

## Synopsis:

Hey DUMMY is based on the true story of Lonnie J. Clinkscale. Hey Dummy is an inspiring story of a young boy who must fight tremendous obstacles to become something much more than what so many people thought he was: a loser, a retard, poor trash, a dummy.

Lonnie Clinkscale is a bright boy but he is beset by a learning disability and a severe speech impediment. Though he tries to do well in school, every day is a challenge. The other students shun him or ridicule his speech and poor hand-me-down clothes. Lonnie is the favorite target of the class bully Tommy. But it is Lonnie's teacher Miss Workman who makes the school day a living hell for Lonnie. Her sadistic nature inflicts torment on the poor boy. Making him read out loud to the class; knowing that his stuttering is a source of amusement for the other students, dismissing his hopes of becoming a successful adult.

Lonnie's home life is little better, but being a middle child in a poor working class black family leaves precious few moments of the love and attention he so dearly craves. There is love in the home but it isn't always shown. Lonnie's father, Diddy, tries to be a good provider, but is at times unfaithful to his wife and abusive to the children. Momma works two jobs to help put food on the table, but doesn't always have time for showing the love and care the children need.

Lonnie looks up to his older brother Eddie, Jr., who lets him help with odd jobs and who tries to protect Lonnie and the other children from Diddy's bouts of rage. Lonnie wishes he was as smart and popular as his sisters, Sherry, Rose and even his twin Lillie, but even they sometimes are embarrassed by their brother.

The story begins as Lonnie walks the bleak streets of Youngstown, Ohio; through the cold bone-soaking November rain. As cold as the rain was; his grade school seems colder still. Delayed by Tommy, Lonnie is tardy for class and is soon at the mercy of Miss Workman's cruel form of education. Forced to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, Lonnie is humiliated in front of the entire class.

At home Momma has prepared a humble but filling meal, but they are afraid to begin eating until Diddy gets home, finally he arrives and later helps Lonnie with his math homework, but this quiet home life is short-lived as an argument over money erupts between Diddy and Momma.

Back at school, Lonnie is, for once, confident that he will be able to do his math problems. Miss Workman is shocked to see that he has done the work, but forces Lonnie to do the problems again on the blackboard without his homework. She tricks him into writing the wrong answers. Lonnie is crushed, but an announcement that his class will be performing the school program of "A Christmas Carol" has Lonnie excited that he might be a part of the play.

Lonnie does get a very small part in the production, but an accident caused by Miss Workman causes him to lose his part in the play. Later, teased by Tommy, Lonnie finally strikes back, breaking Tommy's nose and landing Lonnie and Momma in the principal's office. Lonnie is shocked that he only receives two weeks detention, but is surprised when Mr. Rossi, director of the LAMPS is also in the meeting. Mr. Rossi wants Lonnie to attend the LAMPS classes to help him with his learning problem and speech.

While walking home, the local drug pusher gives Lonnie drugs and the innocent Lonnie takes them. He stumbles home and begins acting very strange. Momma soon realizes that Lonnie is on something and rushes him to the hospital. Diddy arrives later and is more upset over the medical bills, than the health of his son. Lonnie comes home on Christmas Eve and for a short time the home is peaceful. Momma is away working at a Christmas party and Diddy is out seeing a girlfriend. The peaceful holiday cheer is soon smashed when a drunken Diddy returns home and tries to beat Lonnie. Eddie stands up to his father and is beaten unconscious. Only Momma arriving and putting a straight razor to Diddy's neck stops his rage. Momma sends Diddy packing.

Life returns to almost normal for the family with Diddy gone. Lonnie attends LAMP classes and sees a positive change in his other classes. Lonnie also helps Eddie Jr., mowing lawns and doing odd jobs. One of their customers, Miss Boston, take a liking to Lonnie and always has special snacks or presents for him. Lonnie makes a big mistake and steals a loaded hand gun from Miss Boston's attic. Feeling guilty about it Lonnie tells himself he will take it back next time he comes to work.

Two nights later, Lonnie blaming himself for the breakup of his parent's marriage; takes the loaded gun out to examine while Eddie sleeps nearby. Lonnie asks God to take him to heaven, so that he will no longer be dumb and an embarrassment to his family. Lonnie places the pistol barrel to his head and pulls the trigger!

Click! Click! Click!

Six times he pulls the trigger and the gun doesn't fire. Suddenly Eddie snatches the gun. Lonnie begs Eddie not to tell. Eddie takes the gun and slips out the window to throw it away. Lonnie listens out the window and soon hears gunfire. Eddie returns and tells Lonnie that before he threw it away he tested it and every time he pulled the trigger the gun went off.

Eddie tells Lonnie that God had a hand in that moment and that He must have a reason he didn't want Lonnie to die that night. With a new sense of purpose, Lonnie soon enters middle school and is delighted to see that Mr. Rossi will be there too. Lonnie and Rossi work hard to correct his reading and speech problems. Lonnie also meets Mrs. Davis of the Needle's Eye Christian Counseling Center who offers Lonnie advice and tutoring.

One day Mr. Rossi has the class read some famous speeches and to everyone's shock and amazement, Lonnie recites a passage without error and with such conviction that Mr. Thorpe of the school speech team recruits Lonnie to join the team. Lonnie soon becomes a champion and wins many speech contests. But thanks to Diddy's influence, Lonnie soon comes to believe that he owes nothing to God or those that helped him and becomes arrogant in his ability.

Lonnie is ill-prepared for a big competition and begins to stutter on stage. He is devastated and fears that he will be the Dummy again. Lonnie must search deep down and find the strength in himself and in the grace of God to compete in the state finals. When the big day arrives, Lonnie fights his inner fears, gives a compelling speech and wins.

Lonnie is at peace with himself. While at church the following Sunday, Lonnie sees his father going to the altar to pray for forgiveness. Lonnie joins Diddy to give him strength and is soon joined by the entire family. Diddy knows that the family cannot go back to the way it was, but tells them that he will try to be a better man and a better father.