Grammar: Mistakes Abound in the Garden ANSWER KEY

When it comes to spelling and grammar, Agent Lynn Terjekshian is not exactly the sharpest pen on the paper, *despite her Oxford education* (clue that the Oxford comma will be used). This makes things very difficult for her when writing messages to fellow agents in code. Or does it?

There are 3 types of errors in this letter: substituted letters, wrong homophones, and punctuation mistakes. They are color-coded accordingly from here on. (I've turned off Spelling and Grammar Suggestions because that simply made it too busy!) Since the substituted letters are the most obvious, those are the first step. Identifying the letters that were replaced reveals instructions for the next step.

Deer Etta,

      Im hoping this letter find's you well. How, prey tell, is your sister doing? Is she still seeing that charming fellow from Lexington. Anyway, I just had to right and, tell you the exciting news? My zinnias won first prize at, the Concord Garden Club's Fifty-Ninth Annual Flour Show! Is'nt that just the cat's pajamas? After my sole-crushing defeat by that dreadful Rebecca last year, I just new I had-to come back this year with a vengeance! Dew you want to no the secret behind my first-class zinnia's? Each knight before bed, I'd meander quietly out to the garden, tiptoe right up two the zinnias and belt out "Never Gonna Give Ewe Up" in my loudest most intimidating voice As each day went on I noticed, that the zinnia's were thriving! I could hardly believe my own eye's but they were growing at twice the rate of the previous year! When Rebecca first cot a glimpse of my zinnias at the show she almost had a heart attack! That hag cried when it was announced I'd won the prize?

Your friend,

Lynn

The replaced letters spell out homophone dash, grammar error dot. This now serves as instructions for extracting the keyword using Morse Code. Each line represents one letter.

So the puzzlers now go through again. The homophones are pretty straightforward; the grammar errors consist of everything from missing commas to unnecessary commas. Any unnecessary punctuation has been left in this "corrected" copy for the purpose of seeing the dot/dash visual more clearly.

Dear Etta,

 I'm hoping this letter find's you well. How, pray tell, is your sister doing? Is she still seeing that charming fellow from Lexington? Anyway, I just had to write and, tell you the exciting news! My zinnias won first prize at, the Concord Garden Club's Fifty-Ninth Annual Flower Show! Isn't that just the cat's pajamas? After my soul-crushing defeat by that dreadful Rebecca last year, I just knew I had-to come back this year with a vengeance! Do you want to know the secret behind my first-class zinnia's? Each night before bed, I'd meander quietly out to the garden, tiptoe right up to the zinnias, and belt out "Never Gonna Give You Up" in my loudest, most intimidating voice. As each day went on, I noticed, that the zinnia's were thriving! I could hardly believe my own eye's, but they were growing at twice the rate of the previous year! When Rebecca first caught a glimpse of my zinnias at the show, she almost had a heart attack! That hag cried when it was announced I'd won the prize!

 Your friend,
 Lynn

Applying the previously extracted rule, this becomes:

___ T

•• ___ U

• ___ • R

•• I

___ • N

___ ___ • G

• ___ A

___ • ___ • C

•••• H

•• I

___ • N

• E

The answer is **TURING MACHINE**--a device used in computational *grammar*!

___ ___ M