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VerseBuster

Sir Thomas More

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

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Shakespeare in Times Square, New York by kind permission of Mirko Ilic

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GUIDE TO NO.1 'STANDARD' PRINTABLE SCRIPT

VERSATILITY

No.1 script is the simplest and most versatile of our scripts. The layout makes it easy-to-read, easy-to-score and easy-to-print. If your scoring gets anything like ours, the page gets messy. No problem. Just print again and tidy your notes – you can't do that with a book!

You'll notice there is some colour. That's in case anyone wants to use the script on their computer or group-share via a projector. We assure you it prints just fine in B & W. You can save further money, as we always do, by printing double-sided. Just make sure the paper is of reasonable quality to avoid the text coming through on the other side (standard A4 80gsm office weight is perfect, though you can get away with 70gsm).

FEATURES

The most striking feature that greets you is the 'exploded' text. This allows the shape and progression of speeches to be more readily discerned. It is a practice adopted by Neil Freeman, the well-known First Folio specialist, and as also advocated by Giles Block, formerly the 'Master of the Words' at the London Globe for fourteen years under Mark Rylance. Block goes further than we can and explodes clauses and sub-clauses. We would love to follow suit but there is simply not enough space – full-play scripts would run to 1,000 pages.

Underlining the last part of a verse sentence is the second feature. Whether one line or 22, the last few words are key to the argument or its conclusion. They are never throw-away words and one must drive through to the full stop (period). Underlinings are a visual target to aim for.

The third feature is that all metrically voiced '-èd' verb endings are done for you. Non-voiced endings are elided, i.e. *scorn'd*, unless doing so would cause confusion i.e. *su'd* for 'sued' (in which case it will be written *sue'd*).

Also done for you is basic-level elision as the metre requires, i.e. *desp'rate* for 'desperate'. More complex ones are dealt with in no 2 & 3 scripts. Original contractions in the text like *I'll*, *'twere*, etc., and original elisions like *'gainst, th'*, etc., are left as there are.

The fifth and final feature is the performance punctuation. Broadly speaking this means it's lighter and more fluid. It means fewer clunking full-stops and more colons and semi-colons to keep the argument or thought going.

PRINTING

If you don't want the Introduction simply set your printer to start at Page 1.

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

NO OF LINES: 69

TIME (approx): 4 min 50 sec



A recording of this speech has been made for verse-nurse teaching purposes.

It attempts to follow the principles of 'best practice' in verse-speaking broadly advocated by leading teachers and practitioners.

Neither technically nor interpretatively is it definitive (there is always more than one valid interpretation).

Moreover, there is disagreement over an appropriate modern style. Elizabethans took great pleasure in the iambic rhythm [ti-TUM] and expected to hear it at the theatre. But is that preference shared today?

Some argue a more trochaic reading [TUM-ti] is justified as it reflects the contemporary vogue for stressing pronouns at the expense of verbs, and so on.

We feel the most useful contribution we can make to this debate is to lean strongly towards iambic. This style is rarely encountered today. You can then judge for yourself which approach has greater merit.

cont. over

St Martin's-le-Grand, Aldersgate, London

May Day, 1517 A.D.

1,000 STRONG MOB (of the prevailing mood)

1-76: Remove the strangers ! °

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 wretchèd strangers

80: (Their babies at their backs and their poor luggage)

81: Plodding to th' ports and coasts for transportation ;

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 clothè'd ;

85: What had you got?

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

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.

SHERIFF MORE

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

LEGEND

x > see note about

- ✓ Scansion
- ✓ Contraction
- ✓ Elision
- ✓ Expansion

in corresponding

ePLAY RESOURCE
SECTIONS A & D

° > see note about

- ✓ Text
- ✓ Lineation
- ✓ Stage direction
- ✓ Speech header

ePLAY RESOURCE
SECTION A

The corresponding
ePLAY CONTAINS:

GLOSSARY

➤ **SECTION A**

NOTES ON

- ✓ Text
- ✓ Lineation
- ✓ Stage directions
- ✓ Speech headers
- ✓ Pronunciation

➤ **SECTION A**

NOTES / SCORING ON

- ✓ Antitheses
- ✓ Repetitions
- ✓ Modifiers
- ✓ Speech build

➤ **SECTION B**

NOTES / SCORING ON

- ✓ Status
 - Terms of address
 - You v. Thou
- ✓ Alliteration
- ✓ Assonance
- ✓ Long vowels

➤ **SECTION C**

SCANSION

➤ **SECTION D**

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

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TIME (approx): 4 min 50 sec



We also showcase the rhetorical use of suspenseful line-endings (there is a particularly good one at l.143.

Some consciously dispense with the architecture of verse and run the lines as if they were passages of prose. They see verse as quaint and archaic, and 'getting-in-the-way' of a naturalistic performance.

Are they right? Follow our recorded line-endings carefully and see whether you agree. Do you find the delivery contrived & artificial, or is it – despite the heightened language – suitably natural?

One point to keep in mind: when people talk naturally they don't speak with grammatical and syntactical precision. They take pauses in odd places – to check the time, smoke, sip, fiddle with hair & clothing, clock passing distractions, change tack, or *deliberately* pause for effect.

Next time you're in a public space discreetly eavesdrop!

cont. over

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 th' 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 will'd 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 given 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—

113: But rise 'gainst God?

113: What do you to your souls

114: In doing this?

114: O desp'rate as you are,

115: Wash your foul minds with tears ; and those same

hands—

116: That you like rebels lift against the peace—

117: Lift up for peace ; and your unrev'rent knees

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

119: Tell me but this : ▼ what rebel captain—x

WANT A SCRIPT WITH MORE INFORMATION?

OPTION NO. 2 SCRIPT

- ✓ Line count
- ✓ Rhetorically dramatic line-endings
- ✓ Pronunciation
- ✓ Alerts to:
 - gear changes
 - false friends
 - epic caesuras
 - rhymes
 - challenging contractions, elisions & expansions

OPTION NO.3 SCRIPT

- ✓ As above
 - plus
- ✓ Phrasing suggestions
- ✓ Bolding of key stresses
- ✓ Clashing sound separators
- ✓ Slur marks

OPTION NO.4 SCRIPT

- ✓ Verse reset as prose exercise with commentary – *hear the difference*

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

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**Caveat!**

Don't ape our recordings – rather recognize the processes that go into the preparation and make the speech your own. You can do it better!

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Thanks!

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,

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 to banish you—whither 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 pleas'd

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

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

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 use'd?

144: ▼ This is the strangers' case ; ^x

145: And this your mountainish inhumanity. ^x

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