

Timon of Athens

3.2

Enter Lucius, with three Strangers

LUCIUS Who, the Lord Timon? He is my very good friend,
and an honourable gentleman.

FIRST STRANGER We know him for no less, though we are
but strangers to him. But I can tell you one thing, my
lord, and which I hear from common rumours: now
Lord Timon's happy hours are done and past, and his
estate shrinks from him. 5

LUCIUS Fie, no, do not believe it. He cannot want for
money.

SECOND STRANGER But believe you this, my lord, that not 10
long ago one of his men was with the Lord Lucullus
to borrow so many talents±±nay, urged extremely for't,
and showed what necessity belonged to't, and yet was
denied.

LUCIUS How? 15

SECOND STRANGER I tell you, denied, my lord.

LUCIUS What a strange case was that! Now before the
gods, I am ashamed on't. Denied that honourable man?
There was very little honour showed in't. For my own
part, I must needs confess I have received some small 20
kindnesses from him, as money, plate, jewels, and
suchlike trifles±±nothing comparing to his; yet had he
not mistook him and sent to me, I should ne'er have
denied his occasion so many talents.

Enter Servilius

SERVILIUS (*aside*) See, by good hap yonder's my lord. I 25
have sweat to see his honour. (*To Lucius*) My honoured
lord!

[**LUCIUS**] Servilius! You are kindly met, sir. Fare thee well.
Commend me to thy honourable virtuous lord, my very
exquisite friend. 30

SERVILIUS May it please your honour, my lord hath sent±±

LUCIUS Ha! What has he sent? I am so much endeared
to that lord, he's ever sending. How shall I thank him,
think'st thou? And what has he sent now?

SERVILIUS He's only sent his present occasion now, my lord, requesting your lordship to supply his instant use with so many talents. 35

[LUCIUS]

I know his lordship is but merry with me.
He cannot want fifty-five hundred talents.

SERVILIUS

But in the mean time he wants less, my lord. 40
If his occasion were not virtuous
I should not urge it half so faithfully.

LUCIUS

Dost thou speak seriously, Servilius?

SERVILIUS Upon my soul, 'tis true, sir.

LUCIUS What a wicked beast was I to disfurnish myself 45
against such a good time when I might ha' shown
myself honourable! How unluckily it happened that I
should purchase the day before a little part, and undo
a great deal of honour! Servilius, now before the gods
I am not able to do, the more beast I, I say. I was 50
sending to use Lord Timon myself±±these gentlemen
can witness±±but I would not for the wealth of Athens
I had done't now. Commend me bountifully to his good
lordship; and I hope his honour will conceive the fairest
of me because I have no power to be kind. And tell 55
him this from me: I count it one of my greatest
afflictions, say, that I cannot pleasure such an
honourable gentleman. Good Servilius, will you befriend
me so far as to use mine own words to him?

SERVILIUS Yes, sir, I shall. 60

[LUCIUS]

I'll look you out a good turn, Servilius.

Exit Servilius

True as you said: Timon is shrunk indeed;
And he that's once denied will hardly speed.

Exit

FIRST STRANGER

Do you observe this, Hostilius?

SECOND STRANGER

Ay, too well.

FIRST STRANGER

Why, this is the world's soul, and just of the same piece 65
Is every flatterer's spirit. Who can call him his friend

That dips in the same dish? For, in my knowing,
Timon has been this lord's father
And kept his credit with his purse,
Supported his estate; nay, Timon's money 70
Has paid his men their wages. He ne'er drinks,
But Timon's silver treads upon his lip;
And yet±±O see the monstrousness of man
When he looks out in an ungrateful shape!±±
He does deny him, in respect of his, 75
What charitable men afford to beggars.

THIRD STRANGER

Religion groans at it.

FIRST STRANGER For mine own part,
I never tasted Timon in my life,
Nor came any of his bounties over me
To mark me for his friend; yet I protest, 80
For his right noble mind, illustrious virtue,
And honourable carriage,
Had his necessity made use of me
I would have put my wealth into donation
And the best half should have returned to him, 85
So much I love his heart. But I perceive
Men must learn now with pity to dispense,
For policy sits above conscience.

Exeunt