

UTOPIA

Sir Thomas More

Suppose I should show that men choose a king for their own sake and not for his—to be plain, that by his labor and effort they may live well and safe from injustice and wrong. For this very reason, it belongs to the king to take more care for the welfare of his people than for his own, just as it is the duty of a shepherd, insofar as he is a shepherd, to feed his sheep rather than himself.¹ **A**

The blunt facts reveal that it is wrong to think that the poverty of the people is the safeguard of peace. Where will you find more quarreling than among beggars? Who is more eager for revolution than he who is discontented with his present state of life? Who is more reckless in the endeavor to upset everything, in the hope
10 of getting profit from some source or other, than he who has nothing to lose? Now if there were any king who was either so despicable or so hateful to his subjects that he could not keep them in **subjection** otherwise than by ill usage, **plundering**, and confiscation and by reducing them to beggary, it would surely be better for him to resign his throne than to keep it by such means—means by which, though he retain the name of authority, he loses its majesty. It is not consistent with the dignity of a king to exercise authority over beggars but over prosperous and happy subjects. This was certainly the sentiment of that noble and lofty spirit, Fabricus, who replied that he would rather be a ruler of rich people than be rich himself.²

To be sure, to have a single person enjoy a life of pleasure and self-indulgence
20 amid the groans and **lamentations** of all around him is to be the keeper, not of a kingdom, but of a jail. In fine,³ as he is an incompetent physician who cannot cure one disease except by creating another, so he who cannot reform the lives of citizens in any other way than by depriving them of the good things of life must admit that he does not know how to rule free men.

Yea, the king had better amend his own **indolence** or arrogance, for these two vices generally cause his people to either despise him or to hate him. Let him live harmlessly on what is his own. Let him adjust his expenses to his revenues. Let him check mischief and crime, and, by training his subjects rightly, let him prevent rather than allow the spread of activities which he will have to punish afterwards.
30 Let him not be hasty in enforcing laws fallen into disuse, especially those which, long given up have never been missed. Let him never take in compensation for violation anything that a private person would be forbidden in court to appropriate for the reason that such would be an act of crooked craftiness.⁴ **B**

A RHETORICAL DEVICES

Reread lines 1–5. What rhetorical device does More use? How does it strengthen his argument?

subjection (səb-jĕk'shən)
n. the state of being under the authority or control of another

plundering (plūn'dər-ĭng)
n. taking property by force **plunder** *v.*

lamentation
(lām'ən-tā'shən) *n.* an expression of sorrow or regret

indolence (ĭn'də-ləns)
n. the tendency to avoid work; laziness; idleness

B GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Reread lines 26–33. Note that More uses a succession of **imperative sentences** to convey his ideas about how a king should behave.

1. **the duty of a shepherd . . . himself:** More's metaphor paraphrases the Bible (Ezekiel 34:2): "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves: should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"
2. **Fabricus . . . himself:** Gaius Fabricius Luscinus was a Roman commander famous for his virtues. The statement attributed to him here was actually made by his associate M. Curius Dentatus.
3. **in fine:** in conclusion.
4. **an act of crooked craftiness:** sly, dishonest behavior.






SPEECH BEFORE THE Spanish Armada Invasion

Queen Elizabeth I



Portrait of Elizabeth I, Queen of England (1500s), Anonymous. National Portrait Gallery, London. © Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/ Art Resource, New York.

MY LOVING PEOPLE,

We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit our selves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery; but I assure you I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear, I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects; and therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport,¹ but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honor
10 and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe,² should dare to invade the borders of my realm; to which rather than any dishonor shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field. I know already, for your forwardness you have deserved rewards and crowns; and We do assure you in the word of a prince, they shall be duly paid you. In the mean time, my lieutenant general shall be in my stead,³ than whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject; not doubting but by your obedience to my general, by your concord⁴ in the camp,
20 and your valor in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over those enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people.   

1. **disport:** entertainment.

2. **Parma or Spain . . . Europe:** the duke of Parma, the king of Spain, or any other monarch of Europe. Alessandro Farnese, duke of the Italian city of Parma, was a skillful military leader whom Philip II, king of Spain, often relied upon. Philip's plan was to send the Spanish fleet to join the army under Parma's command in the Netherlands and invade England.

3. **my lieutenant general . . . stead:** Elizabeth refers to Robert Dudley, the earl of Leicester. He was a courtier who for a time was Elizabeth's favorite at court.

4. **concord** (kŏn'kôrd') *n.* friendly and peaceful relations; harmony; agreement

COMMON CORE L5a

C PARADOX

A **paradox** is an apparent contradiction that is actually true. During the Renaissance, to be both female and the powerful ruler of a nation was a contradiction in terms. As the female ruler of England, Queen Elizabeth I was herself a paradox. Reread lines 10–11. How does this rhetorical device help Elizabeth present herself as a powerful female monarch? How does she expand on this paradox in the course of her speech to inspire her people?

D DRAW CONCLUSIONS

Reread lines 17–21. What conclusions can you draw about the kinds of feelings a ruler should inspire in times of war?