

Story Time

by *Delores Campbell*

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Penny's First Time Canning

When Penny pulled and dug up her second crop of potatoes, which were medium size this time, she also pulled up a black snake with a red belly. Then the time came to gather cucumbers to can, along with beans and a lot of green tomatoes.

She called me and said "I have cucumbers, beans, and tomatoes comin' out of my ears!"

Since her mother and Claudia had canned before, she said she was going to get them to help her. Claudia's brother, Marvin Teague, was dealing with colon cancer, which spread to his kidneys before he died; so Claudia didn't get a chance to help with this bunch of canning. Mother and Aunt Wanda came over and helped Penny. They canned 200 jars of pickles.



Wanda had never canned or planted a garden. She had been in a car wreck several years back, and is now a cripple; but she still cleans houses and does whatever she can do. She is a very sweet person and a Sunday school teacher at her church. Penny has had her to come clean my house in the spring and fall before. I like to kid her about breaking every new mop I get. She has broken two of them.

I walked in to Penny's kitchen and she was washing jars by hand. I told her that the dishwasher cleaned jars, and—guess what—I got to wash up hundreds of jars. Me and my big mouth! They also got me in on stringing and breaking beans, but my right leg started giving me trouble and I left them to do the rest. The okra started coming on and Penny canned pickled okra for Ronnie Spencer.



But I am getting a little ahead of myself. After Penny gave all her cabbage away, she decided to make chow-chow; so she went over to the *Garden of Eden* and bought a big bag of onions and 2 bags of mountain cabbage from Larry Shook's fresh produce place. Ha! Ha! (There's a Garden of Eden mural on Larry's wall at his place.) They canned the bags of onions and cabbage and had to go back and buy one more cabbage head to finish the last run.

That sounds like a lot of food that has been canned and it was. But since her mother and Claudia had given her jars to use, she divided the canned food with her mother and aunt, and gave Claudia vegetables to freeze. She also gave Preacher Cloud things out of the garden. Preacher Cloud's wife died last year and Billy Wayne has tried to help him by letting him have food from the garden. The Lord has given them plenty, so they gave some fresh produce from the garden to Rex and Gwen Teague, and Faye

Stafford, and some other people.

Claudia told Penny she couldn't wait to can more greens. Penny said they had a lot of fun. When I paid Ronnie Spencer to plow the garden, he said he thought he should be paying me instead because he had never had so much fun in his life. When he got stuck in the garden, we laughed and talked so much that our neighbor came to ask Ronnie to plow his garden. Several days later, we heard him and his son laughing about something.

We all had fun planting our gardens this year. Penny's brother, Eric, had planted gardens in the past, but never canned anything. This year he had someone to help can. Penny's daughter, Jamie, tried planting a small garden. It turned out good this year, too. Penny's first garden has brought a lot of fun and happiness to a lot of people this year. God has been good to us all.

