

FIVE-FINGER DISCOUNT

A Dramatic Reading

By
Mark Littleton



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

**Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106**

**www.wetmoredeclamation.com
Email: speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com**

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From the book, Beefin' Up. Permission to publish as a reading granted by the author to the WETMORE DECLAMATION BUREAU, Sioux City, Iowa.

Dave and his best friend Hugh walked into the tape store. "They're fantastic," Hugh said.

Hugh had been telling Dave about a new album from a group called U2. "They're British or Irish or something," he'd said. "But this new album really zings."

It wasn't difficult to find the new tape. Apparently it had hit number one on the charts. There were posters all over the store.

They rifled through the tapes. U2's tape called "The Joshua Tree" was \$10.98. Dave was surprised that Hugh could buy it--he didn't think he had that much money.

Dave wandered down the row looking at the colorful tape covers. He saw many that he would have liked to own--but how could anyone afford them?

Suddenly, Hugh was at Dave's side. "Come on, let's get outa here."

"You're not buying the tape?"

Hugh smiled. "Not right now."

Hugh and Dave headed out into the mall and walked around. It was winter, and both wore heavy jackets. Hugh wore a military green jacket with large pockets. Dave's was a blue ski parka. He skied nearly every weekend with his family in the Pennsylvania mountains.

Hugh put his hand in his pocket and drew out a package. Instantly Dave recognized the U2 tape.

"I thought you weren't going to buy it."

"I didn't"

"You didn't! Then what..."

"Five-finger discount, man."

Dave gaped a moment at Hugh. He had never known Hugh to be dishonest.

"You can't do that," he sputtered.

"What do you mean I can't? I just did." Hugh grinned. "Saved eleven bucks, plus tax, sonny boy. Think of it as an investment in my future tape collection."

"You mean you've done this before?"

Hugh rolled his eyes and looked away. "Think I'm up to my seventeenth tape this year. Those people in that store have the IQs of rats."

Dave swallowed and glanced around the mall. Suddenly he was afraid they'd be followed, or a policeman would walk up to them and make an arrest. He looked at Hugh again. For so long he and Hugh had been best friends. Why hadn't he known?

Dave tried to think of what he should do. Was he supposed to act like nothing was wrong, or should he have nothing to do with Hugh? Both ways seemed wrong, but what was right?

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---