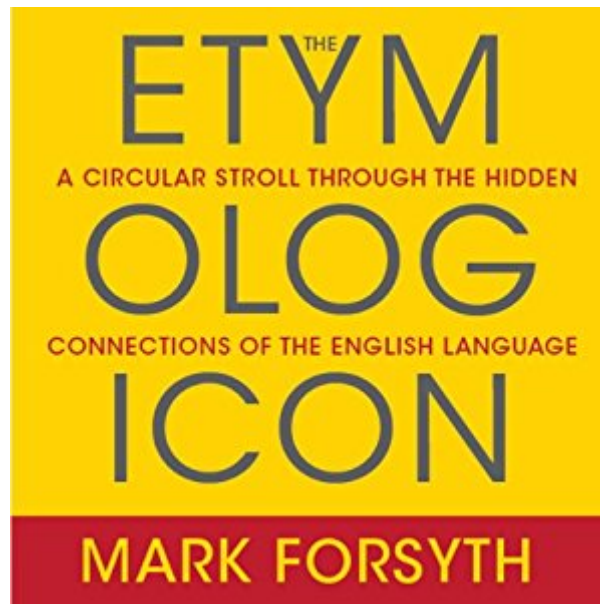


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The Etymologicon: A Circular Stroll Through The Hidden Connections Of The English Language



Synopsis

Do you know why...a mortgage is literally a death pledge? ...why guns have girls' names? ...why salt is related to soldier? You're about to find out...The Etymologicon (e-t?-mÃfÂ¤-lÃfÂ¤-ji-kÃfÂ¤n) is:
*Witty (wi-te\): Full of clever humor
*Erudite (er-?-dit): Showing knowledge
*Ribald (ri-b?ld): Crude, offensive
The Etymologicon is a completely unauthorized guide to the strange underpinnings of the English language. It explains: How you get from "gruntled" to "disgruntled"; why you are absolutely right to believe that your meager salary barely covers "money for salt"; how the biggest chain of coffee shops in the world (hint: Seattle) connects to whaling in Nantucket; and what precisely the Rolling Stones have to do with gardening.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A friend said, you have to read this book. They couldn't quite say why. And it's true that this book defies explanation. (Or to put it another way, any way you try and explain it sounds either a little pointless or rather dull. I'll try and do better!) Mark Forsyth traces word roots, finds connections between words and phrases and tells stories - sometimes from today, sometimes from the recent past, and occasionally back to the days of the earliest human languages. His mind (I suspect) and this book (I can vouch) are a kind of linguistic equivalent of online WILFing. (WILF? Well, it ought to be wwilf. It stands for, "What was I looking for?" and it's a way of describing those lost eight hours you spent browsing websites about pre-Ptolemaic kingdoms, when all you meant to do was find the population of Brisbane for your daughter's geography project.) Each section of the book (the word

'chapter' doesn't really fit) is a kind of walking tour of the linguistic highlands. You learn a lot along the way, but in truth what's happening is that you're mainly enjoying the company of your witty and learned guide, as he traces strange connections, notes the oddities of word origins and how often we use terms that have fascinating (and occasionally scandalous) origins and generally makes you think about the English language. I loved the book, and keep it on my Kindle. And it's given me a whole mine of useless but fascinating information. It's certainly a good book to give as a gift: it's a fun book just to dip into for anyone with the slightest interest in language. If you're anything like me you will read and re-read. I find I remember that there's a curious story behind a particular word, but I have to go back to the book to search it out.

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