

Furious Fiction – July 2024

The Race

By Amy Ferguson

Brief: write a story that takes place at a sporting event. The story must include something shaking and include the words GOLD, GREEN and GLOBAL.

The sunny morning hinted at an optimistic start to the day atop the ski resort of Mount Buller in Victoria's north east. A sea of children with their competition bibs paraded around the ski slopes confidently, despite the wet and icy conditions - this week the kids owned the mountain.

In a lodge nearby, a child, small for their age, got ready for race day. Mum helped tie the race bib around their tiny waist before they ate a small pancake saying again to their mum that they were not hungry. The mum moved on quickly knowing the argument was futile... that was autism and global developmental delay for you – highly unpredictable at all times.

With skis and helmet on, the child and mum loaded a packed chairlift. The quick ride to the top ended with a clink, clank, clunk, and six riders all stood up and hit the icy ground at once, Mum held onto the child but the first-time snowboarder next to them had no chance, slipping right in front of the child. The child's brain didn't comprehend the accident and they moved to fight, flight, freeze instantly. Right now, it was fight and they got their ski pole and jabbed it toward the snowboard to show their anger for the snowboarder being so inconsiderate of their space.

The lady in an official green jacket stormed over and yelled, 'Don't you dare poke your pole at that person, they are just beginner!'

The child looked shocked and began to apologise, again, and again, and again desperate to stop the lady from being angry. It didn't work and the mother could already see they were in trouble – an emotional storm was triggered.

The mum and child quickly moved away from the loading area and the green jacket lady resumed her post. The child collapsed in the snow and the mountain of emotion that erupted was no match for the Mum's years of experience. They screamed to go home, they screamed at the lady in the green jacket, they kicked off their skis and buried their head in their jacket, their tiny body shaking.

The mum got up and moved towards the lady in the green jacket.

'Just letting you know they are autistic; you should not have spoken to them like that – they have a hidden disability but you just assume they're like the other kids.'

The lady shrugged, 'I didn't know.'

The child's crying continued and minutes felt like hours until the mum had a thought and said, 'Let's show that lady.'

The child looked up – determination in their eyes that said 'ok'.

They skied slowly toward the race start line and the child lined up. Adrenalin filled mum's body on their behalf.

The child raced with such speed.

The gold medal was theirs!

Team mates from school rushed to meet them and mum stood back allowing them the moment, one they will both remember for ever.

That parent was me, and this is a true story.