

Looking for dictionary recommendations

The Urth list — 15 messages, 12 voices, 12 Jun 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4648>

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Kate Savage — 12 Jun 2006, 01:32

I am looking for dictionary recommendations. I would like to purchase a good reference book for all those obscure word's Wolfe use that I have never seen before. I am thinking if getting a used copy of the Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary but it isn't the handiest format for casually looking up unfamiliar words. I am also thinking of the Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged.

Any other suggestions?

Thanks in advance.

Chris — 12 Jun 2006, 02:44 · in reply to Kate Savage

I think there is a version of the OED that gives you access to their online edition. It is really quite handy.

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JWillard — 12 Jun 2006, 03:02 · in reply to Kate Savage

Kate Savage wrote:

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Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

Mark Millman — 12 Jun 2006, 06:35 · in reply to Kate Savage

Kate,

You might also want to get a copy of *_Mrs. Byrne's Dictionary of Unusual, Obscure, and Preposterous Words_*, by Josefa Heifetz Byrne. Wolfe has referred to it in, I believe, an essay or an interview, and it has some words that are tough to find even in the OED.

Then there's always *_The Castle of the Otter_*, collected in *_Castle of Days_* but frequently available on the secondary market, and Michael Andre-Driussi's *_Lexicon Urthus_*, though this latter is very difficult to find, and usually quite costly when found. I have a copy of *_Castle_* I can give you--let me know by private e-mail whether or not you already have a copy--but the three copies of the *_Lexicon_* I found are \$225 (abebooks), \$250 (Amazon), and \$495 (!--abebooks again), respectively.

Or you personally may send me vocabulary lists if you like, and I'll send definitions. (This offer available only to Kate Savage.)

Mark

On Sun, 11 Jun 2006, Kate Savage wrote:
I am looking for dictionary recommendations. I would like to purchase a good reference book for all those obscure word's Wolfe use that I have never seen before. I am thinking if getting a used copy of the Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary but it isn't the handiest format for casually looking up unfamiliar words. I am also thinking of the Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged.

Any other suggestions?

Thanks in advance.

Robert Davies — 12 Jun 2006, 13:34 · follows Mark Millman

I got a hardcover copy of *Lexicon Urthus* from Amazon.com a year or two ago for around \$25. I can't imagine it's that hard to get. You may be better off with ebay than online booksellers. They have delusions of grandeur sometimes (\$495!).

Rob

-----Original Message-----

From: Mark Millman <millman at heimdallr.dyndns.org>
Sent: Jun 12, 2006 2:35 AM
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Cc: urth at urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Looking for dictionary recommendations

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Thanks in advance.

Macronaut — 12 Jun 2006, 14:27 · in reply to Kate Savage

You might also consider the DVD version of the OED.
Much easier to search, and it's far cheaper.

Macronaut

--- Kate Savage <katesavage2001 at yahoo.com> wrote:
I am looking for dictionary recommendations. I would like to purchase a good reference book for all those obscure word's Wolfe use that I have never seen before. I am thinking if getting a used copy of the Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary but it isn't the handiest format for casually looking up unfamiliar words. I am also thinking of the Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged.

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Kate Savage — 12 Jun 2006, 14:29 · follows Macronaut

Thank you for the wonderful advice about dictionaries. I have Castle of Days Gene Wolfe himself picked it out from me when I meet him at Readercon. (I asked him for a recommendation saying I would rather stay away from multiple volumes sets but would like an introduction to his work). I read some of it and set it aside. I was unaware of the comments he had on dictionaries or of The Castle of the Otter and I think I will read both tonight. It is ironic that I was at a bookstore recently and could not decide between an American Heritage and the Merriam-Webster's unabridged dictionary. Both were shrink-wrapped and I came very close to getting the American Heritage.

I think I will buy Byrne's Dictionary of Unusual, Obscure, and Preposterous Words as well as The New York Times Everyday Reader's Dictionary of Misunderstood, Misused, Mispronounced Words. I have a bid in on a copy of OED, so hopefully I will get it for a reasonable sum. I am sadly aware of the Lexicon Urthus. I had not thought about a Latin-English dictionary before but it is an excellent idea.

Mark — what a kind offer! I may take you up on it. My husband and I were talking about Wolfe's vocabulary the other night. Tom said that he believes Wolfe sometimes will take a word and shift its definition a little to better suit his purpose. I may find a definition for an obscure word and find that it may still be not quite right.

Does anyone have the contact information for Michael Andre-Driussi? It seems that a publisher like Wildside Press could put the Lexicon Urthus back in print.

I have been having trouble with my Yahoo account. Please try my work email or call me if I don't return email in a timely fashion.

Roy C. Lackey — 12 Jun 2006, 17:37 · follows Kate Savage

Kate Savage wrote:

Does anyone have the contact information for Michael Andre-Driussi? It seems that a publisher like Wildside Press could put the Lexicon Urthus back in print.<<

He is working, if intermittently, on an expanded edition. See here for more info.

<http://www.siriusfiction.com/>

-Roy

Daniel D Jones — 12 Jun 2006, 22:06 · in reply to Macronaut

On Monday 12 June 2006 10:27, Macronaut wrote:
You might also consider the DVD version of the OED.
Much easier to search, and it's far cheaper.

You must be referring to the Concise OED DVD. I haven't seen the OED Single User Edition for under \$400.

Russell Wodell — 13 Jun 2006, 02:24 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

I obtained the Lexicon fairly easily through interlibrary loan in Canada; it even came from an American library, without charge, in about two weeks. Normally I wouldn't do this for a book still in print, but as others have noted, the price now is prohibitive.

Wouldn't a Wolfe wiki more or less have to include, or duplicate, all of Andre-Driussi's hard work?

Russell

----- Original Message -----

From: "Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net>
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Monday, June 12, 2006 10:37 AM
Subject: Re: (urth) Looking for dictionary recommendations
Kate Savage wrote:

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Jeff Wilson — 13 Jun 2006, 07:34 · in reply to Russell Wodell

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Wouldn't a Wolfe wiki more or less have to include, or duplicate, all of Andre-Driussi's hard work?

some of it, but his work itself duplicates Wolfe's hard work.... Of course, wikifying the book is likely to produce new insights and discoveries that can be fed back into the new edition of the LEXICON, so he may be more than repaid for the few unbound copies unsold to dilettantes who satisfy their curiosity with the wiki instead.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

Macronaut — 13 Jun 2006, 14:32 · in reply to Daniel D Jones

No, but I meant only that the DVD version (full or concise) is much, much cheaper than trying to get the OED in print.

Macronaut

--- Daniel D Jones <ddjones at riddlemaster.org> wrote:
On Monday 12 June 2006 10:27, Macronaut wrote:

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Kate Savage — 13 Jun 2006, 20:41 · follows Macronaut

On Mon 12 Jun 2006 12:37 Roy C. Lackey wrote:
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<http://www.siriusfiction.com/>

I was going to post an update to the list about the site you mentioned. There are photocopied spiral bound versions of the Lexicon Urthus for \$25 for those who want the information and don't have \$225 plus to spend.

I also noticed he has some other booklets on the New Sun and Long Sun. Has anyone read them?

I have been having trouble with my Yahoo account. Please try my work email or call me if I don't return email in a timely fashion.

Adam Thornton — 14 Jun 2006, 04:16 · in reply to Kate Savage

On Jun 13, 2006, at 3:41 PM, Kate Savage wrote:
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I also noticed he has some other booklets on the New Sun and Long Sun. Has anyone read them?

- a) the spiral-bound Lexicon is well worth the \$25
- b) I have read all the booklets; they're all worth reading. So is

Snake's-Hands if you're into John Crowley. As I am.

Adam

maru dubshinki — 15 Jun 2006, 04:27 · in reply to Macronaut

On 6/12/06, Macronaut <macronaut at yahoo.com> wrote:

You might also consider the DVD version of the OED.

Much easier to search, and it's far cheaper.

Macronaut

To be honest, I'd have to disagree. I own the Compact OED and I've used the disc versions, and the COED is a better choice. The price differential doesn't really justify one over the other (for such a long-term purchase, anyway), and even worse, the disc version is Windows-only. In ten or 20 years, which one do you think will still be as useful as the day they were bought? (And that's assuming one even uses Windows, which isn't a safe assumption). No doubt there are other reasons other than simply future-proofing things.

~maru