

THE SPARROW'S FALL

A Dramatic Reading

by

Leota Hulse Black



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

**Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106**

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

CAUTION: Wetmore Declamation Bureau material is protected by United States copyright law and conventions. None of our material may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—without prior permission. No trademark, copyright or other notice may be removed or changed. All rights reserved. Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

THE SPARROW'S FALL
A Dramatic Reading

Leota Hulse Black

Copyright 1932 and 1960 by the WETMORE DECLAMATION BUREAU, Sioux City, Iowa.

“Annabelle! Annabelle, ain’t you got that lettuce bed weeded yet? You’ve been loiterin’ around out there for a full hour--git in here an’ set the table for supper!”

“Yes Mis’ Phelps--I’m comin’--” and Annabelle ran breathlessly to the back door. She was not more than nine years of age, but the careworn expression of the thin drawn face might have belonged to a little old woman of sixty. She winced as though she had been struck as the harsh voice boomed on.

“I’m gittin’ sick an’ tired of your shiftless ways--here I’ve bedded an’ boarded you fer five long years an’ where is it gittin’ me? Your pa promised to come fer you in two years when he left you after your ma died, but these navy-men ain’t to be depended on--like as not he’s fergot all about havin’ you an’ I’ll have you on my hands the rest of my days. Not a very invitin’ prospect, I’m tellin’ you.”

“But my daddy gave you money to take care of me, didn’t he?”

“Precious little--not enough to pay fer your board an’ you a-eatin’ more every day--an’ gittin’ lazier too--but what can you expect of the daughter of a navy-man?”

Annabelle’s blue eyes blazed. “Stop, Mis’ Phelps! You can say horrid things about ME, but I won’t let you talk about my daddy--”

Annabelle was rewarded by a slap on her sensitive little mouth.

“None of yer sass young lady--THAT’s the thanks I git fer puttin’ up with you for five solid years! Jist fer that you’ll go to bed without yer supper. Stickin’ up fer yer dad--well, he thinks so little of you that he hasn’t wrote to you fer two years! Now stop that snifflin’ an’ take this quarter an’ git me a cake fer supper. An’ mind that you bring back the change!”

It was several blocks to the bake shop and Annabelle fairly flew, fearful of the consequences should she be gone longer than Mrs. Phelps thought necessary. Having purchased the cake she started home. Twilight was falling over the village. Annabelle looked with longing at the lighted windows where happy boys and girls gathered around the firesides. She paused at the top of a hill to take breath, leaning against a stone wall. She was faint from hunger, and the smell of the fresh cake tantalized her beyond endurance.

“Oh, if I could have a teeny weeny piece--even one little bite--Um-um it smells DE-LICIOUS--I could eat it all I b’leeve an’ there won’t be any supper for me when I get home--I’ve a notion to eat every bit of it--I’m so hungry I don’t care WHAT she does to me--”

She started to open the parcel, but the last beating Mrs. Phelps had given her was still a vivid memory.

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---