

After the story (DOG EAR)

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 01 January 2015 00:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 01 January 2015 08:42



So I'm in Stephen Donaldson's *Lord Foul's Bane* right now, a saga that a reader-chum at work convinced me to try. This has been on the back of my mind since my roomie in college (all those long years ago) raved about it.

And it's the usual fantasy novel. A lot of walking and a lot of strange names, races and titles. And while I can't do anything about the travelogue, I remembered what I should do for the baffling syntax.

Yeah, you got it. Flip to the back. And there's the glossary.

I can't tell you how many times I've struggled through a difficult book only to stumble onto the woulda-been-helpful glossary after the final page has been flipped. As a young reader, I came upon it too late in *Flashman*. Recently, the one in first *Game of Thrones* book eluded me (difficult to imagine, since it's a short story in itself).

I can't be the only one missing the glossary until it's too late.

I'm left wondering if there is something we might do, as writers, to help the readers get through our sprawling tales where the *Illianx* are in desperate a *Rossari*-war to prevent the dark *Valdiaks* from destroying *Upah4&%*

. The only thing I can think of is the splash page, where the title and author appear (in the stark moviehouse, soul-reflection purity of page-whiteness), and just before the page with your pithy quote. Perhaps, below the title and below the author, well down so as not to trouble the visuals of the thing, the words

Glossary Follows

should be added. This won't save everyone – depending on my mood, I'll either pause at that page and muse "So it begins..." or just flip past all that to the first page, snuggling into my chair and diving into the action.

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Another idea (one I originally intended for ***Fire and Bronze*** when it was more a Phoenician language glossary than story) was to put it in the front, just after the title and quote. This, of course, works because the reader will likely spot it going in. The danger of this is that a glossary that notes a character as *Fundam*
ere: itinerant woodgatherer and secret King of Upah4&%
gives the game away. Also, bulky front-side glossaries might put off a potential reader who is thumbing open the book at the local shop, setting him to thinking “I gotta know all this? Shoot, learning French would be easier...”

But there are at least two options. However, all writers should remember that, unlike the readers we dream of writing for, most readers are catching a couple of pages on the evening train or right before bed. They need hints if they are to follow your *Rossari-war*. In the realms of make-believe or detailed historic fiction, where the culture is not our own, you’ll likely need a glossary. And where you’ll put it – that’s up to you.

Good luck.

[>>>MAYBE I SHOULD PUT THIS LINK TO MY BOOKS AT THE TOP, D’JA THINK? OR HERE? HARD TO SAY WHICH WORKS BEST. BUY ONE OF MINE HERE AND TELL ME OF YOUR EXPERIENCE!<<<](#)