Episode #9. Gender neutral nouns

Chris: I love New York City. It’s the best city in the world.

Jessica: There is definitely no other city like it. What’s your favorite place in “The Big Apple”, Chris?

Chris: I like to walk on Broadway on the Upper West Side. I’ll typically walk from 116th Street all the way down to 80th Street. Sometimes I go to the fabulous delicatessens and eat a slice of New York cheesecake or a bagel. I also love to watch the cab drivers go by. The streets are always full of people and lined with used book sellers.

Jessica: When I visit New York, I like to sit on a bench in Central Park with a slice of the best pizza in America while I people watch, especially when it snows. Nothing is more romantic than New York on a snow day.

Chris: When I was a little kid visiting New York, I used to love to go to the top of one of the twin towers of the World Trade Center and watch the sun set over the skyscrapers. At just the right time, they would all look golden. But of course, since the terrorist attack of September 11th, 2001, the twin towers are gone. I’ve visited the memorial for the victims.

Jessica: I really like the memorial. It’s a waterfall on four sides that flows into the footprint of one of the fallen towers. I especially love the Survivor Tree. When I go there, I pay tribute to the brave police officers and firefighters who died that day in the line of duty as first responders.

Chris: The Survivor Tree? What’s that? I’ve never heard of it.

Jessica: The Survivor Tree is a pear tree that New York firefighters pulled out of the rubble at ground zero. Its trunk and branches were severely burned and its roots were broken, but arborists, or as I call them, tree doctors, healed the tree and planted it next to the memorial for the fallen towers.

Chris: As a symbol of rebirth?

Jessica: Exactly. Life that is reborn from the ashes. Right next to the memorial, they built a new World Trade Center that is as magnificent as the towers that were destroyed on 9/11. It’s called the Freedom Tower. You can once again go up to the observation deck and look at the skyscrapers of New York.

Chris: I will have to go up next time I’m there. I heard it’s once again the tallest building in America. The rebuilding of the World Trade Center was important because actions speak louder than words.

Jessica: You know, the spouse of one of my teachers died in a plane that hit the south tower. He was a flight attendant. It was a dreadful day in American history.

Chris: Yeah. All in all, 2,977 people died on 9/11, and I’m not counting the 19 terrorists here. It was the deadliest act of terror in history and the biggest foreign attack on our soil since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. There was never a question in my mind that New York would recover. New Yorkers have true grit and a generosity of spirit that is unbreakable. No act of evil can touch that.