

## The Paronomasiac

I have a dreadful and incurable disease. As a result, my wife has left me. My children all changed their names. I have no friends. People who know me cross to the other side of the street when they see me coming. I have the rare, but deadly social disorder known as....paronomasia.

At first, like Job of old, shunned by all and struck by a terminal malady, I didn't understand why this terrible calamity had happened to me. Last month, for example, I met a fine gentleman over by El Torito's. We struck up a conversation. We had much in common, an interest in sports, we were both well traveled and we had retired to the Lake Chapala area. So we had lunch together.

He mentioned, during the conversation, a strange paradox. He thought it peculiar that many foreign people live here without trying to learn Spanish. I agreed with him and told him of some faux pas I had made while trying to speak. We chuckled together over our linguistic mistakes. Things seemed to be going just fine when it happened.

I asked him, "Do you know the meaning of the word 'paradox'?"

"Of course," he answered. "It means a statement that is seemingly opposed to common sense, yet is perhaps true."

"No," I said with a straight face. "It is either two physicians or a couple of mallards."

I received a look that could only be interpreted as speechless.

"You, know," I elucidated. 'a pair 'o docs' or 'a pair o' ducks'."

He gestured to the waiter for *la cuenta*, paid for both our lunches and rushed off "to a meeting." I haven't heard from him again despite leaving several messages on his phone unit.

I think it all started many years ago when I was a theology student. Father Ignatius was the teacher, a priest with an astounding understanding of scripture but a cleric whose face, it was claimed, would shatter if he ever laughed. I took this as a challenge. He encouraged us to read some of the apocryphal biblical

books, those which were not judged to be the Word of God, but having interesting stories nevertheless. So I did.

One day in class I told him I had been reading Exodus so I did a little research. I said I had found a little known apocryphal version reportedly written by a cousin of Moses, named Mooses.

“According to the Book of Mooses,” I read, “God told him that he was eventually going to get to this place inhabited by the Caananites, Hithites and the Amorrhites”

I could see Father Ignatius looking at me at first incredulously, but then as I read his head nodded appreciatively.

“The land was also inhabited by the Jebusites,” I read. “I wonder if these people might have been ancient forerunners of The Society of Jesus?” Father Ignatius looked at me sternly.

“This is not a class for humor,” he intoned. “No editorial remarks, please. Go on.”

Making this guy laugh needed more jocular fuel, I decided. “... and the Megabites, the Floodlites, who were apparently descendents of Noah, the Expidites, a tribe of project managers and the most popular of the tribes, the Budlites.”

After I was expelled from the seminary, I changed majors and locations. I was accepted into the University of Idaho. I will refrain from a paronomasiac definition of that fine establishment’s name because of recent unsavory statements by Don Imus, the chastised New York radio talk show imbecile.

In an astronomy class I suggested to the teacher that the appropriate definition of the term “asteroid,” was a painful posterior protuberance which could be helped by Preparation H. I was required to switch majors again.

In my physics class, I defined “force” as a ludicrous comic drama, “Ohm’s Law” as a sound required while transcendently meditating, and an “electron” as a democratically appointed negative charge.

In paleontology, I defined “aardvark” as a task requiring great effort. Digging ditches is aardvark. “Horse” are women of ill repute. “Dalmatian” is what happens if you lead a wicked life. You are sent to your eternal dalmatian.

My disease was evidently progressing with alarming rapidity. I tried to repress it, but the more I tried various remedies, the worse it became. As with Star Trek, I saw puns where none had gone before. I heard people make outrageous puns when they didn't intend them. I told my drinking buddy that while a couple of glasses of wine is okay, he shouldn't drink a giraffe. He looked at me strangely. "A whole giraffe of wine would get you blitzed," I explained. We don't drink together any more.

To a doctor friend, when he mentioned "barium" as a remedy for a rash I had developed, I said, "Barium is what undertakers do when people die. They barium." I said that "cranium" was a language similar to Russian, and then, on a roll, I mentioned that a "genital" was a non-Jewish person and that "artery" was the study of paintings. I tried being more cautious in my discussions with my new doctor, but after only one visit, he too, was unavailable. His nurse said he had a very bad seizure. I told her that was unlikely because Seizure was killed by Brutus long ago. She hung up on me.

To a bird watching fanatic I mentioned that a "sparrow" was an extra bird in case the other one had a blow-out, that "illegal" was a sick bird and finally, at the abrupt end of our friendship, I shouted as he ran down the road screaming, hands over both ears, "And a 'Myna' is an underage bird."

So here I am, a little morbid<sup>1</sup>, sitting on my rectum<sup>2</sup>, watching the beautiful constipations<sup>3</sup> at night. I hope these depressions<sup>4</sup> go away<sup>5</sup> or at least become benign<sup>6</sup>.

But, please, I am in a real dilemma<sup>7</sup>. Does anyone have a cure for this affliction<sup>8</sup>?

<sup>1</sup> A higher offer than the one I made at an auction

<sup>2</sup> It damn near killed 'em

<sup>3</sup> A group of stars that make a picture in the sky

<sup>4</sup> Germans with spike on helmets, meaner than de Bavarians

<sup>5</sup> Little Miss Muffet food

<sup>6</sup> What you be after you be eight

<sup>7</sup> Similar to de theorem

<sup>8</sup> A boycotted film