

Timon of Athens

4.1

Enter Timon

TIMON

Let me look back upon thee. O thou wall
That girdles in those wolves, dive in the earth,
And fence not Athens! Matrons, turn incontinent!
Obedience fail in children! Slaves and fools,
Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench 5
And minister in their steads! To general filths
Convert o'th' instant, green virginity!
Do't in your parents' eyes. Bankrupts, hold fast!
Rather than render back, out with your knives,
And cut your trusters' throats. Bound servants, steal! 10
Large-handed robbers your grave masters are,
And pill by law. Maid, to thy master's bed!
Thy mistress is o'th' brothel. Son of sixteen,
Pluck the lined crutch from thy old limping sire;
With it beat out his brains! Piety and fear, 15
Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
Domestic awe, night rest, and neighbourhood,
Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,
Decline to your confounding contraries, 20
And let confusion live! Plagues incident to men,
Your potent and infectious fevers heap
On Athens, ripe for stroke! Thou cold sciatica,
Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt
As lamely as their manners! Lust and liberty, 25
Creep in the minds and marrows of our youth,
That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive
And drown themselves in riot! Itches, blains,
Sow all th'Athenian bosoms, and their crop
Be general leprosy! Breath infect breath, 30
That their society, as their friendship, may
Be merely poison!

[He tears off his clothes]

Nothing I'll bear from thee

But nakedness, thou detestable town;
Take thou that too, with multiplying bans.
Timon will to the woods, where he shall find 35
Th'unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.
The gods confound±±hear me you good gods all±±
Th'Athenians, both within and out that wall;
And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow
To the whole race of mankind, high and low. 40
Amen.

Exit