CHARADE SWIFTIES

J. A. LINDON
Weybridge, Surrey, England

In the August 1969 Kickshaws, Dave Silverman pointed out that the Tom Swiftie, a parlour game of several years ago, is not yet extinct. Most readers of Word Ways are familiar with the standard Swiftie:

"Your meat, Madam!" announced the two butcher-boys jointly.
"Three plus five equals seven," said the mathematician oddly.
"It's best to add seasoning," said Cook sagely.
"You can see I've but just arrived!" protested Lady Godiva, looking barely comely.
"Well, I pulled the knife out again," muttered the murderer unstably.
"Sacked for cheek, madam, but I'm reformed," said the maid expertly.

The word contained in the adverb need not be spelled correctly if the sound is right:

"Only sold out of lobsters," said the fishmonger crabily.
"I see Ararat," said Noah drily.

One-word Swifties are for beginners. Why not construct Charade Swifties with two (or more) words?

"Do I have to pay?" he asked her needily.
"They did it while camping," said the aggrieved husband intently.
"We reached the summit while Conrad, poor fellow, was being taken down," said the mountaineer condescendingly.
"I will not have this! I am angry with you for going to those auctions!" said his father forbiddingly.
"Let me introduce you to my Chinese vase," she said to her daily woman charmingly.
"This young clergyman accidentally touched the alternating-current mains," said the coroner accurately.
"I fear I left the ticket on those grapes I brought you," said the hospital visitor regrettably.

"You read it?
"You must be a bungle.
"Behold, I am the one who knows.
"I'll see you in the afterlife.

Again, one...

"Dinner?
"I'm not hungry.
"About time.
"The Cowhouse?

Sometimes...

"Not a chance.
"Weight?
"Yes.
"Oh, well...
"My club?

So far, the examples include it...

"I each...
"The hole?
"Male...
"My sad...

Rebus Sw:

"I can...
"Face...
"Even...
"Bar...
"You're a fool to say 'Can do' when it's already been done," she told him candidly.
"You may hope it's lost, but I hope an expert has picked it up," she told him profoundly.
"Behold an object of hate!" he said loathingly (lo-a-thing).
"Tis what Parson'Il wed us wi'," said Giles forbearingly (for-be-a-ring).

Again, one can sacrifice spelling exactness for sound:

"Dinner is over," announced the cannibal houseboy masterfully.
"I'm not giving my stock away!" said the fishmonger selfishly.
"About Minnie's perfume," he began reminiscently (re-Mini-scent).
"The Cockney bronchial patients are in there," said the nurse, pointing awkwardly (the ward where they 'awk).

Sometimes, the words in the adverb need a little rearranging:

"Not a slow train left," joked the ticket-clerk expressively ('I've express).
"Weight I certainly have," she announced massively ('I've mass).
"Yes, this is a taxi," said the driver amicably ('I am cab).
"Oh, well, then I suppose your Eva must have my trousers on," he murmured evasively ('I've Eva's).
"My client informs me that while at school he consumed his study-mate Edward," said the barrister intermediately (I ate Ed in term).

So far, the -ly ending has been omitted from the charade. Why not include it too?

"I eschew blatant paranomasia," he snapped pungently.
"The hereditary units gather together in the chromosomes," explained the professor generally.
"Male artists who use egg-white naturally agree!" he screamed temperamentally.
"My sister rouses me at dawn with a bowl of clear soup," he said in a brotherly tone of voice (broth e (a) rly).

Rebus Swifties are best explained by several examples:

"I can't reach C; kindly sound for me the note below," she said humbly (hum B).
"Face like a hairpin-bend," he said smugly (S-mug).
"Every letter of the alphabet except the sixth is correct," said the teacher faintly (F ain't).
"Barrier, not barrister!" cried the proofreader stoutly (st out).
"He marked them with the wrong initials, WR, and in acid!
she groaned wretchedly (WR etched).
"For a mere hundred I'd promptly turn him down," she cried chastely (C haste).

Several of the above variations can be illustrated by a group of Swifties having a common subject -- the ant:

"There is a small emmet embedded in my Good Friday confection," she grumbled abundantly.
"I don't care if it's the progenitor of all pismires!" responded her husband adamantly.
"It's an ig!" said Bobby. "It's an ant!" said Bella. "There's no such thing as an ig, and it's got wings so it can't be an ant -- so it's neither," said Father ignorantly.
"A guild ant!" cried the male pismire buoyantly.

Most of the following foreign-language Swifties are elementary:

"The Frenchman's here!" she announced icily.
"Soon in Germany," she said baldly.
"In Rome, it's the end," he said finely.
"The Italian lady's breasts!" he grumbled pettily.
"Thus, in Italy ... " he began costly.
"The German's child," she answered kindly.
"The Spanish boy's eleven," she once told me.
He merely asked, "Is Mother in France?"
"The French wave," he told us vaguely, even lamely.
"The Nazi's strong," he admitted starkly.

Closest to the hearts of Word Ways readers are Swifties constructed with a logological twist. Here are three to close out this article:

"Ma is aloof," she said backwardly.
"But the dam is back to front," said the builder madly.
"The cart horse will now play," announced the conductor, literally confused.