



Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary and Language Companion

By David Crystal, Ben Crystal

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A vital resource for scholars, students and actors, this book contains glosses and quotes for over 14,000 words that could be misunderstood by or are unknown to a modern audience. Displayed panels look at such areas of Shakespeare's language as greetings, swear-words and terms of address. Plot summaries are included for all Shakespeare's plays and on the facing page is a unique diagrammatic representation of the relationships within each play.

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Editorial Review

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The main lexical references for Shakespeare scholars in the twentieth century were first Alexander Schmidt's two-volume *Shakespeare Lexicon* (1874) and later C. T. Onions' *Shakespeare Glossary*, which appeared in 1911 and was revised by Onions in 1919. A further revision in 1986, by Robert D. Eagleson, kept Onions in print but failed, to some extent, to satisfy scholars. The new *Shakespeare's Words* seems likely to fill the void created by the superannuated Onions.

Using the *New Penguin Shakespeare* as their text, the editors, linguist David Crystal and his actor son Ben Crystal, first collected all of the "problem" words flagged by the Penguin editors and then scoured the plays and sonnets for additional "difficult" words--especially words that are no longer current or that have developed a different sense since Shakespeare's time. After a few further additions, their entries totaled 21,263 under 13,626 headwords.

Rather than defining a word by listing a single near synonym, the Crystals decided that a system called lexical triangulation would better reflect the complexity of Shakespeare's language. Most entries have three glosses, each providing a slightly different slant. For example, *englut* is glossed as "swallow up, gulp down, devour." Each entry includes part of speech, an illustrative quotation (with text and context identified), and selected references to other occurrences. Sidebars contain brief tutorials on address forms, money, weapons, and more.

Readers newly acquainted with Shakespeare will benefit greatly by browsing through the Crystals' list of 100 frequently encountered words, which are accompanied by more illustrative quotations than are provided elsewhere. Other useful features are a chronology, plot synopses, diagrams illustrating interactions of characters, and 16 appendixes providing brief definitions for historical people, places, foreign terms, and other vocabulary not found in the A-Z section.

This is a most ambitious work that will be of immense value to student and scholar alike, a worthy successor to the landmark volumes that preceded it. Recommended for large public and academic libraries. *RBB*
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Review

A fresh look at the vocabulary of Shakespeare's poems and plays including a glossary of nearly 14,000 words and meanings. Ideal for aficionados and amateurs alike, either as a quick reference or as a basis for in-depth research.

About the Author

David Crystal is one of the most authoritative commentators on the English language, and amongst many other things a contributor to the Oxford Companion to Shakespeare. He lives in Anglesey, Wales. Ben Crystal, David's son, is an actor and lives in London (NW1). Stanley Wells, who has written the preface, is General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare and Associate Editor of the New Penguin Shakespeare series.

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