

I met a courier, one mine ancient friend;

Whom, though in general part we were opposed,

Yet our old love had a particular force,

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,

In part for his sake moved.

FIRST SENATOR.

Here come our brothers.

[Enter SENATORS from TIMON.]

THIRD SENATOR.

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.[Exeunt.]

ACT V, SCENE III.

[The woods. Timon's cave, and a rude tomb seen. Enter a SOLDIER in the woods, seeking TIMON.]

SOLDIER.

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.

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 aged interpreter, though young in days:

Before proud Athens he's set down by this,

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

ACT V, SCENE IV.

[Before the walls of Athens. Trumpets sound. Enter ALCIBIADES with his POWERS.]

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ALCIBIADES.

Sound to this coward and lascivious town
Our terrible approach.[A parley sounded. The SENATORS
appear upon the walls.]

Till now you have gone on, and fill'd the time
With all licentious measure, making your wills
The scope of justice; till now, myself, and such
As slept within the shadow of your power,
Have wander'd with our traversed arms, and breathed
Our sufferance vainly: now the time is flush,
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
With fear and horrid flight.

FIRST SENATOR.

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,
To wipe out our ingratitude with loves
Above their quantity.

SECOND SENATOR.

So did we woo
Transformed Timon to our city's love
By humble message and by promised means:
We were not all unkind, nor all deserve
The common stroke of war.

FIRST SENATOR.

These walls of ours
Were not erected by their hands from whom
You have received your griefs; nor are they such
That these great towers, trophies, and schools should fall
For private faults in them.

SECOND SENATOR.

Nor are they living
Who were the motives that you first went out;
Shame, that they wanted cunning, in excess,
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
Which nature loathes,- take thou the destined tenth;

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

FIRST SENATOR.

All have not offended;

For those that were, it is not square to take
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
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.

SECOND SENATOR.

What thou wilt,

Thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile
Than hew to't with thy sword.

FIRST SENATOR.

Set but thy foot

Against our rampired gates, and they shall ope;
So thou wilt send thy gentle heart before,
To say thou'lt enter friendly.

SECOND SENATOR.

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

ALCIBIADES.

Then there's my glove;

Descend, and open your uncharged ports:
Those enemies of Timon's, and mine own,
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
Of regular justice in your city's bounds,
But shall be render'd to your public laws
At heaviest answer.

SENATORS.

'Tis most nobly spoken.

ALCIBIADES.

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Descend, and keep your words.[The SENATORS descend, and open the gates.]

[Enter a SOLDIER.]

SOLDIER.

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.

ALCIBIADES [reads].

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:
Pass by, and curse thy fill; but pass, and stay not here thy
gait.

These well express in thee thy latter spirits:
Though thou abhorr'dst in us our human griefs,
Scorn'dst our brains flow, and those our droplets which
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
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.-
Let our drums strike.[Exeunt.]