“Now is the WiNTeR of our discontent”

**Shakespeare’s history play *Richard III[[1]](#footnote-1)* is a tale of political intrigue as Richard, Duke of Gloucester attempts to climb to political power. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, is determined to gain the crown of England from his brother, the Yorkist King Edward IV. Read the opening lines of the play, focusing on the opening speech. Answer the questions below. Cite textual evidence whenever necessary or helpful to produce a thorough response.**

1. While his motivations are implicit in the opening monologue, Richard shares his intentions in his opening monologue. What is Richard’s goal? Cite evidence to support your answer. Given what you know about this period of time in history, what can you infer might be Richard’s motivation(s)? Include textual evidence to support your answer.
2. What has Richard done to make Edward suspicious of Clarence? Explain the irony.
3. Where is Clarence taken after Edward becomes suspicious of him?
4. Who was earlier imprisoned in the Tower of London but has since been freed?
5. Who was Lady Anne previously married to?

Now is the WiNTeR of our discontent

Made glorious summer by this son of York;

And all the clouds that loured upon our house

In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.

5 Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,

Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,

Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.

Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front,

He capers nimbly in a lady’s chamber

10 To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks

Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;

Why, I in this weak piping time of peace

Have no delight to pass away the time,

15 Unless to spy my shadow in the sun

And descant on mine own deformity.

And therefore since I cannot prove a lover

To entertain these fair well-spoken days,

I am determined to prove a villain

20 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

(Act 1, scene 1)

1. South Dakota Shakespeare Festival’s portray of *Richard III* June 7-10, 2018. More information can be found at www.sdshakespearefestival.org [↑](#footnote-ref-1)