



The Secret Lives of Words

Paul West

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Word enthusiasts will find trivia and treasure" (Kirkus Reviews) in this collection of unusual etymologies authored by an unmatched prose stylist and fabulous wordsmith.

Over the centuries, thousands of our words have been so twisted, tangled, misused, and muddled that their original meanings have been obscured. You'll be surprised to learn that table napkins were once made of and referred to as asbestos, a cloud was once a hill, and lasagna could be

literally translated as chamberpot pasta. In *The Secret Lives of Words*, acclaimed author and stylist Paul West fulfills a personal odyssey to seek out the elusive roots of these and a few hundred other of his favorite words, from abracadabra to zoot suit. Derived from handwritten notebooks, West chronicles the tortuous travels of words across continents and through cultures in this Antiques Road Show approach to etymology. A delight in both form and content, West's collection will capture the attention of word enthusiasts, speakers, writers, thinkers, and readers around the globe.

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