

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj
Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss
Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

No Helvetica

by Douglas Evans

I turned off my computer. I removed a poster from my bedroom wall and stuck taped over the words on my T-shirt. “No Helvetica today,” I said. “Today I’ll try and avoid all Helvetica.”

“What’s Helvetica?” asked my little sister, who followed me downstairs.

A box of cereal stood on the kitchen table. “I’m spending this entire day without Helvetica,” I told my mother.

My mother smiled and removed the cereal box. “Then I’ll cook you some waffles,” she said.

“But what’s Helvetica?” my little sister asked.

After breakfast, my mother gave me two dollars for my school lunch. I checked the bills and handed them back. “I can’t use paper money today,”

I said. "It has Helvetica."

"So I'll pack you a lunch," said my mother. "A ham sandwich and a banana."

"Please take the sticker off the banana peel," I said. "That has Helvetica, too."

"And I still can't guess what Helvetica is," said my sister as we headed out the door.

We waited for the school bus by the street curb. When I saw the bus coming, I started walking to school.

"Does a school bus have Helvetica, too?" my sister asked.

I nodded. "Along both sides and on the back."

Walking along the sidewalk was harder than I thought. Seeing a letterbox up ahead, I crossed the street. Before passing a clothing store, I crossed the street again. Finally, at the corner, I read the street sign, and decided to cut through the park.

"Helvetica, whatever it is, seems to be everywhere," said my sister.

Helvetica appeared above the front entrance of my school. So I entered through the playground door. In the hallway, Helvetica was on the fire alarm. Helvetica was on the library door and the office door, too.

"I can't even use the Boys' Room today," I said.

My sister turned into her classroom. "I'm going to look up Helvetica

on the computer,” she said.

Inside my classroom was better. No Helvetica was on the whiteboard or on my desktop. Some Helvetica appeared on the bulletin board, so I made sure not to turn my head.

Luckily, my reading book had no Helvetica. Neither did my spelling workbook. But I opened my math book with caution. Yes, Helvetica appeared in some of the pictures.

“I can’t do math today,” I told my teacher. “Today I’m staying away from Helvetica.”

“What’s Helvetica?” my classmates called out.

“*Shh!*” went my teacher, but she understood my problem. She handed me a black marker and said, “Then you can mark out any Helvetica you find on today’s math pages.”

During lunch, I found Helvetica all over the lunchroom, on candy wrappers, on potato chip packets, and on milk cartons. It appeared on lunch boxes and on a sign telling me to eat healthy foods. I ended up eating alone in a corner of the room.

“Going without Helvetica is the hardest thing I’ve ever done,” I said.

Finally school was over, and I spent the afternoon doing my homework in my bedroom. I also managed to get through dinner avoiding Helvetica, although I knew it was on many food items on the shelves and in

the refrigerator.

After dinner, I plopped into a chair in the TV room. “I made it,” I told my sister. “A whole day without Helvetica. Now I can watch some TV before going to bed.”

My sister picked up the TV remote. “I finally learned what Helvetica is,” she said. “And I see you can’t watch TV without breaking your Helvetica rule.”

She showed me the remote. I read the words by the control buttons and groaned. “Helvetica,” I said.

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Have you guessed what Helvetica is?

It’s a common font or typeface used in printing and on computers. In fact, this story was printed in Helvetica. Helvetica letters and numbers look like this:

**Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj
Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt
Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9**

Now take a walk around your neighborhood, and see how much Helvetica you can find.