

2022-07-16 E

The letter E sat quite content between his neighbors R and W. He thought himself content because it wouldn't do to be smug or over-confident. He knew his value. He knew he was indispensable, quite necessary, especially in his native English on a clacky American-layout keyboard.

He, most-often of all letters, felt the joyful rush, a pop of a keypress, that triggered his symbol to appear on screen. Nothing unusual about a dozen presses a sentence, really.

The same, of course, couldn't be said for poor little W. She didn't even have her own name, really. She was just a doubling-up of distant-neighbor U. Sentences where she appeared even twice were an occasion for her to celebrate. Now U, on the other hand, was beginning to climb the ranks. Those young-uns, the cell phone keyboards, they often trashed the language with their slurs and simplifications. Simple, single, U now took the place of three whole letters. Something really ought to be done. Can't have upstarts upstaging proper spelling, though at least there weren't any E's omitted in that example.

Once, while ruminating on how wonderfully flexible was his family of vowels, especially considering how each could be modified by a following E, our protagonist encountered the wide wild west of the Space Bar.

Now there was a concept. A symbol without sound. A symbol who only served to break up others. That was one to watch. No matter what U did to corrupt good spelling, that Space Bar would be there. She couldn't exactly grow in importance. More spaces don't mean anything new. All the same, she'd have to be watched. She was a tricky one, E knew. She might have something up her sleeve.

And then, one day, E was silent. He wasn't used at all. It must be some wicked Space Bar plot! She was still happily clicking away, but E hadn't been touched for a whole novel's worth of writing! This newfangled "art" - modern art at its worst - was to intentionally avoid a letter for as long as you could. And, the misfortunes of fame, of course E was the prime target. All these letter-scrimping authors wanted to show just how clever they were by avoiding E.

Somehow this had to be her fault. No one ever tried to write a novel without pressing the space bar.