

The Finishing Touches

Length: Four minutes

Monologue in child dialect; for a small boy

(A small boy, getting ready for school)

Where's my cap, anyway? Mamma, Mamma, do you know where my cap is? –I *did* put it where it belonged—yes'm? I'm sure I did. But it isn't here. *(Looks about, stoops and picks up cap from floor. Calls.)* I've found it. Under the stand. I don't see how it got there, for I know I put it where it belonged. –Ma'am? –Yes'm, it's clean. I am sure of it. I washed it yesterday. What more do you want? –No'm, I didn't aim to be rude. –Can't I go now? –Oh, I haven't time. *(Goes to stage R., pouting.)* Oh, well look then. *(Holds head first to one side and then to the other.)* Oh, it don't need washing. Please, Mom, let me go. I'll be late if you don't. Here's for it then. *(Splashes water on face and neck with hands.)* No, I don't need any old washcloth and soap. It isn't that dirty, I know. All soap's good for anyway is to get into your eyes and make you cry. –Oh, but I'm in a hurry. –Well, hand it here then. *(Imitates hurried washing with soap.)* Where's that towel? *(Eyes shut, holds hands in front of him as if feeling for towel.)* Jolly! That old soap did get in my eyes. What did I tell you? *(Dries face.)* Now, I just bet I'm clean. Where did I put that cap? Oh, here it is. I'm off now. Goodbye! *(Starts, comes back.)* Ma'am? Come back? What for? I'll be late to school if I do not go right this minute. –Well, look! –Not clean! Oh, Mom, you're not going to try and wash it again, are you? My neck don't show so awful much anyhow. But I have my collar on. *(Turns head as if holding it to be washed. Fidgets, and draws away.)* Ouch! Goodness, Mom, don't take all the skin off. Look out, now you did get that old soap all in my eyes. *(Cries.)* That's too hot! Look out! I'll just bet you did take the skin off, too.

(Stands on one foot then on other, and fidgets more than ever.) Well, you had better hurry up, that's what! If you do not want me to get a tardy mark. –It's clean, now, is it? Well, then hand me that towel and I'll get it done in a jiffy! *(Uses towel, then once more picks up his cap.)* I'm off now for sure. My neck won't have to be scrubbed again for a week, will it? Oh, it won't either. I never could see what difference it makes anyway.

Goodbye, Mom. *(Goes to entrance, then calls as he leaves stage.)* Tommy. Tom! It's school time. Come on. Ain't you ready yet? Tom-my!