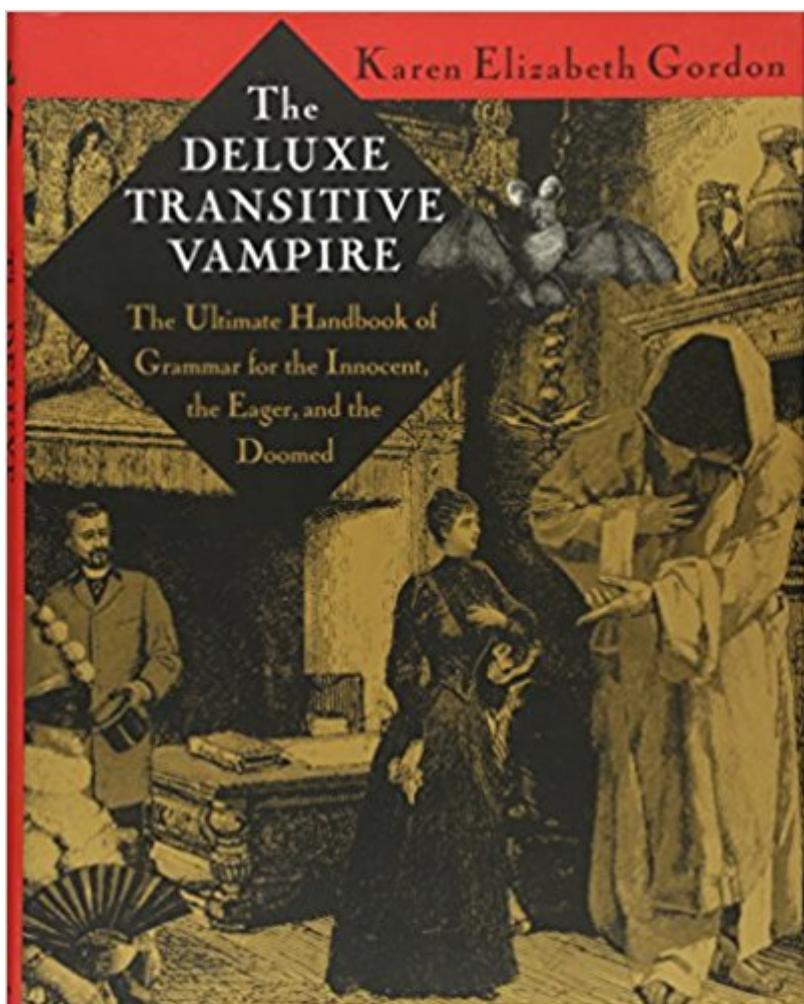


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The Deluxe Transitive Vampire: The Ultimate Handbook Of Grammar For The Innocent, The Eager, And The Doomed



Synopsis

Playful and practical, this is the style book you can't wait to use, a guide that addresses classic questions of English usage with wit and the blackest of humor. Black-and-white illustrations throughout.

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Customer Reviews

Karen Elizabeth Gordon is no ordinary grammarian, and her works (including *The New Well-Tempered Sentence*, *Torn Wings and Faux Pas*, and *The Disheveled Dictionary*)--are no ordinary books of grammar. A special edition of the 1984 classic, *The Deluxe Transitive Vampire* is populated by a wickedly decadent cast of gargoyles, mastodons, murderous debutantes, and, yes, vampires (both transitive and otherwise), who cavort and consort in order to illustrate basic principles of grammar. The sentences are intoxicating--"How he loved to dangle his participles, brush his forelock off his forehead with his foreleg, and gaze into the aqueous depths"--but the rules and their explanations are as sound as any you might find in *Strunk and White*. Outlining the building blocks of the English language, from parts of speech to phrases and clauses, *The Deluxe Transitive Vampire* goes on to exorcise such grammatical demons as passive voice, fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences. At last, a handbook of grammar you will actually want to read. In the words of Gordon's preface, "Howling, exploding, crackling, flickering with new life-forms, and drunk on fresh blood (some of mine is certainly missing), this deluxe edition reminds us on every page that words, too, have hoofs and wings to transport us far and deep."

Playful and practical, this is the style book you can't wait to use, a guide that addresses classic questions of English usage with wit and the blackest of humor. Black-and-white illustrations throughout.

Gordon's book was first recommended to me by poet Bill Matthews when I was a grad student in the MFA program at Brooklyn College. DECADES later, I use Vampire teaching college composition courses, from remedial to advanced. The students can "see" the grammar principles at work. The reticent and timid grammar student is energized by Gordon's exotic, quixotic and witty illustrations. Parts of Speech, Sentence Structure, Passive Voice -- all the essentials are here. Gordon's explanations are straight foward and practical. The class discussions sparked by the content have sometimes been more engaging than literature discussions.

See above. That being said, it is definitely designed for someone who wants to be there really learning the grammar. It's not one of those technical manuals that will answer the quick question you have about that pesky comma. It's going to teach you why the comma is there and how to identify the parts of your sentence with the fluency to rearrange them for greater effect, thus avoiding having to include that comma at all. It wasn't all sunshine and roses, though, from the point of view of a grammatical craftsman who likes to compare constructions in French, German, Latin, and ancient Greek. Gordon swept the differentiation of tense from aspect under the rug, and the book was completely lacking a discussion of mood. Since that's kind of an enormous gaping hole in an otherwise charming, illustrative, and exhaustive book, I have to go 4 stars instead of 5.

This book was recommended to me by a college professor to help me with grammar and sentence structure etc. Not only has it helped me improve and grasp general writing rules but I've never seen or read a book written in this way before. It catches my attention because of the creatures and topics for each of the sentences and this makes this book the opposite to boring; in fact I'm smiling as I'm learning because of the amusement the author has managed to infuse into this very easy to follow and insightful learning tool. Highly recommended not only for it's easy to grasp concepts, but also for it's twisting topics.

In case you couldn't figure it out from the title, this is a short prescriptive grammar of English. Its gimmick is that the examples have a silly gothic horror theme ("How wicked to behold you," "The girl squatting under the bridge is a debutante"), and the text is interspersed with old woodcuts, which

have absolutely no correlation with the text, or, often, with their own captions. The 1993 edition adds an index, which makes it much more useful than the original 1984 version. The level of the book is extremely basic. There is no discussion of the subjunctive, for example. There is also no room made for nuance: nothing about British versus American usage, house styles, levels of formality, or issues on which good writers can disagree (split infinitives, prepositions with nothing after them). The best thing about the book is that it's entertaining. The examples are strange and charming, and reading them is like eating bonbons. I plowed through the book in an hour, enjoying every minute of it. Unfortunately I didn't learn anything from the book that I didn't already know, and I don't think it's going to be particularly useful to me as a reference. Readers who want a grammar book for self-instruction will probably not want to use this book, since it lacks exercises. Readers whose native language is not English will probably have trouble following it, since the sophisticated style and vocabulary are mismatched to the basic level at which it discusses grammar. It might be a good choice for a bright teenager whose high school doesn't teach English grammar effectively.

Perhaps this book is meant for laughs or just for fun. If that's that case it might deserve a higher rating. For people like myself who are very challenged in spelling, punctuation, and grammar it just isn't helpful. I purchased this book in hopes that it would give me a fun way to learn writing mechanics. I expected illustrations to guide me through the stickier spots in my work. This book does not have that. The pictures are cute (in a vampirey, gothic way) but they do not add much to the explanations. The index is really not usefully at all to someone who is clueless in grammar. Terms such as Past Perfect Progressive Tense and Subjective Complements mean nothing to me. After reading these sections - they still mean nothing to me. It would have been nice to see index entries such as: Who's vs. Whose or Past vs. Passed. These are not listed. I took some time to try and find these sections in the handbook, but couldn't. If you are grammar challenged like I am, skip this book.

One of the most entertaining books for freshening up your grammar. I love all of her books and have recommended them to college students who have poor writing skills but can't stand to return to dry manuals to catch up.

Fun to read, and full of great examples and good explanations of the different parts of speech; but I wish it had contained a bit more formal theory and explanation as opposed to doing its teaching primarily by examples, as that always leaves me feeling like I might be missing something (try a "A

Grammar Guide for You and I" by Good if you think you might like that opposite approach).

This book is fun and educational. (Although, was sent 3 instead of 2:-/.) Would have given 5 stars except I receive more than I ordered and was missing two things that it appears I was billed for anyway.

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