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## A Glossary To Speaking Forsooth Compiled By Raymond Towers

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.

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## **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, the English language 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:

Even - E'en

Ever - E'er

Never - Ne'er

It Was - Twas

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. Be careful not to include too much vernacular 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

Acatharsy - pus 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! (can also 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  
Hearken - 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 humor, bad humor)  
Hurly-burly - commotion, tumult

## I

I shall see thee anon - goodbye  
Idle-headed - silly, crazy  
Impiteous - pitiless  
Indrenched - immersed, drowned  
Infectious - diseased  
Infirmity - 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  
Knaves - 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

Sodiales - 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 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 - idle 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 - old, 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')

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## Coins

It's always handy to know the sort of money your characters will be spending. Here is a list of what medieval coins were called in Medieval England.

Farthing - coin worth 1/4<sup>th</sup> 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

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## Oaths

Every so often, or perhaps simply often, your characters may feel the compulsion to utter some vile obscenities at others. Below are a few general usage terms for getting the point across in a rather crude manner. For added novelty, create new profane insults by combining these with other choice words from the Glossary.

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

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## Sources

A Brief Guide To Elizabethan English  
Elizabethan English And Shakespearean Vocabulary  
Elizabethan Language Lexicon by Pamela Duncan  
Elizabethan Language Terms by Read Write Think dot org

See also:  
Shakespeare's Language by Raymond Hickey

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**About The Author** - Raymond Towers is an author of fantasy, horror and science fiction that strays away from the mainstream, plus a little in the way of true paranormal and other genres. He has written and independently published a good number of titles, most of them full-length novels and collections, with several more on the way. The author has been a lifelong resident of warm and sunny southern California, a location that pops up frequently in his writing. At the moment, the author is looking for ways to reach new readers all over the world, in addition to pursuing his great love of writing and taking it to the next level.

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