



# Utopia Book Notes Summary

by Thomas More

## **Book I: Introduction**

[Thomas More](#) is traveling as Henry the Eighth's ambassador in the Low Countries in the early 1500s when he encounters his friend, [Peter Giles](#). Giles introduces More to an acquaintance of his, [Raphael Hythloday](#), who is with Giles at the time. Giles explains that Hythloday has traveled to many parts of the world and has many fascinating stories to tell as a result. He also explains that Raphael has "sailed not as a seaman, but as a traveler, or rather a philosopher" [Book 1, pg. 2](#) and is, as a result, very fluent in Greek.

After the introductions are completed, the three gentlemen return to More's house and begin their discourse. The first place Raphael mentions is [New Castile](#), where his journeys, with some of his companions, began. Here, he mingled among the people and became friends with them, living and conversing among them freely. The [prince](#) became one of their closest friends, and as a result gave them everything they needed, including all the necessities and luxuries for traveling such as boats, wagons, and guides.

They first traveled to the desert, where the vast land looked like it was uninhabited, except for wild beasts and serpents. However, as they traveled farther, the land became more fertile and increasingly populated, until they reached nations and cities. Their travels grew more exciting as they traveled further every day, as they were welcomed on any ship that went to sea.

*"The first vessels that they saw were flat-bottomed, their sails were made of reeds and wicker woven close together, only some were of leather; but afterwards they found ships made with round keels, and canvas sails, and in all respects like our ships; and the seamen understood both astronomy and navigation."* [Book 1, pg. 3](#)

Raphael tells Giles and More of many things that he encountered in the newly discovered countries, and points out a few things that might have been adapted in the ancient countries, which would have improved society and the conditions of living. Raphael speaks about the many errors in their own countries, and in the customs and government of the many countries he has visited, as if he had lived there his whole life. Giles is fascinated and asks Raphael why he is not in the council of a monarch, where his knowledge would be useful and appreciated, and where he could make his own condition 'happier'.

To this, Raphael answers that he will not enslave himself to any king, and that he is happier and freer than most courtiers pretend to be. At this point, More supports Giles' opinion and reiterates the point that Raphael's education and knowledge would render him an excellent counselor to any king. Raphael refutes this, saying that he is not as intelligent as his companions make him out to be, and should he be that intelligent, his counsel would not be appreciated. His reasoning is that most monarchs concern themselves with affairs of [war](#), of which he has and desires no knowledge. Furthermore, "they are generally set on acquiring new kingdoms, right or wrong, than on governing well those they possess" [Book 1, pg. 5](#). He also continues to say that ministers don't think that they need any assistance, and if they do get an assistant, it is only a person who flatters and agrees with them. Good ideas get lost in a show of power and pride. Therefore, there is no point in giving counsel to any monarch or the like.

## The Meeting At Cardinal Morton's House

Raphael continues with a story that happened when he was dining at [Cardinal Morton's](#) house. He first tells of an English lawyer who commended the severe execution of justice upon thieves. The lawyer could not understand why there were so many thieves robbing places when they knew that they would be hung if they were caught. At this point, Raphael spoke freely before the Cardinal, saying that the punishment was too strong for the crime, and that was why it wasn't working. He went on to say:

*"There are dreadful punishments enacted against thieves, but it were much better to make such good provisions by which every man might be put in a method how to live, and so be preserved from the fatal necessity of stealing and of dying for it."* [Cardinal Morton's, pg. 7](#)

His argument that men were driven to stealing through desperation was refuted by the lawyer's opinion that there were enough jobs for these people to choose from. Raphael then took the position that many men are severely injured in war, and therefore cannot work in the trade they used to work in before they went to war. Furthermore, Raphael argued that the aristocracy plays a large part in creating thieves. Idle noblemen hire many people to work on their land, but these people pick up no useful skills. When they become sick, or their lord dies, they are cast out into the world, where, without skills or [money](#), they must steal to feed and clothe themselves and their families.

Raphael added another reason to the multiplication of thieves and beggars in England: the increase in grazing land. In many places, where it is found that sheep of a certain area yield softer wool than sheep in a different area, the nobility and gentry will take over that land in order to let their sheep graze there. Thus, the agriculture stops in these grazing lands, and the towns disappear. The result is that the people who used to live in these areas are driven off their lands without any provisions. Furthermore, there are no opportunities for these farmers to continue farming, as there is no arable ground left. Here again, people must turn to stealing and begging in order to support themselves. Raphael then proposed some solutions to this problem, which included restoring farmlands so that farmers could return to their homes and continue their skill and limiting the amount of wool produced so that nobility and gentry would not be so tempted to take increasing amounts of land. In this manner, employment would rise and the number of thieves and beggars would fall. Raphael then stated:

*"If you do not find a remedy to these evils, it is a vain thing to boast of your severity in punishing theft, which though it may have the appearance of justice, yet in itself is neither just nor convenient."* [Cardinal Morton's, pg. 10](#)

In answer to this, the Cardinal asked Raphael to give his reasons as to why he thought theft should not be a capital crime and what would be a better alternative. Raphael stated his opinion that a human life is worth much more than a little money, and that God has commanded us not to kill, so it is irrational to place human law before divine law.

Furthermore, it is absurd that a thief and a murderer should suffer the same punishment, and this may entice a thief to become a murderer, since there is less chance that he will be caught or identified if he kills his victim. As for a better alternative, Raphael suggested the same punishment that was used in Persia. In this punishment, thieves go about loose and free, doing public works. Should they be idle, they may be whipped; however, if they work hard, they are to be treated without reproach, and are well used. In some places, they are used as guides, or as workmen hired off the public marketplace. In order to be easily identified, they wear an odd uniform, have cropped hair, and a piece of one of their ears is cut off. They are allowed to accept food, meat or drink from friends, but are forbidden to accept money or arms.

[Death](#) is the penalty if they try to escape or handle arms, and [slavery](#) the penalty for anybody who helps them to do so. Those that discover escaped slaves are rewarded. They may regain their freedom through patience and obedience, and by proving that they have changed their ways.

Most of the Cardinal's guests thought this was not a good proposal and would never work in England. However, when the Cardinal agreed it had merit, they all seemed to change their mind. The Cardinal stated that it had possibilities in England, using the following method: when a death sentence is passed on a thief, the prince would relieve him of it and try the slavery idea as an experiment. If it had a positive effect, then that was a good thing. If it had a negative effect, the death sentence would go into effect.

When the issue of what to do with thieves who were incapacitated due to illness or old age arose, a jester proposed that they send those thieves to monasteries or nunneries. The Cardinal smiled at this and approved of it as a joke. However, the rest of the company thought that the Cardinal earnestly approved, and thus supported the jester's proposition.

Raphael pauses and apologizes for dragging the story on for so long, pointing out that this is just an example to show the extent to which the Cardinal's counselors applauded the Cardinal and flattered him. Furthermore, it shows how little his counsel would be appreciated or valued by the courtiers.

More thanks Raphael for his account of the meeting at Cardinal Morton's house, which brought him great memories from his own country. However, he refuses to change his opinion that Raphael would be an excellent counselor and could do a great deal for mankind. To support his opinion, More quotes Plato's idea that "nations will be happy, when either philosophers become kings, or kings become philosophers." [Cardinal Morton's, pg. 17](#) To this, Raphael replies with another of Plato's quotes, saying that Plato judged right when he said that unless kings became philosophers, they would never take advice from philosophers.

### **Hypothetical Meeting at the French Court**

Raphael next starts telling a hypothetical story, asking More what he thinks the outcome would be if he were to propose good laws to kings, showing them all their flaws and evils. Raphael is certain that this would get him turned out of Court, or laughed at. He then goes on to give an example in the form of a hypothetical meeting at the French Court, where each council member is recommending to the king tactics to expand the French territory and/or gain advantage over another nation.

All the tactics include ruthlessness and disregard for the other nation. In this hypothetical meeting, Raphael imagines himself giving his true opinion, which is to learn from the mistake of the rulers of [Utopia](#), who tried so hard to expand their kingdom that they ended up making their own people miserable. Therefore, it Raphael thinks that,

*"It seemed much more eligible that the king should improve his ancient kingdom all he could, and make it flourish as much as possible; that he should love his people, and be beloved of them; that he should live among them, govern them gently, and let other kingdoms alone, since that which had fallen to his share was big enough, if not too big for him."* [French Court, pg. 19](#)

### **Council for Financial Affairs**

Raphael goes on to imagine another scenario, where the king's treasures are the matter of discussion among his financial advisers. Each of the advisers speaks of a method to increase the king's treasure. One of them suggests currency manipulation, another a pretence of war in order to raise money, and yet another suggests

punishing the public for breaking laws that had been forgotten about by the king himself. As more and more advisers offer increasingly manipulative alternatives, Raphael imagines himself standing up and stating his opinion that all the advisers have the wrong idea, that increasing the king's treasure should not be a main focus of the Court. Raphael then imagines himself continuing his speech, saying that the people of a country choose a king for their good, and not for the king's, and therefore it is the king's duty to rule over them justly, and to focus on his people's lives and situations, not his own. Raphael goes on to say that

*"Nor is it so becoming the dignity of a king to reign over beggars as over rich and happy subjects."*  
[Financial Affairs, pg. 21](#)

He then gives the example of the [Macarians](#), neighbors of the Utopians. The Macarians' [law](#) states that the king is never to have more than one thousand pounds of [gold](#) in treasures, or the equivalent. Thus, the kings can focus on the wealth of the country, rather than their own wealth. As a result, the king found that there would be no harm in having free circulation of money, and that this would in fact increase commerce and exchange, and so he implemented this idea.

Raphael again asks More if he thought that such ideas would be favored in court, and More replied that they wouldn't. However, More maintains his view that Raphael could engage in public affairs.

### **The Discussion about Public Service**

More attempts to justify his view that Raphael should engage in public service by saying that although Raphael cannot change the system overnight, through compromise and patience, he may be able to change it for the better. Although perfection may never be achieved, at least the system will be less evil than before. Raphael disputes this and says that the advice he would give is as radically different to the established system as is Plato's plan for the Commonwealth. Furthermore, he says that the effect of his giving advice that is refuted will only make other advisers more secure in their own advice. In the end, his advice would be ignored, and the bad company would either ruin him by influencing him to agree with them, or should he stay in his own opinion, he would be found as much to blame for the country's evils as anybody else.

### **Raphael then states his opinion that:**

*"As long as there is property, and while money is the standard of all things, I cannot think that a nation can be governed either justly or happily; not justly, because the best things will fall to the share of the worst men; nor happily, because all things will be divided among a few (and even these are not in all respects happy), the rest being left to the absolutely miserable."* [Public Service, pg. 24](#)

He says that by restricting wealth in government, evils may be decreased. He then begins to speak of Utopia, where there are so few laws, and yet so much equality; where virtue is rewarded, and every man has everything he wants.

More cannot imagine that a nation in the new world is governed better than ancient nations, and suspects that in such a nation there would be no motivation for achievement and great losses in periods of shortages. Raphael responds that More's views are expected of somebody who has never visited Utopia, and that he only wishes that Giles and More could have been with him when he was there, and observed what he observed. Had this been the case, he is sure that they would agree with his point of view.

More is now extremely curious to hear more about Utopia, and asks Raphael to describe everything about it to them. Raphael agrees, but first they enter More's house and dine.

## **Book 2: Introduction**

[Utopia](#) is a crescent shaped island about two hundred miles by five hundred miles. The coast around it is very calm, except for the entrance into the bay, which is very dangerous and has many rocks. If a ship were to enter this bay without a native who knew the way well, it would face great danger of shipwreck--thus the island is protected by nature from this side. On the other side of the island there are many harbors, and the coast is fortified by nature, such that "a small number of men can hinder the descent of a great army." [Book 2, pg. 28](#)

Utopia was not always an island. It used to be part of the continent, but when [Utopus](#) conquered it and developed it so that it was superior to all around it, he ordered the people to dig a deep channel, fifteen miles long. Although his neighbors initially laughed when he undertook this project, they admired the perfect, finished result.

There are fifty-four cities in Utopia. They are all made to be as identical as possible, with identical customs, [laws](#) and manners. They are all within a day's walking distance from each other. [Amaurot](#) is the main [city](#), and three wise senators are annually sent there from every city to discuss matters of concern. Each city is a minimum of twenty miles, and people in towns regard themselves as tenants, rather than landlords. Farmhouses have been built all over the country, where inhabitants from cities are sent for two years. Each [family](#) has a minimum of forty men and women, and two [slaves](#). For every thirty 'families' there is a magistrate. Every year, twenty families are interchanged between town and country, after spending two years in one place. In this manner, the new 'families' can learn the work from the families that moved one year prior to them and few errors are made.

The country work consists of harvesting and plowing, raising cattle, chickens, horses, and oxen. Oxen are used mainly for work. When harvesting time comes, the magistrates in the country send for people from the town to help, and people are there within a day. When the people living in the country want something from the town, they go and fetch it, without exchanging anything for it. Furthermore, whatever is produced that no use can be made of is given to the neighbors.

### **Of their Towns, Particularly of Amaurot**

The only difference between any of the towns in Utopia is the topography. Thus, by studying one town, we know what they all look like. Amaurot is the most eminent town, as it is where the supreme council resides. Amaurot is located on the side of a hill, and a river, Anider, runs by it. Anider runs down to the ocean, and is fortified at its source so that enemies will not be able to poison or redirect the water, as the town depends on this river for water supply. A wall, with many towers and forts, surrounds Amaurot.

The wall also has a ditch surrounding three of four sides, and a river on the fourth side.

Houses inside the town are identical, with a solid build of three floors. Each house has a garden in the back, where vines, fruits, herbs and flowers are grown. The tenants take great pride in their gardens, which form the character of the town. Any man is free to walk into any house at any time as nobody owns any property, and therefore there is nothing to steal. Every ten years, people are shifted into new houses by lots. The town's history is kept on record, and runs back 1760 years. From these records, the development of the houses, and town can be discovered.

### **Of Their Magistrates**

Every year, every thirty families choose a magistrate, called the [Philarch](#). An [Archphilarch](#) rules over every ten Philarchs. All 200 Philarchs secretly choose, out of a list of four, a [Prince](#). Before choosing the Prince,



they take an oath to choose he who they deem fittest for office. "The Prince is for life, unless he is removed upon suspicion of some design to enslave the people." [Magistrates, pg.](#)

[32.](#) The Archphilarchs are chosen every year, as are the Philarchs. No decision may be made regarding the public until it has been debated several days in council, where two different Philarchs sit every day. The Archphilarchs meet with the Prince every third day, or more often if necessary, in order to discuss important affairs.

However, if an affair is of great importance, it is not the Prince and Archphilarchs that make the decision, but the Philarchs who discuss it with their 'families' and report the decision to the senate. One of their greatest rules is never to debate an issue on the same day that it is proposed. This rule was made in order to avoid any irrational or rushed decisions, so that motions would be deliberate and well-thought out.

### **Of their Trades, and Manner of Life**

The entire population understands and partakes in agricultural work. As children, they are introduced to it at school, and in the world around them. However, besides agriculture, every person has expertise in a certain trade, be it carpentry or manufacture of flax. Every person on the island wears the same [clothes](#), which are suited for both, winter and summer, climates. The fashion never alters, and the only difference between the clothes is in order to distinguish men from women, and the married from the unmarried. Each family makes its own clothes, and specializes in a certain trade. Whereas women generally deal with wool and flax, the family's 'specialization' is passed down from father to son. However, should the son be inclined towards a different trade, he is adopted into a 'family' that specializes in that trade. Likewise, anybody who has learned a trade and wishes to specialize in another may change 'families' and then follow that which he likes best, unless society is in need of one more than the other.

The job of the Archphilarchs is to oversee the people and make sure that nobody is idle and not working hard. However, the [workday](#) is only six hours. The rest of the time is divided into time spent eating, sleeping, and private time. Yet the private time may not be spent in idleness, and must be used in 'proper exercise'. Most Utopians spend this time reading and attending public lectures. Gambling is not allowed.

The six-hour workday is sufficient to provide the Utopians with all they need because everybody works. This is significant when comparing Utopia to other nations, as in other nations, women generally do not work, and neither do priests or rich men and their families. When much of the population is idle, those people that do work need to work much harder in order to support those that don't. Furthermore, less work is needed in Utopia, where everything is shared, making maintenance and repairs in everyone's best interest. Also, they are practical people and wear leather to work, so that their clothes will last many years.

Lastly, the workday is shortened when possible; that is, when it is not necessary for the public. This is because the magistrates believe that nobody should work unnecessarily. Also, because happiness lies in the improvement of the mind, reading time should be provided whenever possible.

### **Of Their Traffic**

The families in Utopia are made of people closely related to one another. Although the women marry out of their homes, the men, their children and grandchildren remain living in the same house. They are all obedient to the eldest relative whose understanding has not been weakened. The maximum number of families per city (not including the country around it) is six thousand. People can be moved from one family to the other if necessary to maintain the minimum number of people per family (ten). Also, families may be moved from one town to another if a certain town is overpopulated or under-populated. On a larger scale, if

the number of inhabitants in the country falls, people may be called back from the colonies in order to inhabit it.

With respect to the families, the oldest man is called the '[governor](#)'. It is the wives' duty to serve their husbands, the children's duties to serve their parents, and the young to serve the elder.

Each city is divided into four sections, each with its own marketplace where the fathers go and take what they need from others, and supply to others what they have produced. People do not take more than they need because they know that there will be more supplies whenever they return, and they are never denied anything because there is plenty of everything.

Outside the towns, there are places allocated for killing animals. Slaves do this as the slaughtering of animals is thought to decrease human affection and pity. The sick are taken care of very well and are accommodated in well-equipped, well-staffed, public hospitals, away from the town centers, so that infectious diseases will not spread.

At dinnertime, the best of what is left in the market is distributed among the community halls, which are in the middle of every street. Each street consists of thirty houses, and is overlooked by a Philarch. At dinnertime, the families that each Philarch overlooks are called together by a trumpet, and dine together. The seating at dinner is specific: the men sit towards the wall, and the women sit on the other side. This is so that if any woman were to become sick or go into labor, she can quickly leave without disturbing anyone. Also, there is clean water and nurses near the women's side. The children sit with the nurses until they are fit for marriage, at which point they sit with the rest of the men and women. Every child is nursed by their mother, unless the mother is sick or dies, at which point the wife of the Philarch will find a volunteer to nurse the child.

The Philarch and his wife sit in the middle at the first table, with the two oldest men. They are honored and respected, and are served first. The chairs of the old are different than the chairs of the young. The old are always served food before the young. Thus, old men are greatly revered. Prior to dinner, the old men give some sort of lecture, which is short and not tedious. Music always accompanies supper, as do perfumes, fruits, and meats. Although this is the case in towns, in the country, each family eats at home.

### **Of the Traveling of the Utopians**

When people want to travel outside the city, they obtain a '[passport](#)' from the Prince, which tells where they are allowed to travel, and until when. They are given a wagon and slave as transportation, and carry no provisions, as they are treated as if they were at home wherever they may be. However, if they decide to stay in one place for more than a night, they have to practice their trade, thus making themselves useful to the nation. Likewise, if people wish to travel within their town and visit the country, they have to join in the country labor. If a person is found traveling without a passport more than once, they are condemned to slavery.

At the annual meeting in Amaurot, the counselors examine what each city needs in supply and what other cities have in surplus and give and take (for free) what is available in order to stock up each city for two years. Any surplus, such as corn, honey, flax, wool or cattle, is exported. A seventh of the exports are given to the poor in the importing countries, and the rest are sold for moderate prices. The [money](#) raised is used for imports. Any excess money is stored in [gold](#) or silver in the country's treasury and saved for times of [war](#). This is necessary because the Utopians prefer to hire a foreign army, which they pay well, than to have their own people fight. For this reason, they have a very large treasury.

This money does not, however, mean anything to them, as they do not think of gold or silver as valuable metals. This is because the Utopians value things according to their usefulness, and gold and silver are not

very useful. In order to make sure of this, the law requires that chamber pots and close-stools be made of gold or silver, and that these metals should be used for nothing else other than jewelry for slaves, thus decreasing its appeal.

An example of clashing customs occurred when the [Anemolians](#), one of Utopia's further neighbors, sent their ambassadors to Utopia. Because they were not as close to Utopia as other countries, they were not aware of their customs, and had heard that the Utopians did not wear fine clothes or gold. Wanting to appear superior, they wore their finest clothes (some of which were gold in color) and much jewelry. When they arrived in Utopia, all the children were laughing at them (since gold and pearls were their toys), and the Utopians thought they looked foolish. After staying in the Utopian houses for a day, the ambassadors felt foolish, and realized that the Utopians thought that gold was a useless thing. They thought that this was strange because in their custom, the person who has the most gold has many servants and people to serve him. Also, the more gold a person has, the more respectfully he is treated, even if people know that he is a bad person.

The Utopians' lack of interest in gold comes from their upbringing and education. They are educated in their own language, and are unaware of the great Greek philosophers, yet have made the same discoveries as them with respect to music, logic, arithmetic, and geometry.

*"They knew astronomy, and were perfectly acquainted with the motions of the heavenly bodies, and have many instruments, well contrived and divided, by which they very accurately compute the course and positions of the sun, moon, and stars."* [Traveling, pg. 46](#)

They can also predict the weather, but dispute the causes of the sea's saltiness, the causes of the sea's ebbing and flowing, and of the origins of heaven and earth.

With respect to moral philosophy, many things are disputed; among which are things that are good for both the body and mind, the nature of virtue and [pleasure](#), and the source of man's happiness. The last is their chief concern, and the dispute always includes some religious views, which they deem necessary for happiness.

Their religious principles are:

*"that the soul of man is immortal, and that God of His goodness has designed that it should be happy; and that He has therefore appointed rewards for good and virtuous actions, and punishments for vice, to be distributed after this life."* [Traveling, pg. 47](#)

Although these principles of [religion](#) are passed down through tradition, they can also be established through reason, if two assumptions are made: that greater pleasures are sought after more than lesser pleasures, and that no pleasure should be sought if it brings pain. However, happiness can only be found in pleasurable things that are also good and honest. Their definition of virtue is "a living according to Nature, and think that we are made by God for that end." [Traveling, pg. 48](#) The first rule of reason is to love and revere God, and be thankful for all that he has given. Secondly, one should "keep [their] minds free from passion and as cheerful as [they] can." [Traveling, pg. 48](#) In order to support one's pleasures, which a person must seek, a person is inclined to enter society. However, nobody should inconvenience others in order to make himself happy.



From this, laws are established that state that all private agreements must be kept, and all laws must be observed. Laws are to be established by either the ruling of a prince or the consent of the people (the people must not be oppressed):

*"They think it an evidence of true wisdom for a man to pursue his own advantages, as far as the law allows it. They account it piety to prefer the public good to one's private concerns; but they think it unjust for a man to seek for pleasure, by snatching another man's pleasures from him. And on the contrary, they think it a sign of gentle and good soul, for a man to dispense with his own advantage for the good of others...They are also persuaded that God will make up the loss of these small pleasures, with a vast and endless joy, of which religion easily convinces a good soul."* [Traveling, pg. 48](#)

The Utopians realize that forbidden objects are ranked among pleasures not because they are truly delightful, but simply because they are forbidden. Furthermore, they think that valuing outward marks of respect is unintelligent, as no true pleasure is gained by these actions. Likewise, no true pleasure is attained from gems and precious stones, although admittedly a false sense of joy may be felt.

As for the pleasure found in hunting, the Utopians believe that there is none. They justify this by saying that if the pleasure is found in seeing the dog run after the hare, then the same pleasure can be found in seeing the dog run after another dog. If the pleasure is found in seeing the dog kill the hare, then this is wrong and should create feeling of pity instead of joy. Thus, hunting consists of pure cruelty, and no pleasure, and should be left to butchers and slaves.

The Utopians divide pleasure into categories: pleasure of the mind, and pleasures of the body. Bodily pleasure can then be subdivided into two more categories: pleasure that is felt in the senses, which includes listening to music, eating and drinking, and the pleasure of health. This is considered the greatest of all bodily pleasures since it makes life easy and desirable, and since without this one pleasure, no other pleasures can be truly enjoyed. The desire for this pleasure leads to the desire for other pleasures, such as eating and drinking, since these maintain health. However, the most valuable of all pleasures lies in the mind, and it arises out of virtue, and results in good conscience.

The Utopians disagree with the concept of fasting. They also do not approve of laziness or sloth. This is because all of these things weaken a person's body, and reject the pleasures of life, such as eating or health. Thus, people who fit into the above categories are considered ungrateful to the 'Author of Nature'.

The Utopians love to learn, and are incredible at inventing tools to help them learn. After coming across the first book they had ever seen, and with a brief explanation of how to make paper and print, they slowly but surely conquered the techniques. Prior to paper, they used to write on parchment and the like. They are very hospitable to learned and well-traveled people, as they love to learn new things from them.

### **Of Their Slaves, And of Their Marriages**

Prisoners of war are not turned into slaves, unless they were fighting in the battle in which they were caught. People who commit crimes and are thus condemned to serve the state for life are also slaves, as are the poor of the neighbors. The last type, however, are treated better than the rest, and may leave whenever they wish to do so. Furthermore, the Utopians do not let them leave empty-handed.

As mentioned, the sick are taken care of very well, and there is nothing that could be done for them that is not done. People visit them and constantly try to put them at ease and make their lives as comfortable as possible. For those that are suffering from a terminal illness, a voluntary [death](#) is an option; however, this must be done with the consent of a priest and the senate or else the person is thrown in a ditch as opposed having a proper funeral.

Women are not allowed to be married before they are eighteen, and men are not allowed to be married before they are twenty-two. People are punished if they are caught 'embracing' before they are married, part of the punishment being denial of the privilege to ever marry.

Behaviors like this ruin the family reputation, and are considered the fault of the parents of the family. Men and women see each other naked before getting married in order to determine if there is something they cannot live with about the other person's body. This is considered a better solution than having to live with something you despise. Polygamy and divorce are not allowed, except for divorce in the case of a spouse's adultery or "insufferable perverseness." [Slaves/Marriage, pg. 59](#)

When divorced, the injured person is granted leave to marry again, but the guilty person is not. Furthermore, the adulterer and adulteress are then slaves. Should the injured person still love the guilty party, they may choose to live with them, but have to follow them to work every day. Occasionally, the Prince will forgive the guilty party and have them return to their loved one. However, should they be caught sinning again, they are condemned to death.

Slavery is considered a worse punishment than death, since a person will be serving the state for the rest of his or her life. It is also more beneficial to the state, as a person's death can do the state no good, whereas their labor is very useful. If the slaves rebel, they are put to death; if they are patient and show signs of better character, they are set free. Tempting someone into adultery is considered as bad a crime as adultery itself.

Just as crimes are severely punished, statues of virtuous men, set in marketplaces, publicly honor good deeds. The people love those that run for office, and call them 'fathers'. The Prince is recognized only by a sheath of corn carried before him, as the high priest is recognized by a wax light carried before him. Nothing else distinguishes these people from the public.

The Utopians have few laws, and people defend themselves in court. They have no lawyers, as an occupation in law means people are professionals at disguising the truth. Furthermore, this is said to waste time. Their law is summarized as follows:

*"All laws are promulgated for this end, that every man may know his duty; and therefore the plainest and most obvious sense of the words is that which ought to be put upon them."* [Slaves/Marriage, pg. 62](#)

The Utopians helped some of their neighbors get rid of their tyrants, and the neighbors, seeing what great ruling Utopia had, asked the Prince if they could have magistrates rule over their own countries.

The Prince agreed, and the magistrates rule over certain countries for a number of years. This appears to be the best system of government for the other countries because the magistrate is unbiased and not interested in wealth. As for countries for which Utopia provides more particular services, those countries are called 'friends.' Utopians do not believe in treaties because they think that "if the common ties of humanity do not knit men together, the faith of promises will have no great effect." [Slaves/Marriage, pg. 63](#) This concept is proven true by their neighbors, who make and break treaties without a second thought. The reason the Utopians do not believe in treaties is their philosophy that:

*"No man is to be esteemed our enemy that has never injured us; and that the partnership of the human nature is instead of a league. And that kindness and good-nature unite men more effectually and with greater strength than any agreements whatsoever; since thereby the engagements of men's hearts become stronger than the bond and obligation of words."* [Slaves/Marriage, pg. 64](#)

## Of Their Military Discipline

Although the Utopians hate war and avoid it at almost any cost, all of their people are trained in military exercises on a daily basis. They believe that there is "nothing more inglorious than that glory that is gained by war." [Military, pg. 64](#) They do not fight wars rashly unless it is necessary in order to defend themselves or their friends. They do fight offensive wars, when such wars are unavoidable. They declare war if any of their people are killed or wounded wrongfully and the guilty person is not delivered to them. Should the guilty party be delivered, they are sentenced to death or condemned to slavery.

In the opinion of the Utopians, glorious war is a victory where no blood is shed, whereas a bloody victory troubles them. Trophies are made to honor those who accomplish a glorious war, trophies celebrating the warriors' reason, understanding and good human nature.

*"The only design of the Utopian in war is to obtain that by force, which if it had been granted them in time would have prevented the war; or if that cannot be done, to take so severe a revenge on those that have injured them that they may be terrified from doing the like for the time to come. By these ends, they measure all their designs."* [Military, pg. 66](#)

As soon as war is declared, the Utopians secretly begin planting letters in the enemies' country, stating the rewards for the killing of the Prince and of each person who is influential in the war. That amount is doubled if the stated person is brought alive to the Utopian senate. They offer incredibly large rewards, both in gold and treasures, as well as in land in their friends' countries. This does not phase the Utopians since these things mean nothing to them. Any supply of money that flows into Utopia is kept for these purposes, so that they should have enough to cover all these expenses. The Utopians think that this is a fair and merciful way of conducting war because in this manner, fewer people will be killed, and those people that are killed are the guilty ones.

The Utopians also use their wealth to hire soldiers. The country from which they hire the most soldiers is [Zapolet](#), which is five hundred miles east of Utopia. The reasons they hire most of their soldiers from this country are that these people are not farmers, but hunters, and cattle herders. They do not care for houses or clothes, and enjoy war. They are fickle soldiers, as they will change sides for a penny a day, yet they compose the majority of both armies in any war. Although this may mean that they are fighting against their own family, the Zapolets don't care because they are getting paid.

The Utopians pay the Zapolets well and don't mind hiring them, as they prefer hiring people to fight for them to risking their own men at war. Furthermore, they think that they are doing humanity a favor by getting rid of these savages. As for the Utopians that engage in combat, they are mainly auxiliary and a command in chief, with two people to replace him, in turn, should anything happen to him. When the Utopians put their army together, they take as many voluntary people from the towns as possible. They encourage women to go with their husbands.

The Utopians would much rather die than give in to the enemy because they know that their children will be taken care of, and so they want Utopia to be safe. Thus, they fight bravely and nobly. In the prime of the war, the youth single out the general of their enemy and attack him, either to take him prisoner, or to kill him. When a victory is obtained, as few people as possible are killed, and nobody is to chase fleeing enemies.

The Utopians use many techniques in war, including ambushes and digging trenches and making walls around their camps. Everybody, except the guards, takes part in these activities. Both horsemen and foot soldiers use arrows. Sharp and heavy pole-axes are used instead of swords, and war machines, invented by Utopians, are used.

If they come to a truce with the enemy, they never break it. They take care of the land that they are at war with, never burning or treading down anything. This is because they may have use for that land later, such as in rewarding people who kill or deliver Princes and the like. Also, they never kill people unless they are opposed by them. At the end of the war, they obtain the war's expenses from the revenues of land they conquered or from money. The revenues from all these lands total over 700,000 ducats a year.

### **Of The Religions Of The Utopians**

Utopia does not have one religion, but many. However, everyone agrees with the same principle that there is one Supreme Being, who they call in their religion [Mithras](#), and who "is also the great Essence to whose glory and majesty all honors are ascribed by the consent of all nations." [Religions, pg. 72](#) Many of them converted to Christianity after hearing the account of the doctrine and how several martyrs gave their lives in order to spread the religion.

When Utopus founded Utopia, he made a law stating that no person should be punished for their religion, and that each man could be of whatever religion he pleased. Furthermore, only through persuasion and argument were people to influence others to join their religion. Thus, when one newly-Christian Utopian showed too much zeal and shouted words of bitterness against other religions, he was condemned to banishment, as was the law. The law also stated that such people could be condemned to slavery. The reason such laws were passed was because Utopus believed that God might have different ways of inspiring different men, and thus nobody should be punished for that. However, should there be only one true religion, that religion will become apparent through discourse and unprejudiced argument. Despite this, he did pass a law stating that nobody was allowed to think that the human soul died with the human body, or that the world was "governed by chance."

Utopians are convinced that all good people will be much happier in their next state. No one should approach death unwillingly because this will show God that they are unappreciative.

Should any man approach death in this manner, they mourn for him after death and pray that God will be merciful to his soul. On the other hand, if a person dies cheerfully, they will sing hymns for him, and commend their soul very earnestly to God. They then burn the body and put an inscribed pillar where the ashes are. Only the good deeds of the dead are spoken of, and they believe that the dead are among us and watching us, although we cannot see them. This thought also discourages people from sinning.

The Utopian equivalents of priests are called [Brutheskas](#). There are two types: those that do not marry, live chaste, do not eat meat or indulge in any other pleasures of life, and those that marry, beget children, and enjoy life's pleasures as long as this does not interfere with their work. The Utopians prefer the latter since they are considered more reasonable. There are only thirteen priests in each town. They are chosen by the people, by secret suffrages, and they are discouraged from speaking with anyone in private. The priests are responsible for education the youth. They do not see much use in letters, preferring the development of youths' ideas and principles, so that their minds will be useful to their community. The wives of the priests are so extraordinary that sometimes they are made priests themselves. Great honor is paid to priests in Utopia, and if any priest should commit a crime, they are not punished because their punishment is left to God and their conscience.

There are two reasons why there are so few priests. The first is that increasing the number of priests means that there is less dignity in being a priest. The second reason is that it is so difficult to find people good enough to become priests. When Utopia is at war, some of the priests join the army and pray during battle. First they pray for peace, and then for victory, with as little bloodshed as possible. The priests are revered by all nations, and have been known to stop unnecessary bloodshed in war.

Utopians measure their months by the lunar cycle, and their years by the solar cycle. Since there are many different forms of religion, the priests are only allowed to share in the temples what is common in all religions. Also, there are no images of God in the temples so that each person can imagine Him as he wishes. At the evening of the festival that concludes each season, the priests meet in their temples and thank God for what he has given them that year or month. In this meeting, women and men are separated--men at the right hand and women at the left hand, placing themselves before the heads of the families to which they belong. They do not sacrifice any animal in this festival, as they do not think that it is right to take pleasure in killing something that God has given them. Instead, they burn incense and other sweet odors and light candles.

All the people at this festival wear white garments, except the priest, whose clothes are multicolored. When he enters, everybody falls to the ground in a very pious manner. After a while, they stand up and start singing expressive hymns. Prayers follow this, and they are general yet specific enough so that they apply to the whole audience, as well as to each individual. Then they pray to God that they wish to be taken to Him when the time is right, but that they would rather sooner than later as they wish to see Him and be taken to the next stage.

In Utopia, every man has a right to everything, and they all know that they can take whatever they want. Therefore, this is truly a commonwealth, as opposed to all the other countries that claim to be but are not. Instead, the of the countries are:

*"A conspiracy of the rich, who on pretence of managing the public only pursue their private ends, and devise all the ways and arts they can find out; first that they may, without danger, preserve all that they have so ill acquired, and then that they may engage the poor to toil and labor for them at so low rates as possible, and oppress them as they please." [Religions, pg. 83](#)*

Thus, it is good that the Utopians have come across such a wonderful system of government that lasts and makes everybody happy, and it would be wise of other countries to learn from and imitate them.

### **More's Conclusion**

Although [More](#) is curious about many things that [Raphael](#) had mentioned, and does not agree with everything that has been said, he can see that Raphael is tired. He says he'll think about what Raphael has said and will examine it all more closely some other time. More has found many things about the Utopians peculiar, and ends the book with a wider view of the possibilities of government, though he still holds out little hope of change.