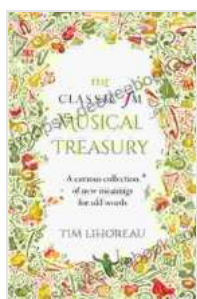# A Curious Collection of New Meanings for Old Words: Exploring the Evolution of Language

Language is a living thing, constantly evolving to meet the needs of its speakers. Over time, words can change their meanings, sometimes dramatically. This process is called semantic change, and it can be fascinating to trace the evolution of words from their original meanings to their current usage.

The Classic fM Musical Treasury: A Curious Collection of New Meanings for Old Words by Tim Lihoreau

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 4406 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 192 pages

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Here is a collection of some of the most curious and interesting examples of new meanings for old words:

1. Awful

The word "awful" originally meant "full of awe or reverence." It was often used to describe something that was inspiring or majestic. However, over time, the meaning of the word has shifted, and it is now more commonly used to describe something that is bad or unpleasant.

- **Original meaning:** "Full of awe or reverence"

- **Current meaning:** "Bad or unpleasant"

2. Nice

The word "nice" originally meant "foolish or stupid." It was often used to describe someone who was gullible or easily fooled. However, over time, the meaning of the word has changed, and it is now more commonly used to describe someone who is pleasant or agreeable.

- **Original meaning:** "Foolish or stupid"

- **Current meaning:** "Pleasant or agreeable"

3. Gay

The word "gay" originally meant "happy or cheerful." It was often used to describe someone who was carefree and optimistic. However, in the 19th century, the word began to be used as a slang term for homosexual men. This usage has since become more widespread, and the word "gay" is now commonly used to refer to homosexual people of all genders.

- **Original meaning:** "Happy or cheerful"

- **Current meaning:** "Homosexual"

4. Queer

The word "queer" originally meant "strange or unusual." It was often used to describe something that was different or out of the ordinary. However, in the 20th century, the word began to be used as a slang term for homosexual people. This usage has since become more widespread, and

the word "queer" is now commonly used to refer to homosexual people of all genders.

- **Original meaning:** "Strange or unusual"

- **Current meaning:** "Homosexual"

5. Sick

The word "sick" originally meant "ill or unwell." It was often used to describe someone who was suffering from a physical or mental illness. However, over time, the meaning of the word has broadened, and it is now also used to describe something that is disgusting or unpleasant.

- **Original meaning:** "Ill or unwell"

- **Current meaning:** "Disgusting or unpleasant"

6. Rad

The word "rad" originally meant "bad" or "unpleasant." However, in the 1980s, it began to be used as slang for something that was cool or awesome. This usage has since become more widespread, and the word "rad" is now commonly used to describe something that is positive or desirable.

- **Original meaning:** "Bad or unpleasant"

- **Current meaning:** "Cool or awesome"

7. Lit

The word "lit" originally meant "on fire" or "burning." However, in recent years, it has begun to be used as slang for something that is exciting or

awesome. This usage has become particularly popular on social media, and the word "lit" is now commonly used to describe something that is worth getting excited about.
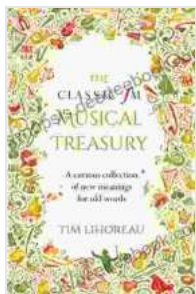
- **Original meaning:** "On fire" or "burning"

- **Current meaning:** "Exciting or awesome"

8. Extra

The word "extra" originally meant "additional" or "beyond what is normal." However, in recent years, it has begun to be used as slang for something that is excessive or over-the-top. This usage has become particularly popular in the fashion and beauty communities, and the word "extra" is now commonly used to describe something that is flashy or attention-grabbing.

- **Original meaning:** "Additional" or "beyond what is normal"

- **Current meaning:** "Excessive or over-the-top"

The English language is a vast and ever-changing tapestry of words. Over time, the meanings of words can change dramatically, reflecting the changing needs and values of its speakers. The examples above are just a few of the many curious and interesting ways that words have changed their meanings over the years.
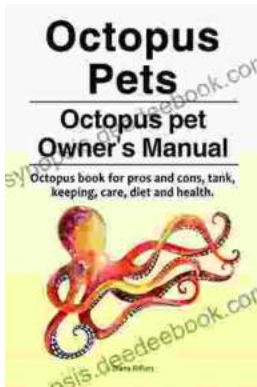
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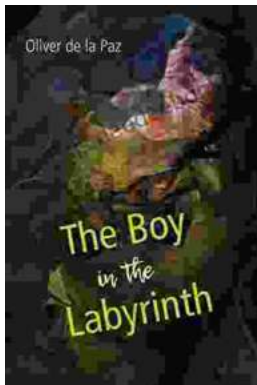| Language	: English
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