

EvoSoap

Truly personal hygiene.

Elizabeth Farnsworth, Aaron M. Ellison and Nicholas J. Gotelli

So convenient, these little refills! And such pretty packaging — with my name printed right there on the front, no less! And the foil keeps the contents sterile, thankfully. And it's so easy to use. According to the instructions, I just open the ziploc and pour the liquid into my dispensers ... in the shower, by the sink, anywhere I need to wash.

And everyone — the chirpy news people, my overanxious daughter — tells me to wash often, of course, to ward off that latest flu or whatever it is that seems to be bringing so many people down. Could it be that Mr Fulton downstairs met his end because he hardly ever washed? (As far as I could tell — his kitchen was a travesty.) A pity, really. And quite awful, the way he went, not to mention how the rest of us in the building had to sit in quarantine for heaven knows how long (really, how many games of solitaire can one play?). But then, he didn't have an educated daughter who could keep him up to date on all the latest health advances. I am so lucky that Vera takes such good care of me.

She told me about EvoSoap and swears by it. Of course, she felt quite pressured to get started with her own series, once the elementary school started mandating it for the children. Kids can be so contagious, after all. I remember not a day seemed to go by without Vera getting an earache or cold when she was a youngster, poor girl, even though the schools vaccinated practically everybody back then! So I suppose it's safest if everybody protects themselves. We all have to do our part.

It's an interesting idea, really: a disinfectant soap tailored to each person's unique genetic profile. I'm no scientist — Vera's father was, but he went years ago in the last outbreak. But Vera (she takes after him) tells me that the Company uses a sample from each person and extracts the genes — 'DNA', is it? Then somehow they can detect if our genes are making antibodies to the latest bacteria or viruses. So then they

make the soap with the right antibodies in it to make up for our deficiencies.

Nobody's perfect!

It seems those bugs fight back, though, changing their own genes to get around our defences. That's why they've got to make new soaps all the time, to adjust — adapt — to the new types of bugs. My daughter says it's a lot like those daily software updates they send to your computer, always staying one step ahead of those mischievous young people — 'hackies', or some such — who

make new viruses for your computer for their fun. Of course, I don't use a computer — too much



trouble to learn at my age! I never was a big believer in that so-called 'evolution' theory, either, but my daughter tells me 'mutation' is a big problem, so I've got to use the new soap to keep up with the changes, as she says the bugs can develop resistance pretty fast. I wish I could still use my old soap, but I guess it doesn't work anymore, and besides, there's only one soap on the market.

So, on her insistence — she's so lovely, Vera, but always so worried — I sent in my sample, a Q-tip swab of the inside of

my cheek (lots of DNA there, I guess), to PersonalDNA Inc. I was afraid they'd need blood, but thankfully not. I was reluctant at first — I don't want to send parts of me to some stranger! But those slick TV ads — honestly, they're on every ten minutes! — gave me the impression that these people know what they're doing. They're real professional scientists — smart, just like my Vera. It's a little disturbing to me that they keep my genes on file — or is it just the sequence of letters in my genes ... oh, yes, the 'code' — in that big national data bank. I don't know where they possibly have room for all those codes! But the Homeland Security office knows best; they say they can use the information to catch crooks, perhaps even those hackies. And, at my age, I confess I don't really care; I'll be leaving this Earth soon anyway. And actually, I haven't had so much as a sniffle in years.

It's a little cumbersome, as they send me a new 'update' soap every month. I guess it's no more trouble than a magazine subscription, but the monthly payments and the express mail costs do take a bite out of my budget. I've been on fixed income since Jeremy died, but Vera helps out. And, as I said, we all have to do our part.

The president told us as much on his daily TV address about the outbreak. Silly man — he calls it the 'War on Germs'. I remember a decade ago — or was it two? — when that other president had his very own 'War on Terror' and somebody before that had a 'War on Poverty'. As if every mother in America, including me and Vera, weren't waging our own little wars on germs with our children. But this president is too young to remember polio. And now he's so het-up about this flu, telling us to wash, wash, wash using EvoSoap. If I didn't know better, I'd say that the Company is running this country!

Oh, there's the doorbell. Must be the mailman with a new packet for me — I was almost out of the old one! He's such a sweet boy — I've got to know him so well. But I worry about that little cough of his. ■

Elizabeth Farnsworth, Aaron Ellison and Nicholas Gotelli — scientists all — came up with this idea over breakfast (which we ate only after washing our hands).

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