

# Timon of Athens

## 4.3

*Enter Timon [from his cave] in the woods, [half naked, and with a spade]*

TIMON

O blesseÁd breeding sun, draw from the earth  
Rotten humidity; below thy sister's orb  
Infect the air. Twinned brothers of one womb,  
Whose procreation, residence, and birth  
Scarce is dividant, touch them with several fortunes, 5  
The greater scorns the lesser. Not nature,  
To whom all sores lay siege, can bear great fortune  
But by contempt of nature.

It is the pasture lards the brother's sides,  
The want that makes him lean. 10

Raise me this beggar and demit that lord,  
The senator shall bear contempt hereditary,  
The beggar native honour. Who dares, who dares  
In purity of manhood stand upright

And say `This man's a flatterer'? If one be, 15  
So are they all, for every grece of fortune  
Is smoothed by that below. The learneÁd pate

Ducks to the golden fool. All's obliquy;  
There's nothing level in our curseÁd natures  
But direct villainy. Therefore be abhorred 20  
All feasts, societies, and throngs of men.

His semblable, yea, himself, Timon disdains.  
Destruction fang mankind. Earth, yield me roots.

*He digs*

Who seeks for better of thee, sauce his palate  
With thy most operant poison.

*He finds gold*

What is

here? 25

Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold?

No, gods, I am no idle votarist:

Roots, you clear heavens. Thus much of this will  
make

Black white, foul fair, wrong right,  
Base noble, old young, coward valiant. 30  
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'accursed, 35  
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 wappered widow wed again.

She whom the spittle house and ulcerous sores 40  
Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices  
To th' April day again. Come, damneÁd earth,  
Thou common whore of mankind, that puts odds  
Among the rout of nations; I will make thee  
Do thy right nature.

*March afar off*

Ha, a drum! Thou'rt quick;

45

But yet I'll bury thee.

*He buries gold*

Thou'lt go, strong thief,

When gouty keepers of thee cannot stand.

*He keeps some gold*

Nay, stay thou out for earnest.

*Enter Alcibiades, with soldiers playing drum and  
fife, in warlike manner; and Phrynia and Timandra*

**ALCIBIADES**

What art thou there? Speak.

**TIMON**

A beast, as thou art. The canker gnaw thy heart  
For showing me again the eyes of man. 50

**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, 55  
But in thy fortunes am unlearned 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; 60  
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. 65

**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? 70

**TIMON**  
None but to maintain my opinion.

**ALCIBIADES** What is it, Timon?

**TIMON** Promise me friendship, but perform none. If thou  
wilt promise, the gods plague thee, for thou art a man. If  
thou dost not perform, confound thee, for thou art a 75  
man.

**ALCIBIADES**  
I have heard in some sort of thy miseries.

**TIMON**  
Thou saw'st them when I had prosperity.

**ALCIBIADES**  
I see them now; then was a blesseÁd time.

**TIMON**  
As thine is now, held with a brace of harlots. 80

**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. 85  
Make use of thy salt hours: season the slaves  
For tubs and baths, bring down rose-cheeked youth  
To the tub-fast and the diet.

**TIMANDRA** Hang thee, monster!

**ALCIBIADES**

Pardon him, sweet Timandra, for his wits  
Are drowned and lost in his calamities. 90  
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 curseÁd Athens, mindless of thy worth,  
Forgetting thy great deeds, when neighbour states 95  
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. 100

Here is some gold for thee.

**TIMON** Keep it. I cannot eat it.

**ALCIBIADES**

When I have laid proud Athens on a heap±±

**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 conquereÁd. 105

**ALCIBIADES**

Why me, Timon?

**TIMON** That by killing of villains  
Thou wast born to conquer my country.  
Put up thy gold.

*He gives Alcibiades 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 110  
In the sick air. Let not thy sword skip one.  
Pity not honoured 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 115  
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 them down horrible traitors. Spare not the  
babe

Whose dimpled smiles from fools exhaust their mercy. 120  
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, 125  
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 giv'st me, 130  
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**

Enough to make a whore forswear her trade,  
And to make wholesomeness a bawd. Hold up, you  
sluts, 135  
Your aprons mountant.

*[He throws gold into their aprons]*

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, 140  
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 pain-sick months  
Be quite contrary, and thatch your poor thin roofs 145  
With burdens of the dead±±some that were hanged,  
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 anything for gold. 150

**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 155  
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 curled-pate  
ruffians bald, 160  
And let the unscarred 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; 165  
And ditches grave you all!

**PHRYNIA AND TIMANDRA**  
More counsel with more money, bounteous Timon.

**TIMON**  
More whore, more mischief first; I have given you  
earnest.

**ALCIBIADES**  
Strike up the drum towards Athens. Farewell, Timon.  
If I thrive well, I'll visit thee again. 170

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

**ALCIBIADES** I never did thee harm.

**TIMON** Yes, thou spok'st well of me.

**ALCIBIADES** Call'st thou that harm?

**TIMON**

Men daily find it. Get thee away, 175  
And take thy beagles with thee.

**ALCIBIADES** We but offend him. Strike!

*Exeunt [to drum and fife] all but Timon*

**TIMON**

That nature, being sick of man's unkindness,  
Should yet be hungry!

*He digs the earth*

Common mother±±thou

Whose womb unmeasurable and infinite breast  
Teems and feeds all, whose selfsame mettle 180

Whereof thy proud child, arrogant man, is puffed  
Engenders the black toad and adder blue,

The gilded newt and eyeless venom'd worm,

With all th'abhorre'd births below crisp heaven

Whereon Hyperion's quick'ning fire doth shine±± 185

Yield him who all thy human sons do hate

From forth thy plenteous bosom, one poor root.

Ensear thy fertile and conception's womb;

Let it no more bring out ingrateful man.

Go great with tigers, dragons, wolves, and bears; 190

Teem with new monsters whom thy upward face

Hath to the marbled mansion all above

Never presented.

*He finds a root*

O, a root! Dear thanks.

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

Whereof ingrateful man with liquorish draughts 195

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. 200

**TIMON**

'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, 205  
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. 210  
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. 215  
Thou gav'st thine ears like tapsters that bade 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. 220

**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 mossed trees  
That have outlived the eagle page thy heels 225  
And skip when thou point'st out? Will the cold brook,  
Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste  
To cure thy o'ernight's surfeit? Call the creatures  
Whose naked natures live in all the spite  
Of wreakful heaven, whose bare unhouse'd trunks 230  
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** Why?

**TIMON** Thou flatter'st misery. 235

**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 240  
To castigate thy pride, 'twere well; but thou  
Dost it enforce. Adly. Thou'dst courtier be again  
Wert thou not beggar. Willing misery  
Outlives incertain pomp, is crowned before.  
The one is filling still, never complete; 245  
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. 250  
Thou art a slave whom fortune's tender arm  
With favour never clasped, but bred a dog.  
Hadst thou like us from our first swathe proceeded  
The sweet degrees that this brief world affords  
To such as may the passive drudges of it 255  
Freely command, thou wouldst have plunged thyself  
In general riot, melted down thy youth  
In different beds of lust, and never learned  
The icy precepts of respect, but followed  
The sugared game before thee. But myself, 260  
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  
Do on the oak, have with one winter's brush 265

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? 270  
They never flattered 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. 275  
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 280  
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.

*He bites the root*

**APEMANTUS** [*offering food*] Here, I will mend thy feast. 285

**TIMON**  
First mend my company: take away thyself.

**APEMANTUS**  
So I shall mend mine own by th' lack of thine.

**TIMON**  
'Tis not well mended so, it is but botched;  
If not, I would it were.

**APEMANTUS** What wouldst thou have to Athens?

**TIMON**  
Thee thither in a whirlwind. If thou wilt, 290  
Tell them there I have gold. Look, so I have.

**APEMANTUS**  
Here is no use for gold.

**TIMON** The best and truest,  
For here it sleeps and does no hireÁd harm.

**APEMANTUS** Where liest a-nights, Timon?

**TIMON** Under that's above me. Where feed'st thou a-days, 295

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? 300

**TIMON** To sauce thy dishes.

**APEMANTUS** The middle of humanity thou never knewest,  
but the extremity of both ends. When thou wast in thy  
gilt and thy perfume, they mocked thee for too much  
curiosity; in thy rags thou know'st none, but art<sup>305</sup>  
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. 310

**APEMANTUS** An thou'dst 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<sup>315</sup>  
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<sup>320</sup>  
compare to thy flatterers?

**TIMON** Women nearest; but men, men are the things  
themselves. What wouldst thou do with the world,  
Apemantus, if it lay in thy power?

**APEMANTUS** Give it the beasts, to be rid of the men. <sup>325</sup>

**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<sup>330</sup>  
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 dullness would torment thee, and still  
thou lived'st but as a breakfast to the wolf. If thou wert<sup>335</sup>

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 killed by the horse. Wert 340  
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 345  
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 common-  
wealth of Athens is become a forest of beasts. 350

**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, 355  
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. 360

**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. 365  
I'd 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 swoon to see thee. 370

**APEMANTUS** Would thou wouldst burst!

**TIMON** Away, thou tedious rogue!

*[He throws a stone at Apemantus]*

I am sorry I shall lose a stone by thee.

**APEMANTUS** Beast!

**TIMON** Slave! 375

**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. 380  
 Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat  
 Thy gravestone daily. Make thine epitaph,  
 That death in me at others' lives may laugh.  
*He looks on the gold*

O, thou sweet king-killer, and dear divorce  
 'Twixt natural son and sire; thou bright defiler 385  
 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,  
 That sold'st close impossibilities 390  
 And mak'st 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** Would 'twere so, 395  
 But not till I am dead. I'll say thou'st gold.  
 Thou wilt be thronged to shortly.

**TIMON** Thronged to?

**APEMANTUS** Ay.

**TIMON**

Thy back, I prithee.

**APEMANTUS** Live, and love thy misery.

**TIMON**

Long live so, and so die. I am quit.  
*Enter the Banditti, thieves*

**APEMANTUS**

More things like men. Eat, Timon, and abhor them. 400

*Exit*

**FIRST THIEF** 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 THIEF** It is noised he hath a mass of treasure. 405

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

**FIRST THIEF** Is not this he? 410

**OTHER THIEVES** Where?

**SECOND THIEF** 'Tis his description.

**THIRD THIEF** He, I know him.

**ALL THIEVES** (*coming forward*) Save thee, Timon.

**TIMON** Now, thieves. 415

**ALL THIEVES**

Soldiers, not thieves.

**TIMON** Both, too, and women's sons.

**ALL THIEVES**

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. 420

The oaks bear mast, the briars scarlet hips.

The bounteous housewife nature on each bush

Lays her full mess before you. Want? Why want?

**FIRST THIEF**

We cannot live on grass, on berries, water,

As beasts and birds and fishes. 425

**TIMON**

Nor on the beasts themselves, the birds and fishes;

You must eat men. Yet thanks I must you con

That you are thieves professed, that you work not

In holier shapes; for there is boundless theft

In limited professions. (*Giving gold*) Rascal thieves, 430

Here's gold. Go suck the subtle blood o'th' 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. 435  
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. 440  
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 gen'ral excrement. Each thing's a thief.  
The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power 445  
Has unchecked theft. Love not yourselves. Away,  
Rob one another. There's more gold. Cut throats;  
All that you meet are thieves. To Athens go,  
Break open shops; nothing can you steal  
But thieves do lose it. Steal no less for this I give you, 450  
And gold confound you howsoe'er. Amen.

**THIRD THIEF** He's almost charmed me from my profession  
by persuading me to it.

**FIRST THIEF** 'Tis in the malice of mankind that he thus  
advises us, not to have us thrive in our mystery. 455

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

**FIRST THIEF** Let us first see peace in Athens. There is no  
time so miserable but a man may be true.

*Exeunt Thieves*

*Enter Flavius to Timon*

**FLAVIUS** O you gods! 460  
Is yon despised and ruinous man my lord,  
Full of decay and failing? O monument  
And wonder of good deeds evilly bestowed!  
What an alteration of honour has desp'rate want made!  
What viler thing upon the earth than friends, 465  
Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends!  
How rarely does it meet with this time's guise,  
When man was wished to love his enemies!  
Grant I may ever love and rather woo  
Those that would mischief me than those that do! 470

*Timon sees him*

He's 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; 475  
Then if thou grant'st thou'rt 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; ay, all I kept were knaves,  
To serve in meat to villains.

**FLAVIUS**

The gods are witness, 480

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 485  
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,  
*[He offers his money]*

and whilst this poor wealth lasts

To entertain me as your steward still. 490

**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. 495  
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, 500  
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; 505  
For many so arrive at second masters  
Upon their first lord's neck. But tell me true±±  
For I must ever doubt, though ne'er so sure±±  
Is not thy kindness subtle, covetous,  
A usuring kindness, and, as rich men deal gifts, 510  
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 feared false times when you did feast.  
Suspect still comes where an estate is least. 515  
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 honoured lord,  
For any benefit that points to me, 520  
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,  
    *[He gives Flavius gold]*  
Here, take. The gods, out of my misery, 525  
Has sent thee treasure. Go, live rich and happy,  
But thus conditioned: thou shalt build from men,  
Hate all, curse all, show charity to none,  
But let the famished flesh slide from the bone  
Ere thou relieve the beggar. Give to dogs 530  
What thou deniest 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 hat'st curses,

535

Stay not. Fly whilst thou art blest and free.

Ne'er see thou man, and let me ne'er see thee.

*Exeunt [Timon into his cave, Flavius another way]*