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Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1376: Get thee to a funnery

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Add a character to a Shakespeare play; plus winning 'Balliol rhymes'



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**

March 19, 2020 at 10:09 a.m. EDT

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning "Balliol rhymes" about famous people)

Hotspur from "Henry IV, Part I": This sickness doth infect the very lifeblood of our enterprise.

Donald Trump: Maybe it'll disappear by April. Everyone says I know a lot about this stuff.

Leontes from "A Winter's Tale": Mine honest friend, will you take eggs for money?

Gwyneth Paltrow: Sure! Guess what I can do with them!

The Style Invitational: Providing Diversion to the Socially Distant since 1993.

Greetings to the Loser Community from Mount Vermin, the Empress's palace, where nobody's (yet) shut down the mass gathering of Invite entries. So bring them on from your various personal bunkers. Do, however, wipe down your keyboards so as not to poison my laptop. Thank you.



This week's contest: **Add a character (or more) to a Shakespeare play and supply some resulting dialogue**, as in the examples above from Duncan Stevens, Thane of Loserdom, who suggested

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the contest. They can be more than one line, but don't write a whole scene or anything. You can find the whole oeuvre online at opensource-shakespeare.org.



Submit up to a total of 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1376 (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, March 30; results will appear April 19 in print, April 16 online.

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives (as we begin to reach back into the Style Invitational Prize Hoard) **Rocket Launcher** ("Play while you sit"), a setup in which you tap a pedal that shoots a foam projectile toward a target you hang on a door. The illustration on the box shows a joyful man in mule slippers using it while sitting on the toilet, which is why, I guess, the game includes a "Do Not Disturb" sign, though, um, do you really need to post such a warning on a closed bathroom door?

Other runners-up win their choice of our "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" **Loser Mug** or our "Whole Fools" **Grossery Bag**. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "Too-Weak Notice" or "Certificate of (de) Merit." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (**FirStink** for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Slam Iamb" is by Kevin Doport; both Jesse Frankovich and Jon Gearhart submitted the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday; follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.



The Style Conversational: The Empress's weekly online column, published late Thursday, March 19, reviews each new contest and set of results. Check it out at wapo.st/conv1376; this week, Shakespearean humor from various Invite contests over the years.

(Hey, the 'Vite just celebrated its 27th birthday, by the way. Please sing for us as you wash your hands.)

And from [The Style Invitational](#) four weeks ago . . .

Slam Iamb: Inking 'Balliol rhymes' from Week 1372

2 Perspective
What to watch when you've seen everything else? Oh, now you want to hear from the TV critic.



3 Review
The path to enlightenment — and a happy marriage — the Hollis way



4 Perspective
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In [Week 1372](#) we asked for modern-day “Balliol rhymes” — little first-person verses (just four lines, four beats a line) published by campus wags at Oxford’s Balliol College in 1880, mocking various muck-a-mucks.

4th place:

[Coronavirus](#) goes, well, viral,
And stocks are falling in a spiral.
Trump needs a guy to blame, and hence,
I’m now the Virus Czar, **Mike Pence**.
(Francesca Kelly, Highland Park, Ill.)



3rd place:

Inmate #06581138Z
I miss my old familiar bed
With cringing nymphs. Instead, I dread
This bunk where *Cimex* lay their larvae.
What a crime. I’m **Weinstein (Harvey)**.
(Alex Steelsmith, Kailua, Hawaii)

2nd place

and the *Bodily Fluid Cleanup Kit*:
Folks often ask me, “**Mitch McConnell**,
Why hold the same dumb views that Don’ll?
Why not decry the bunk he’s uttered?”
Well, duh! I know where my bread’s buttered.
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

I’m the slippery **Gordon Sondland**;
Bought my way into Fake-Blond-Land.
Spilled the beans, then got the sack —
I want my million dollars back.
(Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

Missed the mock: Honorable mentions

Chris Matthews, I, whose latest gaffe
Became my “Hardball” epitaph.
My Bernie crack was all in fun:
I did Nazi what I had done.
(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

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Barr here. When I pick up the phone,
And hear, “Hey, Bill, ease up on Stone!”
Do we pull levers here at Justice?
Gosh, no! We’re totes impartial! Trust us!
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

I’m **Trump the Great!** Still they demean
My genius with covid-19!
Dunno why everybody chides;
There are good life-forms on both sides. *(Nan Reiner)*

I, **John Bolton**, hid too long;
I timed my coward’s silence wrong.
If they would let me speak what’s true,
I’d say that Trump [REDACTED] too!
(Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.)

“Unfair!” says **Amy Klobuchar**.
“My record shows that I’m a star!
So how could I have met defeat
From such a twerp as Mayor Pete?”
(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

My name is **Mitt, or Willard Romney**;
Though, once I was my party’s nom’nee,
Last month I flexed my spinal bone
And now I eat my lunch alone.
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)



A tenured Pat, my name’s **Tom Brady**;
Foes have oft yclept me shady.
Should my post I abdicate,
New England hearts will fast deflate. *(Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)*

Giannis Antetokounmpo
The Greek Freak, Giannis is my name
And basketball’s my favorite game.
Why do I play? For team? For pay?
It’s for the Bucks whichever way

As for the ducks, whichever way.

(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

Gun control, a border wall,
Green New Deal, and a football:
Four things that can't pass in D.C.
I'm **Dwayne Haskins**, your QB.

(Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)

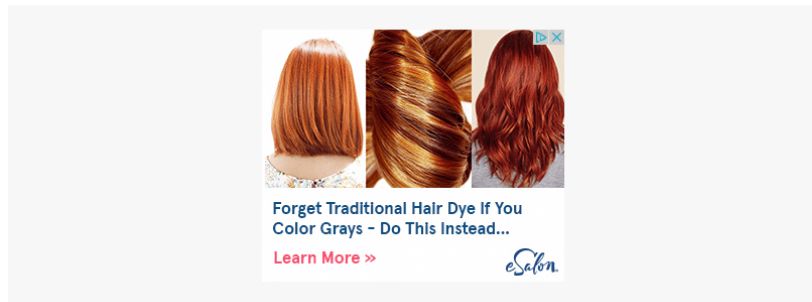
My name is **Lady Liberty**.

I welcome you, if you should be
With bulging purse, and you're from Norway.
Otherwise, back out the doorway. *(Nan Reiner)*

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In the Democratic fashion,
We're for every creed and passion.
Woke, diverse and so enlightened
Though our candidates have whitened . . .

(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)



Brett Kavanaugh

I'm Justice Brett, Trump's contribution;
Now, with my help, the Constitution
That keeps our system's legal roof on
Is one more thing for him to boof on. *(Duncan Stevens)*

I'm visionary **Elon Musk**,

A little fey, a little brusque.
I chase each dream with passion strong!
(Until the next one comes along.)
(David Smith, Stockton, Calif.)

Eve

"That apple looks so bright and red!
I *have* to take a bite!" I said.
As human history now confirms,
I opened up a can of worms.
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Jeff Sessions is my moniker;

My Trump-love's now platonicker.
I'll win my Senate primary
If all the elves come out for me.
(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

Roger Stone

I'm convict Roger, so unfair!
Those biased jurors, I don't care:
The pardon process is on track —

(Kevin Dopart, Washington)



Vladimir Putin

"I should've been in law," said Vlad.

"I'd be best lawyer world has had

And, most agree, no hesitance,

The best at setting presidents." (Jon Gearhart)

I, **Nancy P.**, sat through the speech

By Donald (skin the hue of peach).

Was I affected? Moved? Sure, yup!

I'm sure you saw me [tearing up](#). (Duncan Stevens)

My name is **Rod Blagojevich**.

I admit it: I was nojevich

I'd never get a pardon. Odd,

But one spoiled child just spared a Rod!

(John Glenn, Tyler, Tex.)

I'm **Marie Kondo**, and I'm fond o'

Reduction. Why four beats per line,

If two work fine?

(Frank Osen)

I am **Jeff**, a man of wealth,

A specimen of strength and health.

I spread my grace from coast to coast

(Disclaimer: Jeffrey owns The Washington Post)

(Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

I am **the Empress**, of this Earth,

The self-styled judge of what has worth.

'Tis I who finds the pearls of wit

Amongst the steaming piles of bad poetry.

(Combining entries from Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass., and Perry Beider, Silver Spring, Md.)

AD

Still running — deadline Monday, March 23:

— Bank headlines from our Mess With Our Heads contest. See wapo.st/invite1375.

— Plus videos for our homage to “Epic Rap Battles of History.” See wapo.st/invite1374.

DON'T MISS AN INVITE! [Sign up here](#) to receive a once-a-week email from the Empress as soon as The Style Invitational and Style Conversational go online every Thursday, complete with links to the columns.

3 Comments



Pat Myers

Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. Follow [Twitter](#)

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Analysis

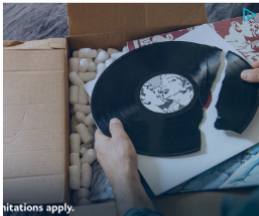
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nan_lynn 1 day ago

Linda, the Losers of the Style Invitational have a facebook group where we share comments and general snark. My partners-in-rhyme are continually clever. And all are welcome! Email Pat at naf.mvers@washpost.com. and she'll tell you more and set you up to join us if you wish. (You