

A Glossary To Speaking Forsooth By Raymond Towers

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Introduction

Every so often, especially when writing humorous or witty short stories, I will have my characters banter back and forth in colloquial dialects or specialized slang, such as that used by the military. Speaking Forsooth falls into this category. After browsing the Internet, and more specifically Youtube, for a quick and easy intermediate level glossary, and after failing to find one that was longer than the ten or fifteen most popular words, I have decided to create a glossary of my own. The result is this fairly comprehensive compilation, put together from various informed sources and sites that offered PDF copies I could download and browse through at my leisure. Sources are credited at the end.

In General

Speaking Forsooth is also known as speaking Post-Chaucerian, Elizabethan or Shakespearian English. The best example of Forsooth can be found by reading through the King James Version of the Bible. This dialect of English was spoken between 1558 and 1603 CE in England, during a time when people stretched out their sentences and said more words to color their speech than what we use in today's shorter, more practical conversations. In other words, English was more artistic then, especially in plays and poetry.

Pronunciation was different as well, as shown in the following examples:

Head - spoken as Haid

Bread - Braid

Dead - Daid

Mercy - Maircy

In poetry, a lot of contractions were used to maintain iambic parameter:

E'en - Even

E'er - Ever

Ne'er - Never

Twas - It Was

For the purposes of this guide, however, I will stick to the most widely used words and terms. That should be enough to give your story characters something to chew on, if used sporadically, but be careful not to include too much as to overwhelm the casual reader.

Glossary

Words In Forsooth - are followed by their modern equivalents.

A

A-pieces - in pieces, to make into pieces, such as tearing an overdue bill into

Acatharsy - puss filled bandage, can be used as an insult

Ado - commotion, trouble

Adieu - farewell

Afore - before, in front of

Agone - ago

Ague - cold or fever

Ajax - privy, outhouse, can be used as insult against smelly person

Alack!, Alas!, Down Upon It! - Darn! (also can express sorrow)

Alarum - a call to arms for an attack, similar to alarm

Ale-knight - habitual drunkard

Allottery - a share or portion granted, inheritance

Amain - with full force toward, or full spread toward

Amorous - pertaining to love, fond of, in love

An - if

Anon - soon, at once, immediately, also 'I'm coming!'
Annoyous - annoying, irritating, vexing
Antic, Antick - bizarre, crazy, odd, fantastic
Anywhen - at any time
Apace - quickly
Aroint - stand off, begone, away (an order)
Arras - a tapestry
Art - skill, such as in medicine, painting, design, etc.
Artificial - pertaining to artistic skills, cunning and skillful in deceit
Astonied - astonished
Astrologaster - false or fake astrologer
Aught - anything
Avaunt - exclamation of contempt or abhorrence, meant to drive one away
Axwaddle - lazy person
Ay, Aye - yes (pronounced 'eye')

B

Baconbrains - fat head
Backfriend - false friend
Bade - asked, commanded (I bid, he bade)
Bandy - give and take, to fight
Bane - cause of death, 'his bane was liquor'
Bardlet, Bardling - bad or false poet
Bare-Bone - lean person
Base, Baseness - low, lowly born, animal-like, petty
Bastard - someone born out of wedlock
Baubling - trifling, no account
Baudstrot - one with a sexy walk
Bawcock - fine lusty fellow
Bawd - low person, pimp or prostitute
Bawdy - obscene, sexual, low class
Beauteous - beautiful
Bedlam - madhouse, madness
Bedswerver - adulterer, adulteress
Beef-Witted - brainless as an ox
Beetle-Headed - stupid
Befall - happen, turn out in the end, become of
Befortune - happen to
Beggary - meanness
Beguile - to charm or deceive with charm
Belswager - swaggering bully, a pimp
Bemadding - maddening
Bereft - deprived, robbed
Beshrew Me - shame on me, curse me
Beslubber - smear, daub

Bespeak - to speak to, address
Betimes - very early in the morning, quickly, soon
Betray - to give away (his face betrayed his thoughts)
Betrothed - engaged, fiancée
Betumbled - disordered
Blowen - wench
Blowze - beggar's wench
Blubbered - swollen by weeping
Blushet - shy maiden
Bodes - foreshadows, an indicator of
Boggard, Bogshop, Boggish - privy, toilet, see Ajax
Bonoroba - showy wench, wanton (literally 'good robe')
Bosom - heart
Brace - a pair
Brache - female dog, 'you son of a...'
Breast - chest, heart
By And By - immediately, directly
By My Faith!, Marry! - Wow! (exclamation), see also Marry

C

Candlewasher - fool, one who wastes candles by reading at night without gain
Caper - leap or frisk about
Carouse - to party, have a good time, make merry, revel
Carriwithet - a bad pun
Catharan - puritan who constantly boasts of his purity
Certes - for sure, definitely
Chapman - itinerant peddler, carnie, boothie
Chatmate - close friend
Choler - wrath
Clew - rope
Clodpate - blockhead
Clumperton - silly fellow, fool, clown
Come hither - come here
Commend Me To - give my regards to
Constable - local law official
Cony - rabbit- also a woman's private parts
Cony Catcher - con artist
Corse - corpse
Counsel - advice
Countenance - face, facial expression
Cousin - close friend, any relative
Cozener - cheater, con artist
Crack Halter - rogue or gallows bird, one who will crack the halter by which he is hanged, also Crack Rope
Crown - head

Cuckold - noun: a man whose wife cheated on him, verb: when a woman cheats, she cuckolds her husband

Cupshot, also Cupshotten - drunk, 'in his cups'

Cutpurse - thief, pickpocket

D

Daft - stupid

Decree - order

Discourses - speaks

Dispatch - kill

Divers / Diverse - various

Dote On - to love dearly, sometimes to the point of spoiling a person

Doth - does

Doxy - wench, mistress

Drayer - cart driver

Drossel - slut

Drumble - inert, sluggish fellow

Dry - insipid, dull

E

E'en - even, evening

Enmity - hate, enemy

Enow - enough

Ere, also E're - before

F

Fain - gladly, willingly (also forced or obliged)

Fair - pale, light-colored, attractive

Fare thee well - goodbye

Feign - pretend, to put on an emotion

Fie, Fie On It - darn it, to heck with it

Flag Fallen - unemployed, usually an actor

Flibbertigibbet - woman prone to gossip, or frivolous

Foe - enemy

Fool - term of endearment or pity

Forbear - stop, leave alone

Forsooth - truthfully

Forswear - to lie or cheat, renounce, deny

Fortnight - two weeks, fourteen nights

Fray - fight

G

Gaffer - old man, grandfather
 Gammer, old woman, grandmother
 Gage - challenge (such as throwing down a gauntlet)
 Gentle - noun: honorable person, noble-born
 Giglot - wanton woman, or unusually destitute man
 Gixy - lively lass, or wench
 Glass - mirror
 Gned - miserly
 Go To! - get out of here, screw you (exclamation)
 Goatish - lustful, lascivious
 God Save Thee, God Keep Thee - goodbye (farewell)
 Good Day, Good Morrow, Well Met, How Now, God Give You A Good Day - hello
 (greeting, salutation)
 Good-faced - pretty, handsome
 Gor-bellied - fat paunch
 Gossip - good friend
 Grammercy - thank you
 Great-bellied - very pregnant
 Grief-shot - stricken with sorrow
 Grimalkin - cat
 Gripe - grasp painfully
 Groom - male servant
 Grounding - uncultured person
 Growtnoll - blockhead
 Gruntle - snout of a pig, or a person's face, disrespectfully
 Guile - charm in order to deceive, trickiness
 Gull - dupe, fool

H

Had As Lief - I would rather
 Hag-seed - hag's offspring
 Halloo - shout, holler
 Hap, Good Hap - good luck, good fortune
 Haply - perhaps, by chance
 Harbinger - foreshadowing, precursor
 Hark, Hark now - listen
 Harlot - rogue, rascal, knave (male or female)
 Haskard - man of low degree
 Haste - hurry
 Haviour - behavior, manner
 Headbourough - parish constable
 Harken - listen, seek
 Heavy - sad, depressed
 Hedge-born - of low birth
 Hedge-priest - illiterate priest, contemptuous

Heigh-ho - joyful exclamation
Helding - useless man
Hence - place: away from here, time: after this
Here-approach - arrival
Hie - go quickly, hurry (an order)
Hindermate - spouse who is a hindrance
His Due - what is coming to him
History - tale, story
Hither - here
Hitherto - so far, out to here
Ho! - call to attention, usually by an authority
Hodge-pudding - made from many things
Holar - fornicator
Honest - truthful, loyal, trustworthy, faithful in marriage
Humour - mood, frame of mind (he's in good humour, bad humour)
Hurly-burly - commotion, tumult

I

I shall see thee anon - goodbye
Idle-headed - silly, crazy
Impiteous - pitiless
Indrenched - immersed, drowned
Infectious - diseased
Infirmary - illness, disease
Iron-witted - harsh, unfeeling
Issue - offspring, children, outcome, product
It Is Meet, It Is Not Meet - it is proper, it is not proper or expected
It Will Serve - it will do, it is good enough
Iwis - truly, certainly

J

Jack-an-apes - ape-ish person
Jakes - privy, toilet
Jarvel - rascal
Jest - joke, prank
Justice - judge

K

Kayleigh - (noun) party
Kicksy wicky - wife, lower class slang
Killcow - swashbuckler, person who thinks he's important
Kin, Kinsman - relative, family member
Knave - scoundrel, jerk (toward a young male), lowly male servant

Knavery - fooling around, roguish trickery (what knaves would do), foolish ornamentation

Knotty-pated - thick-headed

L

Laborsome - laborious, elaborate

Lading - cargo

Lag-end - latter part

Land-damn - berate sharply

Lavendar - washerwoman

Lean-witted - poor in intellect

Leaping house - brothel

Leechcraft - the art of healing

Lenten - scanty, meager

Lest - unless, otherwise, in case of

Liege, My Liege - king, master, lord

Lightskirt - woman of easy virtue

Like To (go, die, etc.) - likely to go, die, etc.

Likeness - resemblance

Look To - watch, keep an eye on, take care of

Love - romantic, family, friendship or loyalty

M

Maiden, Maid - young girl, specifically a virgin

Maidenhead - virginity (to protect one's virginity)

Make-peace - a peace maker

Malapert - rude, impudent

Malmsey - a strong sweet wine

Many Thanks, I Thank Thee - thank you

Mark - pay attention

Marry - indeed, literally 'by Mary' or 'by the Virgin Mary'

Mayhap - maybe or could be

Meet - proper, fitting

Meetly - fairly good

Melancholy - depressed

Mercer - dealer in textiles

Mercy, I Cry You Mercy - excuse me

Mere, Merely - absolute, completely

Merry - happy, festive, pleasant, funny

Meschant - wicked, wretched, a wretch, a villain

Methinks - I think

Milky - timid, weak

Minimus - tiny or insignificant creature

Mirth - fun, merriment

Mislike - dislike, aversion
Monger - peddler, dealer
Moonling - simpleton
Mountebank - itinerant quack
Mousehunt - woman chaser, a wolf
Mumblecrust - toothless person, beggar
Mumble-news - tale bearer, gossip
Mystery - secret, craft, skill

N

Narrow-prying - closely watching
Nary - not a single one
Naught, also Nought - nothing
Naughty - wicked, worthless
Nay - no
Neighbored - closely associated
Ne'r - never
New - recently, lately
Nonpariel - a beauty

O

Office - job, responsibility
Oft - often
Onion-eyed - tearful, weepy
Ope - open
Ort - scrap of food
Otherwhere - elsewhere
Out, Out Upon - exclamation of frustration
Outbrag - exceed in virtue
Outbrave - surpass in valor, bravery
Outfacing - bold, swaggering
Outsleep - sleep past a time
Outsport - revel more than another
Owe - own

P

Parnel - priest's mistress, wanton woman
Partlet - hen, a woman
Past-proportion - beyond measure
Patch - fool, dolt
Pate - head, especially the top
Pathetical - pathetic, moving
Peagoos - simpleton, ninny

Pennyworth - small amount
Perchance, also Belike - maybe, possibly
Perdition - hell, by the fire of hell
Perdy - indeed, for sure
Perforce - by necessity or force
Pernicious - harmful, deceitful
Physic - medicine, cure
Piepowder - itinerant or traveling peddler
Pigeon-livered - meek, gentle
Pillicock - man's private parts
Pissing-while - a very short time
Pitchy - very dark
Pizzle - penis of an animal, 'thou bull's pizzle!'
Plague - curse
Ploughman - farmer
Plumpy - plump
Poesy - poetry, a poem
Popinjay - one who dresses gaudy, flashy, a fop
Prate - babble, chatter
Prating - babbling, talking too much
Pray - please, 'pray pardon,' beg
Presently - soon
Princox - saucy, pert boy
Prithee, I Pray Thee, If It Please Thee - please, I ask you
Prove, also Prive - test, show to be true
Privy - toilet, water closet, see also Ajax, to be informed
Punk - prostitute, harlot
Purse - man's small bag for coins, a person's finances

Q

Quaffing - drinking alcohol in a chugging fashion
Quick - living, alive
Quicken - make alive, make lively

R

Ragman - devil
Recreant - coward, traitor
Resolve - plan
Rogue - dishonest rascal
Roister - revel wildly
Rude - not eloquent
Rudesby, also Rudesbay - rude, insolent person

S

Sack - white wine, probably cheap
 Scold - noisy, arguing person
 Score - twenty (four score and seven equals 87)
 Scurvy - wretched
 Several - separate, distinct
 Shamefaced - ashamed
 Shrew - mean, scolding woman, ill-tempered
 Shrive, Shrift - religious confession
 Shun that - ignore
 Simpkin - simpleton
 Sirrah - man, sir, boy, used when addressing someone under you in authority, also
 ‘oh, man!’
 Sith - since
 Slug-A-Bed - lazy, sleepy
 Small beer - inferior beer, persons or matters of no importance
 Smellfeast - parasite, mooched
 Smite - strike, hit
 Smith - metalworker
 Sodiars - armed men in any group
 Soft! - exclamation of surprise, ‘wait a minute!’
 Solemnity - peacefulness, respectability
 Solemnities - ritual celebrations (more formal than fun)
 Somewhen - at an indefinite time
 Sooth - truth
 Soother - flatterer, yes-man
 Sovereign - leader who answers to nobody
 Sovereignty - independence, leader’s control, a person’s control over him / herself
 Spado - eunuch
 Spintry - male, homosexual prostitute
 Starve lackey - miserly pretentious gallant
 Steal, Steal Away - sneak out quickly, to hide
 Steward - someone who fulfills an office for which is rightfully the office of
 someone else who cannot do the job him / herself, such as an uncle overseeing the realm
 for an underage king
 Sue - to make an appeal (the appeal is a suit)
 Suitor - a man hoping to marry a certain woman
 Swag - big, blustering man

T

Tapster - keeper of an ale house
 Tarry - wait
 Tassel - noble gentleman
 Thick-eared - unwilling to listen
 Thence - from there, from then on

Thine - yours
Thither - over there
Thou , Thee, Ye - you (informal, casual)
Thy - your
Tidings - news
To The Purpose - on topic, constructively, toward a goal
Tod - fox, crafty person
Tosspot - drunkard, alcoholic
Treble - triple
Trencherman - hearty eater
Trittle trattle - idel talk, gossip
Troth - truth, truly, also By Troth, By My Troth - truthfully (or a vow)
Tut - hmphf
Twain - two
Twigger - prolific breeder, lascivious person

U

Undone - ruined
Uglisome - ugly
Uttermost - farthest

V

Verily - truthfully, truly, indeed
Virtue - can refer to a woman's virginity
Visage - face, appearance

W

Want - need, lack, to be without
Wanton - childish, playful, undisciplined, sexually unrestrained (especially women)
Wench - girl, young serving woman
Well met - hello
Whence - where, from where
Wherefore - why (NOT 'where'), to what end
Whereto - to which
Whither - where, to where, to whatever place
Whoreson - son of a whore, also used against objects (Whoreson cup!)
Will - desire
Worthy - valuable person
Withal - in addition, all together, with
Woe - sadness, misery
Wont - used to, likely to
Woo - date, flirt with, seduce, win over
Wot - to know, learn, be told

Would That, I Would - if only, I wish
Wretch - miserable despicable person
Wrought - provided

Y

Yaud - out worn out mare, strumpet
Yaudson - son of a whore
Yea - yes
Yon, Yonder - over there
You - formal, for strangers
Your Part - your opinion, point of view, your sake

Z

Zounds, 'Swounds - I swear (literally 'by His wounds')

Coins

Farthing - coin worth 1/4th of a penny
Ob - ha'penny, half penny
Penny
Tuppence - 2 pennies
Thruppence - 3 pennies
Groat - coin worth 4 pennies
Tester - coin worth 6 pennies
Shilling - coin worth 12 pennies

Stone - unit of 14 lbs of weight

Oaths

Blue-Bottle Rogue, Filthy Famished Correctioner, Starved Bloodhound - used against constables

Boil, Plague Sore, Embossed Carbuncle - for anyone in general

By (Roman god) - used by men

By My Beard / Sword / Honor / Tools (such as hammer and tongs) - used by men

By My Chastity / Modesty / Maidenhead - used by women

Globe Of Sin Filled Continents - used against fat men (I love this one!)

God's Death, God's Teeth, God's Wounds, God's (anatomy part) - used by men

Lyingst Knave In Christendom - general usage

Whoreson Cullionly Barbermonger - general usage

Sources

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