Clarion Review

Autobiography & Memoir

Brown Eyes
Isa Gene
AuthorHouse
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Three Stars (out of Five)

Few are the dog owners—let's say, "people who live with dogs as companions"—who do not believe that their faithful furry friend is devoid of a thought or two worth recording. Such a thing has even happened at the White House, what with Mrs. George H. W. Bush's dog, a Brittany spaniel, apparently penning *Millie's Book.*

Winter Walnut, a chocolate Labrador retriever puppy soon to be known as "Nutty," came to live with Isa Gene, the author of *Brown Eyes*, after she became a widow. In fourteen short chapters, Nutty chronicles his life with the author, an extraordinarily patient woman. Apparently young Labs can be quite destructive. Down came curtains. Up came floor coverings. Fences were regarded as challenges rather than barriers.

Isa Gene continued her professional life for a period after losing her husband, and so she often shared the rambunctious Nutty with "Auntie Sue," a family friend. Both the author and Auntie Sue were allowed to give their perspectives on life with Nutty, with Auntie Sue appearing the softer touch:

> *The next time he came to stay I put the blanket down by the bedroom door*
> *in preparation for the night, he looked at me, looked at the blanket and*
> *proceeded to drag the blanket in the bedroom, collected his soft toy and*
> *sat down firmly on the blanket.*

While Nutty's story is related with great affection—and a history of saintly patience—the canine does have a tendency for run-on sentences and other minor grammar *faux pas.*

Not to worry, Nutty's story charms, and there will be a special resonance with other dog-people because the author and her supporters show that they are willing to give the loving animal the best of care, including multiple walks in inclement English weather. The author notes in one of her chapters: "…his enthusiasm for life, boundless energy, and unconditional love he gave to me made it all worthwhile."

At just seventy pages long, this book would make an excellent gift for people who have no experience with Labrador retrievers but are considering adopting one into their lives. It would also be a worthwhile read—perhaps a chapter a night—for a family with youngsters who desire to bring a dog into their lives. For that purpose, the book illustrates both the happy hours a dog brings into one's life and how much responsibility it entails.

It's apparent that *Brown Eyes* has reached print because, as Gene notes, "… his name is engraved upon my heart." Readers who have loved a dog will understand perfectly.

Gary Presley