SURPRISINGLY RELATED SYNONYMS
(More Strange Bedfellows)

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It’s no surprise these pairs are synonyms, they have a common origin or part origin. But they surely don’t look it. They are what linguists call doublets, words with a common ancient ancestor but arriving at the present form via different paths. Doublets usually arrive at different meanings, while mine double back to the same meaning. They are a special class of strange bedfellows (’10-150), pairs of words with deceptively related etymologically. Pairs often share only a piece of their spelling from a common ancestor, with other parts being unrelated. While most of the below are reversible synonyms, some are one-way definitions or descriptions only.

SRS are nice complements to my coincidental self-synonyms (’04-45, 129), words with two same or close meanings from different roots. For example, net means gain/obtain in two senses: catch fish (Germanic, prob. <L. nodus); and make as a clear profit (<neat [clear], OE <Fris/Ir).

Pairs up first are so different that they have no common letters in crash positions of relevance or in embedded core phonemes. Crash means the same letter (or phoneme) or sound in the same position in both words. Here comparable position applies. The rest, up second, have crashes but are still surprising and don’t really look related.

This study is based mostly on the 1966 edition of Eric Partridge’s Origins etymology dictionary. Most pairs are distantly related and won’t be found together in regular dictionaries’ brief etymologies. I include tenuous relationships, Partridge’s “probable,” “perhaps,” etc, treating them as if definite, denying any pretense of rigorous scholarship, aiming only to amuse or bemuse.

1. Etymologically Related Synonyms with NO CRASHES

accident: chance
advent: coming

adventures: wayward voyager byways (crashes within definition but not with headword)

brew: ferment
chair: seat

communicable: catching
conjugation: zygosis bacterial sex

diary: journal
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eelte: privileged

eyed: oculate

food: 1 repast; 2 pasture fodder

hemp: cannabis

indigenous: native

kickshaw: whatnot
lachrymose: tearful
lanyard: noose

syzygy: joint
vigil: watch-wait
zero: cipher dated synonyms

level: equilibrate
occult: clandestine: concealed
odious: noisome
pretext: 'tissue'
since: thus because: causing
sun: Helios
vertical: upward
water: aqua: H₂O via hydrogen
Zeus: Jupiter (Jove)

2. Synonyms WITH CRASHES, but still surprising; 2a. single pairs
ail: ache
benign: gentle
buoy: beacon (figurative)
condone: pardon
denial: negativity
gradual: progressive
handle: manage
homology: sameness
incident: occasion
integrity: intactness
mangle: maim
ornery: insubordinate
pen: feather quill
protract: drag

attenuate: thin
brotherhood: fraternity
capture: catch
contend: maintain
genre: kind
grotto: crypt
higgledy-piggledy: haywire
implemented: accomplished
instead: as substitute
juvenile: youth
mellow: mild
painting: picture
prison: penitentiary
push: propel
right: correct
shovel: scoop
sustained: continued
taciturn: reticent
tame: domesticated
tenor: toner (anagram)
inguent: ointment
verbose: wordy
vice: wickedness
wardrobe: garments
widowed: vidual

scratch: grate
shorten: curtail

violin: fiddle
wick: village
zest: gusto

2b. Multiples, longs, special cases
ascertain: critically discern discrete criteria
borough: burrow group residences (homophones)
bottom: 1 foundation; 2 bum
break: 1 fracture; 2 burst
communication interceptions: captured
precepts espionage, bugs, hacks, mail theft, etc.

cooking: kitchen concoction
cybernetics: government control systems
duty: debt shared double meanings—tax + responsibilities
flood: Fluctuating flow inflates, surfs. (Influences effluent influenza influx!)
Few surprises but a flowing self-definition. Flu added for chills & thrills and social relevance.
foul: filthy: purulent: putrid
garden: 1 orchard; 2 yard (Oz usage)
laugh: layer’s litter A laughter, no joke, is a clutch (‘litter’) of eggs; the layer is the hen.
nexus: connection node
plane: flat place (a plain?)
standing: consistent: retained/maintained: continuous/continued
strange bedfellows record, 15 ~synonyms
tranquil: quiet: coy (dated)
voluntary: devout devotee monk etc.
vade (go): mosey: vamoose: invade: wade: waddle forms of moving, bipedal or optional
yodel: jubilant yowl
wind: fanned air