

Richard II

3.4

Enter the Queen, with her two Ladies

QUEEN

What sport shall we devise here in this garden,
To drive away the heavy thought of care?

[FIRST] LADY Madam, we'll play at bowls.

QUEEN

'Twill make me think the world is full of rubs,
And that my fortune runs against the bias.

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[SECOND] LADY Madam, we'll dance.

QUEEN

My legs can keep no measure in delight
When my poor heart no measure keeps in grief;
Therefore no dancing, girl. Some other sport.

[FIRST] LADY Madam, we'll tell tales. 10

QUEEN Of sorrow or of joy?

[FIRST] LADY Of either, madam.

QUEEN Of neither, girl.

For if of joy, being altogether wanting,
It doth remember me the more of sorrow.
Or if of grief, being altogether had,
It adds more sorrow to my want of joy.
For what I have I need not to repeat,
And what I want it boots not to complain.

15

[SECOND] LADY

Madam, I'll sing.

QUEEN 'Tis well that thou hast cause; 20

But thou shouldst please me better wouldst thou
weep.

[SECOND] LADY

I could weep, madam, would it do you good.

QUEEN

And I could sing, would weeping do me good,
And never borrow any tear of thee.

Enter a Gardener and two Men

But stay; here come the gardeners.

25

Let's step into the shadow of these trees.

My wretchedness unto a row of pins

They will talk of state, for everyone doth so
Against a change. Woe is forerun with woe.

The Queen and her Ladies stand apart

GARDENER *[to First Man]*

Go, bind thou up young dangling apricots 30
Which, like unruly children, make their sire
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight.
Give some supportance to the bending twigs.

[To Second Man] Go thou, and, like an executioner,
Cut off the heads of too fast-growing sprays 35
That look too lofty in our commonwealth.

All must be even in our government.
You thus employed, I will go root away
The noisome weeds which without profit suck
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers. 40

[FIRST] MAN

Why should we, in the compass of a pale,
Keep law and form and due proportion,
Showing as in a model our firm estate,
When our sea-walled garden, the whole land,
Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up, 45
Her fruit trees all unpruned, her hedges ruined,
Her knots disordered, and her wholesome herbs
Swarming with caterpillars?

GARDENER Hold thy peace.

He that hath suffered this disordered spring
Hath now himself met with the fall of leaf. 50
The weeds which his broad spreading leaves did
shelter,

That seemed in eating him to hold him up,
Are plucked up, root and all, by Bolingbroke±±
I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Green.

[SECOND] MAN

What, are they dead?

GARDENER They are; and Bolingbroke 55

Hath seized the wasteful King. O, what pity is it
That he had not so trimmed and dressed his land
As we this garden! We at time of year
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit trees,
Lest, being over-proud in sap and blood, 60

With too much riches it confound itself.
Had he done so to great and growing men,
They might have lived to bear, and he to taste,
Their fruits of duty. Superfluous branches
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live. 65
Had he done so, himself had borne the crown,
Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down.

[FIRST] MAN

What, think you then the King shall be deposed?

GARDENER

Depressed he is already, and deposed
'Tis doubt he will be. Letters came last night 70
To a dear friend of the good Duke of York's
That tell black tidings.

QUEEN

O, I am pressed to death through want of speaking!

She comes forward

Thou, old Adam's likeness, set to dress this garden,
How dares thy harsh rude tongue sound this
unpleasing news? 75

What Eve, what serpent hath suggested thee
To make a second fall of curse Ád man?

Why dost thou say King Richard is deposed?

Dar'st thou, thou little better thing than earth,
Divine his downfall? Say where, when, and how 80
Cam'st thou by this ill tidings? Speak, thou wretch!

GARDENER

Pardon me, madam. Little joy have I
To breathe this news, yet what I say is true.
King Richard he is in the mighty hold
Of Bolingbroke. Their fortunes both are weighed. 85
In your lord's scale is nothing but himself
And some few vanities that make him light.
But in the balance of great Bolingbroke,
Besides himself, are all the English peers,
And with that odds he weighs King Richard down. 90
Post you to London and you will find it so.
I speak no more than everyone doth know.

QUEEN

Nimble mischance that art so light of foot,

Doth not thy embassy belong to me,
And am I last that knows it? O, thou think'st 95
To serve me last, that I may longest keep
Thy sorrow in my breast. Come, ladies, go
To meet at London London's king in woe.
What, was I born to this, that my sad look
Should grace the triumph of great Bolingbroke? 100
Gard'ner, for telling me these news of woe,
Pray God the plants thou graft'st may never grow.
Exit with her Ladies

GARDENER

Poor Queen, so that thy state might be no worse
I would my skill were subject to thy curse.
Here did she fall a tear. Here in this place 105
I'll set a bank of rue, sour herb-of-grace.
Rue even for ruth here shortly shall be seen
In the remembrance of a weeping queen.
Exeunt