
The Z Files

Volume One of
The Guide to Comfortable
Spelling Bee and Scrabble® Preparation

By Caroline Miniscule

The Z Files

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All the words used within come from:

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 11th edition

Official Scrabble Players Dictionary, 4th edition

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The *definitions* of those words are original to this work.

NOTE

Format

All words that appear in the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 11th edition and the The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) Official Scrabble® Players Dictionary are in ALL CAPS.

Words that appear only in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 11th edition are not distinguished. If it's got more than 10 letters, you know you can't use it in The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) a Scrabble® game.

Words that appear *only* in the Official Scrabble® Players Dictionary are bolded, italicized, and in red (in light grey in black & white e-readers).

Locations and Events

Sweetwater, Texas is a real town, and the WASP Museum at Avenger Field is a real place.

There is no yearly Scrabble® tournament there. There is no Old Fashioned Ice Cream Emporium, either.

There is a AARP National Spelling Bee held every year in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

The Orlando Convention Center exists, but the one in this book is completely fictional.

Play

Murder at the Insert-Name-Here Playhouse is written by Caroline Miniscule and will be available shortly.

The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1)

PROLOGUE

“I hate Scrabble®,” grumbled Tracy McAlpine, walking with her husband out of the vast hall where the Avenger Field The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) Scrabble® Tournament had taken place.

Tracy was five foot seven, slender, and moved with the easy grace of an athlete – someone who biked every day and played tennis regularly. Her husband, Alex, was a couple of inches taller than she, and equally fit.

“I played ten games today,” Tracy The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) continued. “*Ten!* And I didn’t get a single power letter—”

“Power The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) letter?” interrupted Alex.

“That’s the Q, the Z, the J and the X. You know – the ones that are worth ten points or eight points. Heck, I didn’t even get a K! More than that, I think I spent every game drawing *all* vowels or *all* consonants. I just could *not* catch a break. 0-10. That’s The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) how I finished the day. I never would The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) have thought it was possible.”

“Tracy, you and I both know you’re a great Scrabble® player. Obviously your biorhythms were off, that’s all. It happens.”

“Hasn’t happened to me before. Not for ten straight games! I want a hot fudge sundae.”

Alex laughed. “Very well. Hop into your chariot and I’ll The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) take you to the closest ice cream emporium.”

Alex had taken out his keys. He pressed the button on the car remote to unlock the car The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) doors.

“My hero,” said Tracy as she settled into the passenger seat of their twelve-year-old Toyota Camry. “Don’t spare the horses.”

“I was strolling around Sweetwater earlier,” said Alex as he drove out of the parking lot, “and they actually have one. It’s called the Old Fashioned Ice Cream Emporium. I scoped it out in advance, by the way. You will *love* their hot fudge sundaes.”

Tracy smiled. “Good!” She heaved a sigh. “So, your day was better than mine, I take it?”

“Yes, I enjoyed it. I spent several hours at the WASP Museum – very interesting. And I strolled around Sweetwater. It’s a nice little town. We’ll be there in just a couple of minutes.”

Sweetwater, Texas is a small town of about 11,000 residents. Its main claim to fame is the WASP Museum, located at Avenger Field – the same airfield where, during World War II, a thousand women trained to fly airplanes so they could ferry them around the country to various Air Force bases, thus releasing male pilots for active duty. The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) overseas.

Other attractions of Sweetwater are the world’s largest Rattlesnake Roundup every March, and fans of Elvis Presley occasionally visit to see the Municipal Auditorium there, where Elvis Presley performed in 1955 during his Jamboree Tour of West Texas.

And for the last ten years, on the first weekend in August, they hold an Avenger Field Scrabble® Tournament.

A few minutes later, Tracy and Alex were ensconced in a booth in the back of the Old Fashioned Ice Cream Emporium located in downtown Sweetwater. Tracy had a hot fudge sundae and Alex a banana split.

“There’s no problem that a hot fudge sundae can’t solve,” Tracy said after savoring a few spoonfuls. “And you were right, Alex. This is The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) a great specimen of the breed. I don’t think I’ve had a better one. The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) And the cashew nut sprinkles on top? Delish.”

They sat in companionable silence while they devoured their ice cream.

As they walked out of the Emporium Alex said, “Do you feel The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) like walking around Sweetwater? It *is* a nice town.”

“No, let’s just go back to our little home away from home. I’d better get started on a new The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) play, since I’m clearly not going to be able to make a living at Scrabble® tournaments.”

Alex laughed. “Tracy, it was your first tournament! Stop being so hard on yourself. Besides, there’s not enough money in Scrabble® tournaments for you to even *think* of becoming a shark at the game. You were going to have to write another play regardless.”

“That’s true,” Tracy said with a smile. “Oh, I’m sorry, Alex, I’m just moaning. I’d had such high hopes this morning. I didn’t expect to win, of course. I was thinking, realistically, third place. But I went Zero and Ten! I can’t share *that* in my publicity releases, now can I?”

“Aha!” said Alex. “The truth comes out. Your ulterior motive. Publicity. You The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) wanted to get your name in the paper as the winner of a Scrabble® tournament. And of course the article would mention that you The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) were the author of the play, *Murder at the Insert-Name-Here Playhouse*, the darling of The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1) the regional theatre circuit and high school theatre clubs for the last three years.”

Four years ago, Tracy, who had worked for many years as a research librarian in Minneapolis, Minnesota, had gone to see the play *The Mousetrap* at one of the city’s many theatres. She hadn’t seen it for fifteen years. She’d seen it first as a ten year old child, accompanying her family on a trip to London, England. It had been the first play she’d ever seen, and she’d fallen in love with it immediately – both the play itself and the concept of the theatre.

For many years after that she’d gone to the theatre regularly with her family – and once she’d got married to Alex, with her husband. She’d seen everything that the theatre scene in

Minneapolis had to offer, from the drama of Shakespeare to the comedy of Neil Simon. She'd especially loved going to see other plays written by Agatha Christie – *The Hollow*, *Ten Little Indians*, *Five Little Pigs*, *Death on the Nile* and so on.

But when *The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1)* she'd sat in the audience during this fifteen-years-later performance of *The Mousetrap*, something had clicked, and even as she'd watched it she'd written a play in her mind, a play taking place in a regional playhouse, anywhere in the country (the playhouse putting on the play *The Z Files: Build your Z-word Vocabulary (The Comfortable Guide to Spelling Bee and Scrabble Preparation Book 1)* could insert the name of their own theatre into the title and into the script itself, in the appropriate spots), an affectionate tribute and spoof of Agatha Christie plays and performers.

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