

TAKE A SHINE TO • GET THE LEAD OUT OF YOUR FEET • HOLD YOUR HORSES
By Carole L. Cooney

This American saying dates back to the 1880s and probably came from the earlier expression “to shine up to someone.” That meant to behave nicely so someone will like you. Then they “take a shine” to you because of your appearance or personality.

The second expression, used frequently during World War II, means that if you were moving or working slowly, it was as if you had lead in your feet. If you got the lead out, you could speed up your actions.

The third expression is a 19th century Americanism instructing a carriage driver to slow down because his team of horses was too fast. Today the phrase refers to slowing down and being patient in whatever you’re doing.

Setting: A Day at the San Diego Zoo

Characters:

Narrator

Sherrie

Denise

Bret

Dominic

Ticket Seller

Narrator: Two couples arrived at the San Diego Zoo one morning early enough to be the first in line to purchase their entrance tickets.

Sherrie: I haven’t been to the Zoo in ages. I’m excited to see the new exhibits, aren’t you?

Denise: Well, yes, but I don’t want to get too close to the monkey cage. Not after what happened last time.

Bret: What was that?

Dominic: A monkey took a shine to Denise and jumped all over the place making a *lot of noise*.

Denise: He did *not* take a shine to me! He was just excited to see *YOU!*

All: (Laugh)

Sherrie: Here comes the attendant. Let’s get the lead out of *his* feet and get our tickets. Sir! We’re here to buy our tickets.

Narrator: The ticket seller with a large blue cast on his leg, limped toward the counter.

Ticket Seller: Okay. Hold your horses! You’re so early nothing is quite ready yet.

Bret: Okay, sir. Sorry about your leg.

Dominic: Did the lions take a nip at your leg?

Denise: Dominic! Please, I’m sure there’s a good reason he has a cast on. What happened?

Ticket Seller: Do you want my story or do you want me to open the ticket counter?

Sherrie: Let’s let the man open up. We can go get something to eat at that stand over there.

All: Okay. Good idea.

Narrator: The Ticket Seller finishes his preparations and opens the window. Suddenly a crowd of teenagers make a mad dash to buy tickets. The two couples turn around from the food stand and stare disbelievingly at the mob.

Denise: I don't believe it. Where did *they* come from?

Dominic: Someone opened the monkey cage! I knew coming early was too good to be true.

Sherrie: Well, let's make the best of it. Do you want to get in line?

Bret: Sherrie, why don't *we* buy the tickets for the four of us.

Dominic: That's the best idea yet. Okay. Denise? Let's take the lead out of *our* feet and take a quick jog around the parking lot? Ready?

Denise: *Hold your horses!* I've got to tie my shoe lace.

Bret: We'll time you and see who is in better shape. Get set, go!

Narrator: While Dominic and Denise race around the parking lot, Bret and Sherrie join the ticket line. The Ticket Seller sees them approaching. He has taken a shine to the young couple so when it's time to sell them their tickets, he does so with a great big smile and a kind word. Meanwhile Dominic and Denise return panting and laughing.

Denise: Who won?

Bret: Won what? Oh! *Sorry* but we were busy talking with the Ticket Seller. He's got a great story about how he injured his leg.

Sherrie: Come on... Let's get the lead out or we'll be here all day.

Narrator: The two couples begin their journey through the zoo paying *more attention* to Bret and Sherrie's telling the story of the Ticket Seller's leg.