

BENEATH THE MAKE-UP

A Dramatic Monolog

by
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BUMBO, a celebrated circus clown is standing in the waiting room of a hospital talking to the surgeon about the condition of his son, Tommy.

BUMBO--Doctor, I want to speak to you, if you don't mind. I'm worried about that operation, afraid Tommy isn't strong enough to pull through. If you think it'll fail, doctor--I'd rather have him always as he is now, than--than to lose him.

Yes, I know it's a gamble--a matter of life or death!--But I must give him his chance--his chance for a little happiness. I owe him that much. Poor little kid, he's had a tough time of it--spendin' the eight years of his young life in bed--a cripple.

I guess it's a good thing his mother died when she did--when he was just a baby. She died without knowin' he would be a cripple. The shock and worry would have killed her sure.

Sometimes I wonder, doctor, how he can be so cheerful--to everyone. He's missed so much--too much! Never knew a mother's love--and his father, a circus clown.

When his little hand is in mine and he looks at me so kindly--I wonder if he really loves me? You know, I'm almost a stranger to him. The circus rambles about all over the country a whole year 'round and only one day of each year the tents are pitched here in this town and I see my little boy again. Believe me, doctor, I just live for this one day. Away from him, the days seem all the same to me--empty. And then when I come here and see him propped up in bed, lookin' so pale and thin, and yet always smilin' to me, I feel so sorry--so miserable.

Sometimes I feel like chuckin' this game and spend the rest o' my days with him. But I couldn't do that. Don't you see, he must have his chance to get well and strong--so it's on with the show for me. And so I play my part--"Bumbo, the world's funniest clown."

Many times when I am tumblin' around in the sawdust, doin' silly stunts for the crowd--makin' 'em forget their worries and laugh--I think of my little Tommy back here, and wish that he too could see a circus--and laugh and be happy.

The gay crowd never thinks of the clown as a man. A man who can feel pain--can suffer--can die! No, to them a clown is simply a painted fool who does anything for a laugh. That's the only reward for the clown--a laugh!

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---