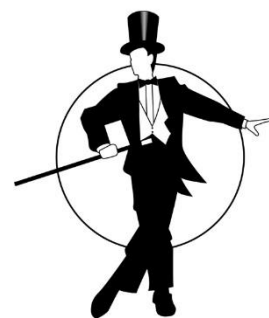


Canine Contact

Penny Bloodhart



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CANINE CONTACT

By Penny Bloodhart

CAST

GEORGE: About 75 years old, looks despondent. Nicely dressed.

GRACIE: About 75, tearful and depressed. Very well dressed, rather prim.

Place

A bench on the street of a small town.

Time

A pleasant morning, about ten o'clock.

GEORGE: Where's the dog?

GRACIE: I beg your pardon?

GEORGE: You usually have the dog with you. The big golden one.

(GRACIE says nothing for a moment, wiping her eyes, looking sad)

GEORGE: Did he die?

GRACIE: Oh, goodness, no! He's still being boarded.

GEORGE: Oh.

GRACIE: I was in the hospital for a while. Then I had to stay with my son.

(GEORGE nods, says nothing. After a brief silence, GRACIE glances at him.)

GRACIE: Nobody could keep him. But I'm better now.

GEORGE: That's good. Haven't seen you in church lately.

GRACIE: Tripped on the ice and broke my wrist. *(she holds up her arm)* It is healed.

GEORGE: So when do you get the dog back?

GRACIE: I don't know. I have to move from my condo...and it seems that I can't take him to the Silver Top Retirement Home. I'm supposed to go there next month. (*she pauses, wipes a tear away*)

GEORGE: Tough to give up such a nice dog. I felt that way when I gave up my car.

GRACIE: You don't drive?

GEORGE: (*shrugs*) I could, but the insurance was too expensive. I could heat the house or have a car.

GRACIE: That's too bad. Your house is big---I remember it from when I visited Dora Turner who lived next door to you. Nice yard.

GEORGE: Yeah. Too big for me, or so the kids say. They want to sell it.

GRACIE: Where would you go?

GEORGE: I dunno. They want me to move into their house, well, not the house but a little studio in back. Up in Yreka.

GRACIE: I tried staying with my son and his family for a while. Everything I did there seemed wrong...couldn't even watch my stories without somebody complaining. I used to go sit in my car with the dog.

GEORGE: I'd like to have a dog again. Would be company in that big old house. Guess I'm just too old to think about it.

GRACIE: Maybe you'd like my dog? It would be better than sending him—uh, I don't know where he'd go! (*she looks distraught, wipes her eyes*)

GEORGE: Oh no...I couldn't take your dog. Probably couldn't afford to feed him.

GRACIE: I could send you money—sort of like 'dog support.' I have to admit that I'm pretty well off...at least for a few more years. At least until the kids have me declared nuts or something! (*both are silent for a moment, looking very sad*)

GEORGE: *(a bit angry)* You know, it is a darned shame---we end up like this. Sitting on a bench with no future.

GRACIE: Yes. Pretty sad after all we've done in our lives. I've always been so careful about acting like a lady. But think about taking my dog, please? You're a good guy, or so Dora used to tell me. I must go-- getting my hair done in a few minutes.

GEORGE: Ok...guess it wouldn't hurt to think about it. The dog, I mean. *(Long pause. GRACIE stands up.)* You could come visit, maybe...if I had the dog.

GRACIE: What? To your house?

GEORGE: Why not?

GRACIE: *(she pauses, thinking it over)* What would people think?

GEORGE: *(laughs a bit bitterly)* Does it matter?

GRACIE: If you have the dog—I guess it would be ok. People might talk.

GEORGE: Do we care? Do THEY care?

(GRACIE sits down again. They look at each other and smile.)

GEORGE: You might even stay for lunch. I have a big kitchen. I cook.

GRACIE: Really? *(she sits up straighter)* I could do that. I'll bring dessert.

GEORGE: And maybe if the dog thing works out...we could...*(he pauses)*

GRACIE: Will you be here tomorrow? I can bring my dog with me.

GEORGE: I sure will! And maybe—

GRACIE: Yes. Maybe! Until tomorrow!

(GRACIE rises and walks off stage after giving him a wave and a smile. GEORGE picks up his newspaper, starts to read it, and begins to whistle.)

THE END