

How is Zimri an Unqualified Ruler?

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How is Zimri an unqualified ruler?

In "Absalom and Achitophel" (1681), Dryden (1631-1700) shows Zimri as a foolish and unfit leader. He uses satire to laugh at Zimri's character. Zimri is not serious, not stable, and always makes wrong choices. He represents the Duke of Buckingham. Dryden uses this character to warn people about such weak and careless leaders.

Changeable Nature: Zimri is always changing. Dryden says he is:

"A man so various, that he seemed to be

"Not one, but all mankind's epitome;"

He tries many jobs but fails in all. One day he is a chemist, the next day a fiddler or a poet. He cannot stay in one place or focus on one goal.

Wrong Opinions: Zimri is "stiff in opinions, always in the wrong." He holds strong beliefs but they are foolish. He never listens to good advice. This makes him dangerous. A ruler must take wise decisions, but Zimri follows his pride and bad ideas.

Love for Fun: Zimri loves women, drinking, and fun. He wastes money and time. Dryden says Zimri is:

"Blest madman, who could every hour employ,

"With something new to wish, or to enjoy!"

He enjoys every hour. He does not care about the country or the people.

No Leadership Skills: Zimri tries to form groups to get power. But he cannot lead anyone. People do not trust him. Even when he makes parties, "he could ne'er be chief." Dryden shows that Zimri is not strong, brave, or wise enough to rule.

In short, Zimri is shown as a silly and weak man. He plays many roles but fails in all. He cannot think deeply or act wisely. Dryden makes fun of him to teach that such people should never become rulers. A real leader must be firm, honest, and responsible.

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