

BRAVE NEW SHAKESPEARE: OTHERNESS

The Book of Sir Thomas More

By William Shakespeare

Act 2, Scene 4

THOMAS MORE

Grant them removed, and grant that this your noise
Hath chid down all the majesty of England;
Imagine that you see the wretched strangers,
Their babies at their backs and their poor luggage,
Plodding to the ports and coasts for transportation;
What had you got? I'll tell you: you had taught
How insolence and strong hand should prevail;
And by this pattern,
Not one of you should live an aged man,
For other ruffians, as their fancies wrought,
Would shark on you, and men like ravenous fishes
Would feed on one another. You'll put down strangers,
Kill them, cut their throats, possess their houses.
Say now the king
Should banish *you*, whither would you go?
What country, by the nature of your error,
Should give you harbor? Go you to France or Flanders,
To any German province, to Spain or Portugal,
Why, you must needs be strangers: would you be pleased
To find a nation of such barbarous temper,
That, breaking out in hideous violence,
Would not afford you an abode on earth,
Spurn you like dogs, and like as if that God
Owed not nor made not you, what would you think
To be thus used? This is the strangers case;
And this your mountainish inhumanity.