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## G.R.A.M.M.A.R.

by

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Winner of the 2018 Student Competition

It was just another ordinary Wednesday for Dr. Ethan Sisters at the Gertrude Rehab Academy for Major and Minor Articulate Refractions - G.R.A.M.M.A.R, for short.

Too bad Wednesdays were always terrible.

It started a long time ago, when someone decided to add a silent “d” to the word Wednesday, and it all went downhill from there. Dr. Sisters’s Wednesday patients always seemed to sap his patience, and the young gentleman sitting in front of him was a prime example. Ironically, explaining to the man why headache is not spelled with a “k” was giving Dr. Sisters just that, a headache.

“But Doctor, “ch” makes a *chchch* sound!”

Dr. Sisters sighed and leaned back in his chair - a word which *was* pronounced the way the man claimed.

“You are correct,” Dr. Sisters interjected, “however letters do not always sound the same all the time.” To his relief, the office clock chimed twelve, terminating this appointment. Dr. Sisters massaged his temples as he filled out his report.

There are a few things you need to know about our dear Dr. Ethan Sisters, the most important of which was that Dr. Sisters had no sisters, only brothers. However, he *did* work with a colleague whose name was Dr. Lyla Brothers, who had *many* brothers, but wished for sisters. She was married to Dr. Ethan Sisters’s brother, Dr. Irving Sisters, so she finally gained the sisters she always wanted, but only through marriage.

It was no surprise to many that Dr. Irving was married before Dr. Ethan, for you see “I” always comes before “E”, with only slight exceptions. Dr. Sisters actually had had a patient with that particular problem this morning.

This particular patient had been screaming to meet whoever invented the “I” before “E” rule. Dr. Sisters could not get a grammatically-calculated word in edgewise, as the patient kept chanting, “Seize the caffeinated protein counterfeits from feisty foreign Keith! *Seize the caffeinated protein counterfeits from feisty foreign Keith!*”

The perfect word to describe this patient, Dr. Sisters had written in his report, was definitely “weird.” Besides for working alongside his sister-in-law, Dr. Brothers, Dr. Sisters also tended to work alongside the Assistant Manager’s Assistant and the Assistant Manager’s Manager; Dr. Sisters had trouble telling the two apart.

The identical twin brothers were identical in every way - from their identical doctor-looking hair cuts, to their identical doctor-looking shoelaces, everything about Dr. Evan Burt and Dr. Ivan Burt was identical, except for the first letter of their first names.

The Drs. Burt would have had the same problem as Dr. Ethan Sisters and his brother, however, their mother’s name was Catherine, and we all know the rule about “I before E except after C”.

Dr. Sisters had made plans to have lunch today with both the Assistant Manager’s Assistant and the Assistant Manager’s Manager. Dr. Sisters had never actually met the Assistant Manager himself.

Lunch was a relatively quiet affair at G.R.A.M.M.A.R. The Drs. Burt filed into Dr. Sisters’ office, Evan then Ivan. Their lunch conversations usually revolved around their different patients, but because of medical disclosure, each patient was just referred to by their medical condition.

As per the rule Dr. *Evan* Burt started the conversation.

“I had to deal with a silent H-er today. It was horrible! The poor woman wanted to pronounce the “h” in honour and honest.”

“Simply devastating,” Dr. Ivan Burt replied. “I never understood why people pay so much attention to something that doesn’t even make a sound. Earlier, I had a patient who wanted to pronounce the “t” in Italy and little instead of its obvious “d” sound.”

“Was your patient English?” Dr. Sisters asked. He knew that English people often pronounced the hard “t”.

“No! He was Texan!” The Drs. Burt cried out in unison.

The Drs. Burt spent the rest of their lunch break arguing about which patient was more seriously ill, as Dr. Sisters contemplated whether the misspelling of words on advertisements affected the consumer’s spelling ability.

After lunch, it was time to get back to work. Dr. Sisters had scheduled an appointment with a most needy patient.

“Doctor, I am in so much pain. Please help me,” whined a man in his early fifties.

“What seems to be the problem?” Dr. Sisters patiently asked his patient.

And so began the tale of woe. The man had gone to another doctor beforehand to complain about his upset stomach, whereupon the doctor informed him that fasting would be a good way to clear out his system -- the only problem with that was that now, the man was *deathly* hungry.

“Well, while I am no medical professional,” Dr. Sisters said, “It would seem like eating something would cure your hunger problems.”

“No, that is not the problem!” The man wailed. “The doctor said to go on a fast, but the fast is going by so *slowly*. Why would something that goes so slow be called a fast!”

After several moments of silence, Dr. Sisters booked the man appointments for the next seven years. He understood that this would not be a fast process.

Looking over his reports at the end of the day, Dr. Sisters was pleased to see that it had been a very productive day. He had straightened out someone with possessive issues over the possessive apostrophe, told someone off for pronouncing the “t” in often, and given the Oxford comma the respect it deserved. He let all the stress from work leave his heavy shoulders as he walked through the front door of his house.

In an overly dramatic and cliched voice, Dr. Sisters hollered, “Honey, I’m home!”

His wife came out to greet him from her in-house studio and smiled. “Finally! Now you and me can spend some time together.”

Dr. Ethan Sisters hugged his wife tightly and whispered in her ear, “You and *I* are indeed going to be spending some time together.”