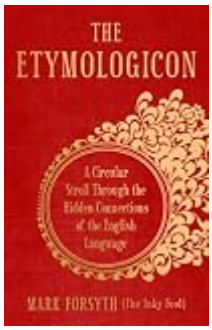
BOOKS I HAVE READ: THE ETYMOLOGICON

Posted on March 31, 2013 by Eddie

Category: Reviews



I like words and I like books about words; I'll even read dictionaries for fun. However, thoughÂ The Etymologicon: A Circular Stroll through the Hidden Connections of the English LanguageÂ is a book about words (and a former number one on the Sunday Times best seller list) I didn't really enjoy it very much.

On one level, it's quite good fun. Each short chapter gives a brief overview of the origin of some common words which are linked together by a tenuous theme. With each chapter more or less flowing out of the one before and the very last chapter sort of linking back to the first one. The approach is interesting and the contents, if hardly revolutionary, isn't bad. The problem is that whole thing is written in such a smug, self-satisfied, look-at-me-aren't-I-clever, sort of fashion that it began to seriously annoy me after a while.

The author, who is probably a perfectly charming man, seems to be trying hard to convince you that he is the sort of person that you would dread sitting next to at a dinner party.

I paid 20p for it on Kindle which was fair enough. Currently it is retailing for Â£5.19 - it isn't worth it!