

Marla saw the sign as she was heading down Main Street. The sign was tacked onto a telephone pole. In big, bold letters the sign said SMITH AND BROTHERS CIRCUS COMING TO TOWN. "Why," thought Marla, "it looks like the circus will be here on Saturday!" Marla ran home to tell her mother about the circus. She had never been to a circus but had read lots of stories about all of the animals and clowns.

"Mom, guess what," Marla said as soon as she got home. "The circus is coming to town!" "When is it?" Mother asked. "It's on Saturday," Marla replied. Mother sighed deeply. "Now, Marla," she said, "you know that your father does not get paid until next week. We just won't have the money to send you to the circus this week." Marla turned away with her head hung low. What her mother had said was true. Money was tight, and it would be hard to pay for a circus ticket this week.

Marla sat on her bed and stared at the ceiling. How could she get the money for a circus ticket? Suddenly Marla had an idea. Why couldn't she wash cars to make some money? Marla washed her dad's car every weekend and knew that she would do a good job. Marla also knew that washing cars was not a favorite job for everyone.

The next morning, Marla carried a hose and a bucket of soapy water and some rags out onto the driveway. She put up a sign that said, CAR WASH -- \$1.00. It was not long before Marla's first customer rolled into the driveway. Marla scrubbed and sprayed until the car shone. The customer gave Marla a dollar and a big "Thank you" for the wonderful job Marla had done. Soon other cars pulled in and

Marla washed and scrubbed quickly. Each customer left with a smile and a shiny car.

At the end of the day, Marla sat down in the grass, too tired to move. She was wet from head to toe and her nose was sunburned. It was all worth it, though, because Marla had earned \$10.00. That was more than enough money to buy a ticket to the circus.

When Saturday came, Marla was the first in line to get her ticket. She sat in the third row, right in front of the ringmaster. The show began and Marla laughed at the clowns' funny skits. She gasped at the men on the flying trapeze and clapped her hands for all of the animals. Marla felt very happy inside. Her hard work had paid off, and she finally was able to see a real, live circus!

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