

Teacher's Remarkable Secret

There was something different about their teacher. Exactly what it was they couldn't quite figure out. She made their textbooks come alive with learning centers, games, and interesting projects. Her classroom was often ringing with the voices of puppets telling stories and teaching. Or the room was echoing with very young voices of people from the past - reliving history. Also to be heard, were the cries of young scientists discovering, the sighs of budding artists and musicians creating, and the cheers of athletes during exercise-learning games. Poured over all the delicious flavors of those sundaes of learning, there was laughter, gallons of laughter.

Though the children in this teacher's class had fun learning, they also knew what the limits were. If they dared cross over those limits, they knew where the rest-and-think chair was. It was off in some corner of the room, where the fun was *not* taking place.

And something else - their teacher talked a lot about Someone none of them could see, and sometimes she even talked *with* Him. When they had problems or squabbles, she would suggest they talk with Him, asking for His help or forgiveness. Then she would encourage them to ask for and give each other forgiveness. She also told stories about Him and sang songs about Him.

However, it was none of these things, that made her different from their other teachers. Some of the others had also tried to make learning fun, and some also knew the Someone that no one could see. No, there was something else that they could not quite put their finger on.

One day, when they were watching a sad story video in class, tears ran down their teacher's cheeks, and where the tears had been, there were bright red streaks. When the children started whispering, she took a pocket mirror out of her purse and patted make-up and powder over the mysterious streaks. Then another time their teacher was laughing so hard, little curls seemed to fall out everywhere from her pinned up hair.

Furthermore, she taught them to do many unusual things. Beside learning to read from left to right, she taught them to read upside down and sideways, as they stood on their heads and as they did somersaults. After their teacher read a story about juggling, she taught them to juggle books, erasers, crayons, and balls, all at the same time, while they skipped rope and recited math facts.

Then one day, while the children were learning to bake the perfect cream pie, one of them asked her, "How do you know how to do all the extraordinary things you've taught us, teacher?" Extraordinary was a vocabulary word the class had just learned. Their teacher hesitated a minute before she answered.

"Can you keep a secret, kids?" she asked.

"Sure!" they all chorused.

"Let's see, how can I explain," she began. "Every day when I come to work, I have to put make-up on."

"That doesn't sound very unusual to me," piped up one child.

"Well, you see," she continued, "I was . . . born at . . . a-a . . ."

"Where, Teacher?! Where?!"

" . . . at a circus . . . to a clown family." Miss Nwalc finished, wondering if she had made the right decision, to tell the children.

"Wow!" "Cool!" "Out o' sight!" they exclaimed.

"When I grew up," she continued, "I decided I didn't want to spend my life just clowning around, but wanted to be a teacher, too. So I went to college and earned a degree. What principal or schoolboard, though, would hire a clown? So I wore people make-up for my interview, and was hired. And every day since then, I put people make-up on in the morning and take it off when I get home at night."

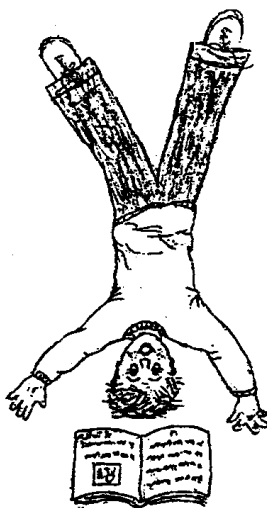
Just then the dismissal bell rang, and the children began to leave. "Remember," she reminded them, "it's a secret!"

"We won't forget! We'll keep it!" they called back. On the way home, they whispered among themselves the wonderful secret - Their teacher was a real clown! However, a child from another class overheard and reported it during dinner that evening. Phones rang off the walls and tables all over that town!

The very next morning, Miss Nwalc was ordered to report to a school board meeting that very night. At seven o'clock sharp, everyone was there - the principal, school board, and parents, and, they all talked at once - "It's unthinkable!" "What a scandal!" "This is a calamity! . . . A clown teaching our children!" "We'll be the laughing stock of the county, the state, the country, the **WORLD!**"

They all agreed to keep it a secret, but it had already spread like wild-fire. The story was on the front page of the town and county newspapers in the morning and on nationwide television that evening: "Clown Poses as Teacher!" "Parents Up in Arms!" Reporters from every state came to record and film the spectacle. "This is a disgrace to our nation's educational system!" teachers, journalists, and political leaders said in a hundred and one different ways. "She's a blah, blah, blah, blah. . . ." And so it went on for days.

Then there were the businessmen who could not have cared less if Miss Nwalc was a clown or a high wire acrobat or a lion tamer. Their voices rose above those of the reporters and the crowds that had flocked to the small town: "Hotdogs! Popcorn! Cotton candy! Cracker Jacks! Soda Pop!"



The fact that the town was turning into a carnival, made the already sour-faced townspeople even angrier. So they made posters, and started yelling, "Miss Nwolc, go back to the circus!" "Clown - back to the circus!" The noise of all the reporters, street vendors, and outraged parents, ringing in the children's ears, made it difficult for them to do their school work, to play, and to sleep. Things got so bad they couldn't even dream anymore . . . at night or in the day.

So a week later, Miss Nwolc, not wanting the children to suffer anymore, prepared to leave town. As she was packing, she saw a television reporter interviewing one of her former students, who was now in high school.

"But Miss Nwolc has a college degree and a certificate of education. They were always hanging on her classroom wall. She *is* a *real* teacher, and she's a *good* teacher! In fact, she's one of the *best* teachers I've ever had, because she made learning enjoyable, and so I learned a great deal in her class! Miss Nwolc is smart *and* strict, when kids need it. She just happens to be a clown. I always had a feeling there's something special about her."



Tears streamed down Miss Nwolc's face, but they didn't make any streaks, since she didn't have her people make-up on, and her cheeks were their natural apple red and round. The next day, in newspapers and on television broadcasts, other former students of Miss Nwolc, who were in high school or college, who were successful and happy young adults, spoke up. They professed that their clown teacher had given them a love for learning, a desire to do worthwhile work, and to jog toward the most important goal in life.

Thus, the next day and for a few years after, Miss Nwolc taught in that school. She never wore her people make-up again, because she wasn't ashamed of her identity anymore. Because she was a clown, she had known both great happiness and great sorrow. So when her students were happy, she could laugh and rejoice with them. When they had problems and heartaches, she could feel their hurt, and cry and pray with them.

A few years after Miss Nwolc revealed her remarkable secret, she met and married Mr. Lowncay. They were blessed with a dozen little clowns, two of their own, ten adopted, and they loved them all the same. After her children grew up, for a number of years, Mrs. Lowncay taught the kids and grandkids of her first students.

Then one morning, instead of going to school, she made the final short jog to the finishing line! There, Jesus greeted her with His loving arms! Some of her family, friends, and students also welcomed her with hugs. Then she waited patiently at the gate for the rest of her family and all her other dear students, to reach the most wonderful goal in life - God's *neverending* forgiveness, love, joy, and peace, that she had told them about, many times and in many ways. "All things work together for good for those who love God." Romans 8:28 KJV