



Shakespearean Language: A Guide for Actors and Students

Leslie O'Dell

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Shakespeare was a master of language, his sayings have become part of everyday speech, and his plays endure, in part, because of the beauty of his verse. Shakespeare's language, however, poses special difficulties for modern actors because many of his words seem unusual or difficult to pronounce, he employs rhetorical devices throughout his works, and he carefully uses rhythm to convey sense.

The relation of the modern actor to the Shakespearean text, the importance of understanding the nuances of his language, and the fundamentals of grammar are all thoroughly examined in this volume. Its heart is a detailed consideration of the iambic code, the metrical system that Shakespeare used to give so much power to his verse. O'Dell also examines the importance of formal rhetoric in Elizabethan England and Shakespeare's artful use of rhetorical devices in his plays. As a practical reference guide, this volume keeps in mind the particular needs of theater professionals.

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