

Shaggy's Morning, F. Scott Fitzgerald

I woke up after a lousy dream, and as soon as the old beezer came alive I went around the yard trying to pick up something interesting, but the wind was too strong.

There was an old biscuit in my dish and if there's anything gloomier than one dead biscuit on a windy morning I don't know about it.

The Brain came downstairs early like she usually does ever since she began staying away all day long. I gave her a rush, and I meant it, too. I'm not one of these diggities that think their boss is a god, even if he's an old nigger that smells like everybody that gave him his clothes—but really anybody would have to hand it to the Brain.

Since I grew up and got the idea that they don't go in much for any perfumes except their own, I never had any trouble with her—except the time I brought her that bone in the middle of the night and she hit me in the eye with it.

I was hoping it was about the right day to go out in the country and swim, but nothing doing—she got into her moving room at the usual time and shoved off, and I had to amuse myself. It wasn't the first time I wished I had something regular to do.

My friend across the street was waiting for his chow, which he gets in the morning, so I had a workout with the little squirt next door. He came tearing over, cursing and threatening, because he knew I never hurt him.

"You big, clumsy tub of hair, I could run rings around you, and I'm out to prove it!"

"Yeah?" I said, kind of amused, because he talks as if he meant it, and we went through a routine with a lot of false starts, charges, leg and throat holds, rollaways, and escapes. It was all right, and after, while we were panting plenty, but I don't get much of a workout with him, because he uses up so much time dodging and doing circles. I like a dog to go in and take it. Even a little fellow like him. Once he let a tooth slip and nipped me, and I gave him hell.

"Don't take advantage, or I'll tear your coat off."

"Aw, don't get sore."

"Then don't let that tooth slip again."

While we were resting he said: "What are you doing this morning?"

"What's on your mind? You won't get me out after some cat again. Some dogs never grow up."

"It's no cat."

"Then what is it? Meat—or girls?"

"I'll take you there and you can see for yourself."

"You're generous all of a sudden. How big's the dog that's there now?"

While we waited for my friend we did some barking—or rather the squirt did most of it. These little tykes can yelp all day without getting hoarse. He made some circles around a bunch of kids heading for school, and I had a laugh when he got a kick in the ribs and gave out a real yelp. I only barked a little in the base to stretch my throat—I'm not one of the kind always shooting off their mouth.

After my friend came out we went with the squirt to see what he'd found. Just like I thought, it was nothing—a garbage can with a lid you could nose off. I got a whiff of some perfume, too, that bucked me up for a minute, but it was yesterday's, so my friend and I roughed up the squirt for wasting our time and went off on our own.

We followed a tall lady for a while—no particular reason except she had a parcel with meat in it—we knew we wouldn't get any, but you never can tell. Sometimes I just feel like shutting my nose and just following somebody pretending they're yours, or that they're taking you somewhere. After a couple of streets I picked up a new perfume.

"There's some romance," I said.

"Say you got a nose." He tried for it, but didn't get anything.

"I must be getting old. I can always remember shapes, but I get mixed up on perfume."

"Shucks, it's just the wind," I said, to make him feel all right, but he has got a weak nose. Now me, I got a fine nose, but I'm weak on shapes. In a minute, though, he got it, and we left the lady and started back down the street at a trot.

Say we must have followed a mile, both of us getting more and more disgusted.

"What's the use?" my friend said. "Either I'm crazy or we're not following one scent, but about ten."

"I get about twenty."

"What say we quit?"

"Well, we're pretty near now."

We got up on a hill presently and looked down—and, say, I haven't seen so many curs since the dog show.

"Sold," I says, and we started home.

The Brain wasn't there yet, but the Beard was. He got out that damn pole and tried to kid me again, holding it out and jabbering—a long time ago I figured out that his object is to see if I'm fool enough to jump over it. But I don't bite, just walk round it. Then he tried the trick they all

do-held my paws and tried to balance me up on the end of my spine. I never could figure out the point of that one.

He started the music-box, that tune that makes my ear hum and starts me howling—so I lammed it out and down the street. A dog passed me carrying a newspaper looking all pleased with himself—but the one time I tried that racket I forgot what it was I was carrying and started to bury it, and when the Beard saw me, was he sore!

Pretty soon I saw my friend coming down the street. He was a fine big dog. He stopped and visited for a minute, with a child he knew, and then he saw me, and came running in my direction. What happened next I couldn't see. It was noon, and there were lots of moving rooms at the cross street—the first thing I knew was that one of them had stopped and then another, and that several people had gotten out. I hurried over with some men.

It was my friend, lying on his side and bleeding out of his mouth; his eyes were open, but his breathing was wrong. Everybody was excited, and they pulled him up on the lawn: by and by his little boy and girl ran out of their house and came over and began to cry. I and another dog that knew him well went up to him, and I wanted to lick him, but when I came really close he snarled, "Scram!" and got half up on his haunches. He thought I was going to eat him just because he was down.

The little boy said, "Get away, you!" and it made me feel bad because I've never eaten a dog in my life, and would not unless I was very hungry. But of course, I went away so as not to worry him, and waited until they carried him away on a blanket. After that we sniffed at the blood in the street and one dog licked it.

In the front yard I howled. I don't know why—then I went to look for the Brain. When I didn't find her I began to figure that maybe something had happened to her, too, and she wouldn't be back any more. I went up on the porch and waited, but she didn't come, so I scratched on the screen and went in and howled a little at the Beard, who gave me a head scratch.

Presently I went to the door, and there was the Brain, getting out of her moving room—I made a rush for her anyhow, and put my nose in her hand and almost tripped her going upstairs. It was good to know she was home. She gave me dinner—the ground beef again and biscuit and milk and a good bone. I picked out the meat first; then I drank the milk and licked the biscuits, but didn't eat them; then I polished my teeth on the bone and buried it shallow—I must have a hundred bones around here, and I don't know why I save them. I never find them again unless accidentally, but I just can't stand leaving them around.

Afterwards I started to go over and see my friend, but there was nobody around except the little girl sitting in the swing and crying.