

# Henry VI, Part 2

by William Shakespeare

Act 3, sc. 1 (line 142 - Verse)

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## Gloucester

Ah, gracious lord, these days are dangerous:

Virtue is choked with foul ambition

And charity chased hence by rancour's hand;

Foul subornation is predominant

And equity exiled your highness' land.

I know their complot is to have my life,

And if my death might make this island happy,

And prove the period of their tyranny,

I would expend it with all willingness:

But mine is made the prologue to their play;

For thousands more, that yet suspect no peril,

Will not conclude their plotted tragedy.

Beaufort's red sparkling eyes blab his heart's malice,

And Suffolk's cloudy brow his stormy hate;

Sharp Buckingham unburthens with his tongue

The envious load that lies upon his heart;

And dogged York, that reaches at the moon,

Whose overweening arm I have pluck'd back,

By false accuse doth level at my life:

And you, my sovereign lady, with the rest,

Causeless have laid disgraces on my head,

And with your best endeavour have stirr'd up

My liefest liege to be mine enemy:

Ay, all you have laid your heads together--  
Myself had notice of your conventicles--  
And all to make away my guiltless life.  
I shall not want false witness to condemn me,  
Nor store of treasons to augment my guilt;  
The ancient proverb will be well effected:  
'A staff is quickly found to beat a dog.'