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Chompy

I'm feeling especially bubbly. I'm always exceptionally sweet, but I just feel extra good. I have people go out of their way to be around my exuberant spirit. They make time in their busy schedules. I know this because, typically, within 10 minutes of conversation, they have to leave. I guess I just add to their day.

As I walk to my job at the fabric store, a child runs up to me and yanks on my dress to get my attention. "Ma'am, ma'am! Would you please help me? My puppy's collar got stuck on a bush over there. I can't get it off. I'll pay you all my pennies."

Ew, I jump back and wipe off the mud from his hands. I can't stand sticky children. His hair is oily and his clothes are covered in muck. I'm sure he hasn't taken a shower within the past few days. Disgusting. I'm sure the dog isn't any better. "I'm afraid I can't. My job starts in 5 minutes at the fabric store down the corner. Run along and find someone else." My time cannot be wasted with this.

He cocks an eyebrow and replies with a strong country accent, "Ma'am, well now, I beg yer pardon, but my aunt works the night shift at that fabric store. She told me that the earliest it opens is 9. It's 8:20, and I don't think it'll take 40 minutes."

How dare he accuse me of lying? I mean, I did, but that is my business. Ugh, what a selfish child, but because of my heart of gold, I reply, "Oh, fine. Where is this dog of yours?"

He eagerly leads me to the edge of the shopping center. He reaches out his hand, but I refused to let him touch me with those grimy little hands once more. A boy like him doesn't deserve to even be graced with the presence of a lady of my stature. Again, however, I am a gracious person.

He comes to a stop and looks at his puppy. I sit on the pavement to get closer. Tears fill up in his eyes and his face reddens. Thank goodness that I'm a master in dealing with human emotions. "Oh, it'll be all right. While I untie him, why don't you tell me a little bit about your puppy. That will cheer you up, right?"

He wipes his nose and his eyes. He blinks his eyes wide and his bottom lip puckers out. "Ok, well, his name is Chompy 'cause he likes to chomp on all the furniture. Mama don't like that too much." He slightly giggles. How can he giggle at that? This mutt is probably going to throw up couch stuffing on my satin dress. I'll kill the dog if he does, and the boy. He continued on, "I've had 'em since I was little. Mama said she found 'em on the side of the road all bloodied up. She thinks he was hit by a car, but all his cuts are all nice and healed on up. Mama calls 'em a fine-looking gentleman now."

"Oh, how nice." I'm trying to only use my fingertips so as not to touch the raggedy 'gentleman'. Dirt gets under my freshly painted nails. You've got to be kidding me. I try to hide my agitation from the boy because I don't want to deal with more tears, "See, you're much calmer now, aren't you?"

He replies with a soft, "Yes ma'am. Thank you for helping me. Yer real nice."

"Well, you're a nice boy, and I understand you're worried about your dog. One time I lost my bunny rabbit. An old man helped me find her." He smiles at me.

My small fingers make it easier to untie the huge tangle. And boom. I got it. The dog bursts into the boy's arms knocking him onto his bum.

"Is everything all right out here?" A gentleman about my age asks.

"Oh, why yes, how kind of you to ask." I smile.

He looks at the boy and then at me. "Well, I'm glad. Now, I'm going to have to ask y'all to leave. If I have a dirty storefront, well, that's bad for business."

My jaw drops, and just as I'm about to let him have it, he gives a salesman smile and says, "Thanks for understanding." He slams the door in our faces.

I make my way off the ground and brush the dirt off. I look at the boy to see if he was fazed, but his eyes have all the stars within his iris. "Oh, thank you ma'am. Here, it's 5 pennies. It's all I got, and my name is Timmy. You can gimme a ring on the telephone anytime. I can cut yer grass or wash yer clothes or whatever you want. I'm a real hard-worker, and I wanna thank you for yer help."

Being the person I am, I kindly give the pennies back. I reply, "Take the pennies and save up to buy him a new collar. That one is..." I pause as I don't want my words to reflect the rude man's, "a little old. My name is Julia by the way, in case you ever need something." I can't believe that the man's words didn't bother him.

His cheeks turn rosy, "Aw, thanks ma'am. I 'preciate you a lot."

"All right, now run along. I really do have work in 5 now. Have a lovely day" He goes off with his dog walking faithfully behind.

I walk in the store and put on my uniform. "Hey Julia," Tina greets me.

"Hello, Tina. You'll never believe what happened. I was outside the store, and this little boy was in a dire situation. His puppy was about to be strangled by his collar. I was running late for work too and only had 5 minutes to spare, but I couldn't just let the boy panic out there. So, I helped him. He started crying; I cheered him up; we got him untied. It was a rollercoaster."

She responds intrigued, "Well, it's a good thing you were there."

I reply, "Oh, yes. Some people are so judgmental too. This jerk told us to leave because the boy's dirtiness would be bad for his business. Children are sensitive when they are young. I would never tell a child that they looked terrible. That ribbon in your hair is not your color by the way. Please, do us all a favor and take it out. We work in a fabric store, so let's try to set a good example. Anyway, I'm just glad I was there to help."

She has a lopsided grin and blows out some air, "Yes, nobody likes someone who is overtly judgmental."

I roll my eyes, "I know right. I guess I'm just more compassionate and understanding than most people. I just genuinely want to help others, and I don't expect anything in return. The boy offered me all his pennies, but I don't understand how anyone could have the heart to take it."

Tina says, "Well, we all know exactly how you are."

"I guess I just radiate helpfulness and kindness."

She mumbles, "Something like that."

"Excuse me."

"Oh, I have a customer! Bye." She hurries away, but I don't see any customers.

