

Style Invitational

BY PAT MYERS

Report from Week 1039

in which we asked you to write a passage using only the words contained in Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy. Shockingly for Style Invitational entrants, many of the entries were about sex! And with words like "resolution," "laws" and "whip," Washington area Losers immediately thought of Congress. One especially clever entry gets no prize because its author, Kristen Rowe, ignored the explicit instructions: Instead of using the required "First Folio" version of 1623, the one at the top of the Wikipedia page, Kristen used Shakespeare's "First Quarto," which had several words that weren't in the other version. Still, it's worth sharing this plot synopsis of "Breaking Bad": "A sicklied patient with no conscience scorns the laws with cursed enterprises to bear outrageous fortune for his would-be widow. O, the calamities he must endure. A happy resolution in the end? Aye, perchance in dreams!"



Something is wrong with this country, and the troubles come from that cast of unworthy cowards we have in office. The insolence makes us all so weary. All those who long to take the whips to their mortal flesh, say aye! (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

2 Winner of the Shakespearean Insult Gum plus Grillz candy teeth:

You know what love is? To devoutly dream of a nobler life with fair respect — not! To rub soft flesh, suffer whips, sleep with the despised — aye, nymph-ophelia! Now, that is great. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

3 Is a man's thought, all the time, of soft, bare flesh and consummation?

Does a bear "grunt" in the country? (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

4 In the dream, the man's a proud traveller of fortune — who scorns the unworthy, makes a thousand cowards suffer, whips a bear to death with a great grunt and, after that, makes soft love to the fair nymph. But in life? He is rather pale and sicklied, and may sweat from his under-arms. (Craig Dykstra)

Hamlettes: honorable mentions

We may be despised by others, but their dream is to have what we have: a great fortune, a proud name, long life, love and respect. (And whips and shocks for those whose insolence makes troubles.) (Mark Raffman, Reston)

To those opposing the proud native name we bear, there's something we have wished to say to them: "That is so wrong, pale-hue cowards. We have no respect for you. (But come by and give more to my great fortune.)" — D. Snyder (Kevin Dopart)

In office, he would make laws for his country and take a fortune for himself, "devoutly" opposing others' troubles. After outrageous enterprises, a Whip's pause. Calamity, thy name is DeLay! (Kathy El-Assal, Middleton, Wis.)

The great "natural" takes his turn . . . The opposing man's patient . . . Now he slings a pitch . . . And there's a long fly. . . Fair? . . . No! "Fardels!" we say . . . And so we lose, and dreams die (for the moment). (Mark Raffman)

"This 'natural bear sweat' does not make my 'coil' long and proud. What say you to that?"

"Aye, 'tis not fair, but — no returns!" (Jeff Shirley)

A resolution for the law's delay is all we wished. But no. So fly not to the office. — J. Boehner (Todd DeLap, Fairfax, a First Offender)

Hue Grunt (of "Soft-More Dreams") and Ophelia Coil (of "Country of a Thousand Flesh-Arrows") to be cast in Bare Action Enterprises' "There's a Nymph in My Fly!" (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

A resolution against arms to bear in my country?! Take this for a "No": to-to-to-to-to-to-to-to-to-to-to-to . . . — W. LaPierre (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

"What is wrong?"

"My shocks be soft, and for a traveller, the end does suffer great pangs."

[Grunt.] "Will be a thousand or more."

"What! That is outrageous!"

"Aye, 'tis a heart-ache. But you may give thy fortune o'er time."

"Rub this!"

"We take that for a 'No.'" (Jeff Shirley)

When you have a man's troubles of the flesh so soft, suffer not! Take this for thy ills, and be re-membered. (Craig Dykstra)

"To sleep in the office is outrageous! Grunt and sweat, take action, aye, 'tis thus.

You must suffer from thy enterprises To make a fortune, all the time, for us." — Employee handbook (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

The calamity of the fly, awry in the man's coil, troubles the flesh; makes a pause in the action and thus, a delay from sins. (Joanne Free, Clifton)

The insolence of the proud man's office: that he might, with no pause to question, bare his flesh for a fair nymph to regard, and in the name of what? "Action"? A dream of consummation with grunt and sweat? There's the outrageous calamity: To end in a sea of troubles. To lose the respect of others! To be despised and thought unworthy! To be remembered for the sins of the moment and no more. (Andy Bassett, New Plymouth, New Zealand)

To give a nymph a great time when you make love, delay the moment of consummation with the thought of something outrageous — say, to be bourn off by and to sleep with a bear. — R. Westheimer (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

When the country is that of others, might makes wrong. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

There's their and there's. Bear and bare. Know and no. Hue and you. O'er and or. Who thought to make us suffer so? (Dave Zarrow, Reston)

You dream of puzzles? Time to have a life. (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

He dreams the dream of all the unworthy and despised who suffer the ills and contumely of their oppressors: to off his in-laws. (Kevin Dopart)

And Last: "Delay not! Take action now! Pitch to us something that shocks. Be outrageous! The unworthy will suffer heart-ache and not be remembered; but to insolence, we give great respect. So grunt and sweat devoutly, and know what? You, perchance, may LOSE!" — The Empress (Beverley Sharp)

And Even Laster: The Bard Is Haunted by Week 1039: There's a wrong that puzzles Will and troubles his sleep: "Who would turn my thought in-to something so outrageous? Those cowards merit a bodkin to their flesh!" (Kathy El-Assal)

More honorable mentions in the online version of the Invite. See bit.ly/invite1043.

Still running — deadline Monday night — our Week 1042 "Tours de Fours" neologism contest. See bit.ly/invite1042.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST: WEEK 1043

Rechanneling celebrity

"'Vanilla Ice Goes Amish' (DIY at 10). The pop star and renovation enthusiast travels to Amish country to learn more about hand craftsmanship."

No, that's not a Style Invitational entry; it's from last weekend's honest-to-goodness TV listings in The Post. But as Loser John Huber suggests, "how could this NOT be a Style Invitational contest?"

It's hard to argue with that.

This week: Describe a TV reality show featuring a celebrity pursuing some unlikely endeavor. The celebrity may be living or dead, even fictional. The winning humor will most likely come from funny, witty writing, but don't write a whole script. Twenty-five to 50 words should be about right.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. And given that this week's contest sounds like a suggestion sheet for "Saturday Night Live" skits, second place will receive More Cowbell!, a little but noisy fire-engine-red model. Donated by the little but noisy, almost-fire-engine-red-haired Nan Reiner.



Feeling skittish? This week's second prize.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet. First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 28; results published Nov. 17 (online Nov. 10). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 1043" in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/inviterules. The subhead for this week's honorable mentions was suggested by both Dave Prevar and Nan Reiner. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev, and click "like" on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at bit.ly/inkofday.

Correction: Last week's results in the print edition labeled our sole First Offender of the week, Robert Rosen of Gaithersburg, as Richard Rosen. Even though "Richard Rosen," as the Style Invitational Devotees noted, could be anagrammed into "Scarred Rhino," "Horrid Rancher" and "Rides Car Horn," among other colorful monikers, Robert still didn't want to change his name — which, notes Devotee Jen Harris, happens to anagram to "Errors Be Ton."



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