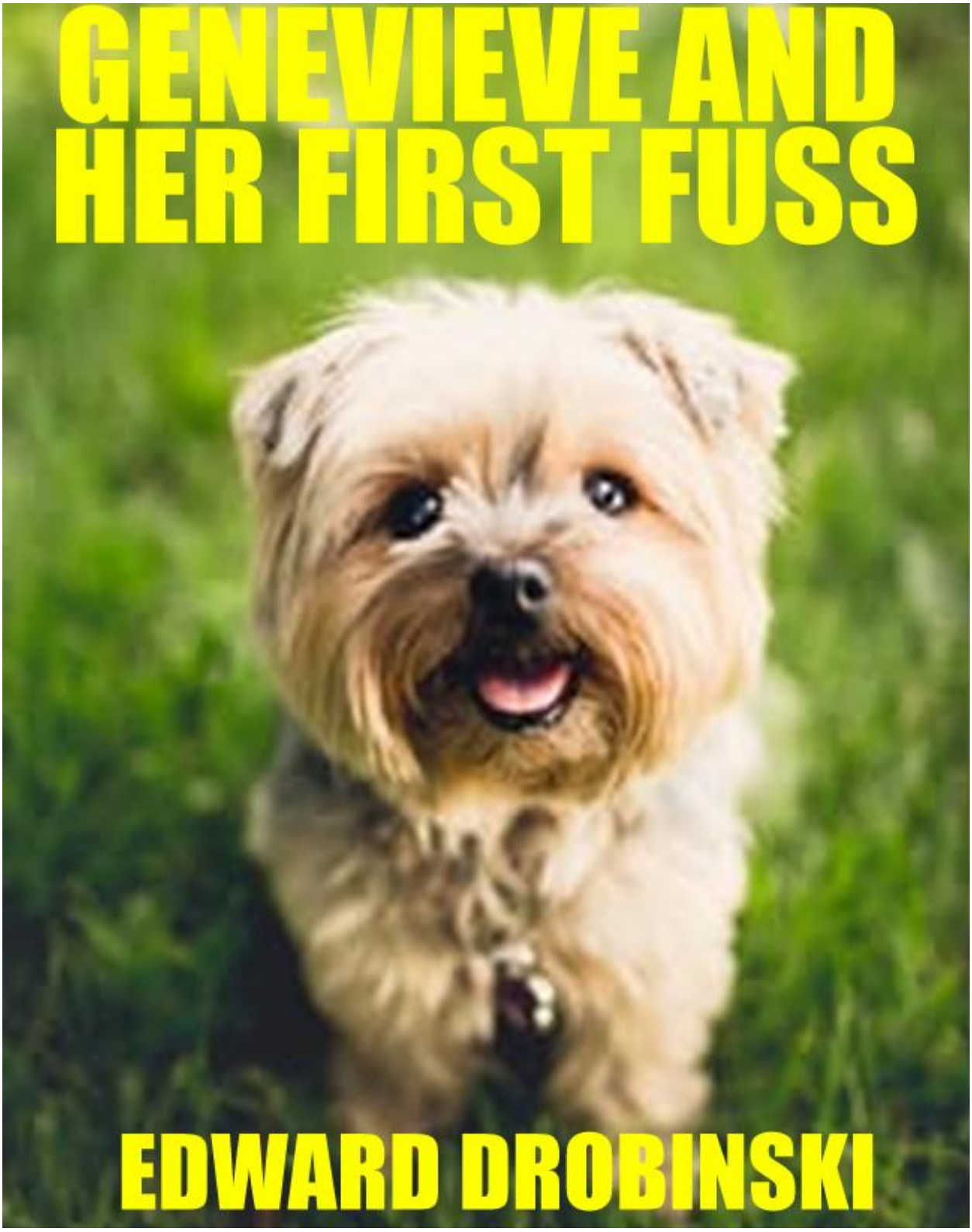
GENEVIEVE AND
HER FIRST FUSS
EDWARD DROBINSKI

GENEVIEVE AND HER FIRST FUSS

By

Edward Drobinski

“You have to write the book that wants to be written. And if the book will be too difficult for grown-ups, then you write it for children."

-Madeleine L’ Engle-

Oh, the sun was in their eyes.

And the desert that’s dry.

In a country town.

Where the map was found.

Oh, the dancing and the singing.

Oh, the music when they played.

Oh, the fire that they saw

there.

On the grave of no return.

Sometimes they found it.

Sometimes they kept it.

Often lost it on the way.

Pawnee shadow to possess them.

Sometimes ride inside of day.

-Mountain-

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1- Genevieve Rises and Reads the News

Genevieve groaned just a little bit as she got her first vision of the new day thanks to the morning light streaming through her eastern window; the one without any blinds or curtains. Her Maltese' furry, white snout released a murmur so low, the sound could not have been heard by anyone, even had they been in an adjoining room. As a matter of fact, there weren't any in such a place, but even if there were .....

Those thin and wispy, cirrus, white, and lazy clouds had again congregated into their segregated Western quarantine; mixing only with the departing yellow. Having no eyes this was not seen as such by the little liquid droplets. Neither was this point of non-view mentioned by the periodically loud, and one-eyed, richer and dark, loud mouthed varieties. Nor did the details matter to Genevieve. To her it just meant another waking sunrise.

Sunrise; the kind courtesy of Pexels.com under their CC0 license; modified.

Such respect for downy attendance duty occurred most every daybreak. It practically had to be that way. The result was that it became a chronic custom for the ill-mannered, insistent, and marginally spontaneous sunrays to fill all of Genevieve’s room. That is except for that little corner cranny where she kept the light sensitive paraphernalia which kept her computer more or less functional. It was her four thousand, one hundred and twenty third sun; but nobody was counting.

The previous night’s drizzle had ended sometime while Genevieve had slept. The eastern window she had left just a bit open had allowed in the water augmented, genial scent of the

sprinkled fall boundary between summer and winter. The pleasant, musky fragrance of the still un-frozen earth mixed with that of the hardiest leaves. Those which still held on to their branches, despite the freezing night winds, remained in their warm weather, lofty perches. Genevieve's bedroom was saturated by the start of another day on Pacific Lane.

Genevieve stretched out all four of her furry, white paws; even the one in the back which preferred being left alone. She groaned again; just a bit louder this time. That attention seeking paw had been making a big deal of little things ever since it twisted ever so slightly while stumbling into that hidden rabbit hole two years ago.

Genevieve; the kind courtesy of Pexels.com under their CC0 license.

But, of more significance than the whimper caused by a cranky back paw, to Genevieve it was a new day. As she had come to expect, the light remained persistent. At 7AM it was still filtered through the remainders of the colored autumn leaves not yet taken by the seasonal wind; but from experience Genevieve knew that this was only the beginning.

And now after having been stretched a bit, even her naggy little hind leg was grudgingly ready to go. Genevieve rolled out of her wickered willow doggy bed and she said “Ouch” out loud. A partially extended, broken strand had stuck her in the belly, leaving a red mark. “One of these days I’m going to fix that,” she thought. Genevieve once again forgot that thought as soon as she was firmly on her feet and the little red line once again blended and faded into relative unimportance.

Genevieve did look behind for all of one second. When she saw no trail of blood, the view of her nearby coffee machine popped into her mind. She entered the kitchen and got it started. She stared out the window while the machine’s percolation resounded like the relentless beat of one of Trinidad’s steel drum bands graced with a fine-tuned pitch disturbing the early morning quiet.

Showing one more flaw in her time worn vow not to do so; Genevieve was compelled to turn on her laptop. She navigated to her local news show, and was shocked to find that a crime had

been committed right here in her well-loved Poochville. She again recalled that breaking her vows never led to anything good. This was no small event, as it was Genevieve's first encounter, even remote, with unpleasantness, and she was not exactly a newborn. Her initial thoughts were that it had to have been some kind of a mistake or that she had accidentally accessed one of the net's disguised fake news sites.

Genevieve had spent her entire life in this town and had never, even via the mistake of an occasional unfounded rumor, had to be subjected to any such doings in reality. Worse, when she brought the full story up on her screen, the incident was not only happening in Poochville; it was happening right where she lived on Pacific Lane. The top of the screen said; "NEWS BREAKING RIGHT NOW," which was accompanied by an archived summer green photo of Pacific Lane and a "concerned" voice over which said; "There have been reports that there has been a crime committed on Pacific Lane in Poochville. We are not yet certain of the circumstances, but will be covering the event for you as of right now." Genevieve looked out her window and saw a commotion just two doors away at the very moment. She thought that she might just "cover the event" for herself.

"Oh my; what could have happened here?" she thought as she rushed to fill her cup. Genevieve carried it as best she could in her snout. She pushed herself through the unlocked and hinged

front door, and wolfed down the contents only spilling a little on the worn dirt walkway.

She got to the paved sidewalk; dropped her now empty cup and immediately saw the hubbub. Block residents whom she knew were milling about while two strangers were standing still, holding onto papers. The outsiders seemed to be in charge; as in addition to holding on to their important papers and appearing stern, they weren't dancing around at all. Genevieve would soon find that the official strangers were called Billy and Jack, though it was extremely difficult for those not familiar with badges and body language to tell the two Scottish Terriers apart.

Billy and Jack; the kind courtesy of Pexels.com under their CC0 license.

They confidently stared, asked questions, and typed into their smart phones. This was serious business, indeed. But if

anyone saw what their finger lacking paws were typing they would have wondered what “nedgt uiikdff hbedeg8 y0t7dhb jguty yufhb” meant; probably concluding that it was some secret code.

“So, who else might have seen anything?” barked Billy.

The street residents who were now standing still and just shuffling their many feet in the front yard were quiet. They cautiously looked around to see if anyone else was going to offer any information.

One problem they all had in coming up with something to say was that the house was a high traffic area. People from the area went there regularly to leave an offering or to take a gift. To highlight anyone doing this yesterday would likely be incriminating a neighbor for no good reason.

2- The Community

Genevieve walked to the homeowners who were standing away from the rest of the group. They were the ones who had called in the report and already had been questioned. Barney, Clara, and their son Gizmo all looked worried. Genevieve asked; "What on earth is going on?"

Clara, Barney, and Gizmo; the kind courtesy of Pexels.com under their CC0 license.

Genevieve had known the little family before they were the current little family. She was friends with Clara and Barney's parents before they were born. They were nice pooches; though Clara's father Mazda was sometimes a bit of a rapscallion. If he saw a bird on the ground he'd bark and run full tilt at it. This startled many residents as they were usually taken by surprise

by his unannounced and sudden bursts. But, despite their initial, momentary jolts they came to see that Mazda never caught a bird. In fact, he never even got all that close. He probably didn't really want to as he certainly wasn't trying to sneak up on any of them. If his efforts had any effect whatsoever, it was to induce winged flight. Yet, his seemingly spontaneous strivings remained just the least bit unnerving to some. Mazda had spent a few years in the military during the "Great War." He was "in the action" overseas and everyone now knows that that sometimes being subjected to life or death conflict can have long term effects as well as its attendant acronymmed syndromes. Mazda would never specifically speak of those times. He would only say that it was done so that the kids could grow up in a peaceful world. Though never said out loud, some wondered what effect his unconventional behavior might have on his children.

Today, Clara seemed to be the most clear of the trio. Barney's darting and unfocussed eyes quietly acted as if he was a victim of shell shock and little Gizmo kept babbling things which didn't yet make any sense to Genevieve. "It's for everyone. And they took it. They just can't do that." His distressed comments showed that he too was shocked, though unlike his dad, still vocal. Clara nuzzled up to Genevieve. She

stifled a tear and said; "Overnight someone took all of the food from the sheds."

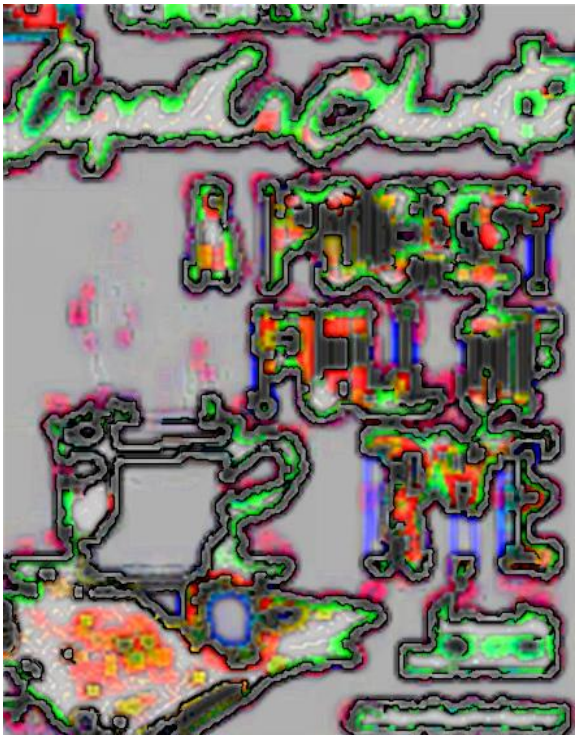
"Oh, no," said Genevieve, more befuddled than she was just prior; and in fact ever had been since the time when YouTube first started to show old films of varied public aesthetic and economic reactions to the alleged "finding" and Christie auctioning of Tiny Tim's, "Ed Sullivan Show" utilized ukulele.

Tiny Tim being rudely annoyed; modified public domain.

She nuzzled against Clara and said; "I can't believe it. I have to see for myself." She walked to the backyard sheds by herself, circling around and under the overhang. To her confirming disbelief and dismay, she saw that they no longer held any of the stored vegetables and other canned goods. It had taken years of co-operative efforts to establish the community

cupboard, and just one night to end it. The salt and vegetable mixes held in tightly sealed jars were all gone, though some of the empty jars and nine pineapples remained. Genevieve found that curious; and hoped it was a possible clue of some sort if she could conjure up some theory as to why the thieves did not take everything of value.

Genevieve vaguely grasped her calling. She had unknowingly been destined to be the Poochville incarnation of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple. Well, she had read or seen; most likely seen "A Pocket Full of Rye," and had made full note of the coffee cup.



Stylized possible cover of "A Pocket Full of Rye"; property of the author.