

## BEFUDDLED

Jackie Brown

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There are some stories my kids should know – like the time the little Jamestown church was full of mourners and the minister ready, but the ashes did not arrive by bus as planned.

“What will we do?” I asked my stepbrother in a panic.

“Mom would think it amusing. Let’s get the urn and fill it with anything for weight. We’ll fake it and hope she arrives for her burial.” She did, just in time.

OR

About the time I watched my little brother one weekend while my parents were away (I guess I was about 16) the village bartender, Eddy, a nice fatherly figure, asked us to ride along to see the Saratoga horse races. “Please, please, Jackie, I never saw a fast horse.” “We have no money, Billy.” “We can cash in our War Bonds,” he pleaded. We did. It was spectacular. People yelled out numbers, so we did too. Eddy showed us where to get the best view and how to bet. It was the best day we ever had. Eddy got us home safely before Mom and Dad got back.

They never found out . . . .

I’ll write those later. I guess my old sociology background kicked in. People are missing the joy and pride of finding the answers or solving problems by the trial and error – searching, being wrong, then – yay – being right.

Take today, for example. Someone asked, “Is that a robin I hear? – Never mind. Alexa, Robin call.” She answered. Rich caroling notes, rising and falling in pitch. “Cheer up, cheerily, cheer up, cheerily.”

In the prehistoric days of my life I actually went outdoors, spied a live robin, singing to another live robin. Then I noticed he is about 10 inches, gray above and brick-red below. I’d see him cock his head to listen for worms below the grass. And best of all, I saw his posture, far straighter than slumping sparrows.

You might say I wasted my time. I could have clicked on ten more facts on my phone. “I know,” I said. “Alexa knows stuff, but I like to feel stuff, too. But I’m prehistoric!”

At a young age I read about Winston Churchill taking walks when he was an artist. He said, “I noticed ten different tones of brown in one tree. Amazing!” So I went checking trees, too. He was right.

In that same vein, at seven years old my little playmates and I ran barefoot over the old Onondaga Indian trail behind our lake cottages, searching for the best green moss. “There – this is it.” Joanne pointed to a lush, dark green patch. “It’s thick and springy,” Ginny added. “Perfect.” We named it our resting place just after Kelley’ Camp. The bonus was wintergreen, just as dark green, next to it and good to nibble.

I was not going to bring this up, knowing there are only a few of me left in the world, until I read a long article on how your brain grows stronger if you puzzle over and struggle for answers. Clicking on is a quick instant gratification, but there’s little time to savor before the save click.

Don’t get me wrong: new technology is great. I’d love to go to Mars, but now I can see it at least.

Just – try to do me a big favor. Take a walk; look for Browns; check out greens, too. Make friends with a robin. Discuss more. Feel more.