

Even though William Shakespeare wrote over 400 years ago, we continue to use words and phrases found in his sonnets and plays today. You could be quoting Shakespeare without knowing it! Read on to learn more phrases that we attribute to Shakespeare's plays.

## **Shakespeare's Phrases**



**We have seen better days**

We are in poor condition, worn out

*As You Like It*, Act 2 Scene 7

**Too much of a good thing**

Even good things can hurt in excess

*As You Like It*, Act 4 Scene 1

**Neither rhyme nor reason**

Without common sense or logic

*The Comedy of Errors*, Act 2 Scene 2

**I have not slept one wink**

I did not sleep at all

*Cymbeline*, Act 3 Scene 4



**Cruel to be kind**

Tough love, being harsh for their benefit

*Hamlet*, Act 3 Scene 4

**The clothes make the man**

People are judged by the way they dress

*Hamlet*, Act 1 Scene 3

**In my heart of hearts**

In my most inner, true thoughts and feelings

*Hamlet*, Act 3 Scene 2

**Own flesh and blood**

Part of my family

*Hamlet*, Act 1 Scene 5



**He hath eaten me out of house and home**

He ate so much there was nothing left

*Henry IV Part 2*, Act 2 Scene 1

**A dish fit for the Gods**

A high-quality meal

*Julius Caesar*, Act 2 Scene 1

**It's Greek to me**

It's unintelligible, I cannot understand

*Julius Caesar*, Act 1 Scene 2

**Sterner stuff**

Strong; capable of overcoming trials

*Julius Caesar*, Act 3 Scene 2



**The be-all and the end-all**

Of the utmost importance; the ultimate aim

*Macbeth*, Act 1 Scene 7

**Jealousy is the green-eyed monster**

Envy is so strong it makes one sick

*Othello*, Act 3 Scene 3

### **What's done is done**

I cannot change what has happened in the past

*Macbeth*, Act 3 Scene 2

### **Something wicked this way comes**

A person so evil, he or she is not human

*Macbeth*, Act 4 Scene 1



**Foregone conclusion**

An inevitable result

*Othello*, Act 3 Scene 3

**Wear my heart upon my sleeve**

To expose my feelings, be vulnerable

*Othello*, Act 1 Scene 1

**All that glitters isn't gold**

Things are not as good as they appear to be

*The Merchant of Venice*, Act 2 Scene 7

**A blinking idiot**

A fool

*The Merchant of Venice*, Act 2 Scene 9



**The world is my oyster**

I can achieve whatever I want to in life

*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act 2 Scene 2

**Short shrift**

Little and unsympathetic attention

*Richard III*, Act 3 Scene 4

### **A tower of strength**

A person you can rely on for support

*Richard III*, Act 5 Scene 3

### **Star-crossed lovers**

Lovers doomed by outside forces

*Romeo and Juliet*, Prologue



**Wild-goose chase**

A hopeless search for something unattainable

*Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2 Scene 4

**Break the ice**

To reduce the awkward, initial social tension

*Taming of the Shrew*, Act 1 Scene 2

**Brave new world**

Used ironically to refer to a new, hopeful period

*The Tempest*, Act 5 Scene 1

**Melted into thin air**

To disappear suddenly, leaving no traces

*The Tempest*, Act 4 Scene 1