

# Class Clown

Laughing outside, crying inside. . .

by Robert Mauro



TIME: *A school day.*

SETTING: *School hallway. Students' lockers are on backdrop. School pennants and clock are above lockers.*

AT RISE: *CLOWN walks sadly and slowly across stage, his big shoes flopping. He stops and stares out over audience.*

CLOWN (*To audience*): Why does everyone call me the class clown? Is it my fault I look like this? Everyone tries to see if my big red nose is real, if this (*Points to hair*) is a wig. Am I wearing makeup? Well, I'm not. This is me. . . What's so funny? (*Paces*) People call me names. Class clown. (*Stops and stares at audience*) I'm no clown. I love Shakespeare! (*Dramatically*) I want to play Hamlet. I've auditioned for Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, even Richard the Third! But they never pick me. (*Shakes head, sighs*) I used to go to Clown College, but I failed pie throw-

## Characters

CLOWN, a new student

BILL

NED            students

JENNY

SUE

ing. So here I am, at this new school. Here I get stared at all the time. I just want to be treated as a person. (*Looks to wing; nervously*) Oh, boy. Here come some of my new classmates. (*Stands at attention*) Have to look sharp! (*He quickly adjusts his nose, fixes his hair, and pulls a long colorful handkerchief out of his pocket and blows his nose. Each time he blows his nose, he honks horn, which is in pocket.*) There. (*He stuffs handkerchief back into pocket, as BILL, NED, and JENNY enter.*)

BILL: Look. (*Stares at CLOWN*) It's the class clown.

JENNY: Bill, that's not very polite.

BILL: Well, Jenny, he looks like a clown, he walks like a clown, dresses like a clown. So he must be-

BILL and NED (*Together*): A clown!

JENNY: How would you like it if some-

one stared at you and called you a clown?

BILL (*Arrogantly*): No one would dare! Right, Ned?

NED: Right!

BILL (*To CLOWN*): So is that your real hair, or a fright wig? (*Laughs*)

CLOWN (*Hurt*): It's my real hair.

NED (*Trying to pull wig*): It looks like a wig to me.

JENNY (*Slapping NED's hand away*): Stop it, Ned! That's rude! You guys are terrible. (*Walks over to CLOWN*) Don't listen to them.

CLOWN: I try not to. (*JENNY takes his arm, walks to edge of stage*)

JENNY: It's not nice to call people names.

BILL (*To CLOWN's face*): Clown, clown, clown!

CLOWN (*To audience, as BILL, NED, and JENNY freeze*): I wanted to take out my seltzer bottle and spray Bill right in the kisser. But I controlled myself, counted to ten, and smiled. (*Counts to ten as JENNY, BILL, and NED unfreeze. CLOWN smiles at BILL.*)

BILL (*Surprised*): What's he doing?

JENNY: He's smiling at you.

BILL: Well, tell him to stop! I hate it when he does that. (*CLOWN continues to smile.*) I'm warning you, clown! Stop smiling at me! (*CLOWN stares at NED.*)

NED: Great. Now he's staring at me!

JENNY: How does it feel?

BILL (*To NED*): Come on, Ned, let's get out of here. I have football practice.

NED: And I have baseball practice.

BILL: Don't you have cheerleader practice, Jenny?

JENNY: Not yet.

BILL: So what are you going to do? Come with us, or hang out with this clown?

JENNY (*Folding her arms*): I'm staying here. And you can forget about going to the prom with me.

BILL: What? But you said you wanted to go with me.

JENNY: That was before I saw how mean you could be to a new student.

BILL: New student? (*Points to CLOWN*) You mean that clown?

JENNY (*Putting her hand on CLOWN's shoulder*): I mean this person. Stop calling him a clown!

CLOWN (*Meekly, to JENNY*): But I am a clown.

JENNY (*To CLOWN*): Not the type of clown they're referring to.

BILL: Jen, the prom isn't really off, is it?

JENNY (*Firmly*): Yes, it is.

BILL (*Throwing hands up, as he starts off*): O.K., fine. Your loss. Come on, Ned. They're waiting for us out on the field.

NED: Right. (*NED and BILL exit.*)

CLOWN (*To JENNY*): Thank you for standing up for me. Not many people do that.

JENNY: You're welcome. But those two

guys just got to me. (*After a pause*) So what are you taking this semester?

CLOWN: I wanted to take pie throwing and juggling (*Takes out three balls and juggles*), but they don't offer those subjects here. So I'm taking trigonometry, creative writing, history, geography, French, and music.

JENNY: Do you play an instrument?

CLOWN: Yes. (*Puts balls away and takes out horn*) The horn. (*Honks it*)

JENNY: I play the trumpet in the school band.

CLOWN: I used to march in the circus parade. But they fired me.

JENNY: Why?

CLOWN: They found out I was a real clown.

JENNY: Stop calling yourself a clown. You're a human being—a nice guy. You can even juggle!

CLOWN (*Taking out balls and juggling*): Juggling these balls is easy. But there are things in life that are much harder to juggle. Things that could break your heart.

JENNY: Has someone broken your heart?

CLOWN: Everyone has! They all laugh at me. This is me. (*Points to himself*) This is what I am. Some people are tall; some people are short. Me? I'm a clown. And that's no laughing matter!

JENNY: But I thought it was a clown's job to make people laugh.

CLOWN: That's what everyone says. Be funny! Make 'em laugh! But I want to make 'em cry! I want to play Hamlet! (*JENNY laughs.*) See? You're laughing!

JENNY: I'm sorry. It's just that you don't look like the Hamlet type.

CLOWN: What type do I look like? A clown, right?

JENNY: Well. . .yes. But that's great!

CLOWN: Easy for you to say. No one laughs at you.

JENNY: But don't you see? The world needs more laughter. And you can give it to them.

CLOWN: But. . .how?

JENNY: How? You mean you don't know how to make people laugh?

CLOWN: Do you remember I told you they threw me out of Clown College? (*JENNY nods.*) Well, besides failing pie throwing, I failed Elementary Laughter 101. (*Honks his horn*) But I did get an A in horn honking.

JENNY (*Laughing*): You're kidding!

CLOWN (*Defensively*): I don't see what's so funny about that.

JENNY (*Trying hard not to laugh*): I'm sorry. But here we are. You're just a clown without a circus. So you'll have to make the best of it in this school. And in life.

CLOWN: How?

JENNY: Juggle! Tell a few jokes. Be a clown! Make 'em laugh!

CLOWN: I do know one joke.

JENNY: Great. Let's hear it.

CLOWN (*Excitedly*): O.K.! What do you get if you put a car and a song together?

JENNY (*After thinking for a moment*): I

don't know. What do you get if you put a car and a song together?

CLOWN: A cartoon! (*JENNY looks puzzled.*) Get it? Car. Tune. Cartoon!

JENNY: Ohhhh! (*With a slight laugh*) Yeah. Yeah. Right.

CLOWN: Not that funny, is it?

JENNY: It's a start.

CLOWN (*Disappointed*): I told you I was better at tragedy than at comedy. Yes, I prefer Shakespeare. (*SUE enters, stares at CLOWN.*)

SUE: This must be the clown everyone is laughing about. (*CLOWN frowns, shakes his head.*)

JENNY: Sue, you've hurt his feelings.

SUE: Well, he's just a clown.

JENNY: But he has a heart. And you've broken it.

SUE: Oh, I'll bet. (*CLOWN takes broken heart from his pocket and holds it up.*)

JENNY: See? (*CLOWN sadly puts broken heart back in pocket.*)

SUE: Sorry. O.K.? (*To JENNY*) Look, Jen, Bill told me you dumped him. Does this mean you're not going to the prom with him?

JENNY: That's right.

SUE (*Ecstatic*): Great! (*Controlling herself*) I mean—too bad. (*After a pause*) So you wouldn't mind if I go with him?

JENNY: No.

SUE: Terrific! But who are you going with?

JENNY (*Smiling at CLOWN*): Well—

SUE: Oh, no! Not that clown! You'll be the joke of the whole school!

JENNY: Fantastic! This school could use a good laugh. (*To CLOWN*) Will you go with me?

CLOWN: I can't dance.

JENNY: I'll teach you.

SUE: This is ridiculous! He can't even dance! I'm out of here. (*SUE exits.*)

CLOWN (*To JENNY*): Will you really teach me to dance?

JENNY: Yes, on one condition.

CLOWN: That I take off this so-called fright wig, these baggy pants, these big shoes, and my big red nose—and put on a tuxedo. Right?

JENNY: Wrong.

CLOWN: Then what do I have to do?

JENNY: Teach me to juggle! (*Suddenly CLOWN begins to laugh.*) You're laughing!

CLOWN: Yes, I am. (*Big smile as he laughs*) I'm laughing. You made me laugh. I'm laughing!

JENNY: Yes, you are! (*They both laugh.*) Now, let's dance! (*JENNY and CLOWN dance to song, "Be a Clown," if possible.*)

CLOWN (*To audience*): After a while I began to learn how to dance and play in the school band—and no one made fun of me any more. Once everyone got to know the real me, we all had a few good laughs! Together! (*CLOWN and JENNY continue dance as curtain falls.*)

THE END

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Class Clown

CHARACTERS: 3 male; 2 female.

PLAYING TIME: 10 minutes.

COSTUMES: All but Clown wear casual school clothes. Bill and Sue may wear sunglasses. Clown wears orange wig, big floppy shoes, baggy pants with big pockets, and has a big red nose and a painted clown face.

PROPERTIES: Horn; long, colorful handkerchief; three balls to juggle; cut-out of a red heart that has a crack in it.

SETTING: School hallway. Lockers are on backdrop; school pennants and clock are above lockers.

SOUND: Recording of "Be a Clown," if possible.