

“Lemonade for sale!”

Feeble golden rays of dappled early-afternoon sunlight sparkled reflectively on the three young girls’ hair as their luring voices called hopefully to advertise their makeshift lemonade stand. “Lemonade for sale!” the youngest girl, Maria, shouted breathlessly, her golden-brown hair dappled elaborately with glittering sunlight. Her sparkling hazel eyes flickered eagerly over an approaching pedestrian. “Would you like some lemonade for twenty-five cents?” she questioned pleadingly, her narrow lips stretched tightly across her face in a generous smile.

“Of course,” the woman replied, fumbling furiously with a heavy leather purse and impatiently tugging out a dollar. She handed her money to one of the eldest girls named Jennifer and said, “I’d like one cup please. You can keep the change.”

“Thanks!” Jennifer exclaimed appreciatively, placing their first precious dollar in an old shoebox and gingerly pouring icy lemonade from a plastic pitcher into a paper cup. “Here you go,” she said as she handed the two cups to the woman. “Enjoy!”

“Thank you,” the woman said, slurping the fresh lemonade from the cup. “Are you raising money for any particular reason?”

“Not really,” another girl, Emily, replied cheerily. “Just for fun.” Her chestnut-brown hair tumbled lusciously down the sides of her head as she bent to fill a cup of lemonade for herself. Her fumbling fingers drummed furiously on the plastic table. “We’ve also got a petting zoo with guinea pigs,” she said, gesturing vaguely in the direction of a wooden fence with three plump rodents comfortably nestled inside. The guinea pigs vigorously chewed at the plentiful clumps of grass surrounding them, their furry rumps shifting repetitively.

“They’re adorable!” the woman cooed, briefly flashing her pearl-white teeth in a marveling smile. “Well, thank you for the lemonade, girls. Have a nice day!”

Not long after she left, the girls spotted an elderly couple coming their way. Emily eagerly sprang to attention and plastered a fake, charming smile on her face. “Would you like some lemonade for twenty-five cents?” she said.

The couple glanced amusedly at each other, a tentative smile playing around their cracked, narrow lips. “Why not?” the man replied cheerily, roughly tugging a battered leather wallet from his pocket and plucking out two smudged quarters with trembling, papery fingers. Jennifer took the money from them and dropped it into the money box. “We’ll have two cups, please,” the man grunted.

Maria dutifully snatched up two paper cups and poured fresh lemonade into each of them, her swift fingers moving efficiently. “Enjoy!” she said as she gingerly handed the two cups to the elderly couple.

In an attempt to attract more customers to their successful business, Maria breathlessly called out, “Fresh lemonade! Petting zoo!” Her glittering hazel eyes flickered eagerly over the sidewalk, searching hopefully for any pedestrians that might want to buy lemonade. “Oh!” Her victorious cry alerted the two other girls of a possible customer: a young woman grappling helplessly with two whining children.

“Hello, ma’am!” exclaimed Jennifer, her chestnut-brown hair tumbling lusciously down to her squared shoulders as she scrambled over to the sighted pedestrians. “Would you like some lemonade for twenty-five cents? Or do you want to go to our petting zoo?” she questioned hopefully, glancing briefly at the two whining children.

“Of course!” the woman replied breathlessly, roughly shoving a loose, golden stand of tangled hair out of her eyes. “We’ll take three cups of lemonade, and admission to the petting zoo for all of us.” She fumbled roughly with a disorganized purse and impatiently tugged out a dollar bill and two quarters, which she promptly handed to Jennifer.

Jennifer dropped the money into the money box while Emily briskly poured the lemonade from the plastic pitcher into three paper cups. “Here you go,” she said as she dutifully handed the cups to the woman, her narrow lips stretched tightly across her face in a charming smile. “The petting zoo is right over there.” She gestured briefly with a juttied thumb to the makeshift wooden fence behind their lemonade stand. “Here are the carrots to feed the guinea pigs,” she instructed, as she placed a crinkling plastic bag of carrots in the woman’s outstretched hand.

“Thank you,” the woman muttered as she struggled frantically to juggle her purchases in her fumbling fingers. With painstaking difficulty, she handed a cup of lemonade each to her two impatient young children, then eagerly sipped her own lemonade. When she had finished, she led her two amazed children over to the petting zoo. The joyous squealing of the guinea pigs arose abruptly as they greedily snatched the carrots given to them, then delighted squeaks as the tentative children softly stroked the plump rodents. “Cute,” one child commented shyly as she cautiously touched the guinea pigs with a small finger.

Several thirsty customers arrived for a refreshing cup of lemonade, and the three girls dutifully poured the homemade drinks, their fingers fumbling. A family

arrived promptly and paid for admission to feed the guinea pigs, so Emily supervised the petting zoo while Jennifer and Maria skillfully handled the lemonade, frantically attempting to fulfill the requests of the waiting customers. Shiny coins and papery dollar bills were dropped into the money box at a surprisingly fast rate, and soon the three young entrepreneurs had gained no less than eighteen dollars.

"I can't believe we earned so much money!" Emily exclaimed disbelievingly, sifting her skinny fingers through the coins and dollars in the box. Her sparkling chocolate-brown eyes briefly flickered over the setting sun. "I think it's time to end our lemonade stand for the day."

The two other girls agreed, and as they all packed up the heavy plastic table cluttered with several remaining cups and an empty pitcher, they replayed in their minds the cheerful scenes of their day at selling lemonade, and the three girls found themselves unable to stop the delighted smiles from spreading across their faces.