

Richard III

William Shakespeare

September 30, 2018

from Richard III, spoken by Gloucester

Now is the winter of our discontent Made glorious summer by this sun of York; And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house In the deep bosom of the ocean buried. Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths; Our bruised arms hung up for monuments; Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings, Our dreadful marches to delightful measures. Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front; And now, instead of mounting barded steeds To fright the souls of fearful adversaries, He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks, Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass; I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty To strut before a wanton ambling nymph; I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion, Cheated of feature by dissembling nature, Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time Into this breathing world, scarce half made up, And that so lamely and unfashionable That dogs bark at me as I halt by them; Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace, Have no delight to pass away the time, 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 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous, By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams, To set my brother Clarence and the king In deadly hate the one against the other: And if King Edward be as true and just As I am subtle, false and treacherous, This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up, About a prophecy, which says that 'G' Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be. Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here Clarence comes.