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RICHARD'S FINAL SCENE  
ACT FIVE SCENE 5  
POMFRET CASTLE

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## KING RICHARD II

I have been studying how I may compare  
This prison where I live unto the world:  
And for because the world is populous  
And here is not a creature but myself,  
I cannot do it; yet I'll hammer it out.

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My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,  
My soul the father; and these two beget  
A generation of still-breeding thoughts,  
And these same thoughts people this little world,  
In humours like the people of this world,  
For no thought is contented. The better sort,

As thoughts of **things divine**, are intermix'd  
With scruples and do set the word itself  
Against the word:  
As thus, 'Come, little ones,' and then again,  
'It is as hard to come as for a camel  
To thread the postern of a small needle's eye.'

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Thoughts tending to **ambition**, they do plot  
Unlikely wonders; how these vain weak nails  
May tear a passage through the flinty ribs  
Of this hard world, my ragged prison walls,  
And, for they cannot, die in their own pride.

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Thoughts **tending to content** flatter themselves  
That they are not the first of fortune's slaves,  
Nor shall not be the last; like silly beggars  
Who sitting in the stocks refuge their shame,  
That many have and others must sit there;  
And in this thought they find a kind of ease,  
Bearing their own misfortunes on the back  
Of such as have before endured the like.

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Thus play I in one person many people,  
And none contented: sometimes am I king;  
Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,  
And so I am: then crushing penury  
Persuades me I was better when a king;

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Then am I king'd again: and by and by  
Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke,  
And straight am nothing: but what'er I be,  
Nor I nor any man that but man is  
With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eased  
With being nothing. **Music** do I hear?

## Madness?

### loneliness

determination (with an almost a comic effect)

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*Richard this he can recreate the world simply in his head. His brain and heart will produce a generation of 'thoughts' instead of people. Just like different people have different opinions and advice the thoughts pull Richard from hope to despair.*

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*Richard now extends his metaphor; the first set of thoughts talk to him of his soul - 'divinity' (as the priesthood would act in the nation) They give him conflicting advice - God welcomes all 'little ones' - Will Richards childlike innocence grant him access to heaven? Then other thoughts remind him rich men cannot enter heaven - as a king he was as rich, now dethroned he is penny-less, this does not comfort him.*

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*The next set of thoughts are 'ambitious' (perhaps echoing the Lords and Royals in society) who urge Richard to fight, to claw his way through the stone wall and escape. He notes then that ambition leads to their downfall, as we are being to see happening to Bolingbroke..*

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*Finally we get the set of 'flatterers' who seem to represent Richard's court. They mark their situation down to luck and shrug that many others have endure this fate.*

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*Richard sums this up; he returns to the idea that he embodies the nation. How his thoughts pull him in to fancies of being king, then remind him kings suffer treason, so he imagines himself a bigger, then he remembers beggars suffer crushing poverty*

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*Last of all Richard muses that maybe men never know if they have been content until they have the experienced all there is - including death.*

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*The music is **ambiguous** - is it there or in Richards head? Both can evoke sympathy.*

Echo's the idea that the king is the nation, here Richard is taking on the task of red-creating England with just his mind.



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*Music*

Ha, ha! keep time: how sour sweet music is,  
When time is broke and no proportion kept!  
So is it in the music of men's lives.

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And here have I the daintiness of ear  
To cheque time broke in a disorder'd string;  
But for the concord of my state and time  
Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.

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I wasted time, and now doth time waste me;  
For now hath time made me his numbering clock:  
My thoughts are minutes; and with sighs they jar  
Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch,  
Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,  
Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.

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Now sir, the sound that tells what hour it is  
Are clamorous groans, which strike upon my heart,  
Which is the bell: so sighs and tears and groans  
Show minutes, times, and hours: but my time  
Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy,  
While I stand fooling here, his Jack o' the clock.

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This music mads me; let it sound no more;  
For though it have help madmen to their wits,  
In me it seems it will make wise men mad.

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Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me!  
For 'tis a sign of love; and love to Richard  
Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.

*Enter a Groom of the Stable*

**Groom**

Hail, royal prince!

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*Richard hears music, he critics how it is not rhythmic, how the musicians are spoiling the tune. Then he applies this concept to mens lives (how his life could have been 'sweet' but the timing was 'broke')*

*Now Richard has time to play attention he can spot the mistakes in the music, he never felt he had time while king to do likewise.*

*Richard sates that his time is running out - but in a much grander metaphorical way.*

*Continues the clock metaphor, then inverts it at the end to suggest the clock is there for Bolingbroke, and Richard is like the cuckoo or the figure who chimes the hour.*

*Richard grows angry (how sane is he at this point? is the music real?) He states the belief that music can cure madness, but with him it sees to stir his anger.*

*Lastly Richard decides the music is a gift to him intended with love, then evokes sympathy as he states that love is beautiful, but a 'strange broach' i.e. one he does not recognise, has never seen in a world that to him has been 'all-hating'.*



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**KING RICHARD II**

Thanks, noble peer;  
The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear.  
What art thou? and how comest thou hither,  
Where no man never comes but that sad dog  
That brings me food to make misfortune live?

**Groom**

I was a poor groom of thy stable, king,  
When thou wert king; who, travelling towards York,  
With much ado at length have gotten leave  
To look upon my sometimes royal master's face.  
O, how it yearn'd my heart when I beheld  
In London streets, that coronation-day,  
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary,  
That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,  
That horse that I so carefully have dress'd!

*The groom seems to have tended to Richards royal horses in the past. He seems sympathetic towards Richard, and tells him of Bolingbroke's coronation.*

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**KING RICHARD II**

Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,  
How went he under him?

**Groom**

So proudly as if he disdain'd the ground.

*Richard asks the groom if Bolingbroke rode on his old horse 'Barbary', and how the horse treated it's new king.*

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**KING RICHARD II**

So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back!  
That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand;  
This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.  
Would he not stumble? would he not fall down,  
Since pride must have a fall, and break the neck  
Of that proud man that did usurp his back?  
Forgiveness, horse! why do I rail on thee,  
Since thou, created to be awed by man,

*The grooms reply angers Richard who clearly hates Bolingbroke and wonders why Bolingbroke's 'pride' does not have a 'fall'?*

*He then changes his mind and suggests that the horse was made to be 'awed by man' and is just doing what it was created for.*

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Wast born to bear? I was not made a horse;

And yet I bear a burthen like an ass,  
Spurr'd, gall'd and tired by jouncing Bolingbroke.  
*Enter Keeper, with a dish*

**Keeper**

Fellow, give place; here is no longer stay.

*Then he turns this idea to himself (who was created to be king) and how he has been denied his birthright and turned in to a prop to push up Bolingbroke. Richard notes he is therefore more like an ass than a horse.*

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**KING RICHARD II**

If thou love me, 'tis time thou wert away.

**Groom**

What my tongue dares not, that my heart shall say.

*Exit*

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**Keeper**

My lord, will't please you to fall to?

**KING RICHARD II**

Taste of it first, as thou art wont to do.

**Keeper**

My lord, I dare not: Sir Pierce of Exton, who lately came from the king, commands the contrary.

**KING RICHARD II**

The devil take Henry of Lancaster and thee!  
Patience is stale, and I am weary of it.

*Beats the keeper*

**Keeper**

Help, help, help!

*Enter EXTON and Servants, armed*

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**KING RICHARD II**

How now! what means death in this rude assault?  
Villain, thy own hand yields thy death's instrument.

*Snatching an axe from a Servant and killing him*

Go thou, and fill another room in hell.

*He kills another. Then Exton strikes him down*

That hand shall burn in never-queenching fire

That staggers thus my person. Exton, thy fierce hand

Hath with the king's blood stain'd the king's own land.

Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on high;

Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die.

*Dies*

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*Richard sends the groom away. He sees the groom has respect for Richard and does not want him to see his former king degraded or perhaps killed. This seems a fairly noble act.*

*An unexpected action for Richard, he has just stated that the time for words is over - his 'patience is stale', but his sudden violence may shock the audience. Another clue to his mental instability?*

*In his final flourish he does kill two people - perhaps finally taking the gardeners advice to 'wound the bark' and restrain the 'apricots'. He also curses Exton, and then Bolingbroke setting that this will 'stain' the land. The foreshadows the civil war (the War's of the Roses) that is to come.*

*He ends by claiming his should will climb to heaven.*

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**EXTON**

As full of valour as of royal blood:

Both have I spill'd; O would the deed were good!

For now the devil, that told me I did well,

Says that this deed is chronicled in hell.

This dead king to the living king I'll bear

Take hence the rest, and give them burial here.

*Exeunt*

*Instantly Exton regrets his actions. He pledges to take Richard's body to Bolingbroke.*

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- Links:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUjckklxuIw>
  - (BBC's Hollow Crown)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNHtZ8D7Yps>
  - (RSC production with David Tennant)
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