



Slayer Slang: A Buffy the Vampire Slayer Lexicon

By Michael Adams

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In its seven years on television, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* earned critical acclaim and a massive cult following among teen viewers. One of the most distinguishing features of the show is the innovative way its writers play with language-- fabricating new words, morphing existing ones, and throwing usage on its head. The result has been a strikingly resonant lexicon that reflects the power of both youth culture and television in the evolution of American slang. Using the show to illustrate how new slang is formed, transformed, and transmitted, *Slayer Slang* is one of those rare books that combines a serious explanation of a pop culture phenomenon with an engrossing read for Buffy fans, language mavens, and pop culture critics. Noted linguist Michael Adams offers a synopsis of the program's history, an essay on the nature and evolution of the show's language, and a detailed glossary of slayer slang, annotated with actual dialogue. Introduced by Jane Espenson, one of the show's most inventive writers (and herself a linguist), *Slayer Slang* offers a quintessential example of contemporary youth culture serving as a vehicle for slang.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The cult TV show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, which follows a California cheerleader's crusade against the undead, has spawned websites and posting boards, novels, comics and, in the academy, Buffy Studies. This volume, a glossary of the show's distinctive dialect ("Buffyspeak"), is a strange marriage of a fan guide and a linguistics textbook. Referencing the original 1992 film as well as the TV show, the almost 75 novels and novelizations based on the character, the official and unofficial web posting boards and other media associated with the "Buffyverse," the monograph comprises an affectionate but technical paean to American slang and youth culture in addition to its 150-page glossary. As a study of actuation (the origins of new words), lexical gaps (concepts without names), loose idioms, new syntactic patterns and ephemeral language in all things Buffy, the book may be slow-going for the average fan, but the glossary itself offers entertaining browsing for diehard and casual watchers of the show. "The micro-history of the word Buffy is a veritable saga," Adams writes with relish. Indeed, the glossary includes nearly 40 variations on the name: Buffyatics (older fans of the show), Buffinator (Buffy herself or one who criticizes Buffy) and Franken-Buffy (monster in the guise of Buffy), to name just a few. Readers can also delight in a breakdown of Buffy's distinctive and amusing use of suffixes ("mathiness," "lunchable"), and its celebration of the prefix uber- ("ubernerd," "uberachiever"). Each exhaustive glossary entry includes parts of speech, etymology, definitions and illustrative quotations from magazine articles, posting boards and countless episodes (writer, date and speaker cited). Ultimately, the book is for a very niche audience of Slayer-obsessed linguists--other readers may be baffled by this blend of academia and pop-culture mania.

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Review

"If you're curious about the word 'ubersuck,' or just want to remember which episode you first heard it in, this is the place to look. As Buffy would say, it is not uncool."--*Kansas City Star*

"While we were caught up in the drama of the battles against the undead...linguist Michael Adams was concentrating on the words. *Slayer Slang* is a combination dictionary of slayer slang/guide to the Buffyverse/textbook. Just consider it another sign Buffy will live forever."--*Sacramento Bee*

"Even if you never watched the show, *Slayer Slang* provides major clueage about the formation of slang terms in general. Slang, after all, is where language vrooms and vibes--or, in the case of *Buffy*, where it vamps."--*Hartford Courant*

"In applying linguistic analysis to the show, Adams not only shows how brilliant and innovative the writing was but also its toggling relationship to and influences upon popular culture."--*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

"Will satisfy the inner geek of a *Buffy* fan."--*Kansas City Star*

About the Author

Michael Adams teaches at Indiana University Bloomington and is the editor of *Dictionaries: The Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Adam Nelson:

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