



The Lemonade War

by Jacqueline Davies

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About the Book

The Lemonade War tells the story of an exciting summer spent by a loving but competitive pair of siblings, Evan and Jessie Treski. At the end of the summer, Jessie, the younger and more academically inclined of the two, is delighted to learn that because she is skipping third grade, she will be in Evan's fourth-grade class when school starts in a few days. To say the least, Evan is less than thrilled. The children's personal conflict becomes a professional one as well, as they set out to outsell each other at their respective lemonade stands. The arc of the narrative follows the arc of Evan and Jessie's business endeavor, from inception to actualization to dissolution, with all the ups and downs along the way. Davies manages to follow this course without becoming dry or dull—in part because the ups and downs of the Treskis' business endeavor are tied to the ups and

downs of their relationship. The characters are lively, realistic, and well defined, and their conflict is handled with sensitivity and without influencing the reader to take sides. We find ourselves rooting for both of these creative and hard-working children all the way through to the book's satisfying conclusion.

Special Features

- The title of each chapter in *The Lemonade War* is a business term or concept, with its definition just below (for example, "Chapter 1: Slump slump (slump) n. a drop in the activity of a business or the economy").
- Economic concepts are defined throughout the book as Jessie investigates, researches, and develops her own ideas.
- Each chapter contains examples of Evan's and Jessie's attempts to calculate sales, profit, expenses, etc. Readers may choose to study the math problems in depth, working them out on their own, or may choose to read on.
- In addition to the math problems and definitions, the book contains some wonderful charts, diagrams, and newspaper clippings, and even a realistic sales receipt. This lovely touch engages the reader and fleshes out the Treskis' story.

Guiding Discussion Questions

Any of the following questions might be presented as an essay topic as well.

- Have you ever felt competitive with someone you are close to, like a sibling or a good friend? How was this embodied? What did you do? How was it resolved?
- Evan is so angry with his sister he can barely stand it! Has Jessie consciously done anything to harm her brother? Explain the root of Evan's anger.
- Jacqueline Davies chose to create Evan and Jessie as characters that don't fit the stereotype of boys and girls, in terms of both their academic strengths and challenges and their social strengths and challenges. Do you think that these stereotypes (girls as intuitive but not good at math, boys as good at math but not so good at reading people's feelings) get in the way at your school?
- Even though Jessie and Evan are having a hard time with each other, they don't want their mom to know. Can you explain why they are so careful not to show her they are quarreling? Have you ever felt like this?
- Evan is pretty sure that Scott Spencer stole the lemonade money he "borrowed" from Jessie. Why doesn't Evan confront Scott? Why doesn't he ask for his money back?
- How do Evan and Jessie finally resolve the conflict—both their lemonade war and their personal war?
- Both children have to admit that they've done mean things to each other before they can move on. Have you ever done something out of anger that you wish you hadn't? How did this play out?

Activities

- If your class studies *The Lemonade War* at the end of the school year, set up a lemonade study in the classroom. Learning from Evan's and Jessie's successes and mistakes, help your students design and implement their own lemonade stand(s). You may choose to divide the class into groups and have each group plan their own stand, designing posters, advertisements, and other business schemes, as Evan and Jessie did. You may choose to have the entire class work together on a plan. Children might sell lemonade during recess, or even set up in the cafeteria during lunch time. Decide together as a class how the money earned will be spent. Taking a leaf from Jessie Treski's book, children may want to donate money to a charity of their choice or to school projects. They may choose to devote a certain percentage of their profits to a culminating celebration in school—a pizza party or lemonade party, for example!
- Using the model described above, encourage children to

design and implement a store of some kind that relates directly to your school's curriculum. For example, schools doing a neighborhood study may choose to study a local grocery store and then set up a store of their own in the classroom for a day.

- Make copies of the math problems in the book for your students. As you read the book aloud, highlight the math problems as a part of your students' experience of the book. Can they think of other ways to figure out the problems? Are their methods more or less efficient than Evan's and Jessie's methods?
- Personal conflicts like Evan and Jessie's are often at the core of good works of fiction. As part of a unit of study on realistic fiction or as a separate project, have your students design and write a story with a personal conflict at its root. You may want to have your students write sketches of their main characters and an outline of the plot (including conflict and its resolutions) as part of their writing process.
- Evan and Jessie win their local Rotary Club's annual Labor Day contest by creating a display that details their entrepreneurial endeavor with lemonade. Labor Day celebrates the many achievements, both social and economic, of the American worker. If your class is studying *The Lemonade War* close to the beginning of the school year, challenge your students to research and present a project related to the holiday. They may profile a particular business in your town; they may research the history of Labor Day itself; they may interview people in their families about their work histories. Challenge them to find their own unique ways to connect to the holiday.

This guide was created by Zoe Ryder White, Educational Consultant.