

153. DETECTIVE ELLA - WEDNESDAY - SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

Good morning, Grace Harbor – it's Dan. I hope your Wednesday's off to a great start!

I'm happy to report that I finally got a question up on the "Wonder Wall" at the Library.

It was: "I wonder... is there anything we can do to make the Quackerson ducklings want to return to our pond next year?"

You might recall that two of the eight ducklings that hatched in the spring have stuck around – including the town favorite, Quack Quackerson. Later this fall, they'll all head south for the winter, and it sure would be nice to have them back again. I can't wait to see if someone finds an answer!

Oh, and speaking of finding answers, I have a bit more to report on the case of the rubber plant. Remember – there was a family that bought the house plant from Maker's Garden, and just in the last couple of weeks, some of the leaves started turning yellow and falling off. They brought it back to Ella to take a look, and she was able to determine that it wasn't pests or disease, and everything about how they were caring for the plant was exactly the same.

But, when I was talking with Ms. Carolyn about it, she made an interesting observation: Ella had asked all about the plant, but she hadn't really asked about the

environment – the conditions in the room where the plant lives.

Well, I texted Ella about this, and she wrote back almost immediately. “Interesting! I’ll look into it.”

That was Monday morning, and I didn’t hear anything back the whole rest of the day. Nothing yesterday morning either. Then, right after lunch, she sent me a message that read, “Please tell Ms. Carolyn that she’s a genius!”

That’s all it said. But I couldn’t just leave it at that! My curiosity was off the charts! So, I headed down to Ella’s studio to see if she would tell me more.

It turns out that I hadn’t heard anything back earlier because Ella had gone into full detective mode. She’d done some research on the internet. She went down to the Library herself because sometimes old books have wisdom in them that you can’t find online. She also made a trip out to The Barn at Blue Hill to see Ted and Lilly Able. She wondered if they had encountered anything similar in the farm’s greenhouse.

Armed with a whole bunch of new possible answers, she asked the family if she could come see the rubber plant in its place in their house. Well, as soon as she walked in, the answer was clear!

The window the rubber plant was sitting in was cracked open. I’m sure that’s because it has been absolutely beautiful lately. The cool of the fall is starting to show

up, and we're all opening windows that had been shut during the heat of the summer. But you know what tropical plants, like rubber plants, don't like? Cool breezes!

So, while nothing about the plant and how they were caring for it had changed, they had changed the environment without realizing it, and it was stressing the plant out. The solution, it turns out, was to move it to a nice bright window they don't open.

When she finished explaining it, I applauded and said, "Well done! I am so impressed!"

"I wish I had thought of it sooner, but the most important thing is the plant should be just fine now," she said.

"Hey," I said, "none of us knows everything. What impresses me most is that you put in the work to find an answer. You could have given up when you didn't know the answer, but you didn't. And even if you *hadn't* found an answer, I'm sure the family would still have appreciated your effort."

This week, we've been exploring what it means to love God with all of our mind. We've said that when we get curious about something we don't know, that's actually a way of showing love with our minds. And yesterday, we expressed gratitude for the people who help us ask questions and explore things.

Today, I want to highlight the initiative Ella showed. She didn't just stay curious, but she dedicated intentional time

and effort to finding an answer. That's what's great about the "Wonder Wall" at the Library too. We're not just invited to post our questions, but we're also invited to try to find answers to some of them too!

Before we close in prayer, I wonder if you can think of one intentional step you could take today to try to answer a question you've been wondering about. Can you do what Ella did – look it up online with an adult in your family, go find a book on the subject, or find someone who might know more than you do and ask them questions? Go ahead and share your idea with one another, and if you need more time, feel free to pause the podcast. I'll be right here when you get back.

[PAUSE]

Ok, let's close in prayer. If you want to, you can close your eyes and fold your hands.

Dear God, we thank you for the way curiosity can inspire us to thought and action. We may not always find the answers we're looking for, but we can still learn and grow along the way. Help us remember that chasing curiosity is one of the ways we can love you with our minds. Amen.

Ok, Grace Harbor, perhaps *you'll* solve a mystery today too! Either way, I'll catch you tomorrow!

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