

# SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

When asked the number-one challenge with Shakespeare's works, modern-day audiences will almost always respond "the language." It's true that the language does sound different to our ears and that Shakespeare uses phrases we no longer use in our everyday speech. But think of this: There are phrases that we use today that would baffle Shakespeare, should he magically time-travel to this day and age. That's because language (especially English) is constantly transforming.

Can you match these original quotes from *The Tempest* to their modern-day translations?

**"We are such stuff**

**As dreams are made on; and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep."**

- Prospero, Act 4, scene 1

**"A plague upon the tyrant I serve!"**

- Caliban, Act 2, scene 2

**"Bestow upon the eyes of this young couple  
Some vanity of mine art."**

- Prospero, Act 4, scene 1

**"Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows"**

- Trinculo, Act 2, scene 2

**"That's a brave god, and bears celestial liquor.  
I will kneel to him."**

- Caliban, Act 2, scene 2

**"Let me live here forever**

**So rare a wondered father and wife  
Makes this place a paradise."**

- Ferdinand, Act 4, scene 1

**"The rarer action is**

**In virtue than in vengeance."**

- Prospero, Act 5, scene 1

**"O wonder!**

**How many goodly creatures are there here!  
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world  
That has such people in't!"**

- Miranda, Act 5, scene 1

**"What a thrice-double ass**

**Was I to take this drunkard for a god,  
And worship this dull fool!"**

- Caliban, Act 5, scene 1

**"I'll break my staff,**

**Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,  
And, deeper than did ever plummet sound,  
I'll drown my book."**

- Prospero, Act 5, scene 1

Wow! There are so many good people here. Humans are so beautiful. This must be a wonderful world to have people like this!

Let my magic cause them to see each other and fall in love.

I was an idiot three times over to think this drunk man was a god and to bow down to this other stupid fool.

I wish some horrible sickness would come to my master, who treats me like a slave.

I'll bury my magical staff and throw my magic book in the sea.

I want to stay here forever—this father and this wife are so special that it makes this place perfect.

It's much harder and more unusual to forgive than to take revenge.

That's a god worth worshipping, and he has wine that tastes like heaven. I will bow down to him.

People change and shift as easily and strangely as dreams, and at the beginning and the end of the dream, we are born and then we die.

See Brush Up Your Shakespeare on page [TK](#).