

EXPERTISE

I'm inept. "We know", I hear you say, while vigorously nodding your head. Be that as it may, I've never discussed this subject with you before. It should lead to a better understanding of why you agree with my opening statement.

Many years ago I had a relative who was extremely difficult to buy for....One year she asked for a small tape player which I quickly purchased. I learned that she needed it to listen to talking books. Her eyesight had been failing for a long time and she found much enjoyment listening to the books.

I hadn't thought much about them and had never listened to one. There just for old folks, I thought. Lest you get huffy, I'm allowed to say old folks since I'm a card carrying member of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, til recently a member of Sears Mature Outlook Club and in three years will get a card from the government that lets me in on all kinds of bargains listed under seniors on the price lists.

You can imagine my surprise when visiting my cousins Orville and Nancy in Florida for a brief holiday a number of years ago when I discovered a small case filled with talking books in the closet. "Are these your mothers?" I asked Nancy. "

No" she said, "they're mine".

"I didn't realize your eyes were going bad" I said, since she does marvellous cross stitching.

"They're not" she replied, "but when we travel between our homes in Pittsburgh and here, they pass the time. Orville and I both love them and I have friends who we trade with as well as buying new ones. Take your pick, listen to them on the way home and I'll pick them up when we visit in the Fall or whenever".

Valerie and I are both avid readers, but what would it be like to listen to someone just reading to you. I looked at the cassettes and much to my surprise most of the readers were well-known actors.

I didn't think any more about it until we were on a second day of the return journey. "What about a tape?" said Valerie.

One of her favourite authors is Patricia Cornwell who writes about a female medical examiner in Virginia, headquartered in Richmond. We began to listen to the tape. Shades of the old radio dramas. The actress reading the book had different voices for the characters and before you knew it we were caught up in the dramas. We were

just approaching Richmond, when the book mentioned an overpass that we just went under. It lent an air of immediacy to the story.

Needless to say, we became hooked. We have listened to Miss Marple, read by Joan Hickson, Poirot read by David Suchet and a multitudes of others by readers such as Ben Kingsley of Ghandi fame.

Our routine when traveling is to start early, usually 6.00 a.m. We stop about 9.00 or 10.00 a.m. and have a big breakfast at horrors! McDonalds. Well we like it, its filling, consistent, reasonably priced and quick. Since we aim to go about 500 miles per day we stop in the early afternoon, find a spot, eat dinner and go to bed relatively early. With only one stop during the day, unless we need gas, or visit a rest station, we have fairly long stretches to listen to our talking books. It sure beats the local radio stations playing both kinds of music, country & western, or evangelists exhorting us to turn from our sinful ways.

One day, after we picked up some tapes from Nancy and bought some others, I spoke to Her Nibs about the high cost of these tapes and suggested that we borrow some from the library and I'd tape them for play later. She though this was a good idea so when we returned we paid \$30 to join Picton library (a cost no longer imposed since amalgamation).

We picked several tapes and proceeded to re-tape the tapes. We have 2 machines with dual tape decks so I picked the best re-read instructions loaded in my blank and the recorded tape and engaged in some fast dubbing. Everything went like clockwork. I finished the copying, packed my tapes in a box in the car and returned the library tapes.

A couple of months later as we were driving down Highway 81 towards Syracuse, Valerie suggested a tape. I agreed and she put one in. It wasn't the beginning and with much muttering and re-inserting we finally got the start. The same juggling had to be dome for the second cassette. I hadn't marked the sides I guess. Anyway it was tense for a few moments.

The next day, the book worked fine. It was one we had purchased. The third day which was the day we would arrive in Titusville we played the third book. It was a real thriller and the hours flew by. When we reached Jacksonville we shut it off so I could concentrate as I drove through the city, we usually find this much faster than the diversion routes around the cities. As we emerged from the city traffic to the relatively uncrowded highway South, I readjusted my seat, set the cruise control at 75, re-started the tape and once again became engrossed in the story. Everything was fine until about 5 miles from our

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