



Ella Minnow Pea

A Progressively Lipogrammatic Epistolary Fable



Author

- ▶ Mark Dunn
- ▶ Born 1956
- ▶ Studied Film at University of Memphis and Screenwriting at University of Texas-Austin
- ▶ Worked as a playwright for over a decade before publishing his first novel *Ella Minnow Pea*, in 2001
 - ▶ This professional history explains the style of his books

Genre and Style

- ▶ *Ella Minnow Pea* is an experiment in style
- ▶ A Progressively Lipogrammatic Epistolary Fable
 - ▶ **Progressive**
 - ▶ steadily or in stages
 - ▶ **Lipogram**
 - ▶ a written work composed of words selected to avoid the use of one or more letters of the alphabet
 - ▶ **Epistolary**
 - ▶ in the form of written letters
 - ▶ **Fable**
 - ▶ a short story that teaches a moral or lesson, often through symbolism

Genre and Style

- ▶ Famous Fables
 - ▶ “The Tortoise and the Hare”
 - ▶ “The Ant and the Grasshopper”
 - ▶ *Animal Farm*
- ▶ Famous Epistolary Novels
 - ▶ *Frankenstein*
 - ▶ *Dracula*
 - ▶ *The Color Purple*
 - ▶ *Bridget Jones’s Diary*
- ▶ Famous Lipogrammatic Novels
 - ▶ Good luck finding one!

Plot

- ▶ The story is set on the fictional island of Nollop, situated off the coast of South Carolina and home to the inventor of the pangram *The Quick Brown Fox Jumps Over The Lazy Dog*. The citizens of Nollop pride themselves on their extensive vocabulary and their creative use of language. They've even erected a monument to honor their late hero. But one day a tile with the letter "Z" falls from the statue. The island leaders interpret the fallen tile as a message from beyond the grave and the letter is banned from use. Citizens are still reeling from the shock, when another tile falls... and then another...



Genre and Style

- ▶ **Pangram:** a phrase, sentence, or verse composed of all the letters of the alphabet
 - ▶ *A quirky novel with pages of zany, jumbled lexicon*
- ▶ **Portmanteau:** a word combining the sounds and the meanings of two other words
 - ▶ *Brunch, Smog, Spork, Dramedy*
- ▶ **Neologism:** a newly coined word or expression
 - ▶ *Leapdash, Larny-house, Intoxi-tipsy*

Characters

- ▶ **Ella Minnow Pea:** An 18-year-old launderess who lives in the busy city of Nollopton with her mother, **Gwennette**, and her father, **Amos**
- ▶ **Tassie Purcy:** Ella's cousin who lives in the rural village of Nollopville with her mother **Mittie**, a second-grade math teacher
- ▶ **Nate Warren:** A young American scholar at the University of Georgia who publishes *Nollopiana*, an academic journal about the island of Nollop, and therefore very interested in the island's recent crackdown on freedom of speech
- ▶ **High Island Council:** Governing body of Nollop





TOTALITARIANISM,
COMPLACENCY, AND
RESISTANCE



FREEDOM OF SPEECH



BETRAYAL AND
SOLIDARITY



BLIND FAITH, REASON,
AND LOGIC

Themes



The Ripple Effect *-just one letter...*

- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Press
- ▶ Music
- ▶ Time
- ▶ Privacy
- ▶ Trade and Commerce
- ▶ History
- ▶ Reality