

INSIDERS

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I first became aware of this particular wordplay recreation when I noticed its use in the Nov. 8, 1998 New York Times Crossword puzzle, which was composed by Robert Malinow and entitled “Insiders.” Although the concept of insiders may well have been an original one with Malinow, I have since learned that similar devices have, in fact, long been employed in clues used by so-called “cryptic” crosswords. In a typical insider, the first and last names of some noted person are embedded, in order, in some longer phrase or sentence suggestive of that person. The letters of each name must be consecutive in the host phrase, albeit these letter strings may be interrupted by word breaks and by punctuation. To illustrate, here are several examples of insider-hosting phrases taken from Malinow’s crossword (in which, impressively, they served as *answers*, not clues):

EGYPTIAN WARPS VISA DATA (Anwar Sadat)
MAN DREADS RIGID ETHIC (Andre Gide)
DIET HELPS COMER MANAGE (Ethel Merman)
HOST EVER SHALL ENDURE (Steve Allen)
EGO REPULSE AVID ALLIES (Gore Vidal)

Having, unlike Malinow, unlimited space to work with, I saw no reason not to allow my own insider-hosting phrases to spread out into complete sentences in the list that follows. And just what is to be done with such a list? Well, if one happens to be possessed of expert crossword-constructing skills, perhaps one selects a half dozen of these sentences, edits them down to more manageable phrases, and composes around them a symmetrical crossword puzzle which may then be submitted to the New York Times Crossword department for its consideration. But I suspect that most readers will be content just to tease out the hidden names in the following, a list of which will be found in Answers and Solutions.

1. He’s no “mini” colossus, pagan, in Italy!
2. “Local vintage, quietly cool,” I’d gently limn him.
3. No vestige remains of a field lost to woods.
4. Some day we *all*—oui!—shall be free of past European afflictions!
5. A crusader’s rich ardor could not supplant a genetic load.
6. She lets nothing mar that wonderful stew artistry, which is a good thing.
7. Would a “chill Aryan” have unchic lint on her pantsuit?
8. No bar acknowledging, he saw in his prospective job a mandate.
9. Yes, antacids may also be set out for this chronic chimney claustrophobic.
10. No mere billionaire ever derogates us.
11. Be’t or not my will, I am done... see, I shake! Spear, end it! For ’tis... etc.
12. He’s a comic keystone—bigger, even, than Ockham Ousel!
13. In rage or genius, a third army spat tonight its challenge.
14. In France, a trim, auric-edged bolero jacket travels well.
15. A *chess* nabob, by golly, pawned that chair; half is cherry, half solid brass!

16. His topics ranged from muntjac quests to raucous tea under the sea.
17. Dining “in state” in her condo, Lee zapped a taco in a trice.
18. “When rich,” the sleeping gypsy dreamed, “resplendent will be my trousseau.”
19. Twice defeated, I had laid aside that quest; even so, now I vacillated...

20. Down in Coventry, lad, you’ll be asked to believe a
Tale of gaddings unclad by a long-ago diva.

21. Quoth a raven, fed garlic in ghee,
Ere he’d squall, “Ante up!” o’er tea,
“Let ichored garb sprawl,
And doomed houses fall,
And lorn poets lament by the sea!” [Descry one, get one free.]

22. A gray Monday in L.A. was Xanadu to this felicific handler of setting.
23. Plan a star turn ere the postman rings twice.
24. Fezzes forsake, males—it’s a hat with a *brim*, not a tassel, that a Turk needs!
25. Oh yes, I’m on coins, stamps, currency—as a symbol, I vary little.
26. If rankled, I’d just pack us Rats in at random.
27. Able was I—aye, I’d nap, *oleo*-nestled, of *nought* that was Bourbon a part!—ere I saw Elba!
28. Self-booed, I push an eternal blackness over existence.
29. Off with jeans, T-shirt, epaulettes—I’ll take my marathon bath *now*, or die trying!
30. Oh, such a heartthrob in my sylvan neighborhood was I!
31. A rank—was it all in his head?—olfactory jolt hit Leroy as the Leader’s retinue passed by.
32. Step hence from here in fear and quaking.
33. A black lamb rose to cite the Devil—and disappeared, bier, cerement and coffin!
34. Off ran cist-born Shakespeare with *my* bacon!
35. “The clew is,” said the hedgehog, “‘racecar’; roll me over *there* now, won’t you?”
36. The old man again gazed astern, estimating and worrying, for he did not trust the scheming
ways of the sea.
37. Aug. 12: Got in a bit of a jam, escaped with minor spear wounds; better day tomorrow—
invited to a cook-out!
38. There’s a kind of a terminal aura or nimbus hovering over these final months.
39. Great, brawny freight carloads of *sand*, burghers, built Chicago!
40. “With Lucy, it was always lucre, ziarats, swank garb, orgiastic sex and deadly nightshade,”
remarked Cesare.
41. May no one brand me a pithless paternalist.

While it is common to use personal names as insiders, there is no apparent reason why other classes of words could not function just as well in that role, e.g., “Throw ordinary journals by the wayside, if you must litter, but never *this* one!” Generalizing further, one might envision inserting entire passages of words as insiders into longer texts—or, conversely, searching existing texts for the accidental inclusion of particular insider passages. One wonders, for example, whether or not (although it would seem unlikely) the complete Lord’s Prayer happens to occur as an insider in, say, any of Shakespeare’s plays. If not, then how about in any of the books of the King James Bible (excluding Matthew 6: 9-13)? Such questions hold a curious fascination.