

SMILE

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Version (1.3)
21.04.2020

INT. COLIN'S HOUSE - MORNING

We watch COLIN go through his morning routine in various snapshots - he is on auto-pilot. Slurping the milk from his cornflakes, watching the news, making his lunch - noticeably dissatisfied with each.

CUT TO:

His partner, NADINE, leans their newborn baby in towards him, and COLIN kisses her goodbye.

COLIN leaves the house soon after.

EXT. COLIN'S STREET - BUS STOP - SOON AFTER

COLIN walks up a small hill to the bus stop - he sits down, and naturally slumps his shoulders.

COLIN notices a MAN sitting at bus stop opposite, who in turn spots COLIN. He smiles - COLIN finds this odd, and awkwardly looks away.

The bus arrives, and COLIN stands up - thankful to have an escape.

INT. COLIN'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

We again watch COLIN go through his morning routine in various snapshots - slightly different from the morning before. He is once again noticeably dissatisfied with each.

He kisses the baby goodbye - but with slightly less enthusiasm than the morning before.

EXT. COLIN'S STREET - BUS STOP - SOON AFTER

COLIN trudges up the hill, and plonks himself down at the bus stop. He looks up, and once again sees the SMILING MAN opposite. This time the SMILING MAN offers a wave - we glimpse a HOSPITAL I.D. BRACELET.

COLIN rolls his eyes, and looks away. No sign of his bus - he checks his watch. An awkward moment passes between COLIN and the SMILING MAN. A bus arrives opposite and the SMILING MAN gets on. COLIN watches with a slight hint of disdain.

INT. COLIN'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

We once again watch COLIN go through his morning routine in various snapshots - this time the cornflakes run out, and the news annoys him slightly more than it has done before.

He fails to kiss the baby goodbye this time.

EXT. COLIN'S STREET - BUS STOP - SOON AFTER

COLIN sits at the bus stop staring at the SMILING MAN opposite. He looks away several times, hoping to stop the SMILING MAN from looking at him.

SMILING MAN
Why do you never smile?

COLIN
...What?

SMILING MAN
I never see you smile.

COLIN
Give me a good reason to.

SMILING MAN
You shouldn't need one. It's free
to do. Look-

The SMILING MAN smiles at him again.

COLIN's bus arrives, and he has no choice but to leave the conversation there.

INT. COLIN'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

We see COLIN's morning routine in various snapshots. He opens a new pack of cornflakes, and the news is slightly less annoying than the previous morning.

CUT TO:

NADINE brings their baby into the hallway, just as COLIN is closing the front door.

EXT. COLIN'S STREET - BUS STOP - SOON AFTER

COLIN is sat at the bus stop.

SMILING MAN
I'm determined to make you smile.

COLIN
...Sure. Be my guest.

SMILING MAN
Knock, knock.

COLIN is reluctant.

COLIN
Who's there?

SMILING MAN
Cows go.

COLIN
Cows go, who?

SMILING MAN
No. Cows go *moo*.

Silence. The SMILING MAN waits. But not even a flicker of a smile from COLIN. A bus arrives, and the SMILING MAN gets on. COLIN watches as the SMILING MAN disappears from view.

INT. COLIN'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

COLIN is working his way through his morning routine when NADINE walks in.

NADINE
(concerned)
Is everything okay?

COLIN
Sure, why wouldn't it be?

NADINE leaves it there and turns to go.

COLIN (CONT'D)
...Knock, knock.

She turns and looks at him - somewhat confused.

COLIN raises his eyes and gestures for her to say the next line - she smiles. A game.

NADINE
Who's there?

COLIN
Cows go.

NADINE
Cows go, who?

COLIN
(deadpan)
...No, cows go *moo*.

COLIN says the punch line very matter-of-fact, with no hint of joke. But NADINE laughs out loud - taking COLIN by surprise.

NADINE

That's *so* bad! Where did you hear that?

Still COLIN doesn't smile.

EXT. COLIN'S HOUSE - BUS STOP - SOON AFTER

COLIN sits opposite the SMILING MAN.

SMILING MAN

I *will* dance! If that's what it takes.

COLIN folds his arms.

COLIN

Don't be so childish.

SMILING MAN

Okay, but you did this...

The SMILING MAN then stands up, and proceeds to perform the most ludicrous dance in an attempt to make COLIN smile.

But still nothing. The SMILING MAN stops dancing.

SMILING PERSON

Whoa... Damn. I'm gonna need to bring my a-game for you!

COLIN's bus arrives - he stands up, throws his hands up in the air slightly as a 'told you so' gesture.

-- We see a brief montage of several different mornings at the bus stop, with several different attempts by the SMILING MAN to crack a smile from COLIN. But no, still no smile --

COLIN

Why are you doing this?

SMILING MAN

Because why not?

COLIN

But you don't have the right to dictate if someone should smile or not?

The SMILING MAN's smile drops slightly.

SMILING PERSON

I just think... Smile whilst we
can, ya' know?

A bus arrives.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLIN'S STREET - BUS STOP - MORNING

COLIN turns up, and immediately looks for the SMILING MAN, but he isn't there, which is odd. COLIN seems genuinely confused, as this has disrupted his routine. He checks his watch, but the time is correct.

COLIN's bus arrives moments later, and still no sign of the SMILING MAN.

EXT. COLIN'S STREET - BUS STOP - ANOTHER MORNING

We see COLIN walking up the hill towards the bus stop - more eagerly than we've seen him do so before.

But still no SMILING MAN. COLIN looks genuinely disappointed, and then he starts to worry.

INT. COLIN'S HOUSE - MORNING

We see COLIN readying himself to leave - he slips on his shoes, he opens the front door but stops. He stops and thinks for a second.

He turns and walks back down the corridor towards the kitchen - he kisses his baby and NADINE goodbye - somewhat surprised, this makes her smile as he leaves.

But still COLIN doesn't smile.

EXT. COLIN'S STREET - BUS STOP - SOON AFTER

COLIN is staring down at the ground, waiting for the bus.

SMILING MAN (O.S.)

...I've got a new joke.

COLIN looks up, and whilst relieved, he slowly begins to smile.

THE END.