



# **Miss Thistlebottom's Hobgoblins: The Careful Writer's Guide to the Taboos, Bugbears and Outmoded Rules of English Usage**

*Theodore Menline Bernstein*

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The old adage, rules are made to be broken has never been as well defended as in MISS THISTLEBOTTOM'S HOBGOBLINS. Throughout the book, Bernstein asserts that we have been indoctrinated with English usage rules that lack flexibility and evoke fear, confusion and frustration in writers. There are times when splitting an infinitive or ending a sentence with a preposition makes sense. Through a series of one-sided correspondences with Bertha Thistlebottom, an archetypal grade school English teacher, Bernstein addresses the community of rule mongering sticklers who have tried to squeeze the English language into a set of inflexible rules and outmoded definitions that only serve to stifle its growth and paralyze writers. In addition to his letters to Miss Thistlebottom, there are scores of entries where Bernstein debunks the rules of yesteryear with wit and intelligence and illustrates how to write effectively—without the worry of hobgoblins.

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