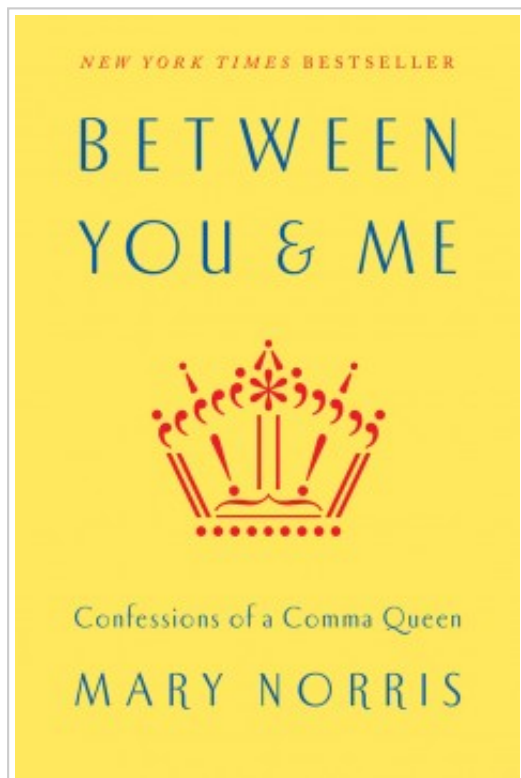


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Between You & Me

Confessions of a Comma Queen

by Mary Norris

Price: \$24.95(Hardcover)

Published: April 06, 2015

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: Mary Norris has spent more than three decades in The New Yorker's copy department, maintaining its celebrated high standards. Now she brings her vast experience, good cheer, and finely sharpened pencils to help the rest of us in a boisterous language book as full of life as it is of practical advice. *Between You & Me* features Norris's laugh-out-loud descriptions of some of the most common and vexing problems in spelling, punctuation, and usage—comma faults, dangles, "who" vs. "whom," "that" vs. "which," compound words, gender-neutral language—and her clear explanations of how to handle them. Down-to-earth and always open-minded, she draws on examples from Charles Dickens, Emily Dickinson, Henry James, and the Lord's Prayer, as well as from *The Honeyymooners*, *The Simpsons*, David Foster Wallace, and Gillian Flynn. She takes us to see a copy of Noah Webster's groundbreaking...

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What We Say

Is it a memoir? Is it a (gentle) primer on punctuation and grammar? Is it funny? Yes, yes and yes. Mary Norris is the "Comma Queen" who worked her way up the ladder at The New Yorker, the last bastion of clear and correct writing. Her delightfully shaggy new book does many things well. It offers a glimpse into the fabled world of The New Yorker. It tells of her trials by fire -- tentatively suggesting a correction here, wrangling with writers there, receiving words of praise from this famed talent while getting nowhere with that famed talent who stubbornly clings to a certain wording because it feels right. Philip Roth, Pauline Kael and the vivid New Yorker figure of Eleanor Gould are all here. But this isn't a straightforward memoir. The girl can't help herself: Norris playfully dives into various burning issues, such as whether the sentence "Yes, yes and yes" should have a comma after that second "yes," when to say "Between you & I" (pretty much never) and the purpose of that thingie that looks like an umlaut but isn't. I couldn't diagram a sentence to save my life. I've never even heard of a copulative verb and blush to think what it might suggest. Yet Norris makes it all fun. She's devilishly good at serving up examples of what she's talking about in the very sentences she uses to describe something. Plus, it ends with an ode to the No. 1 pencil. What's not to love? Between you and I, I'd be worried about my grammar if I ever spoke to her. But I shouldn't be: she's no scold. The Comma Queen makes proper punctuation a pleasure. -- Michael Giltz

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What Others Say

"[Between You & Me] brims with wit, personality — and commas... Norris' enthusiasm is infectious. She's as passionate about sharp pencils as she is about sharp writing... Delightful." - **Heller McAlpin NPR Books**

"[A] winningly tender, funny reckoning with labor and language." - **Megan O'Grady Vogue**

"Delightful." - **Miriam Krule Slate**

"Very funny, lucid, and lively." - **Julia Holmes The New Republic**

"Laugh-out-loud funny and wise and compelling from beginning to end." - **Steve Weinberg Houston Chronicle**

"Down-to-earth... [and] funny." - **Linda Lowenthal Boston Globe**

"An educational, entertaining narrative... Unforgettable anecdotes... Countless laugh-out-loud passages... A funny book for any serious reader." - **Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review**

"A delightful discourse on the most common grammar, punctuation, and usage challenges faced by writers of all stripes... Norris writes with wit, sass, and smarts." - **Publishers Weekly**

"Thoughtful and humorous... [Between You & Me] is not your grade school primer; expect wisecracks and pointed commentary." - **Gricel Dominguez Library Journal**

"[A]..."