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THE LEMONADE STAND

A One-act Drama

by

BRYAN HARNETIAUX



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(THE LEMONADE STAND)

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**To the
Spokane Christian Coalition
of Spokane, Washington**

The Lemonade Stand

A Play in One Act
For One Man and One Woman

MAN

WOMAN

TIME: The present

PLACE: A street in the poverty-stricken section of a city

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

I cannot help but offer a few strongly-felt beliefs. The lemonade stand itself, unattended, should be visible before the production as the audience filters into the theatre. Its presence tends to evoke a shared memory of our first, benign experience with capitalism. This memory may be enhanced by soft and indistinct noises of young children, giggles and laughs amidst an occasional call of "lemonade, lemonade!" This pre-show prelude should be separated from the play proper by a blackout of sufficient length to allow WOMAN to take her place and effect the "dog ear" on the lemonade sign.

The lemonade stand itself must be durable enough to withstand the business of the play, but fragile enough to collapse when MAN first kicks it "for emphasis." MAN's first kick is no more than a gesture, yet it must cause the stand to fall. If the actor has to work too hard to achieve the effect, it will appear it was MAN's intention to upend the stand with the first kick. Thus, great care should be taken in fashioning the lemonade stand.

WOMAN does not spit violently. It undermines the dignity of the act. It must be a slow, well-aimed stream of spittle that drops by force of gravity on the money. WOMAN does not take any of the money as she exits at the end of the play.

Lastly, as for the characters themselves: I see WOMAN as desperate, but dignified; in a sense ageless, probably of child-bearing years, preferably in her thirties. MAN is likable, well-intentioned; older than WOMAN.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

The playlet version of *The Lemonade Stand* was first performed on November 11, 1987 at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington as part of a workshop on poverty primarily sponsored by the Spokane Christian Coalition. It was directed by the author with the following cast:

MAN Bill Hay
WOMAN Pam Kingsley

The play *The Lemonade Stand* was first performed at the Spokane civic Theatre's Firth Chew Studio Theatre on May 5, 1988 under the direction of Jodine Watson, with the following cast:

WOMAN Mary Hawkins
MAN Mason Petit

THE LEMONADE STAND

SETTING: *A lemonade stand, in what must be a poverty-stricken sector of the City. Fast-food litter lies around, along with a few other long-neglected pieces of trash. In the midst is a simple lemonade stand, one a child would make out of scraps of wood and butcher paper. There is a counter on which a plastic or Tupperware pitcher is visible, along with a spoon and some paper cups. There is also a jar, with pennies in it. The sign reads "Lemonade" in black lettering. It is a scene that should speak of a hot Saturday afternoon in one's childhood, of tender exchanges and once-important sales to dig up movie money.*

It is very hot out.

AT RISE: *As the light come up, WOMAN is sitting behind the lemonade stand on a crate. Her clothes are worn, but neat. It is her eyes one notices. Part of the sign on the front of the stand has dog-eared in the heat, so that the word "Lemonade" is partially obscured. The WOMAN finishes counting her change. She looks around and is about to quit when something in the distance catches her eye. She sits again, and waits; anxious, but searching within herself for strength and a sense of calm. Momentarily, MAN enters from DL. He is middle-aged and wears a sports coat and tie; enviably fresh and well-nourished. Initially preoccupied with a piece of paper, he then discovers and is captivated by the lemonade stand.*

MAN *(passing the stand, somewhat hesitantly).* Hello. *(Keeps on going.)*

WOMAN (*wavering at first*). Hello. How are you? (*MAN stops and retreats some, trying to decide what to do.*)

MAN. Fine. Hot today.

WOMAN. Yes. It is. Worse than yesterday.

MAN. A scorcher. You could fry an egg on the sidewalk. Probably cook the chicken, too.

WOMAN. I heard it's supposta be in the nineties.

MAN (*wipes face with handkerchief*). It's all of that. Unseasonably hot. (*Explaining.*) Unusual for this time of year.

WOMAN (*wiping her forehead*). You're right, there.

MAN. You, too? This morning I thought it might cloud up.

WOMAN. We could use some rain. Everything's so dry. It'll go, sooner or later. It can only be hot for so long.

MAN. Yeah. Say, I wonder if you could help me?

WOMAN. If I can.

MAN. I'm looking for Oliveras Street.

WOMAN. Oliveras.

MAN. Yes. I used to know this area. It's gotta be in this neighborhood. (*Showing WOMAN map.*) Map's all pinched together here. Can't tell one street from the next. (*Hands WOMAN map or piece of paper with address on it.*) It's the twenty-one hundred block. Am I close?

WOMAN (*handing him back the map/paper without really looking at it*). No. I'm not sure. Sorry.

MAN. I just thought you might know.

WOMAN. You have friends on Oliveras Street?

MAN. No.

WOMAN. Why do you want to go there, then?

MAN (*looking up from map*). I'm sorry, what?

WOMAN. What's on Oliveras?

MAN. Oh, there's a house for sale tomorrow. I wanted to take a look at the property. It can't be far. Just a general direction would help.

WOMAN (*indicating vaguely, off DR*). Try somewhere over that way. I don't know.

MAN. Oh, I... Am I turned around? That's North. Wouldn't it be East? It's the East twenty-one hundred block. (*Indicating UR.*) Isn't East that way?

WOMAN. Yeah. Yeah, I guess you're right. I'm a good one for directions.

MAN. Well, thank you, anyway. (*Starts to go.*)

WOMAN. Why do you want that property; property like that?

MAN (*stops*). What?

WOMAN. You gonna buy property on Oliveras?

MAN. Maybe. I want to see it first. I might.

WOMAN. Why?

MAN. Why not? Investment. You gotta find it; it rarely finds you.

WOMAN. Bad investment around here. I wouldn't.

MAN (*amused*). You wouldn't. Are you in investments?

WOMAN. No.

MAN. Well, I am. Learned long ago you can work for a dollar, or let the dollar work for you. Now, it's not that easy. You've gotta take risks.

WOMAN. You look like you've done all right.

MAN. Not bad. You need a break or two along the way. I got a few. Talk about investments. Twenty-five, thirty years ago this was the place to be. I used to make deliveries around here. Probably could have found Oliveras blindfolded. Now, look at it. Old, sagging, rusted. Ah, the buildings could say the same thing about me. Things change.

WOMAN. Doesn't sound like much of an investment.

MAN. Ah, but there's the trick. You scoop it up for a price, depreciate it out over a couple of years, collect what rent you can, and wait for the urban renewal boys with their bulldozers and matching grants. (*He has lost her.*) It's complicated, but it works. Yunno, didn't there used to be a bakery over that way? Near that building there, with the cupola, the funny-looking peak?

WOMAN. Panigakos. Panigakos Bakery.

MAN. Panigakos. That was it. Always smelled great.

WOMAN. We would go there for doughnuts before school. He gave away his oddball doughnuts. The ones he said didn't look right. He called them oddballs.

MAN. Oddballs.

WOMAN. Who's selling? The property. Maybe I know them.

MAN. A bank. It's a foreclosure.

WOMAN. Oh.

MAN. Don't know the people.

WOMAN. You buy a lot of things that way?

MAN. Some. Business. It's what makes the world go 'round. Selling lemonade, huh?

WOMAN. Yes.

MAN. Lemonade. One of those things that just sells itself.

WOMAN. Yes. It does.

MAN. Kinda thirsty out. Did you know your sign's drooping here?

WOMAN. Oh yeah, no, I didn't.

MAN. People won't know what you got here. *Monad. Monade.*

WOMAN (*joining him*). No, I guess not. You did.

MAN. That I did. (*He works on the butcher paper, managing to fix the dog-eared corner so it stays up.*) Not everybody's as curious as I am. Let's see what we can do here. You know, you gotta faulty sign, people will figure you gotta faulty product. No sense starting out in the hole, is there? Looks like that'll do it.

WOMAN. Thank you.

MAN. You do this when you were little?

WOMAN. Yes. My sister and I. It was fun. We were pretty good at it.

MAN. Boy, takes me back. Benny Laruso and me. Over on the West side. Give us a red hot sun and ice cold lemonade and we were unbeatable. Our secret was mobility. Had our stand built right on top of my Red Ryder Wagon. We'd cover forty blocks on a hot afternoon. Long time ago.

WOMAN. Yeah, even when we didn't have a very good day it turned out okay. My dad would finally come over and buy what was left. We wanted to do it ourselves, but it was good to know that he was there, if need be.

MAN. Well, is it any good? The lemonade.

WOMAN. Oh, yes. I think so.

MAN. It's the stuff to have when it's thirsty out. That's for sure.

Helpin' your kids out, I bet?

WOMAN. No.

MAN (*overlapping*). Not much happening, they get bored.

WOMAN. It's just me.

MAN. Ah. By yourself? (*She nods.*) This your regular corner?

WOMAN. I don't have a regular corner.

MAN. Some'd say you need a regular corner to build up clientele – customers. Not necessary. Benny and me, we did just fine. You gotta know what you're doin', though. It helps if you got a strategy, a plan. When things were slow, Benny... I mean he was strong, but he also was a little bit goofy. I came up with this thing where we'd stop at a busy corner and I'd set up and then Benny'd start from about a block away crawling along the sidewalk saying in this croaking voice, "Lemonade, lemonade. I need lemonade." By the time he got to me and my Red Ryder, there was this line of smiling and thirsty people. 'Course you gotta have hot. You can't sell lemonade in the rain. You move around then?

WOMAN. Huh?

MAN. To different locations. You move around?

WOMAN. I did this today. Just today.

MAN. Ah. Trying to get movie money, huh?

WOMAN. Yeah. Movie money.

MAN. A little slow right now.

WOMAN. A bit.

MAN. You know... you mind if I make a suggestion? (*WOMAN shakes her head.*) You might think about trying a couple blocks over that way. Little nicer area. More foot traffic. Not that anything's wrong with here. You just haveta go where the business is.

WOMAN. I hadn't thought about that. I like it here. It's what I know. I don't know over there.

MAN. Well, it's just an idea. No big thing. Sometimes I butt in where I don't belong. Just tell me to get lost if I get on your nerves.

WOMAN. No, it's all right. I don't mind.

MAN. Good. You know, some color on your sign here could make a difference. Black does not sell. Believe me. Red sells. Red is hot. It gets people thinking hot, and before long they're thinking thirsty.

WOMAN. I just used what I could find. Red would be nice. I didn't have red.

MAN. Well, it'd make a difference.

WOMAN. I'm sure it would. Actually, I'm just about done for the day. It's been pretty busy. (*Looks in pitcher.*) Didn't know how much I'd need. I thought I'd have enough for the whole afternoon, but I've only got about one glass left.

MAN (*greatly amused*). That's good. That's very good. You know more than I thought. (*Fishes for change.*) Well, why don't I just take the last glass of lemonade. Then you'll have it licked.

WOMAN. If you want.

MAN (*chuckles*). If I want. It'd be kinda fun. It's been awhile since I had any. We'll see what kind of product you got. That's what counts, you know, the product – and having somebody with a need. (*Poised with handful of change.*) How much?

WOMAN. Seven thousand.

MAN. Pardon?

WOMAN. Seven thousand dollars.

MAN (*has a good laugh; WOMAN joins in*). No, really... (*Succumbs to laughter again.*) I like you. Oh... that's good. (*Regaining control.*) In business, you get the customer laughing, you get the business. But you know that, don't you. I have a feeling you could teach me a thing or two.

WOMAN. Oh, I don't think so.

MAN. No, you're good. I like it. So, what's it go for these days?

WOMAN. This goes for seven thousand dollars.

MAN. Sold a lot of seven-thousand-dollar-lemonade today?

WOMAN. No.

MAN. The first is always the hardest. Do you take checks?