

Exercise 3: Here is an example of how terrible passive voice can be. I have taken a paragraph from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and converted his active voice to passive voice. The original of each passage appears on the next page, for comparison.

Exercise 3:

“It was thought by me that a dream was being had, for no shadow was thrown upon the floor by the three women. I was approached closely by them, and looked at by them for some time, and then whispers were made by them. Their faces seemed to be known by me, and known in connection with some dreamy fear. Brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips were had by all three. I was made uneasy by something about them, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. In my heart was felt a wicked, burning desire that I should be kissed by them with those red lips. This is not good to be noted down; lest my wife's eyes should some day be met by it, and pain caused to her by it, but it is the truth [. . .]. The bed was lain in by me with an agony of delightful anticipation. I was advanced and bent over by one until the movement of her breath could be felt. Sweet it was in one sense, honey-sweet, but with a bitter underlain by the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as in blood can be smelled by one. It was both thrilling and repulsive, and as her neck was arched by her, her lips were actually licked by her like an animal.”

--Bram Stoker's *Dracula* converted to passive voice,
Chapter Three.

“How can Arthur be expected by me, a man by whom known of these things were known, to believe? I was doubted by him when he was taken by me from Lucy's kiss as her death was being had. A thought may be had in some ideas that are mistaken that this [woman] was buried alive by us, that she has been killed by us by our ideas; unhappiness will be had by him always. Yet sureness can never be had by him; that is the worst of all. And thoughts will be had by him sometimes that she who was loved by him was buried alive, and his dreams will be painted with horrors of what sufferings were had by her; and again, thoughts will be had by him that we were right, and that his so beloved wife was, after all, a vampire! No! He has been told by me once, and since then much has been learned by me. Since this truth is known all by me, it is known by me a hundred thousand times more that bitter waters must be passed through by him before the sweet are reached [. . .] The stake through her heart must be driven by him, poor fellow.

--Bram Stoker's *Dracula* converted to passive voice,
Chapter Fifteen.

[Here are the original passages, mostly in active voice, for comparison.]

"I thought I must be dreaming, for the three women threw no shadow on the floor. They came close to me, and looked at me for some time, and then whispered together. I seemed somehow to know their faces, and to know it [sic] in connection with some dreamy fear. All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they should kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down; lest some day it should meet my wife's eyes and cause her pain, but it is the truth [. . .]. I lay in the bed with an agony of delightful anticipation. One advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath. Sweet it was in one sense, honey-sweet, but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood. It was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal."

--*Dracula*, by Bram Stoker. Chapter Three.

"How can I expect Arthur, a man who knew none of these things, to believe? He doubted me when I took him from Lucy's kiss when she was dying. He may think in some more mistaken idea that we buried this [woman] alive, that we have killed her. He will then argue that it is we, mistaken ones, that have killed her by our ideas; he will be unhappy always. Yet he never can be sure; that is the worst of all. And he will sometimes think that she he loved was buried alive, and that will paint his dreams with horrors of what she must have suffered; and again, he will think that we may be right, and that his so beloved wife was, after all, a vampire. No! I told him once, and since then I learned much. Now, since I know that it is all true, a hundred thousand times more do I know that he must pass through the bitter waters to reach the sweet [. . .]. He, poor fellow, must drive the stake through her heart."

--*Dracula*, by Bram Stoker. Chapter Fifteen.