

THE PRODIGAL CLOWN

A Skit by Greg Beastron

Spotlight up:

INT. The center ring - NIGHT

The spotlight comes up on the RINGMASTER who gives the audience a WINK, SNAPS his WHIP and proceeds to relate his story:

RINGMASTER

Once upon a time, many, many years ago. Back before Ringling Brothers, Circus Vargas and even P.T. Barnum, himself -- back before there were three rings, instead there was only one -- back before the circus was even called "The Circus" -- the only thing that existed in the world of Big Top were --

(pause, possible DRUM ROLL)

CLOWNS!

Lights up:

CIRCUS MUSIC

A CAR drives to the middle of the ring and an ENTOURAGE OF CLOWNS pour out of the front seat in typical clown fashion. Each of them pursues their particular routines: ONE chases ANOTHER with a BUCKET ready to hurl the contents of the bucket on him. The one ducks out of the way and the BUCKET of CONFETTI flies out over the AUDIENCE. There is a SLAPSTICK FIGHT, a magic trick involving the NEVER-ENDING HANDKERCHIEF and assorted other novelties and perhaps a WHOOPEE CUSHION.

Clowns include SMILEY, BOZO, CLARABELL, CHUCKLES and KELLY.

(Note: Feel free to utilize whatever clown routines you wish to amuse the crowd with. - gb)

At the end of the routines, the Ringmaster returns to the microphone and continues with his story.

RiNGMASTER

You see, God knew that there wasn't enough laughter in the world. Therefore, He created clowns so people could see how much joy and humor was in His

awesome heart. And this particular family of clowns was His most favorite. There was Bozo!

(Bozo comes forward)

Chuckles!

(Chuckles next)

Smiley!

(Smiley forward)

Kelly!

(Kelly next)

And Clarabell!

(Clarabell is last)

Together, they made an inseparable team. Until one day, trouble appeared in the Big Top.

(Note: Again, please feel free to ad as many clowns as you wish. The more the merrier. - gb)

A BUSINESSMAN ENTERS carrying a WAD of MONEY. He notices Smiley as the clown passes him.

BUSINESSMAN

Hey! You! Clown!

SMILEY

Who, me?

BUSINESSMAN

Yeah. I said you. What do you say you and I go into business together. With my uncanny financial sense and your, your --

(notices Smiley's feet)

Big feet. Why Nike'd pay a fortune for us. Come on. What do you say?

SMILEY

Gee, Mr. Businessman. All I've ever known is how to be a clown. And with the big show coming up, I can't

SMILEY (cont'd)

desert my family. They're all I got.

BUSINESSMAN

Oh come on! Think of the moola you can make. Think of the parties, the good time! Think of all the beautiful people you'll meet! You must be getting sick of these clowns!

They look over toward the rest of the family members acting very KOOKY.

SMILEY

Well I would like to see what the world is really like. And Nike sure is a great company.

BUSINESSMAN

Come on, kid. Just do it!

SMILEY

All right! I will!

Smiley turns to his family and MIMES his good-byes.

RiNGMASTER

And with that, Smiley packed up his belongings, took his inheritance of squirting flowers and whoopee cushions and joined the businessman in a limited partnership. His family was very sad. They cried for days.

The clowns engage in the age-old routine of the SPONGE in the HANDKERCHIEF which they squeeze as the CRY into it.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)

Little did they know that Smiley was having the time of his life. He made lots of money. Lots and lots of money. Oodles and bundles and bushel baskets full of money!

Smiley and the Businessman are showered in fake CASH.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)

They made more money than they could shake a stick at. And Smiley, because he was so rich, would party with his new found friends from sun up to sun down. He met lots of celebrities.

The BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE ENTER and surround Smiley. Smiley waves at them and does the Hollywood "air kisses".

SMILEY

Brad! Jennifer! You're beautiful! Tom! Let's do lunch! Julia! Who is your hairdresser, girlfriend! Don't ever change! Steven! Jurassic Clown! It's your next blockbuster! Hey, I must be in heaven!

The businessman progressively removes Smiley's make-up and changes his clothing until Smiley looks almost exactly like the businessman.

RINGMASTER

Little by little, Smiley lost his joy, his vitality -- he lost everything about him that made him special. He became what every clown fears. He became just like everyone else.

The businessman and Smiley begin acting the SAME WAY. Answering the phone, ordering meals, driving the car, greeting friends and other similar actions.

RiNGMASTER (CONT'D)

Then, one day, a terrible thing happened.

The businessman appears wearing a HULA SHIRT and SUNGLASSES. He carries a SUITCASE.

SMILEY

Hey! Where are you going?

BUSINESSMAN

Sorry Smiley, baby! Gotta skip town! It was fun while it lasted!

The businessman EXITS in haste.

SMILEY

Now where do you suppose HE was going?

RINGMASTER

Where indeed! For the businessman took all the money he and Smiley made and flew off to Brazil, which has no extradition treaty with the world of Big Top. Smiley was very sad because he had lost everything.

SMILEY

I don't even have my squirting flower!

RINGMASTER

Smiley couldn't go back home because he believed his family would never want him back, seeing as how he had left them right before the big show and all. Therefore, Smiley had to find some way to make a living. Unfortunately, all he had ever done was be a clown. It was all he knew. So, he sucked up his pride, put back on his fake nose and wig.

Smiley puts back on his FAKE NOSE and WIG.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)

And he got a job doing the very thing all clowns shudder at the thought of. It was something so vile, so degrading -- even Smiley thought twice before he did it.

Smiley stands by himself, CENTER STAGE.

SMILEY

(to imaginary customer)

Welcome to Jack In The Box. May I take your order?

RINGMASTER

That's right. Smiley became a clown for Jack In The Box.

SMILEY

(to imaginary customer)

Let me see if I got this right. You want a Moby Jack, Jack Nachos smothered in Jack Cheese-By-Product, Large Jack Fries with Jack Cola with a triple Jack sweetener and a piping hot Apple Jack Pie? No? Two Jack Tacos with Jack Cheese? What? Change the Jack Fries to Jack Onion Loaf and four Jack Curly Fries with mystery Jack seasoning? Lose the Jack Cola and make it a triple thick Jack shake, but hold the triple Jack sweetener? No? NO? Change the whole thing?! Aaaaauugh!

RINGMASTER

It was horrible.

SMILEY

How do I get outta this chicken nugget outfit?!

(to imaginary customer)

What's that? McDonalds has a nicer clown? That does it! Even if I have to clean up after the elephants, I'd rather do that at home with my family than spend another minute in this burger nightmare!

RINGMASTER

And with that, Smiley picked up his belongings and his paycheck --

Smiley holds up a QUARTER and BITES IT.

SMILEY

Fake.

RINGMASTER

And headed for home -- a broken clown.

Smiley EXITS, his shoulders sagging as he walks off.

RiNGMASTER (cont'd)

Meanwhile, his clown family was having troubles of their own. They just couldn't work up enough spunk to keep the show going.

The other CLOWNS ENTER, trying to perform their routines, but they are unfunny and lackluster.

BOZO

Whooooo Nelly! This just isn't working!

CHUCKLES

You sure are right, Bozo! Ever since Smiley left, our world's fallen apart!

Clarabell HONKS her HORN in agreement.

KELLY

You know, I bet if we prayed really hard, God would send Smiley back to us!

BOZO

Gee Kelly, you think it'll work?

KELLY

I know it will! Come on!

The clowns all close their eyes and pray hard. Nothing happens. Clarabell honks her horn.

CHUCKLES

Clarabell says it isn't working.

KELLY

I don't understand. It always works for that preacher on TV.

BOZO

Wait a minute, I know! I bet if we get all the boys and girls in our audience to pray real hard with us, God will answer our prayer!

(to the audience)

Okay boys and girls? Would you all pray with us? Please?!

(after, hopefully, they agree, he bows his head)

Dear Lord, please bring Smiley back to us. We all miss him so much and we're not the same without him. Amen!

There is a DRUM ROLL as the clowns become startled and wondered what's going on. Suddenly:

Smiley BREAKS THROUGH A FACADE to the rear of the stage.

CIRCUS MUSIC

The clowns all shower Smiley with HUGS as everyone CLAPS.

SMILEY

Why are you all hugging me? Aren't you mad that I left?

BOZO

Mad? MAD?! Smiley! Why would we be mad at you?! You're part of our family!

SMILEY

But I left you right before the big show.

BOZO

Jesus loves you, Smiley! Nothing is more important to Him than you are! And we love you too!

The CIRCUS MUSIC continues as the clowns REAPPLY Smiley's MAKE-UP and put back on his CLOWN OUTFIT.

Smiley turns around and JUMPS in front of the audience. He's the old Smiley once again!

RINGMASTER

And so Smiley learned an important lesson:

SMILEY

I learned that money and popularity never last. The only thing that really lasts is the love of Jesus!

RINGMASTER

And with that, they lived hilariously ever after!

Lights out:

End

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