

# *Henry V, Part Two*

Act III, sc. 1 (line 142)

## **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.'