

THE LIFE OF TIMON OF ATHENS

N.S.T.A.-4



The scene: Athens and neighbourhood

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

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Timon, a noble Athenian
Lucius
            flattering lords
Lucullus
SEMPRONIUS
VENTIDIUS, one of Timon's false friends
ALCIBIADES, an Athenian captain
APEMANTUS, a churlish philosopher
Flavius, steward to Timon
Poet, Painter, Jeweller, and Merchant
An old Athenian
FLAMINIUS
           servants to Timon
Lucilius
Servilius
CAPHIS
Philotus
             servants to Timon's creditors and to the
TITUS
               Lords
Hortensius
And others .
A Page. A Fool. Three Strangers
PHRYNIA
          mistresses to Alcibiades
Cupid and Amazons in the masque
Other Lords, Senators, Officers, Banditti, and
  Attendants
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THE LIFE OF

TIMON OF ATHENS

[1. 1.] Athens. A hall in Timon's house

'Enter Poet, Painter, Jeweller, Merchant,' and others, 'at several doors'

Poet. Good day, sir.

Painter. I am glad you're well.

Poet. I have not seen you long; how.goes the world?

Painter. It wears, sir, as it grows.

Poet. Ay, that's well known.

But what particular rarity? what strange,

Which manifold record not matches? See,

Magic of bounty, all these spirits thy power

Hath conjured to attend. I know the merchant.

Painter. I know them both; th'other's a jeweller.

Merchant. O, 'tis a worthy lord!

Jeweller. Nay, that's most fixed.

Merchant. A most incomparable man, breathed, as it were.

To an untirable and continuate goodness.

He passes.

Jeweller. I have a jewel here.

Merchant. O, pray, let's see't. For the Lord Timon, sir?

feweller. If he will touch the estimate. But for that— Poet [reciting to himself]. 'When we for recompense have praised the vile,

It stains the glory in that happy verse

Which aptly sings the good.

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4 TIMON OF ATHENS

1.1.19

Merchant. 'Tis a good form.

20 Jeweller. And rich. Here is a water, look ye.

Painter. You are rapt, sir, in some work, some dedication

To the great lord.

Poet. A thing slipped idly from me.

Our poesy is as a gum which oozes

From whence 'tis nourished. The fire i'th'flint

Shows not till it be struck: our gentle flame

Provokes itself, and like the current flies

Each bound it chafes. What have you there?

Painter. A picture, sir. When comes your book forth?

Poet. Upon the heels of my presentment, sir.

30 Let's see your piece.

Painter. 'Tis a good piece.

Poet. So 'tis; this comes off well and excellent.

Painter. Indifferent.

Poet. Admirable. How this grace

Speaks his own standing! what a mental power This eye shoots forth! how big imagination

Moves in this lip! to th'dumbness of the gesture

One might interpret.

Painter. It is a pretty mocking of the life.

Here is a touch; is't good?

Poet. I will say of it,

40 It tutors nature; artificial strife

Lives in these touches, livelier than life.

'Enter certain Senators', and pass by

Painter. How this lord is followed!

Poet. The senators of Athens—happy man!

Painter. Look, moe!

Poet. You see this confluence, this great flood of visitors:



1.1.46 TIMON OF ATHENS

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I have in this rough work shaped out a man
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug
With amplest entertainment. My free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax; no levelled malice
Infects one comma in the course I hold,
But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on,
Leaving no tract behind.

Painter. How shall I understand you?

Painter. How shall I understand you?

Poet.

I will unbolt to you.

You see how all conditions, how all minds,
As well of glib and slipp'ry creatures as
Of grave and austere quality, tender down
Their services to Lord Timon. His large fortune,
Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,
Subdues and properties to his love and tendance
All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-faced flatterer
To Apemantus, that few things loves better
Than to abhor himself; even he drops down
The knee before him, and returns in peace
Most rich in Timon's nod.

Painter. I saw them speak together.

Poet. Sir, I have upon a high and pleasant hill
Feigned Fortune to be throned. The base o'th'mount
Is ranked with all deserts, all kind of natures,
That labour on the bosom of this sphere
To propagate their states; amongst them all
Whose eyes are on this sovereign lady fixed
One do I personate of Lord Timon's frame,
Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her,
Whose present grace to present slaves and servants

Painter. 'Tis conceived to scope. This throne, this Fortune, and this hill, methinks,

Translates his rivals.

6 TIMON OF ATHENS 1.1.77

With one man beckoned from the rest below, Bowing his head against the steepy mount To climb his happiness, would be well expressed 80 In our condition.

Poet. Nay, sir, but hear me on.
All those which were his fellows but of late,
Some better than his value, on the moment
Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance,
Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear,
Make sacred even his stirrup, and through him
Drink the free air.

Painter. Ay, marry, what of these?

Poet. When Fortune in her shift and change of mood
Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants,
Which laboured after him to the mountain's top

Seven on their knees and hands, let him slip down,
Not one accompanying his declining foot.

Painter. 'Tis common:

A thousand moral paintings I can show, That shall demonstrate these quick blows of Fortune's

More pregnantly than words. Yet you do well To show Lord Timon that mean eyes have seen The foot above the head.

'Trumpets sound. Enter LORD TIMON, addressing himself courteously to every suitor'; a Messenger from VENTIDIUS talking with him; LUCILIUS and other servants following

Timon. Imprisoned is he, say you? Messenger. Ay, my good lord; five talents is his debt,

His means most short, his creditors most strait.

100 Your honourable letter he desires



1.1.101 TIMON OF ATHENS

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goes

To those have shut him up, which failing Periods his comfort.

Periods his comfort.

Timon. Noble Ventidius! Well.

I am not of that feather to shake off
My friend when he must need me. I do know him
A gentleman that well deserves a help,
Which he shall have. I'll pay the debt and free him.

Messenger. Your lordship ever binds him.

Timon. Commend me to him; I will send his ransom;
And, being enfranchiséd, bid him come to me.

'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,
But to support him after. Fare you well.

'Enter an old Athenian'

Athenian. Lord Timon, hear me speak.

Timon. Freely, good father.

Athenian. Thou hast a servant named Lucilius.

Timon. I have so; what of him?

Athenian. Most noble Timon, call the man before thee.

Messenger. All happiness to your honour!

Timon. Attends he here, or no? Lucilius! Lucilius. Here, at your lordship's service.

Athenian. This fellow here, Lord Timon, this thy creature,

By night frequents my house. I am a man That from my first have been inclined to thrift, And my estate deserves an heir more raised Than one which holds a trencher.

Timon. Well; what further?

Athenian. One only daughter have I, no kin else, On whom I may confer what I have got. The maid is fair, o'th'youngest for a bride, And I have bred her at my dearest cost

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8 TIMON OF ATHENS 1.1.128

In qualities of the best. This man of thine Attempts her love; I prithee, noble lord, 130 Join with me to forbid him her resort;

Myself have spoke in vain.

Timon. The man is honest.

Athenian. Therefore he will be, Timon.

His honesty rewards him in itself;

It must not bear my daughter.

Timon. Does she love him?

Athenian. She is young and apt.

Our own precedent passions do instruct us What levity's in youth.

Timon [to Lucilius]. Love you the maid?

Lucilius. Ay, my good lord, and she accepts of it.

Athenian. If in her marriage my consent be missing,

140 I call the gods to witness, I will choose

Mine heir from forth the beggars of the world,

And dispossess her all.

Timon. How shall she be endowed,

If she be mated with an equal husband?

Athenian. Three talents on the present; in future, all.

Timon. This gentleman of mine hath served me long;

To build his fortune I will strain a little,

For 'tis a bond in men. Give him thy daughter:

What you bestow, in him I'll counterpoise,

And make him weigh with her.

Athenian. Most noble lord,

150 Pawn me to this your honour, she is his.

Timon. My hand to thee; mine honour on my promise.

Lucilius. Humbly I thank your lordship; never may



I.I. 153 TIMON OF ATHENS

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That state or fortune fall into my keeping Which is not owed to you!

[Lucilius and Old Athenian go

Poet. Vouchsafe my labour, and long live your lordship!

Timon. I thank you; you shall hear from me anon. Go not away. What have you there, my friend? Painter. A piece of painting, which I do beseech Your lordship to accept.

Timon. Painting is welcome.

The painting is almost the natural man;
For since dishonour traffics with man's nature,
He is but outside; these pencilled figures are
Even such as they give out. I like your work,
And you shall find I like it; wait attendance
Till you hear further from me.

Painter. The gods preserve ye! Timon. Well fare you, gentleman. Give me

your hand;

We must needs dine together. Sir, your jewel Hath sufferéd under praise.

Jeweller. What, my lord, dispraise?

Timon. A mere satiety of commendations.

If I should pay you for't as 'tis extolled,

It would unclew me quite.

Jeweller. My lord, 'tis rated

As those which sell would give; but you well know, Things of like value, differing in the owners, Are prized by their masters. Believe't, dear lord,

You mend the jewel by the wearing it.

Timon. Well mocked.

Merchant. No, my good lord; he speaks the common tongue

Which all men speak with him.

TIMON OF ATHENS 1.1.179

Timon. Look who comes here; will you be chid?

Enter APEMANTUS

180 Jeweller. We'll bear, with your lordship.

Merchant. He'll spare none.

Timon. Good morrow to thee, gentle Apemantus.

Apemantus. Till I be gentle, stay thou for thy good morrow;

When thou art Timon's dog, and these knaves honest.

Timon. Why dost thou call them knaves? thou know'st them not.

Apemantus. Are they not Athenians?

Timon. Yes.

Apemantus. Then I repent not.

Teweller. You know me, Apemantus?

Apemantus. Thou know'st I do; I called thee by thy name.

190 Timon. Thou art proud, Apemantus.

Apemantus. Of nothing so much as that I am not like Timon.

Timon. Whither art going?

Apemantus. To knock out an honest Athenian's brains.

Timon. That's a deed thou'lt die for.

Apenantus. Right, if doing nothing be death by th'law.

Timon. How lik'st thou this picture, Apemantus?

Apemantus. The best, for the innocence.

Timon. Wrought he not well that painted it?

Apenantus. He wrought better that made the 200 painter; and yet he's but a filthy piece of work.

Painter. You're a dog.

Apenantus. Thy mother's of my generation; what's she, if I be a dog?