

Doctor Juliet Bradshaw's blonde hair blew almost horizontal with the wind rushing through her open-top black Saab convertible. She had just left her afternoon dermatology clinic and was heading straight out for dinner. She drove at nearly seventy miles per hour. She was very happy. She had been informed that her fourth paper on the genetics of squamous cell carcinoma had been accepted for publication by *Nature*.

Doctor Spackman's Beetle was approaching Highbury Corner. He planned to stop at his favourite HiFi shop. He parked on the opposite side of the road and crossed over to the shop. Doctor Spackman turned to see the blonde hair of Doctor Bradshaw swish into view. As she turned, something about the bridge of her nose struck a familiar and primal chord deep within his primitive brain. He remembered how much he had thought about the way she looked in her theatre blues. The gentle rise and fall of her breasts.

* * *

Tom is terrified. It's not fear of the unknown; it's the exact opposite. He knows very well what lies ahead. He's been here before. He reaches down to his radial pulse and then wishes he hadn't. If only he wasn't asthmatic. He's heard of so many others taking beta-blockers. They swear by them. He feared some bronchoconstrictive collapse. He toyed with the idea of verapamil. Maybe that would have controlled his rate enough, but what if it had led to some catastrophic arrhythmia?

* * *

Richard Jones was at a crucial moment when his mobile rang; it would be difficult, very difficult, to stop.

"Bad timing," Brenda whispered, the waft of her breath tickling his ear.

"Very," he murmured, moving upwards a fraction. "We're at the point of no return."

"Yes," Brenda agreed. "I can't believe you're doing this on your wedding day."

"Neither can I." Richard willed his phone to stop.

His mobile gave six more rings, then stopped.

"Thank God for that," Brenda sighed.

"Yes," whispered Richard, distracted. With only half his mind on the job, he moved his hand higher.

"Careful," Brenda said, restraining him.

"What? Oh right . . . sorry!" Richard cursed himself for being a clumsy fool. "It's no good, we'll have to stop now." He put down his lumbar puncture needle and pushed his stool away from the bedside. He hurried across the ward. His white coat was hanging beside the washbasin,

pockets bulging. He switched off his mobile, scrubbed quickly, then hurried across the ward.

"You took your time," Brenda pouted.

"Let's just get on with it, shall we?"

"It was her, wasn't it?"

Richard didn't reply. He snapped on new gloves, sat down, and picked up the lumbar puncture needle.

"You'd better make it quick," Brenda said, close behind him. The tickle of her breath was back. She gave a little sigh. Something soft nudged the nape of his neck.

"If you don't hurry up," she murmured, "we'll run out of time." The nudge came again. "And you know what you're like, Richard, such a terrible stickler for fitting everything in."

* * *

The dull throb of a landing helicopter marked the arrival of a harvested liver on the roof of Barford Hospital. Inside the chopper was Professor Thomas Lovejoy, who liked occasionally to go out and do the harvesting himself. As he handed over the organ box and ran for the theatres, he was aware of the Chinese girl waiting in the corridor. This girl had been at every one of his last six transplants. "Professor Lovejoy, do you mind if I watch?" She was there, waiting outside the theatre, beautiful almond eyes visible above the mask.

"May Chang, you can assist."

[Correspondence]

I'D LIKE TO TEACH THE WORLD TO SPELL

From emails exchanged last year between David Armstrong, a former English teacher, and employees of The Coca-Cola Company.

To The Coca-Cola Company,

The slogan for Dasani mineral water contains an egregious error. The tag line is "Treat yourself well. Everyday." The word "everyday" is an adjective that is used to describe things that are routine or ordinary. "Everyday concerns" or "everyday life" would be two examples.

Your slogan should read: "Treat yourself well. Every day." In this case "every" is an adjective modifying the noun "day." This is a popular construction which is also used in such phrases as "every week," "every time," "every breath I take," etc.

I would also argue that the phrase "Every day"

by itself is somewhat unsubstantial as a full sentence. I will defer, however, to your superior knowledge of the language of mass communication. I do believe, though, that it would behoove the Dasani division of The Coca-Cola Company to make an attempt to appeal to the grammatically sophisticated beverage consumer by modifying your advertising to correct the aforementioned error.

Respectfully submitted,
David Armstrong

Thank you for contacting The Coca-Cola Company, Mr. Armstrong. We appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns regarding our new slogan for DASANI, "Treat yourself well. Everyday."

Advertising slogans aren't always constrained by the traditional conventions of formal writing; compromises are quite often made to develop a more effective message. When forming the new slogan for DASANI, we considered both "Everyday" and "Every day." After subjecting both versions to testing, we decided to use the more impactful adjective form, rather than the adjective-noun phrase. Since "Everyday" is not an actual sentence and isn't part of a complete paragraph, we do not feel it is necessarily confined by the same literary bounds as formal writing.

We value feedback from our consumers. Your comments have been shared with the appropriate management here at the corporate headquarters and will certainly be taken into consideration as we move forward with our future plans.

Joy
Industry and Consumer Affairs
The Coca-Cola Company

Dear Joy,

Thank you for your prompt and informative response to my email message. I do appreciate your taking the time. I must confess, however, that I am not completely satisfied with your answer. I fail to see how the adjective "everyday," which has a completely different meaning than the phrase "every day," is more "impactful." (By the way, "impactful" is not listed as a word in any dictionary that I am aware of. Was this neologism spawned by the person who hatched your Dasani slogan?) You say you chose the "adjective form," as if you were choosing between two versions of the same thing—but the similarity is purely superficial.

Your slogan may as well read "Treat yourself well. Ordinary," or "Treat yourself well. Commonplace," because that is what it means, given the error. You say that you have subjected both versions to testing. I assume that means that you conducted focus groups, and that none of the invitees caught the error, or that the few

who did were drowned out by the majority that found the totally irrelevant adjective "everyday" to be "impactful." Are we then to assume that poor grammar and abuse of the English language make for more effective marketing? If this is the case I have a couple of suggestions for future slogans you may wish to consider:

"Coke. Its the real thing."

"All ways Coca-Cola."

"Coke add's life."

Would you use such slogans? I wouldn't think so, and yet you defend your error on the

[Translations]

YOU EAT THE HORSE MEAT

The following phrases are generated by "Bowlingual," a device that can be attached to dogs' collars to translate their barks into Japanese or English.

My friend!
Tell me your secrets.
Bend down so I can see you.
Got some good stuff?
I have a secret.
I want something new.
I want to see the world.
Give me the stars and the moon.
I'm huge.
I'm dominant.
I'm beautiful.
I'm gorgeous.
I'm very cuddly.
I'm having a fiesta now.
Let's do this all day.
I wonder what you're thinking.
I'm feeling a little odd.
I have mixed emotions.
Are you my friend or my enemy?
Leave me alone.
I'm depressed.
Don't touch.
Move back.
I'm above you.
Respect my authority.
I might bite.
Take your best shot.
I will not be denied anything.
I've never been so embarrassed.
Please help me.

grounds that "Advertising slogans aren't always constrained by the traditional conventions of formal writing." Surely there must be limits to this unpoetic license.

In closing, I am surprised that a firm such as The Coca-Cola Company does not want to extend its high-quality standards to include the language used to promote its products, and I anxiously await a decision from your superiors regarding my request.

Best regards,
David Armstrong

Thank you for your reply. We truly appreciate your feedback regarding our slogan for DASANI, and I will share it with the appropriate management. As for the word "impactful," this is simply the noun form of "impact" with the suffix "-ful" added to the end in order for it to be used as an adjective. Words with suffixes are typically not in the dictionary.

Rich Robinson
Advertising Specialist
The Coca-Cola Company

Dear Rich,

It has been a few days since our email exchange and I have yet to hear from your executives. You had promised to share my concerns with them, and I would have thought that the issues I raise were sufficiently urgent to warrant immediate attention on the part of your superiors. I would appreciate an update on the status of my request.

Your fine and reputable firm needs to act swiftly to repair this grievous attack on the English language, one which I have now seen plastered on the sides of buses, on billboards, and in numerous other public locations. Have you considered the effect of your nonsensical "Treat yourself well. Everyday" campaign on the nation's schoolchildren? How do you expect them to fare in their English courses when subjected to a barrage of advertising with no respect for the rules of the language? And what of those who are learning English as a second language? Should they be told that standards apply only in the classroom and not to Corporate America?

In these days of increased scrutiny of corporate behavior, you would do well to ensure that your "messaging" has a positive impact on society. I submit that you are conducting a campaign that is offensive to those of us who care about the language and harmful to those who are attempting to master it.

In closing, although I appreciate the creativity of your comment that "Words with suffixes are typically not in the dictionary," I believe that if you research this further you will find

that many words with suffixes are in fact in the dictionary, and that words that are not words are not.

Warm regards,
David Armstrong

[Scherzo]

THIS IS NOT A TOY

"The Only Professional Player of the Toy Piano, Margaret Leng Tan," by Eula Biss, was published in the Winter/Spring issue of the Bellingham Review. Biss is the author of The Balloonists, a book of prose poems.

I. OF THE TOY

"I've learned to work within the limits of a toy," she says. "And confining myself to its boundaries has widened my capabilities."

What defines a toy? The toy hammer can't pound a real nail. The toy egg can't be eaten. The toy typewriter doesn't write. A toy has no use beyond play.

Dictionaries, religious texts, letters, and textbooks all have a use, I tell my poetry students. What is the use of poetry? "A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose," wrote Gertrude Stein. If prose is a tool, poetry is a toy.

I remember telling my father that I wanted a Happy Meal so that I could get the free toy. He said, "You can have a Happy Meal, but there's one thing you have to learn—nothing is free." This was before the report that children were working seventeen-hour days in China packing plastic Snoopy figurines for McDonald's restaurants. The toy factory released its child laborers after this report was made public.

She did not have a toy piano as a child in Singapore. At sixteen she won a scholarship to study at Juilliard.

McDonald's offers separate Happy Meals for girls and boys. The Happy Meals for girls come with a girl toy and the Happy Meals for boys come with a boy toy.

Is the toy piano a boy toy or a girl toy?

"The toy itself makes demands . . ." writes the National Toy Council.

She made her debut on the toy piano in 1993 at New York's Lincoln Center, playing John