

Henry VI, Part 2

by William Shakespeare

Act 3, sc. 2 (line 242 - Verse)

Salisbury

Sirs, stand apart; the king shall know your mind.

Dread lord, the commons send you word by me,

Unless Lord Suffolk straight be done to death,

Or banished fair England's territories,

They will by violence tear him from your palace

And torture him with grievous lingering death.

They say, by him the good Duke Humphrey died;

They say, in him they fear your highness' death;

And mere instinct of love and loyalty,

Free from a stubborn opposite intent,

As being thought to contradict your liking,

Makes them thus forward in his banishment.

They say, in care of your most royal person,

That if your highness should intend to sleep

And charge that no man should disturb your rest

In pain of your dislike or pain of death,

Yet, notwithstanding such a strait edict,

Were there a serpent seen, with forked tongue,

That slily glided towards your majesty,

It were but necessary you were waked,

Lest, being suffer'd in that harmful slumber,

The mortal worm might make the sleep eternal;

And therefore do they cry, though you forbid,

That they will guard you, whether you will or no,
From such fell serpents as false Suffolk is,
With whose envenomed and fatal sting,
Your loving uncle, twenty times his worth,
They say, is shamefully bereft of life.