

Beaver Has a Brain¹

by Phillip W. Weiss

Beaver Cleaver was a ten-year-old boy. He lived in the town of Mayfield with his father, Ward, his mother June, and his fifteen-year-old brother Wally. Beaver attended Mayfield Elementary School where he was in the fifth grade. His teacher was Miss Lambert, who Beaver adored. Beaver was a good-natured boy. He had lots of friends His best friends were Gilbert and Whitey. Beaver liked to play ball, watch Westerns on television, and do what boys his age are expected to do.

On the surface Beaver was a perfectly normal boy. However, over time Beaver developed a reputation for being colossally stupid. His friends believed that Beaver was the dumbest boy not only in the neighborhood but in the entire world. Beaver did crazy things that confirmed their belief. For instance, like the time Beaver almost got hit by a train after his friends told him that oncoming trains always stop to let people cross the railroad tracks. Or the time Beaver tried to grab a beehive after his friends told him that the bees would not mind him breaking into their hive to get the honey. Or the time at the zoo when Beaver tried to climb into the lion's den to play with the lions after his friends told him that the lions were just big pussy cats that liked to play. These and other exceptional acts of recklessness by Beaver led Beaver's friends to genuinely believe that no one that stupid and gullible could possess a brain.

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¹ The characters in this story are based on the characters featured in the television sitcom Leave It to Beaver.

After a while, even Ward and June became concerned with Beaver's pervasive lack of common sense. So, they took him to a local pediatrician, Doctor Lester Feingold. Doctor Feingold gave Beaver a thorough physical examination. He listened to Beaver's heart and lungs, poked his belly, looked in his ears, shined a light in his eyes, tested his reflexes, looked down his throat, and found nothing wrong. Beaver was in perfect health. So, Dr. Feingold recommended further evaluation by a child psychologist and referred Beaver to Doctor Loretta Kornbluth, a well-known child psychologist located in New York City.

So, the Cleavers took Beaver to New York City where Beaver was seen by Doctor Kornbluth. During the examination, Doctor Kornbluth asked Beaver certain questions to evaluate his reasoning skills. For instance, she asked Beaver if elephants fly. Beaver said absolutely because they have big floppy ears that they can use as wings. She also asked him what he would do if he was walking in the woods alone and became lost. Beaver said he would lay down and take a nap. After the examination, Doctor Kornbluth concluded that Beaver had serious deficiencies in reasoning skills and recommended that he have an MRI of the brain to rule out any organic cause for Beaver's problem and referred Beaver to a noted neurologist, Doctor Roger Regenaur.

The next day, on the way to school, Beaver ran into his best friend Gilbert.

"Boy, do I have news for you," Beaver exclaimed excitedly.

"What news? What are you talking about?" Gilbert asked.

“Yesterday I went to this lady doctor who told me that she will be sending me to a place where they’ll take pictures of my brain,” Beaver said, barely able to contain his excitement.

“You have a brain?” Gilbert asked, incredulous.

“Of course I have a brain. Otherwise, they wouldn’t be taking pictures of it,” Beaver replied, still excited.

“Wait a minute. Is this some kind of joke?” Gilbert replied, skeptical.

“No, Gilbert, no joke at all. They’re going to take pictures of my brain,” Beaver insisted.

“Gee, Beave, I didn’t even know you had a brain,” Gilbert said with conviction. “I thought what’s inside your head is just an empty space with nothing in it.” Gilbert said. “Wait till I tell the guys about this! See ya around!”

After leaving Beaver, Gilbert ran through the streets shouting, “Beaver has a brain! Beaver has a brain!” People on the street who saw Gilbert running did what they could to avoid this boy who was screaming such bizarre news. Finally, Gilbert ran into Eddie Haskell, who was standing in front of a store window, admiring himself in the reflection. Eddie was Wally’s best friend. He was also the neighborhood wise guy who the younger kids looked up to as someone who was cool and with it.

“Wow, Eddie, do I have news for you!” Gilbert said, panting to recover his breath.

“What news, chump, and it better be good,” Eddie said, feeling put off by this sudden interruption.

“Oh, it’s good, alright,” Gilbert insisted.

“Okay then. Now, spill the beans,” Eddie demanded.

“Beaver Cleaver has a brain!” Gilbert exclaimed. “I’ve been running through the street telling everybody.”

“Hey, you better be careful with that kind of talk. Everybody knows that a creep like Beaver is too stupid to have a brain.” The very thought of Beaver having a brain made Eddie laugh. “No one as dumb as Beaver could have a brain,” Eddie declared, chuckling, while trying to wrap his own brain around this startling news.

“I’m telling you it’s true. Beaver told me that some doctor is sending him to a place where they will take pictures of his brain.” Gilbert said.

“And you believe him?” Eddie asked, skeptical.

“Yeah, I believe him. Beaver is too stupid to lie about something like this.” Gilbert argued.

“Okay, squirt, I’ll take your word about this for now, but if I find you’ve been goofing on me ...”

“I’m not goofing on you! This is what Beaver told me! You gotta believe me!” Gilbert begged.

“Alright. Now get lost and keep me informed if you hear anything new.” Eddie ordered.

Gilbert took off down the street leaving Eddie who resumed admiring his reflection in window, a smirk on his face, convinced that no way could a clown like Beaver possibly have a brain.

Beaver was seen by Doctor Regenaur who ran a series of tests that measured Beaver's reflexes, balance, and other functions related to the nervous system. Everything was normal. Then the doctor arranged for Beaver to undergo a procedure known as magnetic resonance imaging or MRI. The MRI was a noninvasive procedure that used high powered sound waves to produce detailed images to detect the presence of possible organic abnormalities, which in Beaver's case, of the brain. At the MRI suite, Beaver lay down on a gurney and was wheeled into a tube. He lay there for about twenty minutes as the MRI bombarded his head with sound pulses that produced dozens of images of his brain.

The MRI found that Beaver had a normal brain.

A few days after the MRI, Ward and June received a copy of the report containing the findings of the MRI along with several images taken of Beaver's brain. Beaver showed Gilbert the images.

"You see, Gilbert, I do have a brain," Beaver said, Here's the pictures they took of my brain." Beaver then showed Gilbert the images.

Gilbert carefully looked at the photographs and then gave the photos back to Beaver.

"All I saw is a bunch of mush," Gilbert said with conviction. "I didn't see no brain."

"Even the report says I have a brain," Beaver argued. "The report can't be wrong."

“I don’t know about any report, Beave. All I know is that what you showed me didn’t look anything like a brain. What you have inside your head is a pile of mush. No wonder you do so many stupid things. You got mush in your head. But that’s okay, we can still be friends.”

“Thanks a lot, Gilbert, You want to go somewhere and fool around?”
Beaver asked.

“No, I have to go somewhere with my parents. They want to take me to a store to buy me a jacket,” Gilbert lied. Gilbert left Beaver and went to Whitey’s house where he told Whitey about the photos he saw from Beaver’s MRI.

“Whitey, Beaver showed me the pictures that they were supposed to take of his brain. But all they found was mush,” Gilbert declared.

Whitey said, “Wow, Beaver has mush in his head. No wonder he does such dumb things.”

“Yeah, no wonder,” Gilbert agreed. “I gotta go and tell Eddie Haskell about this. Wait until the rest of kids find out about this. Beaver is the only kid in the world who has mush for a brain,” Gilbert said, laughing, and then ran off to find Eddie.

Gilbert found Eddie, as usual admiring himself, this time in the side mirror of a parked car.

“Eddie, guess what!” Gilbert exclaimed.” I saw the pictures taken of what was inside Beaver’s head, and they showed that Beaver has mush where his brain is supposed to be.”

“What are you talking about?” Eddie asked, annoyed that Gilbert had barged in like this, interrupting his self-admiration.

“I’m telling you that Beaver doesn’t have a brain! He has mush where his brain is supposed to be. I saw the pictures myself!” Gilbert blurted.

Edde laughed and said, “So what? That just proves what I’ve been telling everybody. Nobody as stupid and wacky as Beaver could possibly have anything in his nogin. Now, get lost before I club you.”

Soon, the rumor spread throughout the town that Beaver Cleaver had mush for a brain. At school, kids snickered every time they saw Beaver and soon he was given a nickname, Mush Head. Everywhere Beaver went, kids called him by that name. He was no longer Beaver the kid everyone liked, but Beaver the Mush Head who was too stupid to do anything right. Beaver did everything he could to convince the other kids that he had a brain, but no one would believe him.

Soon, Beaver began wondering whether it was true that he didn’t have a brain. So, he decided to ask his father, Ward.

“Dad, could I talk to you about something?” Beaver asked Ward.

“What is it, Beaver?” Ward replied.

“Well, it’s about something that I heard at school.” Beaver said, tentatively.

“What about?” Ward asked, his interest now perked.

“Well, it’s about me.” Beaver said.

“About you?” Ward responded, surprised. “What about you?”

“Well, at school the kids are saying that I don’t have a brain. Is that true?” Beaver asked.

“Of course you have a brain,” Ward said with a mixture of annoyance and concern. “Who’s been saying that you don’t have a brain?”

“Everyone,” Beaver said.

“Even your teachers?” Ward asked, anger welling up inside him.

“No, not my teachers, just the kids,” Beaver said.

“Well, Beaver, I’m glad you brought this to my attention. Let me assure you that you do have a brain and that it is a normal brain, and that anyone who is saying differently doesn’t know what he’s talking about,” Ward said with conviction.

Later, after discussing the matter with June, Ward called Mayfield Elementary School and spoke with the school’s principal, Miss Ellington. Ward informed Miss Ellington of what Beaver told him. Miss Ellington assured Ward that the school had nothing to do with spreading this rumor and that the school would act to put an end to this rumor. After her discussion with Ward, Miss Ellington announced that there would be an emergency meeting in the assembly hall to discuss an important matter. A few minutes later all the students and teachers were assembled in the room. Miss Ellington went to the podium on the stage, faced the assemblage of students and teachers, and said:

“I have been informed that there is a rumor going around that one of our students does not have a brain. That rumor is false and must stop now. We all have brains. To think otherwise is mean, cruel, and just plain wrong. Furthermore,

if I find that anyone is still spreading this rumor, which is a malicious lie, they will find themselves in very deep trouble. I hope I made myself clear. You are dismissed.”

Later, Beaver spoke with Gikbert.

“You see, Gilbert, I do have a brain. Even the school believes I have a brain.” Beaver exclaimed.

“Yeah, that’s what the school says, But I saw the pics and no matter what the school says, I’ll never believe you have a brain. Now I got to go somewhere.” Gilbert said and left. Thereafter, Gilbert avoided Beaver. Whenever Beaver tried to talk to Gilbert, Gilbert would run away.

Beaver never spoke to Gilbert again.

As for the rumor about Beaver’s brain, the rumor quickly faded with the passage of time. Yet years later, Beaver still wonders whether the rumor was true about his brain being mush and whether he should have another MRI. After all, it wouldn’t hurt to get a second opinion.