

Timon of Athens

1.2

Hautboys playing loud music. A great banquet served in, [Flavius and Servants attending]; and then enter Timon, Alcibiades, the Senators, the Athenian Lords, and Ventidius which Timon redeemed from prison. Then comes, dropping after all, Apemantus, discontentedly, like himself

VENTIDIUS

Most honoured Timon, it hath pleased the gods to
remember

My father's age and call him to long peace.

He is gone happy, and has left me rich.

Then, as in grateful virtue I am bound

To your free heart, I do return those talents,

5

Doubled with thanks and service, from whose help
I derived liberty.

TIMON

O, by no means,

Honest Ventidius. You mistake my love.

I gave it freely ever, and there's none

Can truly say he gives if he receives.

10

If our betters play at that game, we must not dare

To imitate them. Faults that are rich are fair.

VENTIDIUS

A noble spirit!

[The Lords stand with ceremony]

TIMON

Nay, my lords,

Ceremony was but devised at first

To set a gloss on faint deeds, hollow welcomes,

15

Recanting goodness, sorry ere 'tis shown;

But where there is true friendship, there needs none.

Pray sit. More welcome are ye to my fortunes

Than my fortunes to me.

[They sit]

FIRST LORD

My lord, we always have confessed it.

20

APEMANTUS

Ho, ho, confessed it? Hanged it, have you not?

TIMON

O, Apemantus! You are welcome.

APEMANTUS

No,

You shall not make me welcome.

I come to have thee thrust me out of doors.

TIMON

Fie, thou'rt a churl. Ye've got a humour there 25

Does not become a man; 'tis much to blame.

They say, my lords, *Ira furor brevis est*,

But yon man is ever angry.

Go, let him have a table by himself,

For he does neither affect company 30

Nor is he fit for't, indeed.

APEMANTUS

Let me stay at thine apperil, Timon.

I come to observe, I give thee warning on't.

TIMON

I take no heed of thee; thou'rt an Athenian,

Therefore welcome. I myself would have no power: 35

Prithee, let my meat make thee silent.

APEMANTUS

I scorn thy meat. 'Twould choke me, for I

should ne'er flatter thee. O you gods, what a number

of men eats Timon, and he sees 'em not! It grieves me

to see so many dip their meat in one man's blood; and 40

all the madness is, he cheers them up, too.

I wonder men dare trust themselves with men.

Methinks they should invite them without knives:

Good for their meat, and safer for their lives.

There's much example for't. The fellow that sits next 45

him, now parts bread with him, pledges the breath of

him in a divided draught, is the readiest man to kill

him. 'T'as been proved. If I were a huge man, I should

fear to drink at meals,

Lest they should spy my windpipe's dangerous notes. 50

Great men should drink with harness on their throats.

TIMON (*drinking to a Lord*)

My lord, in heart; and let the health go round.

SECOND LORD

Let it flow this way, my good lord.

APEMANTUS

`Flow this way'? A brave fellow; he keeps his

tides well. Those healths will make thee and thy state
look ill, Timon. 55

Here's that which is too weak to be a sinner:
Honest water, which ne'er left man i'th' mire.
This and my food are equals; there's no odds.
Feasts are too proud to give thanks to the gods. 60

Apemantus' grace

Immortal gods, I crave no pelf.
I pray for no man but myself.
Grant I may never prove so fond
To trust man on his oath or bond,
Or a harlot for her weeping, 65
Or a dog that seems a-sleeping,
Or a keeper with my freedom,
Or my friends if I should need 'em.
Amen. So fall to't.

Rich men sin, and I eat root. 70

[He eats]

Much good dich thy good heart, Apemantus.

TIMON Captain Alcibiades, your heart's in the field now.

ALCIBIADES My heart is ever at your service, my lord.

TIMON You had rather be at a breakfast of enemies than
a dinner of friends. 75

ALCIBIADES So they were bleeding new, my lord; there's
no meat like 'em. I could wish my best friend at such
a feast.

APEMANTUS

Would all those flatterers were thine enemies then,
That thou mightst kill 'em and bid me to 'em. 80

FIRST LORD *(to Timon)* Might we but have that happiness,
my lord, that you would once use our hearts, whereby
we might express some part of our zeals, we should
think ourselves for ever perfect.

TIMON O, no doubt, my good friends, but the gods 85
themselves have provided that I shall have much help
from you. How had you been my friends else? Why
have you that charitable title from thousands, did not
you chiefly belong to my heart? I have told more of
you to myself than you can with modesty speak in 90
your own behalf; and thus far I confirm you. `O you

gods,' think I, 'what need we have any friends if we
should ne'er have need of 'em? They were the most
needless creatures living, should we ne'er have use for
'em, and would most resemble sweet instruments hung 95
up in cases, that keeps their sounds to themselves.'
Why, I have often wished myself poorer, that I might
come nearer to you. We are born to do benefits; and
what better or properer can we call our own than the
riches of our friends? O, what a precious comfort 'tis 100
to have so many like brothers commanding one
another's fortunes! O, joy's e'en made away ere't can
be born: mine eyes cannot hold out water, methinks.
To forget their faults, I drink to you.

APEMANTUS Thou weep'st to make them drink, Timon. 105

SECOND LORD (*to Timon*)

Joy had the like conception in our eyes,
And at that instant like a babe sprung up.

APEMANTUS

Ho, ho, I laugh to think that babe a bastard.

THIRD LORD (*to Timon*)

I promise you, my lord, you moved me much.

APEMANTUS Much! 110

A tucket sounds within

TIMON What means that trumpet?

Enter a Servant

How now?

SERVANT Please you, my lord, there are certain ladies
most desirous of admittance.

TIMON Ladies? What are their wills? 115

SERVANT There comes with them a forerunner, my lord,
which bears that office to signify their pleasures.

TIMON I pray let them be admitted.

Enter one as Cupid

CUPID

Hail to thee, worthy Timon, and to all
That of his bounties taste! The five best senses 120
Acknowledge thee their patron, and come freely
To gratulate thy plenteous bosom. Th'ear,
Taste, touch, smell, all, pleased from thy table rise.
They only now come but to feast thine eyes.

TIMON

They're welcome all. Let 'em have kind admittance. 125
Music make their welcome!

Exit Cupid

[FIRST LORD]

You see, my lord, how ample you're beloved.
*Music. Enter a masque of Ladies as Amazons, with
lutes in their hands, dancing and playing*

APEMANTUS

Hey-day, what a sweep of vanity comes this way!
They dance? They are madwomen.
Like madness is the glory of this life 130
As this pomp shows to a little oil and root.
We make ourselves fools to disport ourselves,
And spend our flatteries to drink those men
Upon whose age we void it up again
With poisonous spite and envy. 135
Who lives that's not depraveÁd or depraves?
Who dies that bears not one spurn to their graves
Of their friends' gift?
I should fear those that dance before me now
Would one day stamp upon me. 'T'as been done. 140
Men shut their doors against a setting sun.
*The Lords rise from table with much adoring of
Timon; and to show their loves each singles out an
Amazon, and all dance, men with women, a lofty
strain or two to the hautboys; and cease*

TIMON

You have done our pleasures much grace, fair ladies,
Set a fair fashion on our entertainment,
Which was not half so beautiful and kind.
You have added worth unto't and lustre, 145
And entertained me with mine own device.
I am to thank you for't.

FIRST [LADY]

My lord, you take us even at the best.

APEMANTUS Faith; for the worst is filthy, and would not
hold taking, I doubt me. 150

TIMON

Ladies, there is an idle banquet 'tends you.
Please you to dispose yourselves.

ALL LADIES Most thankfully, my lord.

Exeunt Ladies

TIMON Flavius.

FLAVIUS My lord. 155

TIMON The little casket bring me hither.

FLAVIUS Yes, my lord. (*Aside*) More jewels yet?

There is no crossing him in's humour,

Else I should tell him well, i'faith I should.

When all's spent, he'd be crossed then, an he could. 160

'Tis pity bounty had not eyes behind,

That man might ne'er be wretched for his mind.

Exit

FIRST LORD Where be our men?

SERVANT Here, my lord, in readiness.

SECOND LORD Our horses. 165

[Exit Servant]

Enter Flavius with the casket. He gives it to Timon,

[and exits]

TIMON

O my friends, I have one word to say to you.

Look you, my good lord,

I must entreat you honour me so much

As to advance this jewel. Accept and wear it,

Kind my lord. 170

FIRST LORD

I am so far already in your gifts.

ALL LORDS So are we all.

[Timon gives them jewels.]

Enter a Servant

FIRST SERVANT My lord, there are certain nobles of the
senate newly alighted and come to visit you.

TIMON They are fairly welcome. 175

Exit Servant

Enter Flavius

FLAVIUS I beseech your honour, vouchsafe me a word; it
does concern you near.

TIMON

Near? Why then, another time I'll hear thee.

I prithee, let's be provided to show them entertainment.

FLAVIUS I scarce know how. 180

Enter a Second Servant

SECOND SERVANT

May it please your honour, Lord Lucius
Out of his free love hath presented to you
Four milk-white horses trapped in silver.

TIMON

I shall accept them fairly. Let the presents
Be worthily entertained.

Exit Servant

Enter a Third Servant

How now, what

news?

185

THIRD SERVANT Please you, my lord, that honourable
gentleman Lord Lucullus entreats your company
tomorrow to hunt with him, and has sent your honour
two brace of greyhounds.

TIMON

I'll hunt with him, and let them be received 190
Not without fair reward.

Exit Servant

FLAVIUS (*aside*) What will this come to?

He commands us to provide and give great gifts,
And all out of an empty coffer;
Nor will he know his purse, or yield me this:
To show him what a beggar his heart is, 195
Being of no power to make his wishes good.
His promises fly so beyond his state
That what he speaks is all in debt, he owes
For every word. He is so kind that he now
Pays interest for't. His land's put to their books. 200
Well, would I were gently put out of office
Before I were forced out.
Happier is he that has no friend to feed
Than such that do e'en enemies exceed.
I bleed inwardly for my lord.

Exit

TIMON (*to the Lords*) You do yourselves 205

Much wrong, you bate too much of your own merits.

(*To Second Lord*) Here, my lord, a trifle of our love.

SECOND LORD

With more than common thanks I will receive it.

THIRD LORD

O, he's the very soul of bounty!

TIMON (to First Lord) And now I remember, my lord, you 210
gave good words the other day of a bay courser I rode
on. 'Tis yours, because you liked it.

FIRST LORD

O I beseech you pardon me, my lord, in that.

TIMON

You may take my word, my lord, I know no man
Can justly praise but what he does affect. 215
I weigh my friends' affection with mine own.
I'll tell you true, I'll call to you.

ALL LORDS

O, none so

welcome.

TIMON

I take all and your several visitations
So kind to heart, 'tis not enough to give.
Methinks I could deal kingdoms to my friends, 220
And ne'er be weary. Alcibiades,
Thou art a soldier, therefore seldom rich.
[Giving a present] It comes in charity to thee, for all
thy living
Is 'mongst the dead, and all the lands thou hast
Lie in a pitched field.

ALCIBIADES Ay, defiled land, my lord. 225

FIRST LORD We are so virtuously bound±±

TIMON And so am I to you.

SECOND LORD So infinitely endeared±±

TIMON All to you. Lights, more lights!

FIRST LORD

The best of happiness, honour, and fortunes 230
Keep with you, Lord Timon.

TIMON Ready for his friends.

Exeunt all but Timon and Apemantus

APEMANTUS What a coil's here,

Serving of becks and jutting-out of bums!
I doubt whether their legs be worth the sums 235
That are given for 'em. Friendship's full of dregs.
Methinks false hearts should never have sound legs.

Thus honest fools lay out their wealth on curtsies.

TIMON

Now, Apemantus, if thou wert not sullen

I would be good to thee. 240

APEMANTUS No, I'll nothing; for if I should be bribed too,
there would be none left to rail upon thee, and then
thou wouldst sin the faster. Thou giv'st so long, Timon,
I fear me thou wilt give away thyself in paper shortly.
What needs these feasts, poms, and vainglories? 245

TIMON Nay, an you begin to rail on society once, I am
sworn not to give regard to you.
Farewell, and come with better music.

Exit

APEMANTUS

So.

Thou wilt not hear me now, thou shalt not then.

I'll lock thy heaven from thee. O, that men's ears
should be 250

To counsel deaf, but not to flattery!

Exit