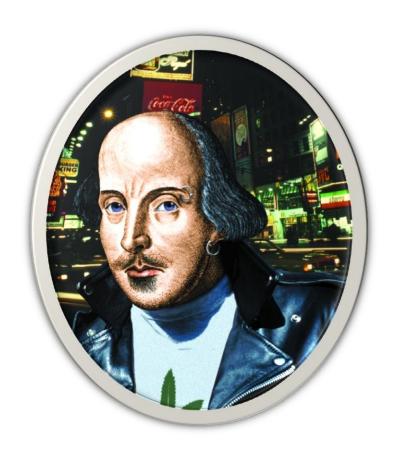


# Sir Thomas More

## Shakespeare's Sheriff More speech, Act 2.[4]

GENERAL EDITOR: John Nobody 9/2/2016



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### St Martín's-le-Grand, Adlersgate, London

Approaching May Day, 1517

#### **CROWD** (of the prevailing mood)

<sup>1-76</sup>: Remove the strangers! °

#### **LEGEND FOR STANDARD THEATRE SCRIPT**

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#### SHERIFF MORE

- 77: Grant them remov'd, and grant that this your noise
- <sup>78:</sup> Hath chid down all the majesty of England;
- 79: Imagine that you see the wretched strangers
- 80: (Their babies at their backs and their poor luggage)
- <sup>81:</sup> Plodding to th' ports and coasts for transportation; <sup>x</sup>
- 82: And that you sit as kings in your desires,
- 83: Authority quite silenc'd by your brawl,
- 84: And you in ruff of your opinions clothed;
- 85: What had you got? 4
- 85: I'll tell you: you had taught
- <sup>86:</sup> How insolence and strong hand should prevail,
- <sup>87:</sup> How order should be quell'd; and by this pattern
- 88: Not one of you should live an agèd man—
- $^{89:}$  For other ruffians (as their fancies wrought)  $^{\times}$
- 90: With self same hand, self reasons, and self right,
- <sup>91:</sup> Would shark on you; and men like rav'nous fishes <sup>x</sup>
- <sup>92:</sup> Would feed on one another.

#### **DOLL**

<sup>93:</sup> Before God, that's as true as the Gospel.

#### LINCOLN or GEORGE BETTS O

<sup>94:</sup> Nay, this is a sound fellow, I tell you—let's mark him.

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SHERIFF MORE
 <sup>95:</sup> Let me set up before your thoughts, good friends,
 <sup>96:</sup> On supposition; which if you will mark,
 <sup>97:</sup> You shall perceive how horrible a shape
 <sup>98:</sup> Your insurrection bears. •
                                    First, 'tis a sin!
 <sup>99:</sup> Which oft the apostle did forewarn us of,
100: Urging obedience to authority; *
<sup>101:</sup> And 'twere no error, if I told you all,
<sup>102</sup>: You were in arms against your God Himself!
    ALL
<sup>103:</sup> Marry, God forbid that! <sup>o</sup>
    SHERIFF MORE
<sup>104:</sup> Nay, certainly you are;
<sup>105</sup>: For to the king God hath His office lent
<sup>106:</sup> Of dread, of justice, power and command;
107: Hath bid him rule, and willed you to obey;
<sup>108:</sup> And—to add ampler majesty to this—
109: He hath not only lent the king His figure,
<sup>110</sup>: His throne, His sword, but giv'n him his own name, <sup>×</sup> °
<sup>111:</sup> Calls him 'a god on earth'.
111:
                                      What do you then—
<sup>112:</sup> Rising 'gainst him that God Himself installs—<sup>x</sup>
113: But rise 'gainst God? X
113:
                                What do you to your souls
<sup>114:</sup> In doing this?
114:
                      O desp'rate as you are, x
<sup>115:</sup> Wash your foul minds with tears; and those same
                                                                   hands—
116: That you like rebels lift against the peace—
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117: Lift up for peace; and your unrev'rent knees x
<sup>118:</sup> Make them your feet to kneel to be forgiven!
119: Tell me but this: what rebel captain—
<sup>120:</sup> As mutinies are like to hap—by his name <sup>x</sup> o
121: Can still the rout? Who will obey a traitor?
122: Or how can well that proclamation sound
123: When there is no addition but a 'rebel'
<sup>124:</sup> To qualify a rebel? <sup>x</sup>
                           You'll put down strangers, x
125: Kill them, cut their throats, possess their houses,
<sup>126:</sup> And lead the majesty of law on leash °
<sup>127</sup>: To slip him like a hound.
                                  Say now the king
128: (As he is clement if th' offender mourn)
<sup>129</sup>: Should so much come too short of your great trespass
<sup>130:</sup> As merely t' banish you—whith'r would you go? × °
131: What country—by the nature of your error—
132: Should give you harbor? X
                                  Go you to France or Flanders;
<sup>133:</sup> To any German province; Spain or Portugal;
<sup>134</sup>: Nay, anywhere that not adheres to England—
135: Why, you must needs be strangers. X
                                             Would you be pleased
<sup>136</sup>: To find a nation of such barb'rous temper, <sup>x</sup>
<sup>137</sup>: That breaking out in hideous violence <sup>x</sup>
138: Would not afford you an abode on earth?
139: Whet their detested knives across your throats?
<sup>140:</sup> Spurn you like dogs? and like as if that God
<sup>141</sup>: Own'd not, nor made not you? °
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Nor that the elements

<sup>142</sup>: Were not all appropriate to your comforts, <sup>x</sup>

<sup>143:</sup> But charter'd unto them?

What would you think

To be thus used?

This is the strangers' case;

<sup>145</sup>: And this your mountanish inhumanity. <sup>x</sup>

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