Style Invitational Week 1333: Check your (homo)phones

Invent a word that sounds like another word; plus the winning Shakespeare ‘tailgaters’

By Pat Myers
May 23

(Click here to skip down to the winning Shakespeare “tailgaters”)

Amphibian: A frog who, after you kiss him, remains a frog. (*Milo Sauer*)

Boredello: A brothel where everyone looks and acts exactly like your wife. (*Dion Black*)

Eyesickle: The coldest of stares. (*Michelle Stupak*)

This week we repeat a contest that the Empress ran in 2009 and her predecessor, the Czar, did in 2002: **Invent a homophone — a word that sounds the same as an existing word but is spelled differently** — and define it, as in the examples from Week 849. What is “the same”? Isn’t that “eye” in “eyesickle” a bit different from the “i” in “ickle? We rule (as that is what Empresses do) that it’s close enough. Eye-I-al!

Speaking of quibbles: In both previous contests we referred to these
words as homonyms — which they are, at least according to the Webster's New World and Merriam-Webster dictionaries. But “homonym” can also refer to a word that has totally different meanings with the same spelling, like pen (writing implement) and pen (pig holder). We don’t want those. So here you are, purists: “homophones” it is. The previous headline “Homonymphomania” is hereby retired.

Submit entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1333 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the Lose Cannon, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives, perfectly apropos of this contest, a T-shirt depicting a “Dali Llama” — a shaggy white llama with a big crazy Salvador Dali mustache. Two homophones! Donated at this month’s Loser brunch by Dave Prevar.

Other runners-up win our “You Gotta Play to Lose” Loser Mug or our “Whole Fools” Grocery 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). Deadline is Monday night, June 3; results published June 23 in print, June 20 online. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week’s results is by Chris Doyle; both Beverley Sharp and Jeff Contopasidis submitted the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively 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 discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .

A BARD HAR DAY: WINNING SHAKESPEARE TAILGATERS

In Week 1329 we asked for Shakespeare “tailgaters” — rhyming couplets in which you pair a line from the Bard with one of your own.

4th place:

“Methinks no face so gracious is as mine” (Sonnet 62)
Is my least successful pickup line. (Pete Morelewicz, Fredericksburg, Va.)

3rd place:

Assume a virtue, if you have it not: (“Hamlet”)
“I am the smartest man this country’s got.” (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

2nd place and the Shakespearean Insult Gum:

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold
Now watch this, if my beer thou wouldst but hold! (Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

"Tis not the many oaths that makes the truth; ("All's Well That Ends Well")
"Believe me" often signifies fake newth. (Marni Penning Coleman, Falls Church, Va.)

Avon culling: Honorable mentions

Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press (Sonnet 140)
To ask if thou seem'st fat in thy new dress. (Larry Neal, McLean, Va.)

Is not my sorrow deep, having no bottom? ("Titus Andronicus")
A surgeon botched my buttock lift last autumn. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

My bosom franchised and allegiance clear ("Macbeth")

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My bosom franchised and allegiance clear ("Macbeth")
One-thirty K will make me disappear. — S. Daniels (Steve Langer, Chevy Chase, Md.)

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain ("Hamlet")
And still enthral a base of several mill’n. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

What’s done cannot be undone. ("Macbeth")
Till 2021. (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

We’ll yoke together, like a double shadow. ("Henry VI, Part 3")
You watch Tucker Carlson; I’ll watch Maddow. (Chris Doyle)

“A mess of Russians left us but of late.” ("Love’s Labour’s Lost")
(Don Jr. to his dad, Page 58) (Frank Osen)

And, being intercepted in your sport, ("Titus Andronicus")
Is how the R*s*skins keep their season short. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)
As cannons overcharged with double cracks ("Macbeth")
Is Boeing's 737 Max. (Michael Rolfe, Cape Town, South Africa)

Come not between the dragon and his wrath: ("King Lear")
As “Game of Thrones” has shown, he’ll kick your a**. (Craig Dylstra, Centreville, Va.)

Do you think the Nats will win two games this week? (Clifford Fishman, Rockville, Md.)
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak. ("Macbeth")

She's knitted hats in corals, roses, pinks. (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)
The lady doth protest too much, methinks. ("Hamlet")

Get thee to a nunnery. ("Hamlet")
You're having too much funnery. (Nancy Della Rovere, Silver Spring, Md.)

I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought: (Sonnet 30)
My keys, phone, wallet, glasses, my last thought. (Frank Osen)

Men at some times are masters of their fates ("Julius Caesar")
Unless they live in gerrymandered states. (Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)

No profit grows where is no pleasure ta’en, ("The Taming of the Shrew")

No profit grows where is no pleasure ta’en, ("The Taming of the Shrew")
So all our dishes come with extra ba’on. (Chris Doyle)

O poor Orlando, thou art overthrown! ("As You Like It")
Now China’s built the biggest theme park known. (Frank Osen)

One that loved not wisely but too well: ("Othello")
The mother of the Duggars, I’m Michelle. (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

Against the stormy gusts of winter's day (Sonnet 13)
Trump found no shelter in the NDA. (Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.)

Out damned spot! Out I say. ("Macbeth")
You’re loaded with my DNA. (Bob McKenty, Matawan, N.J.)

“The wise man knows himself to be a fool” ("As You Like It")
Seems something not taught at the Wharton School. (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

This day is called the feast of Crispian ("Henry V")
Perchance we fit a game of Frisbee in. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)
Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view: (Sonnet 69)
You see, commando cartwheels just won't do. (Kevin Dapart)

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, (Sonnet 18)
Thy drunken Facebook pies will follow thee. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown ("Henry IV, Part 2")
Especially when the Novocain wears down. (Ward Kay, Vienna, Va.)

If we should fail? We fail! ("Macbeth")
Mom says we'll still get into Yale. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

The time is out of joint. O cursed spite! ("Hamlet")
I dropped my Rolex in the loo last night. (Duncan Stevens)

This Duncan hath borne his faculties so meek ("Macbeth")
And still gets contest ink most every week. (Chris Doyle)

I have not slept one wink ("Cymbeline")
And shan't till Empress grant me . . . zzzzzzzzzzz (Dave Zarrow, Reston, Va.)

Better a witty fool than a foolish wit. ("Twelfth Night")
But best to be both for the Style Invit. (Heather Spence, Arlington)