

Shakespeare's unusual language

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Unusual Word Order

- “Call you me ‘fair’? That ‘fair’ again unsay.”
(1.1.186)
- “Helen, to you our minds we will unfold.”
(1.1.216)
- “Wherefore speaks he this / To her he hates?”
(3.2.233-234)
- “Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.”
(4.1.41)

Ellipsis (Omission of Words)

- “Godspeed, fair Helena. Whither away?”
(1.1.185)
- “As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!”
(1.1.234)
- “Thou shalt not from this grove” (2.1.152)

Archaic Words and Idioms

- “For aye to be in shady cloister mewed,” (1.1.75)
- “Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.” (3.1.150-151)
- “To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?” (3.2.142)

Words with Alternate Meanings

- “And she respects me as her only son.”
(1.1.164)
- “To bait me with this foul derision?”
(3.2.203)
- “But soft! What nymphs are these?”
(4.1.134-134)

Familiar Pronouns and Verb Inflections

- “This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.” (1.1.28)
- “If thou lovest me, then / Steal forth thy father’s house tomorrow night” (1.1.167-168)
- “Hast thou slain him, then?” (3.2.69)

Older Verb Inflections

- “Thou told’st me they were stol’n unto this wood” (2.1.199)
- “Be as thou wast wont to be.” (4.1.72)