

Richard II abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 4

Disillusionment

Situation: The queen suffers through a gardener's comparison of the state with that of an unkempt garden, the queen not quite ready to accept the king's desperate situation.

QUEEN: But stay, here come the gardeners. Let's step into the shadow of these trees. They will talk of state, for everyone doth so against a change. Woe is forerun with woe.

The queen and her lady step aside.

GARDENER: Go, bind thou up young dangling apricokes which, like unruly children, make their sire stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight. Go thou, and like an executioner cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays that look too lofty in our commonwealth.

Gardener to Servingman

Why should we keep law and due form and be
A model of firm estate when our sea-
Walled garden, the whole land, is full of weeds,
Her fruit trees unpruned, her fairest flowers
Choked up? He suffered with disordered seeds
This spring; thus found himself without reserves.
He must be even in this government,
And root out the weeds, or leave the soil spent,
Robbing its fertility for healthy
Flowers. What pity it that wasteful he
Had not so trimmed and dressed his land as we
Our garden. Superfluous branches we
Lop away, that bearing boughs may live. 'Tis
His crime; had he done so the crown be his.

SERVINGMAN: What, think you the king shall be deposed?

GARDENER: Depressed he is already, and deposed 'tis doubt he will be.

The queen steps forward.

QUEEN: Thou old Adam's likeness. How dares thy harsh rude tongue sound this displeasing news? Why dost thou say King Richard is deposed?

GARDENER: Pardon me, madam. Little joy have I to breathe this news, yet what I say is true.

QUEEN: And am I last that knows it? Gard'ner, for telling me these news of woe, pray God the plants thou graft'st may never grow.