

## SHAKESPEARE'S FIRST AND LAST WORDS

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*Editor's Note: Shakespeare uses a total of 65 different words to begin and end the actors' dialogue in his 38 plays. In addition, he uses 5 other words to start the six prologues, and 7 more to end the seven epilogues. These words, and none other, are employed in the soliloquy below.*

NIGHT. A WOOD IN ILLYRIA. MIST. ALARUMS & EXCURSIONS.  
ENTER SHAKESPEARE.

SHAKESPEARE: O Good Ford, Noble Gregory--  
Shoot Another Boatswain:  
So ... Strike, Sir!

*(Points)*

I Know You, Young Romeo! Clap!  
Assist In Happiness' Delights  
Nay, To Be True Open Joy!

*(Looks To Right)*

Tush, Old Queen--  
Queen Long Hung  
In Solemnity ... Cease! Hence!  
You Ruinate Another Holiday!

*(Comes Forward)*

Call My Good Pipers Near!  
Let My Realm Ring Free  
As I Now Take Good Escalus' Bier  
Proceed Away to Scone  
Before New Diseases, Ending Heart's Peace  
Befall!

*(Whispers)*

So Now I'll Relate True Ending  
Who's Way Amends When In Time--

*(Staggers)*

If ... If ... I, Who Won Two Roses--

*(Reels)*

So ... Night? Farewell, Sweet Day!

*(Stumbles)*

Amen!! *(Falls. DIES.)*