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Perfect Agreement (Paperback)

By Michael Downing

COUNTERPOINT, United States, 2009. Paperback. Condition: New. Reprint. Language: English . Brand New Book. Mark Sternum, a professor who teaches spelling and grammar at Boston's McClintock College, is full of droll observations about the rules that govern our language, but he leads a diligent if somewhat detached life. Friends and family try to coax him into deeper involvement, yet he keeps even his lover at arm's length. He screens all incoming calls, including his eccentric sister's word pictures about the waning days of their comatose mother. One day, an African-American single mother who has failed the college's basic skills test for the last time accuses Mark of prejudgism, and Mark is fired. Blown off course, he monitors the ensuing academic skirmish from a distance as his case makes national headlines, and turns his attention instead to the graceful rhythms of a small Shaker community. As the scrambled pieces of Mark's life and the simple ways of the Shakers begin to merge, Mark finds new beauty in his own maddening, blissful dependency on the people in his life. Funny and generous, Downing's seemingly effortless prose juxtaposes cunning portraits of academic functionaries weathering the age of...



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