

THE APPLE-SAUCE CHRONICLES

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In his excellent book on formula jokes, Jokes (Delacorte, 1983), Paul Dickson comments that What's the Difference? jokes, a blend of conundrum and pun, can be found in very old joke books. Some of the examples below are homonymic in nature; others reverse the first and last parts of the name; yet others are spoonergrams.

What is the difference between

music by Camille Saint-Saëns and a stupid skeleton?

One is a Danse Macabre, the other is a macabre dance

a lock on a liquor cabinet and a top base stealer?

One is a brew lock, the other is a Lou Brock

a pacifist and the author of On the Beach?

One will never shoot, the other is Neville Shute

a house of ill repute and the author of Les Fleurs du Mal?

One is a lair of bawdy, the other is Baudelaire

the capital of Louisiana and a knavish conductor?

One is Baton Rouge, the other is a rogue baton

a certain 1947 movie and curses by the Rosemary's Baby heroine?

One is the Foxes of Harrow, the other are the hexes of Farrow

a doorman and a fashion designer?

One closes doors, the other adores clothes

martial law and a person who has no mongrel dogs?

One has a curfew, the other has few curs

a common herb and a Confederate general doing his grammar?

One is parsley, the other is Lee parsing

a priest's white robe and the capital of New York?

One is any alb, the other is Albany

extreme fright and a naughty girl?

One is acute shock, the other is a cute shocker

the number thirteen and a sleepy pastry cook?

One is a baker's dozen, the other is a dozing baker

a twin with a scar and the author of Tom Sawyer?

One is a marked twin, the other is Mark Twain

a person who saves his paycheck and a former Cubs player?

One banks earnings, the other is Ernie Banks

a goof-off and a stable boy?

One horses around, the other is around horses

Superman and a baker with day-old bread?

One is a man of steel, the other is a man of stale

a sacred place and the heroine of Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm?

One is a temple, surely, the other is Shirley Temple

a dentist and the female lead in Star Wars?

One fishes for caries, the other is Carrie Fisher

a United Nations diplomat and a bachelor?

One is UN-attached, the other is unattached

the letter F and the gold statue of Prometheus in New York?

One is at the center of Rockefeller, the other at Rockefeller Ctr

shrimp fried in a beer batter and an antique piece of furniture?

One is dipped in ale, the other is Chippendale

a composition by Khachaturian and a teetotalling moron?

One is the Sabre Dance, the other is a sober dunce

a person with amnesia and a long-distance runner?

One has a lapse of memory, the other a memory of laps

a pool player starting a game, and a lucky casino gambler?

One banks the break, the other breaks the bank

a rug in front of an entrance and a bullfighter?

One is a doormat, the other is a matador

a Brooklyn Bridge salesman and a Vogue magazine illustrator?

One is a con artist, the other is a Condé artist

Although not mentioned by Dickson, the juxtaposition of two appropriate movie titles for a hypothetical double feature is a common type of formula wordplay. A related gambit consists of hypothetical movie titles with appropriate actors or script-writers.

The Grapes of Wrath / The Wild Bunch

The Girl on the Front Page / Libelled Lady

Follow Me Quietly / Hush Hush Sweet Charlotte

Swingtime / The Hanging Tree

The Lady Vanishes / Grand Illusion

The Elephant Man / The Ugly American

Hurricane / Gone With the Wind

Earthquake / California Split

The Iron Man / The Iron Maiden / The Magnet

Hair / Shampoo

Who Done It? / The Servant

I'll Cry Tomorrow / Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears

Easter Parade / It Happened on Fifth Avenue

Victor Victoria / Hey Boy! Hey Girl!

Giant / You're a Big Boy Now

Caesar and Cleopatra / Made For Each Other

Broken Arrow / I'll Fix It!

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? / The Iceman Cometh

Second Honeymoon / Brideshead Revisited

Rear Window / I'll Be Seeing You

Comrade X / 10
 Dressed to Kill / Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid
 Breakfast at Tiffany's / Come and Get It
 Seven Brides for Seven Brothers / To Each His Own
 Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice / Caesar & Cleopatra / The Deep Six
 Which Way to the Front? / Advance to the Rear
 Applause / Big Hand for a Little Lady
 Do You Take This Stranger? / I Do, I Do
 The D.I. / E.T. [weight-watcher's special]
 Sleeper / Z
 On the Beach / Paleface
 Get Out Your Handkerchiefs / I'll Cry Tomorrow
 Pffft! / You Said a Mouthful
 Bananas / The Egg and I
 California Split / All the King's Men
 Rip Van Winkle / The Big Sleep
 The Old Maid / Everything's on Ice
 Two Mules for Sister Sara / Are Husbands Necessary?
 Apocalypse Now! / Boom!

The Story of the Pay Toilet, starring Johnny Cash
 Spider-Man, starring Clifton Webb
 In Search of a Diet Soda, starring Tab Hunter
 Hair, starring James Beard and Fuzzy St. Knight
 Goldfinger, starring Tom Thumb and Pinky Lee
 The Blackboard Jungle, starring Victoria Principal
 Another Part of the Forest, starring Helen Twelvetrees, Twiggy,
 and Woody Allen
 A Covenant With Death, starring Gene Hackman
 Oh! Calcutta!, starring Max Baer
 Noah and the Flood, starring Ethel Waters
 The Miss Piggy Story, starring Mia Farrow, script by John Suck-
 ling
 Maggie, Girl of the Streets, script by Anthony Trollope
 Cats, starring Kitty Carlisle at the Greenwich Mews
 Tired Jockey, starring Rider Haggard
 The Discovery of Electricity, starring Ned Sparks
 Betrayal, starring Marianne Faithfull
 Bound for Glory, script by the Marquis de Sade
 The Filling Station, starring Vittorio Gassmann
 The Postman Always Rings Twice, starring David Letterman

Punning variations on the names of various real or fictional notables is a perennial sport, as illustrated by the following:

MAAT DILLON ancient Western hero from Egypt
 DUNE MARTIN number one crooner from the lost planet of Arrakis
 MAX PLANKTON physicist lost in the Bermuda Triangle
 GENE SARACEN golfer who attacked Christians in the Crusade Open
 NATHAN EXHALE "I regret that I have but one breath to give
 for my country"
 HARPOON MARX the most silent person aboard the Pequod
 SOLO-MON lonely wise king
 ZORROASTER prophet who cuts a Z in your forehead

BINGA CROSBY pygmy singer from Central Africa
 GABBAI HAYES Hebrew Western star
 FILIBUSTER KEATON long-winded comedian
 BIANCA JOGGER runner who uses a breath spray
 ERICH FROMMAGE noted writer on the psychology of the big cheese
 THE POLYURETHANE OF CAWDOR modern plastic Macbeth
 CREMONA LISA violinist with the enigmatic smile
 ANN CORIOLANUS Shakespearean burlesque star
 DAVID FARRAGO medley of U.S. naval officers
 BOBBY COXA hip baseball player
 BACHELOR unmarried German composer
 LUAU BROCK Hawaiian baseball star who steals feasts
 PORCELANA TURNER movie star who fights age spots
 BABYLON CHANEY the ancient world's favorite horror actor
 DECADESI ARNAZ Cuban bandleader who performs every ten years
 PHARAOH FAWCETT blonde leader of Egypt
 GWEN VERDUN French dancer who achieved notoriety during World
 War I
 HOOPOE old bird who wrote The Raven
 FRANK PERDU chicken man lost in France
 MAELSTROM THURMOND politician in midst of powerful whirlpool
 GOY LOMBARDO bandleader who plays during the Jewish New
 Year
 ROY CAMPANILE Brooklyn Dodgers bell ringer
 BUNNY GOODMAN Easter jazz musician
 MERCY CUNNINGHAM choreographer who shows great compassion
 QUASI QUOMODO hunchback who asks in Latin "What's the matter?"
 AMOS AND ANDES famous radio comedy team depicting two blacks
 lost in South America
 LOTTO LENYA actress who emcees bingo games
 CECIL B. CAMILLE sobbing movie director
 MOLE BROOKS underground film maker of comedies
 STANNUM MUSIAL the baseball tin man
 LAX BARKER loose Tarzan star
 BLOIS LANE reporter on the Loire Daily Planet
 TOM MX missile cowboy star
 EDWARD ALGAE seaweed playwright
 SPIRO AGNEAU French lamb-like veep
 COMANCHE GUEVERA American Indian revolutionary leader
 CARAVAN JOHNSON actor who travels across deserts
 THE LOAM RANGER the underground cowboy
 ROBOT REDFORD the most handsome of the humanoid actors
 STROMBOLI THURMOND volcanic senator
 SIGMUND FEUD psychiatrist who promoted conflict
 PETE MOROSE sullen superstar
 CHIPPENDALE EVANS cowgirl from the last half of the eighteenth
 century
 CORTEX RITTER cerebral cowboy
 BUCKY ARDENT passionate shortstop
 PLYMOUTH ROCK HUDSON first Pilgrim to make it big in Hollywood
 VECTOR MATURE favorite movie star of mathematicians
 TOM LASORDID baseball manager with shameful past
 SIERRA BERNHARDT mountainous actress of great range