



Sir Thomas More

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

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ACT 2 SCENE (4) - [VARIES WITH EDITIONS]

NO OF LINES: 69

TIME ^(approx): 4 min 50 sec*St Martin's-le-Grand, Adlersgate, London**May Day, 1517***CROWD** (of the prevailing mood)

1-76: Remove the strangers ! °

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SHERIFF MORE

77: Grant them remov'd, and grant that this your noise
 78: 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)
 81: Plodding to th' ports and coasts for transportation ; x
 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
 86: How insolence and strong hand should prevail,
 87: 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) x
 90: With self same hand, self reasons, and self right,
 91: Would shark on you ; and men like rav'nous fishes x
 92: Would feed on one another.

DOLL

93: Before God, that's as true as the Gospel.

LINCOLN or **GEORGE BETTS** °

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

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TIME ^(approx): 4 min 50 sec**SHERIFF MORE**

95: Let me set up before your thoughts, good friends,

96: On supposition ; which if you will mark,

97: You shall perceive how horrible a shape

98: Your insurrection bears. °

98: First, 'tis a sin !

99: Which oft the apostle did forewarn us of,

100: Urging obedience to authority ; x

101: And 'twere no error, if I told you all,

102: You were in arms against your God Himself !

ALL

103: Marry, God forbid that ! °

SHERIFF MORE

104: Nay, certainly you are ;

105: For to the king God hath His office lent

106: Of dread, of justice, power and command ;

107: Hath bid him rule, and willed you to obey ;

108: And—to add ampler majesty to this—

109: He hath not only lent the king His figure,

110: His throne, His sword, but giv'n him his own name, x °

111: Calls him 'a god on earth'.

111: What do you then—

112: Rising 'gainst him that God Himself installs—x

113: But rise 'gainst God? x

113: What do you to your souls

114: In doing this?

114: O desp'rate as you are, x

115: 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

118: Make them your feet to kneel to be forgiven !

119: Tell me but this : what rebel captain—

120: As mutinies are like to hap—by his name ^x ^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'

124: To qualify a rebel? ^x

124: You'll put down strangers, ^x

125: Kill them, cut their throats, possess their houses, ^x

126: And lead the majesty of law on leash ^o

127: To slip him like a hound.

127: Say now the king

128: (As he is clement if th' offender mourn)

129: Should so much come too short of your great trespass

130: As merely t' banish you—whith'r would you go? ^x ^o

131: What country—by the nature of your error—

132: Should give you harbor? ^x

132: Go you to France or Flanders ;

133: To any German province ; Spain or Portugal ;

134: Nay, anywhere that not adheres to England—

135: Why, you must needs be strangers. ^x

135: Would you be pleased

136: To find a nation of such barb'rous temper, ^x

137: That breaking out in hideous violence ^x

138: Would not afford you an abode on earth?

139: Whet their detested knives across your throats? ^o

140: Spurn you like dogs? and like as if that God

141: Own'd not, nor made not you? ^o

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141: Nor that the elements

142: Were not all appropriate to your comforts, ^x

143: But charter'd unto them?

143: What would you think

144: To be thus used?

144: This is the strangers' case ;

145: And this your mountanish inhumanity. ^x

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