

EMPTY SMILES

A Dramatic Monolog

by
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INTRODUCTION: The human spirit has many different ways of coping with the devastating traumas of life. In the play "Empty Smiles" by Karen Wallace, we learn of one method a teenager uses to cope with her parent's divorce. We join her now as she sits in the waiting room of the high school principals office.

(Teen sits in chair with one leg under her, adjusts the volume on her tape player at her waist, adjusts the earphones on head, closes eyes, listens to music, body moving to rock beat, quietly sings some of the words....opens eyes and notices newcomer to the room. Newcomer will be a spot in direction of the audience. Moves earphones off head and rests around neck.)

(Embarrassed smile) Oh, Hi! How long have you been standing there? (Rises to cross behind the chair and leans with both hands on back.) Are you waiting to see the principal, too? I've never seen you in here before. Is this your first time? Well, don't worry about him. (Brush off movement of hand.) He'll yell a lot but he's really a wimp. I know because I'm in here a couple of times a week. Why? It's because I'm always listening to my music--(touches earphone) like during class. (Giggles) Teachers don't seem to like it when I put my earphones on in class.

(Walks to side of chair, prepares to put earphones back up to ears but stops to answer.) Who am I listening to? I just love this new group _____. (Name a popular singing act, if possible, one with women) Have you heard them? They are so gorgeous. They wear all these really great clothes (pantomimes on own body) and they're all so slender. (Hands describe curvy shape. Pause. Ponders) Sometimes, don't you just wonder what their lives are really like. It's just got to be better than ours, don't you think? (Dreamily) Lots of money, clothes, boyfriends--people who love them.

(Paces a little, big smile) But hey, who's complaining? Not me. (Dismissal movement of hand) I'm an upbeat, relaxed kind of person, always looking at the bright side, always smiling. That's how I handle my life. (Turns chair around, straddles it, speaks rather conspiratorially) You want to know how I do it? It's easy--I just don't think--about anything. I don't need booze and I don't need drugs to escape. I don't even need friends. (Stands up, walks to side of chair.) It's just me and this music. (Touches the earphones, puts them back on, turns on player.)

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