

PENNY

A Dramatic Reading

by

Leota Hulse Black



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

**Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106**

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

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Nine-year old Stevie swung slowly on his crutches up the rickety stairs of the old tenement house. As he reached the door of a cold, bare room on the second floor, he called, "Penny--hey, puppy, I've sold all my papers early an' we're gonna celebrate! We're goin' down to Tony's an' get a whopper hot dog for you an' a big fat hamburger for me. Penny--(Whistles) Penny--where are you? Gee--why, Penny's not here-- Penny's gone--"

A boy of about Stevie's age appeared at the door. "Hey Steve, if you're lookin' for Penny, well--I don't think you'll find him! You see--well--someone left your door open this morning and Penny got out and started lookin' for you, I guess. Anyway--well, gee, Steve, it's somethin' that happens to lots o' dogs-- he got out in the street an' Mike O'Neill came along in his truck an' you know what a screwy driver Mike is--well--he ran over Penny--"

"No! Oh, no! I know better--you're just kiddin'--"

"Gee, Steve, it's tough but it's the truth--honest!"

"Scrubby--where's Penny now--where's my dog?"

"Well--I didn't see it happen, but everyone says that Penny was killed insuntly so Mike threw him in his truck an' took him to the city dump. Say, Steve, what if Penny wasn't really dead? What if he was hurt awful--an' Mike just thought he was dead? Hey, Steve, where you goin'?"

But Stevie was already clumping down the stairs, leaving Scrubby shaking his little head in sympathy.

With white, drawn face and tearless eyes, Stevie started on the long walk to the city dump. It was growing colder and a heavy sleet was falling. His crutches slipped on the icy walk and once he fell, headlong, but struggled to his feet and hurried on, driven by the thought of his little pet lying suffering and alone.

It was almost dark when he reached the place. His little rough hands were numb with cold and shafts of pain swept through his crippled legs. Picking his way through the debris, he anxiously called,

"PENNY--PENNY, WHERE ARE YOU? IT'S STEVIE, PENNY--PENNY, POOR LITTLE DOGGIE, WHERE ARE YOU?"

From the far side of the dump came a piteous answering whine.

"PENNY--OH, PENNY, YOU'RE NOT DEAD--PENNY, JUST A MINUTE--I'M COMIN'---OH, PENNY, I'M SO GLAD I FOUND YOU--I'LL BE THERE IN A MINUTE."

Stevie lowered himself to the ground and tenderly lifted the trembling little form into his arms.

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---