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The Huckleberry Pickers

Mary Graham Bonner

One hot afternoon, some children knocked at a neighbour's gate—ragged, flushed, and tired, carrying pails of huckleberries. They had been picking since morning and were going door to door trying to sell them.

The children who answered were in the middle of a small party, and their mother was out for the afternoon. They didn't have any money. But they had lemonade and sponge cake, and a cool brook at the back of the garden.

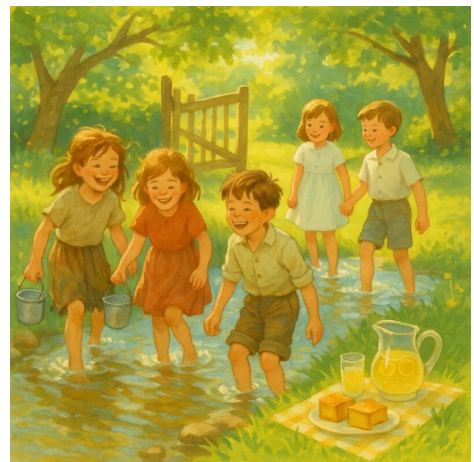
"We can't buy the berries," they said honestly, "but stay and play with us—and when Mother comes home, she'll buy them all, we're sure of it."

The berry pickers could not resist.

They sat in the garden and drank lemonade and ate cake, and oh, after a long hot morning in the fields it tasted wonderful. Then they all went wading in the brook, and the cool water was even better than the cake.

When the mother came home she found her own children and a set of new friends, all wading, all laughing.

Of course she bought every single huckleberry.



But better than the money—and the children felt this keenly—was what the mother said next: if they came this way often, she'd like to keep buying from them. Her family loved huckleberries. And there would be lemonade parties.

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