



Smile

Matt Shaw

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He was standing there. Right there. He kept shouting that he was going to go but.... he wasn't moving... he wasn't. I thought he was bluffing... I only turned my back on him for a moment. A moment! Had I seen him go... of course I would have followed. Of course I would have gone after my younger brother! The thought of him lost in this shopping centre... alone... it sends shivers down my back.

I have to find him. I WILL find him. Anything to get out of having to make the call home to mum. She's going to be so mad...

* * * * *

Alex's mum was tired and over-worked. Holding down a full-time job, keeping the house clean and looking after the children - the youngest of which was still a handful with his ADHD as they tried to get the medication right - she just wanted a break. Even if it were only for an afternoon - so she sent Alex to the shopping mall, with his younger brother who was throwing a tantrum because he wanted to go to the toy store to spend his pocket money. She never once thought Alex would lose his younger brother in the crowds.

And no one would have guessed how the day would have ended or just how many more children were missing.

'Smile' is a new horror from the best-selling author behind the 'Happy Ever After Trilogy' - told through the eyes of the main character as he frantically searches for his missing brother.

Smile Details

Date : Published June 9th 2012

ISBN :

Author : Matt Shaw

Format : Kindle Edition 118 pages

Genre : Horror, Short Stories, Mystery, Fiction

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From Reader Review Smile for online ebook

Alexa "Naps" Snow says

Well, creepy clowns are my favorite. Little spoiled children, well, not so much. With that being said, my heart went to Alex and his mother and hoping to find this little boy.

J.C. Brennan says

Do you hate Clowns? Well, I can guarantee you after you read this you'll hate them a little more. Alex loses his little ADHD brother in the mall after being asked to take him to get shoes so his worn-out mother can have a little peace and quite for awhile. He panics as anyone who loses a child would but when they find out two more children have gone missing this become dire. The only thing the children have in common, after viewing the monitors, is they all had an encounter with a strange clown—one who was not supposed to be there. What happens next will chill you to the bone and pray you never see another clown as long as you live.

Holy Hell! I could not put this book down I read it from cover to cover in an hour's time. Matt Shaw's writing is exceptional, and the story itself sent cold, eerie chills down my spin. Smile is a suspenseful, horror story you don't want to miss. I'd give it six stars if I could, loved this story.

Rob Twinem says

tedious in the extreme....*spoilers* I did not enjoy this short story it was tedious and nothing happened! Alex loses his brother in shopping mall, his mum will kill him (yawn) he becomes aware of a rather odd clown (lets copy Stephen King!)...clown has killed and kidnapped younger brother..zzzzzzzzzzzzzz....I think I'll leave Matt Shaw for others to enjoy and read something good in future :((

Flint Macwood says

One of Shaw's best! I'd say this is one of his most defining works.

If you love the macabre, terrifying stories that takes you places you don't want to go, then pick up a copy of SMILE.

Matt does a great job of putting the reader into the head of his main character, which is one of my favorite things about him.

Check out SMILE, and see what the fuss is about!

Brenda Seaberg says

This was a decent read. I liked the writing as well as the story (it wasn't error-free, but there weren't so many that it was distracting either). I found myself wanting to know more about the characters, as their lives were quickly touched in this short story.

Jason says

4 Stars

Smile is a fun novella that is worth a quick summer read.

Matt Shaw does a great job at cranking up the tension and the angst and shows how scary losing a small child can be. The story quickly unfolds and it is clear that it will not be a fun trip to the mall for our young cast. For a novella, enough is said and enough takes place to make this story work...Check it out!

"I hate clowns.

I think that I hate the smiling ones worse. There's something really sinister about them.

Stephen fucking king.

I'm never gonna read one of his books again, I swear."

Beadyjan says

This free short novella from Kindle was my first read by this author and to be honest it will probably be my last.

Firstly there were many grammatical errors making it hard to read, the author switched from present to past tense in the same sentence, and often repeated whole paragraphs verbatim which jarred with me.

The story line began really well though with a teenage boy looking after his younger adhd affected brother in a busy shopping centre when the younger lad goes missing. It built tension and made you feel you were this teenage lad panicking about what to do trying to find his kid brother and was showing all the signs of a really good psychological thriller.

Then it suddenly took a bizarre and unbelieveable turn and the supposedly horrific ending was ridiculous. Unexpected but just didn't really go with the rest of the story and all the horror was in the last page or two.

Joann says

Oh what a wickedly great little read for those who like dark and mysterious short reads. It was spooky at times. Yes, the author has a dark mind which is evident in the ending. Not an ending that I saw coming!

Stuart Keane says

I believe the greatest horror comes from real life. To put it another way, if something can really happen to you, it's more terrifying than say a werewolf or aliens. This is the premise of a cracking little short from Matt Shaw, who is fast becoming one of my favourite independent authors. Shaw also includes two of the scariest elements of horror...children and...no spoilers, it ruins the ending.

First of all, I've read the reviews so let's get that part out of the way. There are errors in the book. I noticed a couple of typos and changes of tense in certain sentences. However, this doesn't ruin the flow of the story. If anything, it adds to the chaos and confusion that inhabits our protagonist, a teenager called Alex who loses his little brother in a shopping mall. As I mentioned, a real situation twisted with the menace of horror...always more effective. The errors probably weren't intentional by the author but, unlike some books, they don't ruin the experience.

The reason *Smile* is so effective is simple: Fear. Parents, brothers, sisters, babysitters; everyone knows the fear of losing a little one, especially somewhere as chaotic and unforgiving as a shopping mall. It paralyses you and there's always the nagging doubt that searching for someone in a place so vast is taking you further away from them. This is nestled beautifully in the book itself, the tension is ever-present as Alex goes from selfish kid to nervous, irresponsible brother. By the time he gets the (useless) security guards involved, the book is fraught with tension. I couldn't stop reading, finishing it in one sitting.

4* - *Smile* is a little gem of a book. It's short, tense, plotted between past and present tense - using flashbacks to trace the events of the book - and very spooky. As mentioned, I won't ruin the ending for you but *Smile* will have you trembling a little. It would have been 5* but I think it was a little too short. There were certain other things that seemed a little unexplained - the security camera bit for example - but sometimes, in horror, this also adds to the terror, as the unknown is always more petrifying. One thing is certain...you'll never look at your kids in the same way again.

Ruby says

I loved this book it had me gripped from the beginning. What do you do if you are shopping at a mall with your child and you turn you back for one minute and they are gone, seemingly without a trace? This book is wonderfully written with an interesting storyline. I have to admit that I had it somewhat figured out halfway through the book but, I still completed it and have to admit that the ending did indeed give me a little shock. I cant wait to read more by this author. It is a dark book and every parents nightmare come true.

Dianne says

A typical teen, Alex has been asked to take his younger brother, Lewis, (who has ADHD), to the mall to give his mother a break. Alex's reward for doing so is the pair of shoes he has been wanting, all he has to do is take Lewis to the toy store he wants to visit. So far, so good, except for the creepy mall clown that is trying, unsuccessfully to make Lewis laugh.

First on Alex's agenda is to take care of what he wants to do, promising little Lewis his time will come, they will go to the store he wants to see. As Alex gets wrapped up in his own shopping, Lewis disappears and cannot be found! Security cameras show him there one minute and gone the next!

What happens next only adds to the terror of losing his brother! For a short read, I have to say, this is detailed, tense, realistic and horrific! It is every parent's nightmare, times ten!

Some people love clowns, some think they are creepy-I'd love to know how you feel about clowns after reading this!

Adam Vanzant says

That was disturbing... I love it.

Lady Delacour says

Good Solid
Short Story.
With a bit of
Creepiness.
Listened with TTS
Clean with
Foul Language.

Grammar*Kitten says

[Yes, this is a big 'eff you' to all the absoluter idiots that were like 'ooh I hate clowns now' or 'not for those with chlorophobia' - yes. I get it. The clown is bad. Cheers for ruining that twist, tossers. (hide spoiler)]

Paul Nelson says

First off Smile prays on one of the many nightmares every parent dreads, losing your child while out shopping, it nearly happened to me once and the panic is indescribable. In this day and age you've got to have eyes in the back of your head.

Smile is told in first person from the viewpoint of Alex who takes his 8 year old brother shopping to get school shoes, the bribe is a trip to the toy store. Shoes bought, Alex's next stop is trainers for himself but no, arguments ensue and Lewis throws a tantrum of epic proportions, storms off and amazingly stops outside the shop. Alex has eyes on him, turns round, turns back and he's gone.

The story follows two timelines, not to far apart, the present search for Lewis and the events leading up to the separation.

Turns out Lewis is not the only missing person in the shopping centre and while viewing CCTV footage the only unusual thing seen is the presence of a clown.

Now I've got to say the whole clown thing has never really done it for me in a scary context, I guess it's from watching a few low budget horror films as a kid. Smile has changed my opinion somewhat amidst a short story that builds the tension nicely.
