**THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: Confounding Us With its Quirks and Complexities.**

The English language, also known as the Queen’s language, has often been hailed as a global lingua franca. One one hand, it is a powerful tool for communication, facilitating international dialogue and understanding. On the other, it’s a linguistic labyrinth, filled with peculiarities that can confound even the most seasoned speakers. Simply put, it can be a language full of inconsistencies, absurdities and contradictions.

The English language has a fascinating history, shaped by various invasions, cultural exchanges and linguistic influences. The first influences of the language came from the Roman occupation of what is today known as Britain. As they invaded, they brought with them, along with many other things, their language -(Latin). After the decline and withdrawal of the Roman Empire declined and its legions from the region, the Germanic tribes from the Nordic region invaded. This laid the foundations for Old English. Then the Norman conquest led to the adoption of so many French words (another conquest). Then Middle English emerged between the 11th - 15th Centuries, and it would go through various iterations, before becoming the modern day English Language.

The evolution of the language never stops, as we can find so many other influences (Italian, Spanish, German, Arabic, various African languages, e.t.c). Some places have even created their own version of English - the Nigerian Pidgin and the Jamaican Patois major examples. All-in-all, English is truly a global language. And int the current social media age we’re in………..well the less said about that, the better. English language has so many words, some of them meaning the same or nearly the same thing. For example; Jog, Sprint, Gallop, Canter, Trot all mean to run, all be it at different speeds. You want a single word to define a process or situation? You can bet it exists in English. And if it doesn’t……..well, it will simply borrow from another language!

But here’s the kicker; English, for all its charm and global recognition, is a crazy language. It has so many rules - until it’s time to defenestrate them! Rules come here to die! Words and expressions don’t always mean what they seem. They stand in defiance against logic! ‘Overlook’ and ‘Oversee’ sound similar but mean nearly opposite things. Same for ‘Wise man’ and ‘Wise guy’. Then there’s ‘a slim chance’ and ‘a fat chance’ which both mean the same thing. Same for ‘Flammable’ and ‘Inflammable’. And when you tell smeone to break a leg, you’re actually wishing them well! You’re told ‘i’ before ‘e’; Chief, Grief, Thief. But for the same /I:/ sound, we have ‘Seize’. A person who hunts? A hunter. A person who sings? A singer. A person who cooks? A Cook! Where’s the ‘er’! There’s ‘read’ and ‘read’, same spelling and meaning, but different pronunciations depending on tense. The past tense of ‘gut’ is ‘gutted’, but the past tense of ‘cut’ is ‘cut’ as well. One mouse becomes two mice. One louse becomes two lice. One house? Two houses, instead of hice. Same for Goose/Geese, Tooth/Teeth, Foot/Feet. Moose should become Meese right? WRONG! It’s still Moose!

Spelling in English can be confusing sometimes. ‘Queue’ has five letters yet sounds the same as the letter ‘Q’. Silent letters sneak in like ninjas. Psychology. Honest. Knife. Gnome. Pneumonia. You get the gist. As for pronunciations…..sigh. ‘Gh’ can sound like ‘F’ (Tough), or be totally silent (High). At the beginning of words though, it sounds totally different (Ghetto).

If you ever find yourself confused by the language, I’ll say just accept and move on. It is contradictory, sometimes absurd and illogical. It is a language where noses can run, feet can smell, and fingers can ‘toe the line’! Imagine!