

TWO-CONSONANT SENTENCES

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On December 19, 1993, puzzlemaster Will Shortz of the Weekend Edition on National Public Radio challenged his listeners to construct sentences using only two consonants, such as "Can Connie, a nice niece in Canaan, can-can on a canoe in uncanny innocence?" or "Suppose a pious pope possesses a spouse - oops!". He added "entries will be judged on wit, originality, elegance and naturalness of phrasing". Counting different consonant-choices by the same person as separate entries, nearly 300 poured in during the next two weeks. The most fecund entry was DN, with 39 different contestants represented, closely followed by ST with 34. There were 49 different consonant-pair choices.

The winner, announced on NPR on January 2, was the ST entry given below. There were many other creative (even zany) sentences; this article presents one example for each consonant-pair. Three should be noted for their allusions to historical (or contemporary) events: the Bobbitt mutilation (BT), the birth of Jesus (LN), and the Boston Tea Party (RT). No one discovered that palindromes sometimes work: too hot to hoot; Madam, I'm Adam; name no one man. And contestant Molly Mayo missed a real opportunity by overlooking ML!

- BD(2) Beddy-bye, baby boy! Bid Daddy bye-bye! [Jim Hamilton]
 BL(2) Ella, babble Baby Lou a lullaby
 Abba, abba! Lo, a Bible I belie -
 Boola, boola, bob-a-loo,
 Bella, bella, la-la-loo -
 Bali 'a'i! Bally-'oo! Baby Lou [Donald F. Marsh]
 BR(1) Rib-bare robber Barbara bore a rare Arab bureau (brrr!) [Alex Lindholm]
 BS(3) Babs' boss, Bobb, sobs as Bea's base beau, Bubba, abuses sea bass [Roxanne Bogucka]
 BT(6) A taboo tête-a-tête: a batty Bobbitt beauty bit a Bobbitt beau titbit (bye-bye, baby!) [Steven Faber]
 CN(1) Una, I can onan on an Inca lion [Newton Bowles]
 CS(2) Esau cusses Isaac's eyes [Jeannette Van Raalte]
 CT(1) E.T. tactic: ice it, cut it, eat it [Rosalie Oliveri]
 DF(2) Did doo-doo off UFO feed dead doe? If dead doe did die of doo-doo, did odd UFO food fad do dud deed? Fie, UFO! Adieu, doc! [Ronnie Himmel]
 DG(2) A good guide dog did guide Dad [Joe Cahill, Susan Morse]
 DL(1) Did dull addled Lady Della deal old ally, idle loaded Daddy Leo, a leaden dolly load o' dilled eel? [Dorothy Thayer]
 DM(8) Dad, am I a maid? I'm mad! Adam made me a moody dame! [Peter Collins]

- DN(39) Donny, a Dundee dandy, and Nina, an Ionian nun, dined on an onion in Indiana. Nina, denuded (indeed, undone) did iodine and died. Adieu, Nina! [Sheree Galpert]
- DR(16) Dear Radio Reader: Did Eduardo, a rodeo rider, dare ride a rare red doe, or did Dario, a dour dude, roar "I rode a ruder, redder deer"? Adieu, Dierdre [Bernell Scott]
- DS(9) I say, Susie, assessed odds aside, do assiduous doses of soda suds dissuade sassy seaside dudes' soused ideas as does a disease as odious as AIDS? [Robert Gillis]
- DT(3) At tea, a tattooed idiot did ode to a dead toad (a tad odd!) [Matt Hulen]
- FG(1) Gigi, aga of Foggia, go fife a gigue of a gay fugue if Geoff, a fey foyey guy agog of a gaffe (a gouge - "fag" - a foe, Fifi (a goofy effigy of a giga-ego) gae Geoff a foggy age ago), off-gauge a goeey figgy egg foo-foo [John Tomashek]
- FL(4) Full of life, I feel aloof. If I fail, I feel a fool [Jim Hamilton]
- FR(2) Aria: aura of rear-roof airy aerie area? Fie! Ere a friary off-year forum offer a fee or IOU, you, our fair error-free referee, fore'er free, fire away ferry fare for a fey friar, free for a rare UFO foray! [Virginia Shipman]
- FS(1) If Sue is as sassy as Essie, is Essie as safe as Asa? [Linda Grady-Troia]
- FT(1) I ate tofu at a fete, a foot of taffy, too - a fat fete [Linda Grady-Troia]
- GL(1) On an ogle in an igloo, I go gaga [Newton Bowles]
- GN(6) A young gay-guy gang, gone in gin, engage in going gaga on an aging nun gagging on eggnog [Molly Mayo]
- GS(3) As Gussie's goose eggs gag, Susie's sage sausages assuage us [Roxanne Bogucka]
- HS(4) As she hisses, a shah's ass shies, so he sasses sissies as she has hash [J. M. Rabassa]
- HT(4) Otto, Thea! Out to the auto to toot to the heath! Tote the tot that hath the teeth to eat the hat! (Uh-oh, it hit Thea.) Aha, tie the hat to the tot! Ta-ta [Bruce & Barbara Lessey]
- LN(5) Alone in a lonely inn, in Anno One, no linen, no nylon, only Noel, Noel [Aarne Hartikka]
- LP(1) A ploy: Lily lay ill; people ply a pale apple peel loop up [Nellie Pennington, Nate Hine]
- LR(1) Larry O'Reilly: a real liar, all air [Jeffrey C. Bradley]
- LS(13) Sally, a sassy lass, says "Susie is a souse - also loose". Sly Susie says "I'll sue!" [Aarne Hartikka]
- LT(14) A little tale to titillate - title: Lolita [Toby Gottfried]
- LV(2) Evil Alva Levi, lovely Eva Vallee, lively Lila Levy lave vial valve, leave level levee via vile vale [Adele Schlapik]
- LW(7) "Woe!" wily Will will wail, "Lee will loll, Wally will wallow, I will lie low" [Linda Grady-Troia]
- MN(4) Name me: I am anyone, I am no one; I'm an anima, a meanie, a ninny, a mommy in a muumuu, a nun in a mini; I am many; I am one - I am Man [Wayne Eastman]
- MR(1) Rummy Mary, my rare amore, I'm mere armor, a roomy roar; rue or ire, our merry mire, ere a rumor maim me more [Alex Lindholm]
- MS(8) Seems Miss Simms sees some moss Sam misses [Michael Veitch]

- MT(2) Matt met teammate Tom at a tomato meet to eat tomato meat, a tomato at a time, tête-a-tête [Mary E. Haydon]
- NR(1) At a roar in a ruin near our nunnery, I ran in a rare noon rain [Nancy Gannon]
- NS(12) A nun in sunny Sienna sins; soon, a son ensues [Lisa Overton]
- NT(15) To attain attention in a nation not into natation, one teen, Antonio Titian, nineteen, ate ten tuna in an inane union initiation in Oneonta tonite [Micheal Rosenblum]
- NW(1) O, wow! We won one wee weenie (no onion) [Robert S. Vanatta]
- PR(1) Re: Prop Repair. Repair rear prop rip per Pierre [George Caplan]
- PS(4) Sue supposes Pa possesses poise as Pa passes Sue pea soup. Sue, pious as a spouse, passes Pa pie [Jay Cary]
- PT(6) Papa ate a potato pot pie atop a tippy tepee [Ethan Strauss]
- RS(6) As Eros issues arise or serious errors ease, Sir Rosario Rios, Russia's usurious seer, is sure Sara Sasser's sire, Ira, raises rose Sierra sea irises [Bob Fields]
- RT(16) Irate at a Tory tea rate, a trio (attire ratty) try to tote tea out to rot [Nellie Pennington, Nate Hine]
- RW(2) "Wow," we roar, "we are aware we wore wire a wry way. We're a wee raw! We rue!" [Sylvia Coogan]
- ST(34) See Tess taste-test Sissy's sassy tea to attest to its tastiest status [Dawne Bear, Rachel Chanin]
- SW(3) Susie says "Yes, I owe Iowa a sou. We saw a sassy sow. We ease away as seas sway us" [Bill Norton]

A SERIES OF EXALTATIONS

Remember James Lipton's famed An Exaltation of Larks, a humorous updating of medieval terms of vengery like a **murder of crows** or a **shrewdness of apes**? He has returned to the lists with a series of slender (64-page) illustrated books published by Villard Books at \$10 apiece, further exploring this genre. The first three Exaltations are of *Business and Finance*, *Home and Family*, and *Romance and Revelry*; one on *Sports* is planned.

The *Romance and Revelry* book drolly illustrates collectives such as an *Overflow of Johns*, a *Freeze of Virgins*, a *Gambol of Second Marriages (and Gamble of Thirds)*, and a *Trump of Prenuptial Agreements*, to guard against a *No-Trump of Alimonies* or a *Slam of Paternity Suits*. In all, there are 147 of these terms to be savored by the reader; one-third, however, appear in the original book.