

THE
ROWAN CANTICLES



ODDS BODKIN

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A Tale Told in the Ancient Manner

Odds Bodkin

A Glossary of Possibly Unfamiliar Words To Smooth The Reader's Way

Ordered As They Appear In The Text

empiricist: an observer who relies upon the senses and the scientific method

faux: artificial or false

anachronistic: conspicuously old fashioned or from another time

syntax: the arrangement of words

ennui: listless dissatisfaction with life

lay: a narrative poem meant to be sung

quatrain: a stanza of four lines with alternating rhymes

cacophony: a harsh, confused mixture of sounds

girth: width around the middle

quid pro quo: what is owed in return for something

Rowan: a mountain ash tree with clusters of red berries

rill: a small stream

sotted: drunk

daft: foolish or insane

gracile: of a slender and delicate design

swatch: a cloth sample

smeek: a noxious smell

copse: a small stand of trees

quaff: to drink heartily

rede: advice or counsel

with: a thin tree branch grown from a living stump or sapling

pell mell: rushed and disorderly

hewer: one who cuts

homily: an informal moral lesson

adage: a wise proverb or expression

wyrd: one's fate or personal destiny

march: a woodland frontier
wold: an area of uncultivated land
freehold: land owned freely by a person
shabaroon: a disreputable person
weald: a wooded district
katydid: a pale green insect
coruscations: sparkles of light on water
purlieus: the surrounding land or outskirts of a town
caveat: a warning or advisement
telltale: a cloth on a ship's rigging moved by the wind
fulsome: generous and abundant
hitherto: until now
tarn: a small mountain lake
lout: a loud, rude man
sedge: a kind of wild grass with triangular stems
redoubt: a low earthen and wood fortification
stocks: a device for public ridicule that holds head and limbs between boards
jaunty: lively, cheerful and self-confident
pursed: a look of the lips that shows disapproval
talisman: an object with magic powers for good luck
runes: magic words or symbols
shamble: to shuffle awkwardly on one's feet
harlequin: a jester dressed in a diamond-patterned outfit
mage: a magician, wizard or learned person
stigmata: miraculous blood patterns upon the skin
thaumaturge: a performer of miracles and wonders
enjoin: to instruct or urge
quandary: a difficult situation or dilemma
heresy: a belief or opinion contrary to orthodoxy
aura: the energy around living things seen by spiritual sensitives
karcist: a practitioner of black magic
rheumy: watery
darkling: relating to growing darkness
dendriform: shaped like a tree
bluets: a small wildflower with blue petals and a yellow center
Maiden's Lies: an imaginary species of wildflower
mugwort: an aromatic daisy
Crone's Head: an imaginary species of wildflower
floret: one of a compound flower's smaller sub-flowers
gall: impudent and bold behavior
beetle-browed: brows arched threateningly or in confusion
shackle: a restraint that locks the wrists and ankles
monger: a dealer or trader in a commodity
sot: a habitual drunkard
festooned: to adorn with ribbons or flowers
bodice: a woman's vest

bandy: to speak carelessly or pass on a rumor
moonstone: a pearly, semi-precious stone
imbibe: to drink in ideas or alcohol
Minlet: an imaginary hallucinogenic flower; also Crone's Head
reproof: a reprimand of disapproval
spoor: the track or scent of an animal
crone: a thin, ugly old woman or witch
swaddlings: cloths for wrapping a baby
quail: to cringe or show fear
wont: one's customary behavior
cirque: a ring or circle
flense: to remove the skin and blubber of a whale
armatures: armor or supports
firmament: the sky or heavens
insouciantly: lightly or indifferently
nascent: soon to happen
archetype: a recurring symbol or situation
elementals: the powers of Nature
wan: pale or weak
sophistry: suspicious or deceptive philosophy
puissance: great power
Warog: an imaginary prison realm of Norns, or Demons
coffer: a chest for holding valuables
roil: grow turbulent
beeves: cows for meat
verst: about a kilometer
periapt: a magic charm
arcane: mysterious or secret
ragtag: untidy or disorganized
niggling: finding fault in a petty way
portent: an omen of the future
sylph: a slender spirit girl
midden: a waste heap
dell: a tree-filled valley or place
league: about three miles
quibble: to object about trivial things
counterpane: a bedspread sewn from many small pieces of fabric
sargassum: floating mats of seaweed
dun: a dull grayish brown color
pelf: wealth
norns: Norse goddesses of destiny; here, demons in Warog
patrician: an aristocrat or privileged person
reach: here, a body of water
pate: a person's head
crucible: a high-temperature container or severe test
linchpeg: a linchpin

wester: to near the west
harangue: to lecture or insult forcefully
gunwale: the seamost edge of a ship's deck (pronounced "gunnel")
demiurge: a controller of the material world
solar plexus: the base of the sternum, mid-chest
masque: a drama where actors wear masks
agog: excited or anxious
intone: to recite flatly
sanctum: a private, sacred place
ylem: the universe's primordial state before the Big Bang
phalanx: a cluster or row of soldiers with spears and overlapping shields
scintilla: a tiny, barely visible point of light
obsidian: a black volcanic glass
wizened: wrinkled with age
hover: here, a fisherman
proffer: to offer
languor: a soft, seductive ease or restfulness
aplomb: self-confidence or courteous correctness
sough: the sound of wind in tree leaves
rutting: animal mating
slattern: a dirty, untidy woman
bomfret: an imaginary fruit
countenance: one's face
rudiment: a primitive form of something
tryst: when lovers meet
quay: a stone wharf
hubbub: the noise of an excited crowd
churl: an impolite, low-born person
bilious: bad tempered
bumptious: overly proud and tough-minded
tuke: a knitted wool hat
zephyr: a gentle breeze
festooned: hung with flowers or other ornaments
marooned: abandoned on an island
dirk: a short dagger
bruit: to spread a rumor
wyrm: a small dragon
wight: a supernatural being
lee: a place sheltered from the wind
hamstring: to cripple by cutting leg tendons
stopple: to seal or close up
petard: a small bomb
limn: to edge with light
importune: to ask persistently or annoyingly
supine: lying face upward
rackle: impetuous and loud

capstan: a large spool on a ship's deck for hauling in line
lave: to wash
verderer: a royal forest's judicial officer
desuetude: disuse
flummery: a sugary egg dish
blancmange: a sweet cornstarch dish
flout: to ignore
immure: to confine against one's will
amicus: a friend in court
offal: animal entrails
slops: human waste in buckets
squinch: to narrow one's eyes
rail: to protest strongly
umbrage: offense
ignominious: deeply embarrassing
doff: to remove
disjunct: confused and disconnected
dolt: a stupid person
pilloried: locked in a pillory, or stocks
withers: highest part of a horse's back
admixt: mixed
betwixt: between
tincture: a medicinal infusion in alcohol
mandrake: a plant with roots shaped like a human
gorse: a prickly shrub
tine: the point of an antler or fork
patina: a gloss or sheen produced by age and weathering
mote: a very small piece of something
moiré: an irregular, wavy pattern
seafox, bleddies, croats, selps: imaginary fish
marm: an old woman
phiz: a person's face
muslin: cheap cotton cloth
esplanade: a seaside walkway
plangent: loud and reverberating
keep: the inner tower of a castle
fosse: a deep trench around a castle
portcullis: a heavy fortified grate protecting a castle
iniquity: wicked behavior
pie: splotched with two or more colors
penumbra: a shadow's edge
truncate: abruptly cut off
sloth: laziness
pox: a disease that causes skin eruptions
shrike: a songbird that impales its prey on thorns
vole: a small rodent

onan: having to do with masturbation
epithet: a curse or angry expression
sigil: a magical symbol
broidered: embroidered
whither: where to
athwart: across
perdition: endless torment
hapless: helpless
oriel: an ornate bay window
stentor: a very loud-voiced person
vestibule: a small lobby or entry room
pratfall: a faked stumble
livery: a servant's uniform
mange: a dog's fur disease
scrofula: a skin disease that causes large swellings
lenticular: thinly oval shaped
whit: a small amount
frisson: a sudden thrill or fright
chimera: a mythical beast that combines animal bodies
boggy: here, strange and mind-boggling
churlish: mean spirited
absinthe: a wormwood liqueur
redress: payment for a wrong
gewgaw: a useless, showy thing
torque: a neck ornament
fop: an empty-headed dandy
tor: a rocky hill, usually with a small stone keep
togs: clothes
demesne: an owner's private land or domain
keen: when women wail in grief
spurious: false
malign: to speak ill of
skulk: to sneak about
hold: a ship's storage below decks
trussed: tied up
impress: an impression
inveigle: to persuade by deception
troth: a marriage pledge
spleen: bad temper
priapic: relating to the erect phallus
urchin: a child who lives on the streets
nuptial: having to do with marriage
apostate: someone who renounces a belief
berimed: covered with fine frost
nabob: a wealthy person
grimoire: a book of spells

unguent: an ointment
etheric: made of invisible spirit substance
apse: a church recess that holds the altar
dross: worthless slag floating on molten metal
massif: tall cliffs of rock
nil: nothingness
hirsute: hairy
pate: forehead or head
hinder: at the rear
occlude: to obstruct, as in an obstruct bowel
corpulent: obese
vicissitude: an unexpected outcome or misfortune
occlude: to obstruct, as in a bowel
sycophant: a servile flatterer
frump: an unattractive woman
fetid: foul-smelling
contrite: remorseful
excommunication: the denial of Holy Sacraments
immolation: a sacrifice by fire
purloin: to steal
plasm: short for plasma, an ionized gas; here, an evil energy
miasma: a foul vapor; here, a form of demonic waste
eldritch: weird and sinister
gyre: a spiral or vortex
baleful: menacing
proboscis: a tubular sucking organ on an insect
kelp: a tall, ribbon-like seaweed
blat: a sheep's bleat
perforation: a hole
prostrate: face down on the ground
gibberish: speech that makes no sense
fortnight: two weeks
travail: the pain of childbirth
shrouds: lines that secure a ship's mast
toadying: slavish behavior
gruel: a thin oatmeal soup
scintillant: sparkling
fold: an enclosure
conformation: the spatial arrangement of things
remand: return to custody
cleave: to adhere to strongly
send: a pale from of evil sent to spy
capuchin: a small hooded monkey
cohort: one tenth of a Roman Legion, about 500 men
senescence: deteriorated by age
caterwaul: a shrill howl

eschew: to avoid
ere: before or until
strand: a seashore or walk along the sea
ambit: the bounds of something
sward: an expanse of grass
goad: to provoke or poke
erstwhile: former
fallow: resting soil
mallow: a plant with pink flowers
alchemy: transforming matter to gold
bravado: brave, empty talk
stoccado: a sword thrust
peller: a caster of magic spells
jinx: a bringer of bad luck to others
brindled: fur with streaks of color
chiaroscuro: dramatic contrast of light and shadow
barc: a small ship
demur: to show reluctance
nape: the back of the neck
poke: a small bag
stile: steps that lead over a fence
rapprochement: good relations between people
tableaux: a group of figures posing
disabuse: to convince otherwise
wax: to increase
fraught: filled with anxiety
slough: to shed, as in a skin
flout: to show too openly
glower: to stare angrily
percolate: to drip through a filter
paroxysm: a sudden spasm
fell: terribly evil
bile: a green digestive fluid
knout: an Imperial Russian whip
pastiche: an imitation
proscription: a thing that is forbidden
engorged: swollen and enlarged
curmudgeon: a bad-tempered, bitter man
bereft: empty
menses: menstruation
plaint: an accusation or complaint
loth: unwilling
ostinato: a repeated musical phrase
allay: to put to rest
chortle: to laugh
frieze: a horizontal display of sculptures

bill of lading: a list of goods to be shipped
continence: sexual celibacy
qualm: an uneasy feeling or regret
eddy: fluid circling behind an obstruction
scullion: a lowly kitchen servant
highborn: of the nobility
entreat: to beg or ask for seriously
lest: unless
hagborn: born of a hag or witch
shaveling: a monk with head shaved in a tonsure or circle
futhark: a runic alphabet
spinster: a woman who never married
sans: without
jibe: to mock or taunt
chub: a large minnow
maw: an animal's or monster's mouth
cliquant: glittering
drudge: a menial worker
enclave: a secured area or private place
otiose: lazy or indolent
perfunctorily: quickly and without reflection
reprobate: an unprincipled person
espalier: a flat trellis for flowers or vines
thready: barely audible
conceit: an elaborate metaphor or literary idea
largess: generosity
perspicacity: insight or wisdom
seneschal: a governor or high-ranking person
temerity: bravery or audacity
debauch: to seduce or corrupt
diddled: sexually toyed with
humours: vapors or gases
olio: a collection
vulpine: having to do with foxes
plaits: braids
tangent: a line that intersects a circle at one point
calumny: false and reputation-ruining statements
beget: to father a child
rife: widespread
quizzed: curious
blacktack: here, a hard black bread
din: a loud noise
vittels: "victuals" or food
"for the nonce": for the present
xanthic: bright yellow
minkwort: an imaginary flower

Wizard's Collar: an imaginary flower
bombast: loud, empty boasts
ironwood: a tree species with hard wood
doughty: big and brave
whetstone: a stone used to sharpen blades
hocks: knee joints
strop: to sharpen on a leather strap
duff: decaying leaves on the forest floor
pry'thee: "I pray of you"
plinth: a heavy stone base that support a weight
escarpment: the edge of a plateau
fief: an estate of land
quartered: cut or torn into four pieces
fores: forelegs
pike: a toll road or turnpike
forswear: to give up or go without
odic: of or relating to the life force
dowse: to detect underground water with a rod
leylines: ancient underground lines of force
heath: open uncultivated grassland
adz: a sharp tool for hand-shaping logs into beams
investiture: the granting of an honor or rank
legerdemain: magic performed with the hands
poltroon: a coward
mal de mer: seasickness
bugboo (bugaboo): a devil or goblin
toque: a small cap
mere: a small lake or pond
gullible: easily fooled
voluble: quick-witted and fast-talking
relief: as in "bas-relief", a sculpture that lifts partly from a background, as on a coin
whereat: where
androgyny: possessing both male and female traits
timothy: a tall species of grass used for hay
astral: pertaining to the psychic, invisible plane or the stars
mewl: to cry or whimper
bumpkin: an unsophisticated person
ballyhoo: a fuss
sangfroid: cool and unconcerned under pressure
bestrew: to partly scatter with objects
pelagic: the upper zone of the open ocean
bole: the trunk of a tree
col: a mountain pass
montane: of the mountains
waif: an unwanted, abandoned person
terebinth: a cashew tree

sly: here, a female wizard or mage
chinquapin: a chestnut tree
affray: a public fight
orison: a prayer
catenary: the arc of a suspended rope or wire
zimb: a gnat
enmered: here, sunken in water
recondite: obscure or unknown
incarnadine: bright or pinkish red
cataract: a waterfall or rushing rapids
usurer: a high-interest moneylender
riven: split apart violently
wereboar: an imaginary animal
liege: a feudal lord or king
eventide: day's end
verve: vigor or enthusiasm
dipole: an oppositely charged or magnetized pole
labyrinth: a maze or complicated, confusing set of tunnels
teak: a tropical tree with very hard, dark wood
scarp: a sheer cliff
gymnosperm: a conifer tree, like a pine or fir
monocarp: a plant that flowers once and then dies
annelid: a segmented worm
lycopod: a club moss
schist: a dark metamorphic rock
rod: the length of five yards
colloquy: a conversation between two people
superluminary: faster than the speed of light
sapience: knowledge or wisdom
tourmaline: a dark green crystal
imbroglio: a complicated and troublesome situation
bromeliad: a tropical plant with stiff, spiny leaves
iliad: as in "The Iliad", a Homeric epic poem
paramour: a lover
warps and wefts: the vertical and horizontal threads on a loom
habitué: a long-time resident of a place
initiate: someone who belongs to a secret spiritual order or group
axis mundi: the axis or center of the world
hake: an edible sea fish
creel: a basket for carrying fish
wain: a cart or wagon
ken: what one knows
filigree: delicate silver or gold tracery
liana: a tropical vine
inveigh: here, to carry something
insensate: lacking reason or senses

popinjay: a vain, proud person
brigantine: a two-masted ship
chicane: to trick, as in chicanery
brocade: silk woven with gold or silver thread
posthaste: as fast as possible
trousseau: a bride's wedding gifts
bonhomie: friendliness and good will
antipathy: dislike
hyperbole: overdone exaggeration
winsome: attractive in appearance
amourette: a female lover
pulchritude: female sexual beauty
paladin: a chivalrous knight
courtesan: a woman kept for sexual activities
melodrama: a melodrama
armistice: a truce or cessation of hostilities
efface: to erase
hegemony: political dominance
preamble: an introduction to a piece of writing
subatoms: here, subatomic particles
parlance: a way of speaking commonly used
contrition: remorse
predilection: a liking or preference for something
malediction: magic words meant to curse someone
fourscore: eighty
fazed: disturbed
credulous: ready to believe anything
backbiting: malicious talk about someone
proletaire: a common worker
augury: foreseeing the future or fortune telling
mizzen: the mast of a ship aft of the mainmast
tyrannicide: the killing of a tyrant
stevedore: a dock hand
decrown: to remove a kingship
stratagem: a clever scheme
laird: a Scottish noble
swain: a young man
cachalot: a Sperm Whale
foulard: fine printed silk
monomaniac: someone selfishly self-possessed and dangerous
sere: dry and withered
woebegone: miserable and sad
fledgling: a baby bird growing first feathers
casement: a window
chum: chopped fish bait
vulgarian: a newly wealthy, vulgar person

askew: tilted or not right
cravat: a man's neck scarf
seawrack: a seaweed with float bladders
peregrine: a small falcon
baleen: a whale's mouthparts for straining krill
djinn: an Arabian genie or powerful spirit
muff: a woman's bushy private parts
sans-culotte: without pants or undressed
doldrums: a windless region of the sea
pip: a small hard fruit seed
merle: a species of blackbird
prolegomenon: a lengthy introduction, as in a book
convoke: to summon a group
verily: truly
conundrum: a confusing problem
vouchsafed: granted to someone courteously
enfeoffed: to be given land, as in a fief
beholden: owing others for something
venal: able to be bribed
interstices: the space between two things
overtones: related levels of vibrations
apropos: appropriate to
quadrille: an early formal square dance
carapace: the hard upper shell of a turtle or arthropod
annul: invalidate
stomata: pores under a leaf for gas exchange
enfilade: a head-on attack or volley of gunfire
inhere: to exist within naturally
unclad: undressed
fortissimo: in music, playing very loudly
synchronicity: a meaningful, seemingly magical coincidence
aureola: the circle around the nipple
mons: the Mound of Venus, as in a woman's sexual organ
cudgel: a club or baton
palimpsest: a manuscript page that is scraped clean for fresh writing
aphorize: to compose pithy truisms
ideation: creating ideas
barbican: outer fortifications of a castle
trodden: walked upon often
concubine: a woman kept for sexual activities
ruse: a trick
nib: the tip of a quill or ink pen, cut apart thinly to allow ink to flow
overweening: overly confident and smug
swab: a mop
lockjaw: a tetanus infection that locks the jaw
portfolio: a person's investments

flay: to strip off the skin
rankle: to provoke or irritate someone
pike: a long-poled medieval weapon
midge: a small biting fly
quarrel: a bolt shot by a crossbow
caste: a level of social status
suzerain: an overlord or region that controls others
obdurate: stubborn and unyielding
wrought: made with effort
atrium: a central Roman courtyard
chary: cautious or unwilling
force majeure: a great or unforeseen force
ingénue: an unsophisticated young woman
prescient: predictive of the future
ere long: soon
astir: in a state of excitement
flagellant: a person who flogs themselves in an act of worship
pedicel: a tiny flower stalk
deva: a divine being in Vedic lore
meristem: the actively growing tissue of a plant
diadem: a jeweled crown
canapés: bread squares with toppings
cavalcade: a procession of riders
ilk: of a similar type
catacomb: a subterranean cemetery
gambit: a risky first action
epiphany: a sudden and profound insight
animus: hostility
vulpicide: killing a fox
chiffon: a fluffy cake or fabric
polychrome: multicolored
phosphenes: lights that appear on the retina when pressed, eyes closed
chakra: one of seven spiritual nodes of the human body
antipodes: two opposite poles
nave: where the congregation sits in a church
spectrum: the colored wavelengths of white light
sapphirine: blue like a sapphire
cloy: to overcome with sweetness
pud: penis
ectogenesis: when an embryo grows outside the uterus
abscond: to steal and run away with something
pittance: an inadequate amount of money
viceroi: the assistant to a king
catcall: an offensive whistle or shout
ne'erdoowell: an idle loafer who never does well
diablerie: wild, devilish mischief

bagman: a gatherer of illegal monies
virtuoso: a highly-skilled musician
parse: to analyze or diagram a sentence
imperious: domineering
twain: two
nacreous: looking like mother-of-pearl
fugue: a layered musical composition that varies phrases
scherzo: a light, fast playful piece of music
anomaly: an abnormal occurrence
synapse: a junction of neurons in the brain
blackguard: a scoundrel or criminal
staves: wooden barrel ribs
muse: one of the Nine Muses of the Ancient Greeks, in charge of creativity
dervish: a person who whirls in religious ecstasy
misogyny: the hatred of women
gout: to spurt blood or a spurt of blood
scape: landscape
skittish: nervous and alarmed
valences: the bonding states of electrons around the nucleus of an atom
arrears: the state of being late for a payment
mistral: a strong, cold wind
limpet: a small mollusk with a conical shell that clings to rocks
chamberlain: a servant who manages household affairs
vassalage: occupying land under someone else's control
marlinspike: a sailor's tool for breaking rope knots
ululations: women's cries of grief or joy
flotsam: floating ship wreckage
errant: lost and searching for something
raked: sloped at an angle, as in a sloping theater stage
skein: a long coil of thread
saxifrage: an alpine flower
bight: a curve or recess, often along a seacoast
thresher: one who separates grain from stalks by beating them on the floor
risible: laughable
aliquot: the sum of
accurst: cursed
steeve: a ship's spar for loading cargo
comity: courtesy and peace
chafe: to rub together too hard
commonweal: the welfare of the public
accolades: rewards or praises for merit
by dint of: by means of
inure: to become accustomed to unpleasant things
surety: the guarantee of payment
contravene: to undo or block an action
middling: average

basalt: dark volcanic rock
tarantass: a four-wheeled horse-drawn coach
bewizened: old and wrinkled
ganglion: a nerve bundle in the body
cuirass: armor worn front and back around the torso
panoply: a bright collection of objects
pentangle: a five-pointed star of mystical meaning
chrism: oil and balsam used for baptism and anointing
ephemera: things that exist only for a short time
ersatz: not real
nigh: near
fen: a bog or swamp
reticence: unwillingness, often to speak
staves: here, sticks
nidge: an off-color term for someone engaged in sexual intercourse
chanterelle: a yellow mushroom that smells of apricots
saturnalia: an orgiastic Roman fertility festival
spleen: bad temper or spite
pish: an exclamation of disgust
plumule: a seed's first green shoot
echelon: a formation of troops
auger: a drill for boring holes
zoophyte: a plant-like animal, like a sea anemone
gauntlet: an armored glove
flail: a short, heavy stick with another stick roped to it for torture
vertigo: a loss of balance when looking down from a great height
lintel: the upper part of a doorframe
peristalsis: wave-like movements in the intestine
harrow: a farm implement with numerous sharp spines
miscible: able to be mixed well
noir: black
subterfuge: lies and deceit
sunder: to split apart by force
vitriol: bitter criticism
tantamount: the same as
ocular: a lens
atonement: forgiveness for a wrong
arbitrage: here, a complex negotiation
transept: in a cross-shaped church, one of the two arms of the cross
aspew: in a state of spewing
burl: a knotty swelling on a tree
parry: in sword fighting, to ward off an opponent's stroke
halberd: a battle spear with two axe blades behind the point
deserts: what a person deserves
sepulcher: a burial chamber
colophon: statement at a book's conclusion

howdah: a shaded platform ridden on an elephant's back
glamours: illusions of the mind, usually self-centered ones
chapeau: a hat
fistula: an opening between tubular organs in the body
germinant: ready to germinate and grow
hierophant: an interpreter of esoteric mysteries
rud: a blush
consanguinity: of the same blood or ancestors
propitious: indicating success in the future
viz: vision or guardedness
lotus-crossed: a classic pose in yoga meditation
puerile: childish and silly
queest: a species of dove
pugilist: a fighter
moke: an inexpensive donkey
nuncio: a papal ambassador
affiche: to attach or affix
pitch-blende: a black mineral slag that contains radium
impresario: an organizer of concerts and plays
abbatoir: a slaughterhouse
portico: a columned entryway
corporeality: physical existence
gorgonia: two or more corals shaped like fans
buttress: a thick stone support structure
hierarch: a chief priest or archbishop
suborn: to bribe or convince someone to lie
bestial: like a beast
inscrutable: unknowable
provenance: the beginning or earliest known history of something
dearth: a lack of something
bobolink: a blackbird
rhapsodize: to speak about something with great enthusiasm
paragon: a perfect example of a person or thing
bier: a movable burial platform