

The Sad Smile

By Gloria Patts

Smiles are everywhere. Anytime you have a joyful moment, they peek out, taking rule of your own Throne of Lips. Whether just a smirk, or a full grin from ear to ear. Now there once was a time, not too long ago, when everyone's Smile was hidden. Oh, those poor unfortunate Smiles! They could only show themselves through the twinkle of eyes. And the people too! They couldn't help but weep at the fact that their Smiles were hidden. I shall tell one special Smile's story, a child's Smile, of age eleven.

Once upon a time, there was a Smile. He was very radiant, as he was an especially happy and content one. He just couldn't wait for his kid to go anywhere where Smiles were shown and throned! He adored going to play at the wondrous playground, or to his best friend's house, (Because a Smile's best friend is always their person's best friend) and even school because they were all places he could show off his handsome self.

That, perhaps, was his only flaw, he was quite a vain little Smile, always admiring himself. Once his ugly enemy the Frown, (For in every mouth there is a Frown, Laughs, Taste Buddies, Sneezes in the back, and your very own Smile) snorted to him, "One day things will be different, for I will rule the mouth, and hide you away, because you are too self-absorbed to rule properly." And, sadly, that was the truth. Frowns are known to be brutally honest. Once Smile spent all day worrying over a blemish, not realizing that he let tons of Sneezes out! (Whomever is sitting on the Throne of Lips is in charge of letting out Sneezes and Laughs, in moderation of course.) The day after that incident they didn't get to go to school!

However, Smile only brushed Frown's remark off, with the Taste Buddies reassuring him and the Laughs laughing, but the Sneezes agreed with Frown, they had seen the foolishness of Smile first hand in certain matters. But let it be known, Smile was in most ways the best ruler. Now one particular day when the sun was shining and birds were singing their perfectly beautiful song in early spring, Smile got excited, knowing it was a school day, and who wouldn't be excited about that glorious morning? He said to one of the Taste Buddies, "A new day for me to do what I do best, and show the whole world how perfectly handsome I am!"

This time, however, something was different. He could feel it. The world, despite the cheerful day, seemed almost gray. A change was coming, and he was afraid. Smiles are not very fond of change. As the child walked out of their little brick house towards the bus stop, thumping across the gravel road spotted with weeds and dandelions, something else was also thumping; Smile's heart. Smile knew something was wrong- he could feel it. Yet he remained hopeful that everything would be fine.

When they arrived, before the child hopped on the big yellow school bus, he stopped and put on a big, black, face mask, the kind used in a hospital. Smile was terrified! What was happening? Why was it suddenly pitch black? Who was dragging him into the Throat!? All the Taste Buddies were screaming, and the Laughs panicking, and no one interacts with Sneezes except Frowns, so he couldn't possibly ask them, although if he had asked on his way into the Throat, it would have been of no use, as it seemed they were completely petrified with fear.

He wished to ask his fellow Smiles, but not a Smile was to be seen through the dark mask, and even if he could see a friend, he wouldn't be able to ask quickly enough because he was slowly entering the Throat dungeon. Smile wondered if they were experiencing the same terror as him. Little did he know, Smiles across the world were also being hidden away, tossed like rag dolls into their own private Throat dungeons. Without the Smiles there to smile, the world became very depressed. Children were always crying, and adults were always stressed. It seemed that only the Frowns were content with this new world.

All day, as the child went about their usual business, going to school classes and such, Smile was kept this way, and Frown ruled triumphantly. Eventually he got used to it. He figured, "Maybe things will go back to normal tomorrow. Kids can be quite unpredictable sometimes." But the next day things didn't change, they were the same! Throughout everything the child did, Smile was hidden away! Poor Smile, he didn't get used for weeks! Then one fateful day, the child stopped going places altogether. The kid even did school online.

Smile was distraught. "Why am I being punished? Why is this happening?" he thought. Then he remembered what the ugly Frown had said. "He was right." whispered Smile in the weakest, saddest little voice, because that is all he could muster. And although a Frown is always honest, that is the first time Smile admitted it. Smile was going through such a tough time. "I never even knew I could be sad," he said one rainy day with the saddest sigh you've ever heard, sitting in the bottom of the damp and dark Throat Dungeon.

The days slowly went by, day by day, week by week, month by month. He rarely was used, and began to feel ever so useless, and that is not good for a Smile. They should be

practiced and used as much as possible. They do so hate it when the Frowns get over used. Everyday was the same. Occasionally, they did go out, but always Smile was covered and hidden, and could only be seen through gleaming eyes, and if he wasn't in the Throat.

Only in the child's dreams was he set completely free, and oh how terrible that must be! To think, Smile, the happiest creature in the Mouth, was only free in dreams. As for the rest of the time, he was locked away by Frown and masks in the cold, damp, dark Throat Dungeon. Oh, how terrible things had gotten! Smile started to think this was his new life. "Never to be seen again! The tragedy of it! If I could go back, I would be ever so much more careful, I finally realize how foolish I have been." A lonesome, sad little thing he was just then.

When all hope was lost, another change took place. But this one was a change that Smile gleefully rejoiced at. Things had begun to perk up again! First Smile was woken up and taken by a Laugh gleefully jumping out of the Throat and onto the Throne of Lips, then his kid took him to the park that glorious sunny day, and without the mask and Frown to lock him up and hide him away! "Oh, how magical this feels! I feel like myself already!" he whispered, looking into the glistening pond water, with a fresh breeze blowing against him on the Throne of Lips. Soon he went to other places without the mask again, and went back to school!

Then one day, he watched as his child helped their mother throw away all the masks, and took down Frown from the Throne of Lips, as everywhere across the world the Smiles were taken up again, and people ended the reign of their terrible Frowns. And as everyone started to smile again, the world got a whole lot brighter. "Never to be seen again, those

appalling things!” Smile said, talking about the masks of course, for no one can prevent Frown from coming and even taking over from time to time, but we should always limit how long he stays. And from that day on, Smile was as jubilant as before, but not nearly as vain, for he did have a marvelous little mouth, full of fun Laughs and Taste Buddies, amazing despite the not so pleasant Sneezes and terrible Frown.

The End