



Words Fail Me

Teresa Monachino

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This lively and informative new title was originally inspired by the author's Italian mother and her struggles with the vagaries of the English language. Over the years the author has tried to correct her attempts and explain why the word she has chosen is incorrect, only to be baffled herself by the lack of logic within those explanations. English is full of contradictions and peculiarities (not counting such dull grammatical inconsistencies as 'i before e except after c', which are really no fun at all) and hoodwinks us into believing one thing while meaning something quite different. In English, all is not what it seems and with this book the author has brought these illogical oddities to the fore. Questions of spelling, pronunciation or the blatantly nonsensical are illustrated through clever visual representations that are created entirely through artfully manipulated typography. heteronyms and introduces the 'antigram' (demonstrating how the swift shuffle of certain letters can create words that entirely contradict the first: honestly becomes on the sly, earliest becomes rise late and, fabulously, Elvis = lives!). Monachino goes on to demand an explanation from all those tricky little words that are spelt the same and pronounced the same, but yet have utterly different meanings, while highlighting a few of life's petty pleonasms and showing off some quite excellent tautologies. A gaggle of one-word oxymorons shines the spotlight on words that harbour contradictory words within them and the final section provides a note on inadvisable hyphenation, which is a useful disco-very, but perhaps not the best place to beg-in. Because of the linguistic nature of this title there will be a American English edition.

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