

ACT 2 SCENE (4) - [VARIES WITH EDITIONS]	NO OF LINES: 69	TIME ^(approx) : 4 min 50 sec	OBSERVATIONS ON SHERIFF MORE’S FAMOUS ‘IMMIGRANT’ SPEECH
<div><div><div>St. Martin’s-le-Grand, Aldersgate, London</div><div>Approaching May Day, 1517</div><div><div>We offer two main types of theatre script:<ul style="list-style-type: none">text only (see example on Audio Demo page)as seen here with line count and other performance-preparation markers – see explanatory notes opposite and the Legend below (page 5)</div></div><div><div><div><div>CROWD (of the prevailing mood)</div><div>1-76: Remove the strangers ! °</div></div><div><div>SHERIFF MORE</div><div>77: Grant them remov’d, and grant that this your noise LE</div><div>78: Hath chid down all the majesty of England ; 11</div><div>79: Imagine that you see the wretched strangers 11</div><div>80: (Their babies at their backs and their poor luggage)</div><div>81: Plodding to th’ ports and coasts for transportation ; 11</div><div>82: And that you sit as kings in your desires,</div><div>83: Authority quite silenc’d by your brawl,</div><div>84: And you in ruff of your opinions clothed ; 11x</div><div>85: <u>What had you got?</u> 4</div><div>85: I’ll tell you : you had taught LEV</div><div>86: How insolence and strong hand should prevail,</div><div>87: How order should be quell’d ; and by this pattern 11 LE</div><div>88: Not one of you should live an agèd man—</div><div>89: For other ruffians (as their fancies wrought) 11x</div><div>90: With self same hand, self reasons, and self right,</div><div>91: Would shark on you ; and men like rav’nous fishes 11 LE</div><div>92: <u>Would feed on one another.</u> 7</div><div><div>DOLL</div><div>93: Before God, that’s as true as the Gospel.</div></div><div><div>LINCOLN °</div><div>94: Nay, this is a sound fellow, I tell you—let’s mark him.</div></div></div></div></div></div></div>			

Observations come in two parts – General and Specifics. Specifics are performance clues embedded in the text line by line. For a list of the type of clues see Specifics below. Then go to the matching [ePlay resource](#) for this speech which shows all those clues line by line in an attractive, easy-to-grasp, colour format. The ePlay also has the definitions. The ePlays can be studied privately or shared with a class or workshop with the use a projector.

GENERAL

CONTEXT / SITUATION

- Sheriff More (he is not yet ‘Sir’ Thomas More) is addressing a mixed mob of educated and uneducated people who are calling for the expulsion of immigrants who they believe threaten their way of life
- The situation is dangerous
- While admonishing them Sheriff More must also reason with them through force of logic and an appeal to their better nature
- He refers to them as ‘good friends’, not ‘you blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things’ as Murellus does in a similar mob situation in *Julius Caesar* (Act 1:1)
- There are references to God. Elizabethans genuinely feared divine retribution and eternal damnation.

VERSEBUSTER TIP

The temptation to be angry throughout should be avoided. It will sound shrill. The actor needs to imagine that he has at all costs to *persuade and convince*, rather than berate and hector. As always in Shakespeare delivery it is a fusion of intellect and emotion. It is about balance. Emotion should never drown the argument. That is not to say one cannot be highly charged, but at specific moments – be sparing. Less is more.






SHAPE OF SPEECH

- More’s speech is very long; it would tolerate cuts
- It has many mid-line endings, common to later Shakespeare, to encourage the actor not to take excessive pauses after full-stops (i.e. ‘get on with it’).
- The speech has three distinct phases:
 - Lines 77-92
 - Lines 95-118
 - Lines 119-146

The gear changes at 95 and 119 are marked by the gear change sign ⚙. Note, however, there is variation and ‘mini-phases’ within this larger pattern.

TEXT

The language is comparatively simple and straightforward and More’s overall argument readily understood today.

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<div><p>SHERIFF MORE </p><p>95: Let me set up before your thoughts, good friends,</p><p>96: On supposition ; which if you will mark,</p><p>97: You shall perceive how horrible a shape LE</p><p>98: <u>Your insurrection bears.</u> ⁶  [FF]</p><p>98: First, ’tis a sin !</p><p>99: Which oft the apostle did forewarn us of,</p><p>100: Urging obedience to authority ; ^{11x}</p><p>101: And ’twere no error, if I told you all,</p><p>102: <u>You were in arms against your God Himself !</u></p><p>ALL</p><p>103: Marry, God forbid that ! ^{6a} </p><p>SHERIFF MORE</p><p>104: Nay, certainly you are ; ^{6b}</p><p>105: For to the king God hath his office lent LE</p><p>106: Of dread, of justice, power and command ;</p><p>107: Hath bid him rule, and willed you to obey ;</p><p>108: And—to add ampler majesty to this—</p><p>109: He hath not only lent the king His figure, ¹¹</p><p>110: His throne, His sword, but giv’n him his own name, </p><p>111: <u>Calls him ‘a god on earth’.</u> ⁶</p><p>111: What do you then—</p><p>112: Rising ’gainst him that God Himself installs—</p><p>113: <u>But rise ’gainst God?</u> ⁴</p><p>113: What do you to your souls LE</p><p>114: <u>In doing this?</u> ⁴</p><p>114: O desp’rate as you are,</p><p>115: Wash your foul minds with tears ; and those same hands—</p><p>116: That you like rebels lift against the peace—</p></div>			<p>WORD / PHRASE SUBSTITUTIONS</p> <p>We have made some modest word substitutions to make certain bits clearer to audiences e.g. ‘<i>on leash</i>’ (126) for ‘<i>in lyam</i>’. (In substituting we always preserve the metre and, if possible, the alliteration and assonance too). Check the ePlay for more substitutions. If you want to reverse our substitutions, please do so. Take charge and make the speech your own.</p> <p>‘False friends’. The speech has five ‘false friends’ which we denote in the margin with the symbol [FF]. For the purpose of this demo speech we have taken the liberty of ‘modernising’ them (indicated by the infinity sign  placed before [FF]). Check the ePlay for the original word or phrase.</p> <p>Definition: <i>False friends are words that look familiar to us today but actually meant something (or could mean something) quite different – even the exact opposite – in Shakespeare’s day.</i></p> <p>VOICE</p> <p>Shouting at the mob for 69 lines will wreck your voice and be intolerable for the audience. So play around with the ‘persuasion / admonishment’ mix. Find places to change the volume, rhythm and pitch – hear the audio example for ideas</p> <p>AUDIO CAVEAT</p> <p>The audio is only our ‘take’ on the speech the day we recorded it. It represents ‘work-in-progress’. Tomorrow we’d do it differently. You’ll notice some little inconsistencies, a bum note and slips of the tongue – just as might occur in live performance. Our recordings are emphatically not definitive and should be treated with a healthy dose of critical detachment. We don’t have, or claim to have, a monopoly on the right way to speak Shakespeare.</p> <p>That said, our methodology and approach, based on the work of the greatest exponents of Shakespeare-speaking, is sound. It can be applied to any speech or part to help yield a consistently proficient result. We leave the truly inspirational, virtuoso stuff to you.</p> <p>GESTURE / ILLUSTRATION</p> <p>More’s speech invites a lot of gesture, but be specific. “<i>Suit the action to the word, the word to the action</i>”.</p> <p>SCALE</p> <p>Know what space you will be playing in. A smaller, more intimate space requires smaller gestures and more subtle vocals. Try the speech two ways. First imagine you are playing to a huge arena (but don’t push your voice, you’ll wreck it). Then try it again to (imaginary) family in the kitchen – enrol your pet if you have to!</p> <p>AUDITION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">For auditions cutting this lengthy speech is essential – 30-35 lines max.

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<div>117: Lift up for peace ; and your unrev’rent knees LE</div> <div>118: <u>Make them your feet to kneel to be forgiven !</u> ¹¹ o</div> <div>⌞</div> <div>119: Tell me but this : ▼ what rebel captain—^{9 > 11}</div> <div>120: As mut’nies are like to hap—by his name LE o ∞ [FF]</div> <div>121: Can still the rout? <u>Who will obey a traitor?</u> ¹¹</div> <div>122: Or how can well that proclamation sound</div> <div>123: When there is no addition but a ‘rebel’ ¹¹ LE</div> <div>124: <u>To qualify a rebel?</u> ^{7e > 6}</div> <div>124: You’ll put down strangers, ^{(11 > 10) x}</div> <div>125: Kill them, cut their throats, possess their houses, ^{(10 > 11) x}</div> <div>126: And lead the majesty of law on leash LE o</div> <div>127: <u>To slip him like a hound.</u> ⁶</div> <div>127: Say now the king</div> <div>128: (As he is clement if th’ offender mourn)</div> <div>129: Should so much come too short of your great trespass ¹¹ LE</div> <div>130: As merely t’ banish you—whith’r would you go? o ∞ [FF]</div> <div>131: What country—by the nature of your error—¹¹</div> <div>132: <u>Should give you harbor?</u> ^{5e > 4}</div> <div>132: Go you to France or Flanders ; ¹¹</div> <div>133: To any German province ; Spain or Portugal ; ¹²</div> <div>134: Nay, anywhere that not adheres to England—¹¹</div> <div>135: <u>Why, you must needs be strangers.</u> ^{7e > 6}</div> <div>135: Would you be pleased LEV</div> <div>136: To find a nation of such barb’rous temper, ¹¹</div> <div>137: That breaking out in hideous vi-o-lence ^{11x (9-10)}</div> <div>138: Would not afford you an abode on earth?</div> <div>139: Whet their detested knives across your throats? o ∞ [FF] [HWET]</div> <div>140: Spurn you like dogs? and like as if that God LE</div> <div>141: <u>Owned not, nor made not you ?</u> ⁶ ∞ [FF]</div>			<div><u>VERSEBUSTER TIP</u> Make the judges the mob and persuade <i>them</i>.</div> <div>SPECIFICS You will find a wealth of performance-specific information in our ePlay resource. These are attractive PDFs with in-depth annotation [glossary, etc] and notation [scoring of the text] using helpful, easy-to-grasp graphics. See the Sir Thomas More ePlay demo on Homepage. They can be used for private study or projected on a wall for group study. The ePlays are distinct from our printable theatre scripts which are A4, 1.5 spacing, Arial font 12 for easy reading and mark-up (just grab anything that interests you from the ePlay resource). Note as well that, as illustrated opposite, we ‘explode’ the text (much like an exploded pie-chart). When first getting to grips with a speech this makes it easier and quicker to discern its shape and evolution of thought / argument. <i>For an attractive slide-show that explains the significance of the Shakespeare-related terms below citing numerous examples, please see the slide show ePlay demo</i> The ePlay marks up (list not exhaustive):<ul style="list-style-type: none">the syllable count for each verse line > one can immediately distinguish between regular lines, feminine endings and irregular ones, short or longall repetitions, antitheses, puns, etc. > important not to miss these and their frequent interconnectionmonosyllabic as opposed to polysyllabic lines; long vowels as opposed to short vowels; trochaic rhythms (TUM-ti) versus iambic rhythms (ti-TUM), elisions, etc. > all of these impact on the pace of lines (or sections of lines – the first half might be slow, the second half quick, or vice-versa)caesuras (or caesurae) > places in the line that are natural sense breaks and benefit from pointing up. They are also places to top up of breath (if so required). For ‘pointing up’, picture a pole supporting a clothes line (a verse line) on which is hung a great variety of clothes (words of different weight and shape)those verse-line endings that have potential for rhetorical (dramatic) suspense shown opposite with the symbol LE or LEV [line-ending verb] > actors are in the business of being compelling and making an audience <i>want</i> to listen to their character. One of the (legitimate) ways to achieve this is to tease the listener’s ear when a verse-line ending invites you.interesting switches between:<ul style="list-style-type: none">forms of address > status games: clue to shifting attitudes<ul style="list-style-type: none">‘you’ and ‘thou’titles and epithetsverse and prose > clue to sincerity versus insincerity; to openness versus disguise; to sanity rather than madness, etc. (Note that verse and prose are far less to do with status as many imagine – Hamlet, a prince, interchanges between both, as does Rosalind, a Duke’s daughter)complex and simple language > another clue to sincerity or guile; or to the articulation of difficult</div>

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<div>141: Nor that the elements ¹²LE</div> <div>142: Were not all approp’ate to your comforts, ^{10x}</div> <div>143: <u>But charter’d unto them?</u> ⁶</div> <div>143: What would you think ^{LEV}</div> <div>144: <u>To be thus used?</u> ⁴</div> <div>144: This is the strangers’ case ;</div> <div>145: <u>And this your mountainish inhumanity.</u> ^{11x}</div>			<p>emotions; or to pomposity, or to hyperbole, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">alternative stage directions > there can be huge differences between popular texts (Arden, Penguin, Cambridge, Oxford, etc.) as to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">the placement of entrances and exitsthe type of action (if any) at a given momentwho speaks certain lines (known as ‘Speech Headers’ or ‘Speech Prefixes’)to whom lines are addressed (an ‘aside’ or ‘not an aside’; to one person or all?) and so forth.Empower yourself and pick the stage directions that work best for youalternative text and line layout > in heavily disputed texts like <i>Richard III</i> and <i>King Lear</i> there are many textual variations between editions. Pick the best and leave the rest! If you are familiar with the original texts – ‘Quarto’ and ‘Folio’ – you can also compare these alongside the modern. If you’re not familiar with these do not panic! Versebuster’s own text serves the actor very well. It is sensitive to all the well-known and lesser-known textual disputes. Ours is very much an <i>actor’s</i> script as opposed to a <i>school-room</i> script, but certainly it is still very usable and intelligible in a school or college environment.‘false friends’ > these are words that mean today the opposite of, or something significantly different from, their original sense; which, of course, would be very misleading and confusing. Famously ‘<i>doubt</i>’ could mean ‘<i>fear</i>’. In <i>Richard III</i> there are two occasions when ‘<i>leisure</i>’ is better understood as ‘<i>pressure</i>’ – but on a third occasion it can be understood in its modern sense! To alert you in the theatre script we use [FF] in the margin; you then check the ePlayscansion > Shakespeare’s dramatic verse is somewhat different to his poetic verse – the <i>Sonnets</i> scan meticulously, the plays irregularly. Modern editions can be very hit and miss with solutions. Some barely bother because their book is intended for students not actors. In the opening soliloquy to <i>Richard III</i> there are three non-scanning lines. One of these requires that, technically speaking, the actor contracts / elides ‘vir-tu-ous’ (3 sybs) to ‘virt-chus’ (2 sybs). Ignore or respect? There is no easy answer. The debate on scansion is much coloured by ever-changing tastes in verse-speaking, as well as the modern aversion to rules. <div><p>RULES!</p><p>At Versebuster we are rather partial to rules as it means we know where we technically stand, or <i>ought to be standing</i> in verse-speaking wisdom. Armed with this knowledge we can then break the rule from a position of <i>informed choice</i>.</p><p>We dispute rules stifle creativity. In Olympic ice-skating the skater may not wear roller-blades instead; they may not do a double toe loop outside the parameters of the rink; they may not fall over. Despite these irksome restrictions many skaters deliver sublime performances. And, appropriately enough, the skater cannot give a gold medal performance without masterful technique. So it is with Shakespeare.</p><p>Accordingly, ‘informed choices’ are the key. You choose which rule(s) you will (generally) honour and which you will (generally) ignore or break. In any case, not all rules are equal; some rules trump other rules. See our PowerPoint presentations to found out more.</p></div>

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Theatre Script Legend [©]				
11	Verse line syllable count		103:	Coloured line numbers indicate a quibble about line setting (shared line, etc)
	Lines without a number are always 10 regular syllables		104:	
11x	Doesn’t scan – some word, or component of a word, or a combination of two word needs eliding, e.g.		[FF] °	False friend in the script and actor needs to check the ePlay for real meaning
	THEATRE SCRIPT	ePLAY		
	Obedience	[o-BEAD-yence]	∞ [FF]	False friend replaced by us and actor may want to check the ePlay for the original word[s]
	Ruffians	[RUFF-yans]		
7e	Epic caesura - - the final weak or unstressed syllable is not counted		▣	Notable gear change / change of tack – argument, attitude or mood
°	Alerts actor to a note in the ePlay about a textual or line setting dispute		LE	Verse line with suspenseful ending (typically because the sense is incomplete)
[SD] ° [SH] °	Alerts actor to a note in the ePlay about a Stage Direction or a Speech Header		LEV	Verse line with suspenseful ending driven by a verb
x	Alerts actor to a note in the ePlay about scansion and / or elision		[xxxx]	Suggestion how a word should be pronounced
	THEATRE SCRIPT	ePLAY		
	Whet	[HWET]		