

TWENTY THOUSAND PALINDROMIC “AND”S

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On page 96 of *I Love Me, Vol. I*, Michael Donner suggests that the ordinary possibilities of the English palindrome are so close to being exhausted that, if new work is to be produced, it may become necessary to enlist the aid of obscure abbreviations in the collection by Ralph de Sola. Word Ways editor A. Ross Eckler perhaps also has in mind the ‘drome may be used up when he remarks on page 291 of the November issue that palindromes are not very important to Word Ways because they follow well-trodden paths.

The dog is dead, but he won’t stop squirming. For a glimpse of the scarcely touched combinatorial possibilities of the palindrome, let us look at a subset of the available ways to palindromically construct the word “and”. A much-abused lady by the name of EDNA is frequently hailed into service for this purpose (DNA and kidnap are also available to the unscrupulous), but a more elegant method is to derive the word from two others, as in Lindon’s “Aid and abet Amis as I mate bad Nadia.”

Below are lists of D and NA words which, in combination, provide $100 \times 100 = 10,000$ different ways to make “and”. The title of this article promises 20,000; where are the rest? They are made by pivoting any NA word around itself on a central D (“Delia, we rut!”—and Nature wailed), as well as by using two different NA words to create a phrase (again, around a central D), the reversal of which appears in the second half of the palindrome (Enid and Nadia, my maid, and Nadine).

Not all combinations are syntactically feasible, but many, perhaps most, are. As concerns the D list, I was faced with an *embarras de choix*, and made a more or less arbitrary selection. Because two letters are required, the NA words were more difficult to come by. This lists consists of (1) fairly common dictionary words and first names, (2) names from standard dictionaries of biography, (3) Biblical names, (4) geographical names drawn from Webster’s Collegiate, and (5) names from dictionaries of mythology.

A sample of palindromes using these ideas:

Leon stops Ned a limo AND NAomi, laden, spots Noel

“Delia rattedD,” NAdia said, “AND Etta railed”

Ned got Eb bigoted, a maid AND NAdia made to gibbet Ogden

“Allen, I slam mammaries,” I raveD. “NAGano nag AND Eva rise, I ram mammals in Ella!”

Rat censored NATO tot AND Eros nectar

Elba canoe. Dora sliD NAgel’s leg into hot Nigel’s leg AND Isla rode on a cable

aD NAb	gaD NAsal	paleD NAam
ageD NAbbed	galleD NAsturtium	palleD NAaman
amiD NAbber	gild NAt	petaleD NAarai
anD NAbob	gird NATal	ponD NAbal
ariD NAcre	gold NATalia	rabiD NAdab
AsgarD NAda	haD NATalie	rapiD NAgge
awarD NAdia	handeD NATasha	ratteD NAhallal
baD NAdine	heard NAt	raveD NAharai
baffleD NAdir	hiD NATion	reD NAIN
bald NAg	inward NATional	regarD NAum
ballaD NAIad	jaggeD NATO	roD NAbua
beD NAIades	jammed NATural	ruffleD NAg
caD NAif	keyeD NATure	saD NAgano
calleD NAIL	kiD NATurism	sadeyeD NAha
censoreD NAiled	laD NAv	sailed NAMur
cold NAiler	laiD NAv	salaD NAPA
crabbeD NAiling	leD NAY	sapiD NApo
dabbeD naive	lewD NAzi	saveD NARA
daD NAME	liD NAdar	stupiD NArew
dastarD NAMED	liveD NAdel	tableD NARo
demand NAm	maD NAd	timiD NARova
diamonD NAMing	maiD NAgano	toileD NAssau
diD NAn	miD NAgel	told NAuru
Edward NANA	mild NAgeli	unbinD NAWa
egaD NANNY	myriaD NAidoo	unbuckleD NAYarit
enableD NANO-	naileD NAidu	upward NAEenia
EniD NAomi	NimroD NAKaya	venD NAEesus
faD NAp	noD NAMias	vianD NAla
fableD NApalm	noteD NANNi	vieweD NAAñiga
faileD NApe	odD NApoleon	visoreD NANA
fleD NAp	old NASH	waD NAPI
fonD NARY	onward NAsser	waveD NARada
frowarD NASA	paD NAST	wold NARaka
		word NARisci