

**UNDERSTOOD
BETSY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649727315

Understood Betsy by Dorothy Canfield

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

DOROTHY CANFIELD

**UNDERSTOOD
BETSY**



UNCLE HENRY LOOKED AT HER, EYEING HER SIDEWISE OVER
THE TOP OF ONE SPECTACLE-GLASS.

Understood Betsy.

Frontispiece (Page 34.)

**UNDERSTOOD
BETSY**

by DOROTHY CANFIELD Fisher



GROSSET & DUNLAP

Publishers

NEW YORK

1917

P

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I Aunt Harriet Has a Cough	1
II Betsy Holds the Reins	27
III A Short Morning	52
IV Betsy Goes to School	74
V What Grade is Betsy?	89
VI If You Don't Like Conversation in a Book Skip this Chapter!	110
VII Elizabeth Ann Fails in an Examination	137
VIII Betsy Starts a Sewing Society	161
IX The New Clothes Fail	186
X Betsy Has a Birthday	201
XI "Understood Aunt Frances"	234

UNDERSTOOD BETSY

CHAPTER I

AUNT HARRIET HAS A COUGH

WHEN this story begins, Elizabeth Ann, who is the heroine of it, was a little girl of nine, who lived with her Great-aunt Harriet in a medium-sized city in a medium-sized State in the middle of this country; and that's all you need to know about the place, for it's not the important thing in the story; and anyhow you know all about it because it was probably very much like the place you live in yourself.

Elizabeth Ann's Great-aunt Harriet was a widow who was not very rich or very poor, and she had one daughter, Frances, who gave piano lessons to little girls. They kept a "girl" whose name was Grace and who had asthma dreadfully and wasn't very much of a "girl" at

B Y P L

all, being nearer fifty than forty. Aunt Harriet, who was very tender-hearted, kept her chiefly because she couldn't get any other place on account of her coughing so you could hear her all over the house.

So now you know the names of all the household. And this is how they looked: Aunt Harriet was very small and thin and old, Grace was very small and thin and middle-aged, Aunt Frances (for Elizabeth Ann called her "Aunt," although she was really, of course, a first-cousin-once-removed) was small and thin and if the light wasn't too strong might be called young, and Elizabeth Ann was very small and thin and little. And yet they all had plenty to eat. I wonder what was the matter with them?

It was certainly not because they were not good, for no womenkind in all the world had kinder hearts than they. You have heard how Aunt Harriet kept Grace (in spite of the fact that she was a very depressing person) on account of her asthma; and when Elizabeth Ann's

father and mother both died when she was a baby, although there were many other cousins and uncles and aunts in the family, these two women fairly rushed upon the little baby-orphan, taking her home and surrounding her henceforth with the most loving devotion.

They had said to themselves that it was their manifest duty to save the dear little thing from the other relatives, who had no idea about how to bring up a sensitive, impressionable child, and they were sure, from the way Elizabeth Ann looked at six months, that she was going to be a sensitive, impressionable child. It is possible also that they were a little bored with their empty life in their rather forlorn, little brick house in the medium-sized city, and that they welcomed the occupation and new interests which a child would bring in.

But they thought that they chiefly desired to save dear Edward's child from the other kin, especially from the Putney cousins, who had written down from their Vermont farm that they would be glad to take the little girl into

their family. But "*anything* but the Putneys!" said Aunt Harriet, a great many times. They were related only by marriage to her, and she had her own opinion of them as a stiffnecked, cold-hearted, undemonstrative, and hard set of New Englanders. "I boarded near them one summer when you were a baby, Frances, and I shall never forget the way they were treating some children visiting there! . . . Oh, no, I don't mean they abused them or beat them . . . but such lack of sympathy, such perfect indifference to the sacred sensitiveness of child-life, such a starving of the child-heart. . . . No, I shall never forget it! They had chores to do . . . as though they had been hired men!"

Aunt Harriet never meant to say any of this when Elizabeth Ann could hear, but the little girl's ears were as sharp as little girls' ears always are, and long before she was nine she knew all about the opinion Aunt Harriet had of the Putneys. She did not know, to be sure, what "chores" were, but she took