The Lemonade Stand

by

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INT. PUPPY MILL - DAY

JESS, 10, a resourceful girl scout, looks through all the dog cages. The DOGS inside are battered and ill.

Jess locks eyes with BUCKY, a pug with eyes to big for its face. She waves and blows kisses at him through the cage.

The sign on the cage reads BUCKY - PUG - $200 - AVAILABLE UNTIL FRIDAY.

Jess’s mind wanders in thought.

EXT. PARK - JOGGER’S TRAIL - DAY

Jess postures behind her well crafted lemonade stand. The sign reads ONE DOLLAR LEMONADES, scribbled in multi-colored markers.

    JESS
    Lemonade!

A JOGGER stops by the stand. Running in place, she pulls a dollar out of her sports bra. Money exchanges hands. She stuffs the cash in her tackle box.

WOOP WOOP.

A police bike screeches up to the stand. Riding the bike is OFFICER BOB, 30, a by the book park ranger. He looks on through his aviator shades. He munches on a worn out toothpick with his coffee stained teeth. He grabs his megaphone with his finger-less gloves.

    OFFICER BOB
    Just what in the hell are you doing?

    JESS
    Who? Me?

    OFFICER BOB
    Ya, you girl scout.

    JESS
    Well, I’m selling lemonade mister.

    OFFICER BOB
    What? Selling lemonade?

Officer Bob stomps out his kick stand and unbuckles his plastic helmet. He strokes his poor excuse of a mustache and thumps over to Jess with his megaphone.
OFFICER BOB (CONT’D)
Shut it down. Shut the whole thing down.

JESS
But mister, I need to save money to buy a rescue dog. He’s the cutest pug in the world but he has anemia--

OFFICER BOB
Park code 87 violation 12. You can’t operate and independent eatery on park grounds with the means to turn a profit without a proper permit. Do you have a permit little missy?

Jess shakes her head no. Officer Bob grabs a cup.

JESS
Hey, you have to pay for that.

Officer Bob slowly chugs the lemonade. The juice drips down his cheeks and on his shirt. He crushes the cup.

OFFICER BOB
Just go to city hall and get a permit. You’re a big girl. You can figure it out.

Officer Bob adjusts his wedgie and hops on his bike. Jess mocks him as he rides off and probes other CIVILIANS.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

City hall is mayhem. The pedestrians argue with the clerks while security escort them out. There is a line of DEGENERATES out the door. Jess takes her place in line.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

CLERK, 40 something, sits miserably behind his desk. Jess approaches the desk.

JESS
Hello, I’m opening my very own lemonade stand in the park.

CLERK
Park? Go to parks and rec.

Jess walks out.
INT. CITY HALL - PARKS AND RECREATION - DAY

CLERK 2, sits behind his desk zoned out. Jess attempts to get his attention.

        JESS
        Excuse me sir. Sir...

Clerk 2 snaps out of his trance.

        JESS (CONT’D)
        I need a permit.

        CLERK 2
        Go to financial services.

INT. CITY HALL - FINANCIAL SERVICES - LOBBY - DAY

Jess sits irritated reading TIME magazine.

INT. CITY HALL - FINANCIAL SERVICES - OFFICE - DAY

CLERK 3 plays solitaire. Jess approaches impatiently.

        JESS
        I need a permit.

        CLERK 3
        Health department.

Jess stands strong as a statue.

        CLERK 3 (CONT’D)
        What do you want girl? I’m busy.

        JESS
        I go there, they tell me to go here. I’m opening a lemonade stand and I need a permit already. Where do I go?

        CLERK 3
        Ok. Ok. You need to go to permitting services because you’re getting a permit. Down the hall.

        JESS
        Thank you.

Jess leaves the room.

        CLERK 3
        All you had to do was read the sign.
The computer screen explodes with a deck of cards. Clerk 3 jumps for joy.

INT. CITY HALL - PERMITTING SERVICES - LOBBY - DAY
Jess squints as she tries to read the tiny 4 point font sign reading PERMITTING SERVICES.

INT. CITY HALL - PERMITTING SERVICES - DAY
Jess walks inside. The room is vacant and gloomy. She nears the clerk’s counter which stands ten feet tall. She almost steps over the red line before catching herself. She waits patiently behind the line.

    PHYLLIS (O.S.)
    Next.

Jess approaches the counter.

    PHYLLIS (O.S.) (CONT’D)
    I said next, god damn it.
    JESS
    I’m down here.

PHYLLIS, 60, an old hag with fish tanks for glasses, smokes a cigarette and leans over the counter.

BUZZ.

    PHYLLIS
    Shh...

Phyllis’s eyes wander around. She follows a fly as it hovers from left to right. The fly settles on the counter. She grabs her fly swatter then swings it.

SPLAT. She examines the swatter.

    PHYLLIS (CONT’D)
    There you are you little bugger.
    PHYLLIS (CONT’D)
    (To Jess)
    Now, what do you want little girl?
    JESS
    One permit please.

Phyllis coughs up a lung.
JESS (CONT’D)
I’m opening my lemonade stand so--

PHYLLIS
Where are your documents?

JESS
What documents?

PHYLLIS
In order to sell lemonade you need an Employer Identification Number, a Food Service Establishment Permit under the food truck laws, Business License and Tax Permit, register a DBA, meet the IRS employer’s tax guide if hiring more than one employee, all while passing the standard inspections of the health department. And then there’s insurance--

JESS
How much will that cost?

Phyllis punches numbers on her calculator. Receipt paper feeds through the register. She rips the receipt off.

PHYLLIS
Approximately $3,878.

JESS
What?

PHYLLIS
And 66 cents.

Jess’s eyes fill with tears. She rips off her highly decorated sash and cap and mopes away.

INT. PUPPY MILL - DAY

Jess slouches in front of Bucky’s cage. Bucky looks ill.

JESS
I’m sorry Bucky. I tried to do everything right but the fact of the matter is, this country is run by greedy old pricks. They say capitalism is the opportunity for small businesses, but then why are all our politicians controlled by conglomerates and lobbyists? This country is sponsored by nothing but oil companies and Walmart.

(MORE)
I don’t know if I want to live in a country where a girl scout can’t sell lemonade?

Jess perks up with enthusiasm.

JESS (CONT’D)
Sell lemonade?

FLASHBACK – CLERK’S OFFICE

PHYLLIS
In order to sell lemonade.

FLASHBACK – JOGGER’S TRAIL

OFFICER BOB
Selling Lemonade?

FLASHBACK – JOGGER’S TRAIL

JESS
You have to pay for that.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

JESS
That’s it. I’ll be back for you Bucky. I promise. It’s going to take more then that for the man to keep me down.

Jess sprints out the door.

INT. JESS’S GARAGE – DAY

Jess digs through her garage and rips up her lemonade sign. She takes her markers and fills out a new sign.

Jess straps on her sash and adjusts her cap.

EXT. PARK – JOGGER’S TRAIL – DAY

Jess is operating the lemonade stand.

JESS
Lemonade, get your lemonade.

WOOP WOOP.
Officer Bob storms up to Jess with his megaphone.

OFFICER BOB
Now I know you didn’t get that permit.

JESS
No I did not Mr. Bob.

OFFICER BOB
Well then, you can’t sell lemonade.

JESS
I know. I’m not selling lemonade.

Jess Points Up.

Officer Bob looks up at the sign above his head. It reads FREE LEMONADE.

OFFICER BOB
How the hell are you going to save your precious pup by giving out free lemonade?

Sitting on the table is a large mason jar crammed with bills. Jess spins the jar around. It reads DONATIONS and has a Polaroid of Bucky’s face glued on.

Officer Bob cracks a smirk. He chugs a lemonade, reaches down his crotch and pulls out a crumpled dollar bill. He drops it in the jar and gestures a tip of the cap. He hops on his bike and rides off.

EXT. PUPPY MILL - DAY

Jess exits the puppy mill. She drops to a knee.

JESS
Here Bucky.

Bucky runs out and jumps into Jess’s arms. She attaches her leash to Bucky’s collar. They stroll down the street side by side.