

THE
INSOMNIAC'S
The
Last Word
on
the Odd Word
DICTIONARY



Paul Hellweg

THE INSOMNIAC'S DICTIONARY

*The Last Word
on the
Odd Word*

Paul Hellweg

Illustrated by
Joan Leigh Herder



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**The Insomniac's Dictionary:
The Last Word on the Odd Word**

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THE INSOMNIAC'S DICTIONARY

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Paul Hellweg
Northridge, California

INTRODUCTION

I have called this book *The Insomniac's Dictionary* partly because it was born in the dark hours of night during my own periods of sleeplessness. More to the point, it's the perfect book for insomniacs, book browsers, and anyone else with a little time to while away. For one, it doesn't require much in the way of mental or emotional commitment (have you ever tried reading Kafka at 3 A.M.?). And secondly, it's not meant to be read through at once. I encourage everyone to skim and skip around a bit.

The Insomniac's Dictionary presents nearly three thousand strange and intriguing words, all of which are grouped together by categories. By way of explaining why I've chosen this format, I'd like to briefly relate my inspiration for writing this book. It's been more than a dozen years since I first discovered the joys of dictionary reading. From the very beginning, I was amazed by the richness of our language. I quickly became enchanted with words the likes of *pentheraphobia* (fear of one's mother-in-law), *kakistocracy* (government by the worst citizens), and *ailuromancy* (divination by watching the way a cat jumps). I wanted more. I wanted to see all the phobias, all the governments, all the fortune-telling words. It didn't take long to realize I was stymied—there were books that included these delightful words, but none that grouped them together to be enjoyed as a whole. Thus my research began.

The results are here for you to enjoy. Some of the lists are as all-inclusive as I could make them. Every chapter has been thoroughly and painstakingly researched. I cannot claim that the resulting lists are absolutely complete, but I can state that they are more complete than any lists that can be found in any other reference book.

On the other hand, some of the chapters make no attempt to be all-inclusive. Such chapters are intended merely as introductions to their respective subjects. By way of example, our language contains over 20,000 eponyms (persons for whom something is named). Most of these

are obscure scientific terms or measurements, and it's obviously beyond the scope of this book to list them all. It wouldn't be much fun either.

Most of the word lists are pretty long, and I've thus chosen to divide them into smaller groups. I admit these subcategories are totally arbitrary—they are a means of presenting the words in easier-to-digest servings and should not be construed as definitive classifications. And speaking of digestibility, I would not recommend reading some of the longer chapters in one sitting. Remember: this book is best enjoyed by browsing, not straightforward reading.

Though it may be hard to believe, all entries in *The Insomniac's Dictionary* are real words. You may not be able to find them in your personal dictionary, and some aren't even in standard unabridged dictionaries, but all have been accepted as legitimate English words by at least one significant reference work.

Hopefully this book comes to you without pretensions. I do not ask that you learn new words to use in conversation, nor do I expect to enrich your writing vocabulary (the world already has its share of obtuse literature). Some people may find this dictionary useful as a serious reference tool, but this also is not my intent. My only hope is that you find pleasure in the pages that follow.

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
Introduction	xiii
I. Logophilia or Logomisia? A Guide to “Word” Words	1
II. The Alector’s Lexicon: Words About Insomnia	5
III. A Glossary for Pantophobes: 555 Phobias	10
IV. Manifestly Manifold Manias	25
V. Omnicidal Maniacs: A Guide to “Killing” Words	39
VI. A Convocation of Eagles: Collective Nouns for Animals	47
VII. Squealers, Squeakers, and Cheepers: Animal Young	51
VIII. Of Cygnine Maidens and Anguineous Villains: A Look at Animal Adjectives	56
IX. Pick a Government	64
X. “-Omancy” Fancy: A Divine Guide to Divinations	73
XI. Hippopotomonstrosesquipedalian Delights: Long Words	83
XII. Do, Re, Mi: Short Words	91
XIII. Cwm, Qoph, Zaqqum, and Other Trw Wrds	97
XIV. A Peanut-Butter-and-Jelly Farnsworth: Eponyms	105
XV. Of Acronyms and Portmanteaus	113
XVI. Of Lubber-Wort and Nunchions: A Look at Lost Words	123
XVII. The Eye-Opener: Words on Love, Sex, and Marriage	129
XVIII. The Penultimate Chapter: 151 Uncategorizable but Delightful Words	136
XIX. An Introduction to Word Play	144
Bibliography	154

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LOGOLATRY	2
PANDICULATION	8
AMAXOPHOBIA	13
DROMOMANIA	30
TOMOMANIA	32
TOMECIDE	46
MURDER	48
CRASH	49
JOEY	55
VESPERTILIAN	57
ANGELOCRACY	67
MYOMANCY	77
AA	92
MAYONNAISE	106
MELBA TOAST	107
LEOTARD	110
BELLYGOD	124
DEFENESTRATION	139
POGONOPHILE	141

I

LOGOPHILIA OR LOGOMISIA?

A Guide to “Word” Words

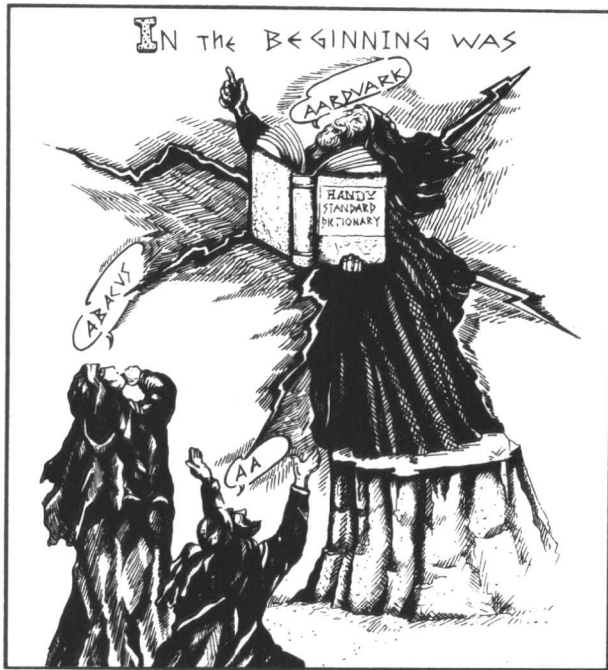
I am assuming that readers of this dictionary are logofascinated individuals. So in honor of all logolepts (word maniacs), I am presenting a list of “word” words as the first chapter. There are obviously hundreds of words about “words,” but this chapter is fairly short. Each entry, however, is special. The prefix of each is derived from the Greek *logos*, which means speech, word, or reason.

Because of the various meanings of *logos*, this Greek term is the root of numerous modern words which do not relate to speech or writing (for example, “logic” is based on the meaning “reason”). The list that follows is limited to “logo” terms that do in fact relate to the subject of this book: words. Many of these are esoteric medical or psychological terms; thus I have divided the list into two categories. The first deals with “logo” words of general interest, and the second covers the more specialized terms.

GENERAL “WORD” WORDS

Logamnesia: Forgetting words

Loganamnosis: Mania for trying to recall forgotten words



Logolatry: *worship of words*

Logaoedic: Words having a metrical rhythm

Logia: Plural of logion

Logion: Maxim of a religious teacher (or other short “pregnant” saying)

Logo: An identifying statement or symbol

Logocracy: System of government in which words are the ruling power
(all talk and no action)

Logodaedalus: One who is cunning in words

Logodaedaly: Arbitrary coinage of words

Logodiarrhea: Rapid, voluble speech

Logofascinated: Fascinated by words

Logogogue: One who legislates about words

Logogram: 1. A symbol used to represent an entire word (\$ for dollar, etc.); 2. a word puzzle

Logograph: Logogram

Logographer: A prose writer in ancient Greece

Logography: Art of arranging letters for printing

Logogriph: An anagrammatic puzzle
Logolatry: Worship of words
Logolept: A word maniac
Logologist: One who studies words
Logology: The study of words
Logomachy: 1. Dispute about words; 2. a word game
Logomacice: Logomachy
Logomancy: Divination based on words
Logomania: Overtalkativeness
Logomisia: Disgust for certain words
Logomonomania: Great loquacity
Logonomy: The science of language
Logophile: One who loves words (hence logophilia: love of words)
Logophobia: A strong aversion to words
Logorrhea: Excessive or abnormal talkativeness
Logospasm: Spasmodic utterance of words (stuttering)
Logotype: Type containing two or more letters cast as one piece

SPECIALIZED “WORD” WORDS

Logagnosia: Any speech defect due to damage to the central nervous system
Logagraphia: Inability to express ideas in writing
Logaphasia: Speech or writing defect due to damage to the brain
Logasthenia: Disturbance of that faculty of mind that deals with speech
Logoclonia: Spasmodic repetition of the end syllables of words
Logoklony: Logoclonia
Logokophosis: Inability to comprehend spoken language
Logoneurosis: Neurosis associated with a speech defect
Logopathy: Any speech defect associated with damage to the central nervous system
Logophasia: Logaphasia
Logopedics: (Logopaedics, logopedia, logopaedia)—Study of speech disorders
Logoplegia: Any paralysis of the speech organs

THE INSOMNIAC'S DICTIONARY

As a parting gesture, here are two recently coined “logo” words. Each is delightful, but neither one has been accepted by a standard reference work. Perhaps in time . . .

Logastellus: One whose enthusiasm for words outstrips his knowledge of them (coined by John McClellan, “Word Ways,” August 1970)

Logocide: To kill a word (coined by Dmitri Borgmann, *Language on Vacation* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1965])

II

THE ALECTOR'S LEXICON:

Words About Insomnia

This dictionary is not for run-of-the-mill word lovers; it's for *insomniac* word-lovers. Thus, just as we first took a look at "word" words, let's take an early look at all the unique terms that describe sleep conditions. Our language contains many words about sleeping; however, I've limited the following selection to words that relate either directly or indirectly to insomnia and other sleep disorders.

The title to this chapter ("The Alector's Lexicon"), by the way, is simply a grandiloquent way of saying "The Insomniac's Dictionary." See below (alector) and Chapter XVIII (lexicon).

I do not mean to imply that you have to be a confirmed insomniac to enjoy this chapter. But sleepless nights, whether they be habitual or occasional, seem to be virtually universal. I've only once met a person who claimed *never* to have had a sleepless night. This chapter is not for him. It's for the rest of us.

SYNONYMS FOR INSOMNIA

To begin with, here is a list of synonyms for insomnia. If you are in fact reading this at 3 A.M., it might be comforting to know you're not

alone. Considering the number of words describing the condition, I should think there must be many people thus afflicted.

Synonyms for insomnia:

agrypnia
ahypnia
anypnia
aypnia
cacosomnia
insomnolence
pernoctation
zoara

SLEEP INDUCERS

Here we have a list of every insomniac's heartfelt desire. The following adjectives are all synonymous and all mean "pertaining to that which induces sleep." These soporific adjectives refer to sleep inducers in general, whether they be an esoteric drug or a simple cup of warm milk (or your Uncle Herman's slide show of his latest trip to Fargo, North Dakota).

Adjectives pertaining to sleep inducers:

hypnagogic
hypnogenic
somniafacient
somniaferous
soporiferous
soporific

SYNONYMS FOR SOMNAMBULISM

Your insomnia may not seem so bad once you've seen what some people do in their sleep. Here's a list of synonyms for somnambulism, which means "abnormal sleep condition in which motor acts (typically

walking) are performed.” For some intriguing variations, see *lunastimus* and *somnocyclism* in the next section of this chapter.

Synonyms for somnambulism:

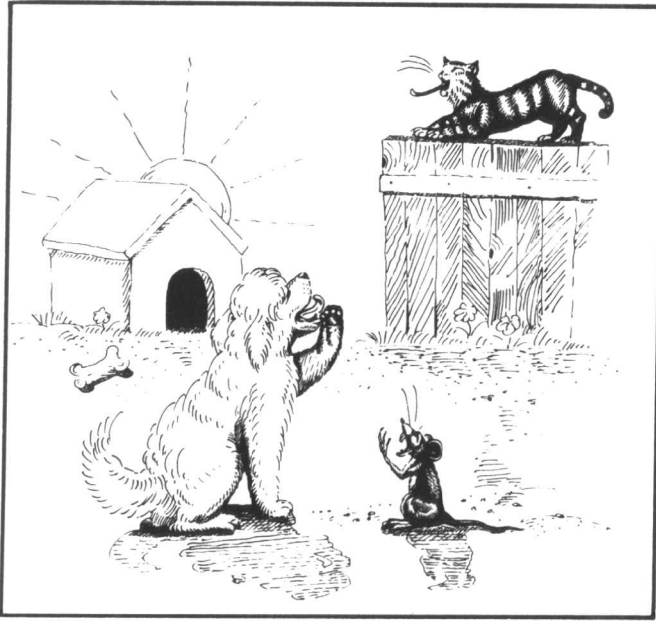
authypnobatesis
autnyctobatesis
hypnenergia
hypnobadisis
hypnobasis
hypnobatesis
hypnobatia
hypnonergia
noctambulation
nyctiplanctus
nyctobadia
nyctobatia
selenogamia (Literally: “wedded to the moon”)
somnovigil

MISCELLANEOUS

The following words all deal with sleep disturbances or closely related themes. Again, insomnia may not seem so bad when compared to its opposites. Narcolepsy, for example, is a medical condition in which the sufferer is subject to falling deeply asleep anytime, anywhere. To narcoleptics, insomnia might well seem a blessing.

Other sleep-disturbance words:

Agrypnotic: That which drives sleep away
Alector: A person who is unable to sleep
Consternatio: Night terrors in children
Dysania: Difficulty in becoming fully awake after sleep (opposite of *euania*—see Chapter XVIII).
Egersis: Intense wakefulness
Hypersomnia: Sleep of excessive duration
Hypnodia: Somnolence (unnatural sleepiness)
Hypnolepsy: Narcolepsy



Pandiculation: *the act of stretching and yawning*

Hypnopathy: Narcolepsy

Hypnophobia: Fear of sleep

Hypnophrenosis: A general term for any sleep disturbance

Hypnosia: Uncontrollable drowsiness

Hyposomnia: Lack of sleep; sleep for shorter periods than normal

Hypotaxis: Light sleep

Levisomnous: Light sleep

Lunastimus: Somnambulist who walks about only when the moon is shining

Malneirophrenia: A distressed state of mind following a nightmare (opposite of *euneirophrenia*—see Chapter XVIII)

Narcolepsy: Uncontrollable sleep

Narcohypnia: Numbness felt on waking from sleep

Oneiroidynia: Sleep disturbed with nightmares

Oneironosus: Morbid dreaming

Parahypnosis: Abnormal sleep

Parasomnia: Disturbed sleep