



# Timon of Athens: Third Series (Arden Shakespeare)

*William Shakespeare*

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*Timon of Athens* has struck many readers as rough and unpolished, perhaps even unfinished, though to others it has appeared as Shakespeare's most profound tragic allegory. Described by Coleridge as "the stillborn twin of *King Lear*," the play has nevertheless proved brilliantly effective in performance over the past thirty or forty years.

This edition accepts and contributes to the growing scholarly consensus that the play is not Shakespeare's solo work, but is the result of his collaboration with Thomas Middleton, who wrote about a third of it. The editors offer an account of the process of collaboration and discuss the different ways that each author contributes to the play's relentless look at the corruption and greed of society. They provide, as well, detailed annotation of the text and explore the wide range of critical and theatrical interpretations that the play has engendered. Tracing both its satirical and tragic strains, their introduction presents a perspective on the play's meanings that combines careful elucidation of historical context with analysis of its relevance to modern-day society. An extensive and well-illustrated account of the play's production history generates a rich sense of how the play can speak to different historical moments in specific and rewarding ways.

**The Arden Shakespeare** has developed a reputation as the pre-eminent critical edition of Shakespeare for its exceptional scholarship, reflected in the thoroughness of each volume. An introduction comprehensively contextualizes the play, chronicling the history and culture that surrounded and influenced Shakespeare at the time of its writing and performance, and closely surveying critical approaches to the work. Detailed appendices address problems like dating and casting, and analyze the differing Quarto and Folio sources. A full commentary by one or more of the play's foremost contemporary scholars illuminates the text, glossing unfamiliar terms and drawing from an abundance of research and expertise to explain allusions and significant background information. Highly informative and accessible, Arden offers the fullest experience of Shakespeare available to a reader.

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