The Smiler

ETHAN QUIMBY - A 27 year old, male patient, is emitted into a mental institution. 2 split personalities - Nice, friendly, and loved by others and is the main character as well as part of the duo of detectives (Ethan and Steve); Insane sociopath (Second personality isn't revealed till end). Ethan is also the detective of the story.

STEVE UDELHOVEN - He gives a family friendly feel to the story so it's not so intense. Steve ends up as the actual detective in the end. Volunteers at the mental hospital.

TOBI - Has a short term memory loss, VERY observant, smart.

STACY THE NICE NURSE - The only kind nurse in asylum. She's a potential suspect because of her temper.

MARY - Often seen talking to herself Mary gives off the creepy feel because she seems to be able to predict murders and has screaming fits.

BETTY THE BAD NURSE - Nasty, mean and abusive to the patients.

ROSE-OF-SHARON - Betty's right hand nurse. She's mean, too.

SID - First patient killed during Ethan's stay.

RANDOM PATIENT - Minor speaking line

THE SMILER - The mysterious murderer of play.

Act 1 Scene 1

The stage is dark, MARY recites the poem

MARY

Never smile at a crocodile!

No, you can't get friendly with a crocodile;

Don't be taken in by his welcome grin;

He's imagining how well you'd fit within his skin!

Never smile at a crocodile!

ETHAN

(Sounds of Struggle, ETHAN Angrily) No! No, Please! Oh god, no! Please don't make me go to that place! I'm not crazy! Please, I'm telling you-I'm not crazy! I'm not crazy!

A thud is heard then all is silent. Lights turn on.

The front hall in Cane Hill Asylum.

All main characters who are patients are milling around aimlessly. It's blatantly obvious that they are mentally unstable due to their movements and actions. Some are mumbling to themselves, some are rocking back and forth looking paranoid. SID sits at the desk looking mean. On the wall is a window with rusty bars blocking patients from trying to escape. Outside it looks gloomy.

STEVE (narrating from on stage)

This story is about a war hero known as Ethan Quimby... (In a dreamy voice)

STACY is staged sitting at the front desk

The lights turn on suddenly

ETHAN wakes up with a fast jolt springing him upwards on the couch, and he is breathing hard as though he was terrified. He sits up looking confused and then a look of dread crosses his face.

STACY notices the patient wake up and immediately rushes to her patient MARY is seated in a chair, curled up in a ball keeping her face covered behind her knees and arms wrapped around her legs. She is slowly rocking back and forth.

STACY

(A fake smile crosses her face) Oh! You're awake! Oh wonderful! (STACY crosses over to the couch) I assure you Mr. Quimby, your stay here will be absolutely delightful! Even though you

don't want to be here, You'll be glad your ex-wife checked you in! Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is easily treatable! Definitely because your's is a very mild case!

ETHAN

I guess...

He aichilly gets off couch and puts one hand to his forehead as though he has a headache.

STACY walks over to her nurse's station and starts sorting through files

I'm sure I'll get used to this since there isn't much of a choice (*laughs nervously*). Though I really don't think it's necessary for me to be here. (*He puts his hand on his forehead and pauses*)

STACY

(Puts her hand on ETHAN'S shoulder) It's not a surprise that someone would be angered after hearing that they're going to be sent here. At first it will be tough to adjust, but soon you will be able to overcome your disorder and go back to your life.

MARY suddenly screams. She starts freaking out-- she throws herself onto the floor as if something was trying to attack her, she knocks over a table kicking and screaming. BETTY and ROSE-OF-SHARON run on from Stage left and pin her down.

MARY

(She puts her hand over her face and slowly increases the speed of her speech when she abruptly stills and points to ETHAN.). The Smiler! The Smiler! The Smiler! The Smiler! It's coming for you next!

MARY goes still as she's injected by a shot by ROSE-OF-SHARON

SID

(Says from where he's sitting at the desk reading a newspaper) Mr. Udelhoven! Take the newbie to his room. It's room 5B. Go...Now!

STEVE jumps onto stage and stumbles over to ETHAN

STEVE (gesturing to MARY)

Well, I guess I'm taking you to your room. Oh, and that's normal around here by the way.

ETHAN

Really? (ETHAN looks at MARY) That's going to be really hard to get used to. What's, um, well... What's her reason for being here?

STEVE (looks at MARY while he speaks)

Mary is schizophrenic-- Oh but don't worry man, she isn't dangerous! Uh... When she takes her treatment.

STEVE exits stage Right ETHAN following him through the door marked 5b. STEVE opens the door and enters the room, ETHAN following closely behind

ETHAN

Um. Why did that nurse call you Mr. Udelhoven? By the way, my name is Ethan Quimby.

STEVE

(He looks down at his shoes abruptly) That's my name. Steve Udelhoven, I intern here. Your name is Ethan Quimby? (Realization crosses STEVE'S face) ... Ethan Quimby, as in the decorated war hero? Far out man! What are you doing here? (he says excitedly)

ETHAN

Yeah... (chuckles and scratches his head awkwardly) ...that's me.

STACY walks into ETHAN'S room while STEVE is in the middle of his sentence

STEVE

(Questioningly) Of all people, I wouldn't expect you to be in a mental hospital.

STACY busies herself by putting the sheets on the bed.

STACY

Well, most veterans usually have some form of mental disorder due to war.

ETHAN

Guys? Does Mary usually scream about The Smiler? What even is that?

STACY

Mary is a little unstable at the moment. But don't worry, she'll calm down soon enough. And as for The Smiler, well... you don't have to worry about that. It's nothing. (STACY says defensively.) Anyway, it's time for your daily pills.

STACY gives ETHAN a paper cup full of three small multicolored pills and exits stage right. STEVE turns to ETHAN and walks closer to him and looks around furtively before saying.)

STEVE

Nobody really knows what or who The Smiler is but I think it's this insane murderer who runs around at night--- (STEVE is cut off when BETTY suddenly enters Stage Right and pushes STEVE away from ETHAN)

BETTY

Steve! Don't say things like that! Ethan, swallow those pills now! You know what Stacy told you!

BETTY frantically walks out the room
ETHAN swallows the cup of pills, and climbs into the bed
He looks at STEVE

ETHAN

What--- (were you saying about this Smiler?)

STEVE (cuts him off)

I'll see you tomorrow at breakfast. Good night.

ETHAN

Whoa! Wait! (STEVE walks out the door)... Good night.

The light dim and ETHAN sits up in bed creeped out by the thought of the SMILER STEVE opens the door suddenly [after 5 seconds] making ETHAN shriek and jump out of bed in fright

ETHAN

What the heck, man! That spooked me!

STEVE walks up to ETHAN

STEVE

This was on the outside of your door. (gravely)

STEVE hands ETHAN a smiley face sticker Stage goes dark

Scene 2

STEVE and ETHAN walk on from stage right and sit at the table. Lights turn back on, resuming the scene

All the patients in the common space gasp dramatically. ETHAN and STEVE look at eachother. ROSE-OF-SHARON takes BETTY'S hand and starts to pull her off the stage Right)

BETTY

Sid? The Smiler's never gone after the workers here at the institution.

MARY starts rocking back and forward with her hands over her face and her head shaking. STEVE gets up and tries to calm MARY down when ETHAN goes up to him

ETHAN

(*Taps STEVE on the shoulder*) Steve! I think we should see what happened. Maybe we could figure out what's going on.

STEVE

(Glances at MARY) Okay

ETHAN and STEVE walk off stage left)

Scene 3

STEVE, ETHAN, BETTY, ROSE-OF-SHARON, and STACY walk into the room of the crime. A dead body lies on the bed that's stained with blood. On the wall a creepy smiley face with fangs and Xs as eyes drawn on the wall of the of the victim's room.

STEVE

Good golly, I know who did this... It was the...the...

ETHAN

Who?

STEVE

The Smiler.

ETHAN

(Troubled look on face) Really? But I guess he is pretty dangerous. Oh this is horrible!

STEVE

I know right? I'm really surprised I'm still alive.

ETHAN

Okay, well we now can recognize The Smiler's logo of sorts...Is that blood?

STACY, ETHAN, STEVE, BETTY, and ROSE-OF SHARON start walking around and inspecting the scene. STEVE and ETHAN go off in a corner Stage right and the nurses converse stage left on the other side of the room. They don't seem to be very affected

STEVE

You better believe it. On another note, the nurses never seem to be affected when a death occurs. Do you think it could be them? They are really vicious sometimes; they don't care at all for the patients.

BETTY walks off stage left

ETHAN

I mean maybe, but why would a nurse kill one of their own?

STEVE

Whoever this is, it won't be the last time they'll kill someone. This is the work of someone who loves the sight of someone suffering. This is sick.

STEVE, ETHAN, ROSE-OF-SHARON and exit stage left STACY stays behind and looks one last time at the dead body and smiley face

STACY

(Deadpans) Good bye Sid.

STACY then exits stage left

Scene 4

ETHAN paces back and forth while STEVE is sitting on the couch eating a piece of ham, looking frustrated. STEVE seems calm about the situation at hand.

ETHAN

This is starting to freak me out. I don't know what to do.

STEVE

Well, let's just try to roll with it. This has been going on for 2 years so--

ETHAN

This has been going on for 2 years? Two years! How can you act so careless innocent people are being murdered! Why haven't the police been involved!?

STEVE

Isn't it obvious? We're in the nuthouse! The loonybin! The people have cracked! People here a are jelly brains and jiggy. The police have better things to do than try to get facts from patients who are on some of the largest prescriptions of medications! *(TOBI enters)*

TOBI

Also, the nurses here don't care squat about us. The only reason they are here is because they're paid oodles of money, oodles. Even-even...even (Stutters) nurse Stacy. Oodles.

ETHAN stares at TOBI, astonished. STEVE shifts uncomfortably.

And you were wondering who the killer is my friend? Weren't you my friend? Yes, yes, (He rubs his lips together) I know who the killer is, or was, that is, and I can tell you it's, he's, she's... uh, they're..... (Tobi suddenly looks lost and frustrated, he clenches his hands and rubs his lips together) What...? What am I doing in your room my friend? What the oodles? ("What the oodles" is said with a bit of sass) Oh that's it! I found this in the mailbox...the mail...the mailbox.

TOBI hands STEVE the letter and STEVE opens it up and starts to read

STEVE

"I know you are trying to find out who I am, and that's great and all. But stop. It's best if you stay out of my business and let me do my job. You are all going to die anyway so what's the point?-" (interrupted by ETHAN)

ETHAN

Their job! What job involves murdering people! (ETHAN is cut off by STEVE)

STEVE

Wait! Let me finish, geez... (he looks at the paper for a couple seconds and then flips it over) there's a poem. (STEVE take a deep breath, and gestures for ETHAN to come over. ETHAN looks at the letter over STEVE's shoulder.)

STEVE

It's a nursery rhyme...

"Never smile at a crocodile!

No, you can't get friendly with a crocodile;

Don't be taken in by his welcome grin;

He's imagining how well you'd fit within his skin!

Never smile at a crocodile!

Stop Smiling at the crocodile.

The Smiler."

That was far out.

ETHAN and STEVE stare at the paper

ETHAN

My mom. (*He pauses*) She read this to me almost every single day, she-she was obsessed about it! (*He steadily becomes angrier*) She said it so much I still catch myself reciting it in my head! I hate this poem!

STEVE (ignores the tangent)

What a drag. This is what he's threatening us with? This chump's telling us to stop trying to investigate. Psh!

ETHAN

The Smiler is trying scare us. If he thinks Ethan Quimby is just going to let this happen then The Smiler's got another thing coming! We'll- --

BETTY storms in, angry at STEVE and ETHAN

BETTY

What's with all the noise!? (BETTY stomps towards ETHAN and point her finger at him as she angrily says.) You're supposed to be in bed! It's past lights out! What do you have there? (She crossed over to them) What's this? (Takes the note) Are these cut outs from Sid's magazines? You freaks! Now go to your room, Mr. Quimby. (She points her finger at STEVE) And Steve, find something else to do!

ETHAN exits Stage Right, and ALL OTHER ACTORS exit Stage Left STEVE turns toward the audience

STEVE

She's so mean!

STEVE exits Stage Right Stage goes black

Scene 5

Lights turn on

Scene begins with ETHAN and STEVE readings books in the main lobby with the other patients

STEVE suddenly stops and turns to ETHAN

STEVE

You know, three days and no sign of The Smiler after his cute little stunt with that gross nursery rhyme. I'm starting to think all he is is a big wimp, a really - - -

STEVE is interrupted with a scream from from off-stage A patient runs in from stage left and yells frantically

RANDOM PATIENT

(He puts both hands on his the side of his head) Oh! Oh my-my-my-my...G-G-Gu-Guuuusss He's-He's D-D-De-Dead!

MARY

I knew it! I kn-kn-knew it. (MARY puts her hands over face then starts laughing hysterically and Betty comes up and tries to calm her down as the scene goes on.)

STEVE

Well then... (as everyone stands up and ETHAN runs off stage left to go see the crime scene, STEVE then follows, along with TOBI, exiting stage left also, the boys run back in on stage left to a set up murder scene, almost identical to SID'S.)

At the crime scene

ETHAN and STEVE stand looking at the smiler's face

ETHAN pulls STEVE aside to talk one-on-one. The others talk with only their mouths{no voices are heard from them} only ETHAN and STEVE'S conversation can be heard in the audience

ETHAN

Remember what Tobi told us, that the nurses "don't give a squat about us" or whatever? It only makes sense that one of them would be the killer!

STEVE

But what about Sid? He was a nurse, and he was killed.

ETHAN

Yeah I know, but we need to start from somewhere, and the nurses are the most mysterious. We should talk with the nurses first. Especially Stacy, have you seen her temper? She gets angry really quickly!

STEVE

I noticed that. That didn't seem like Stacy, not at all.

ETHAN

Come on. They're right over there. Let's go talk to her.

ETHAN and STEVE exit Stage Left
Stage goes dark

Scene 6

STACY enters and walks over to the nurses desk where BETTY is sitting. After a couple seconds go by ETHAN and STEVE storm in from stage left. ETHAN walks up to the desk in serious mode.

STEVE

Excuse me but I think one of you guys are brutal lunatics who enjoys the act in which you viciously cause the death of someone.

ETHAN gives STEVE an incredulous look

ETHAN

That's not how you interrigate someone....

BETTY

If you freaks think I'd even take the time of day to go and murder these lunatics than you've got it all wrong!

RANDOM PATIENT walks up to them

RANDOM PATIENT

Well actually you'd have to take the time of NIGHT because The Smiler apparently only kills when we are sleeping.

ETHAN

That's true.

RANDOM PATENT

Thank you Ethan! All I'm saying is that maybe our dear and widely loved Betty here is hinting that she is actually the killer---

BETTY shakes her head and stomps off Taking RANDOM PATIENT with her and starts and they exit. STACY sighs and crosses her arms, turns around and starts organizing pills.

STACY

Boys, I don't see how you could even suspect us. Here take this. (*She hands ETHAN some pills*), Why would you suspect the nurses in an insane asylum when there are perfectly insane wards frolicking about.

ETHAN

Because we've been observing you, and well, you have a very bad temper.

STACY'S back all of a sudden stiffens and she turns towards the boys

STACY

I do no--- (t! In fact my temper is perfectly contained!)

Cut of by a bloodcurdling scream. STACY's face turns frightened

STACY

(Mumbles a Whisper) That's Rose-Of-Sharon.

ETHAN

What?

STACY

(Louder) That's Rose-Of-Sharon.

ETHAN and STEVE look at each other and run of Stage Left at the same time. STACY, BETTY, TOBI, and RANDOM PATIENT follow ETHAN and STEVE shortly after. The stage goes dark.

Scene 7

STEVE, ETHAN, RANDOM PATIENT, BETTY, and STACY run in to see ROSE-OF-SHARON standing over MARY'S bed with MARY'S dead body laying down on it.

ROSE-OF-SHARON

I... I just walked into Mary's room and she was dead with a chest wound in her.. Oh my god! She's... she's dead.

STEVE

What a drag... She's dead, of course the person who always predicted other people's deaths. Sadly she couldn't guess her own.

BETTY

(Says Emotionlessly) Someone stabbed her in the chest and then drew an incomplete smiley face on the wall out of her blood.

ETHAN

The killer could be anyone at this point.

BETTY

Well, I never liked her anyways! I'm going to go do paperwork in my office.

ROSE-OF-SHARON

Yeah, I'm going to the bathroom

BETTY and ROSE-OF-SHARON exit Stage Left

STACY

Do you know how long ago she was murdered?

TOBI

Looks like it was about thirty minutes ago.

RANDOM PATIENT

I'm going to finish eating. I just came in here because everyone else was.

RANDOM PATIENT exits Stage Left.

ETHAN

Does any know who that guy is? I see him all over the place, I'm starting to think he doesn't have a name.

STACY

Good golly! I'm late for Rick's feeding!

ETHAN

Who's Rick?

STEVE

I don't know....

STACY exits Stage Left

ETHAN

I'm going to go to the bathroom.

STEVE

Okay. I'm gonna bounce ideas off of Tobi here. (STEVE patted TOBI on the back lightly.) When you get back we'll tell you what we've come up with.

ETHAN

Okay.

ETHAN exits Stage Left.

STEVE

So. What do you make of this Tobi? Who is this guy?

TOBI

Oh yes, my friend. This is very serious, my friend. But you should not be asking why, but how. You see, there are oodles of things I notice. Oodles (*TOBI says this urgently*). First oodle, there-there-there are no signs of struggle, so who ever did this did it very very very fast, oh yes. In an' out, yes. Second oodle, the smiley face isn't complete, yes? Yes. So who ever did this was in a hurry, my friend. Third oodle--

TOBI is cut off by ETHAN who comes running back in the room Stage Left.

ETHAN

Guys! Rose-Of-Sharon is dead!

ETHAN, STEVE, and TOBI exit Stage Left and stage goes dark to set up ROSE-OF-SHARON'S place of death in the main lobby: ROSE-OF-SHARON is dead sitting up on the couch but resting back on the back rest (not lying down). ETHAN, STEVE, and TOBI enter Stage Left and go straight toward ROSE-OF-SHARON body.

STEVE

Jinkies! They're dropping like flies!

TOBI

Flies have oodles.

ETHAN and STEVE both look at TOBI, then look back at each other.

ETHAN

When I came in to check on her she was dead.

TOBI

There's blood coming from her mouth. She was poisoned. Then she was stabbed, oh yes, that's how it happened. That's how all-- (TOBI clenches his fists and looks at the ground irritated. His

face clears and looks up with a confused look on his face.) What? Wait, where am I? Why am I here? What's going on?

STEVE turns toward TOBI and grabs his shoulders; not urgently, but not necessarily gentle.

STEVE

Tobi, Rose-Of-Sharon was just killed by The Smiler. I need you to go find Betty and tell her this.

TOBI

Rose died? Whoa, okay. Why doesn't anyone tell me anything that's going on around here?

TOBI exits Stage Left. STEVE turns back toward ETHAN.

STEVE

Well, he's right about one thing. Rose-Of-Sharon did die of poison. But if she was dead, then why did The Smiler stab her?

ETHAN

Well his signature mark is a smiley face drawn in blood, then he probably just needed the blood. (*He shivers.*) This is so sick. Why would anyone want to do this?

STEVE

I've been asking this question the whole time but I can't seem to find the answer.

ETHAN and STEVE are silent for only a moment. Just then TOBI comes back on stage entering from Stage Left with BETTY following behind. BETTY looks scared as if she didn't quite believe what TOBI had said. When she sees ROSE-OF-SHARON's body she starts to sniffle.

TOBI

I found Betty.

BETTY chokes back a sob then speaks.

BETTY

I didn't want to believe it was true. (Says teary-eyed) Go to bed.

ETHAN

But it hasn't even been dinner time yet.

BETTY

I said go!

STEVE, ETHAN, and TOBI exit Stage Left, leaving BETTY alone. BETTY turns towards ROSE-OF-SHARON and cries. The stage goes dark.

Scene 8

ETHAN sits in the corner of his room, it's dark but still light enough for the audience to see. ETHAN is mourning the death of his dear friend STEVE, he was killed by The Smiler.

ETHAN

(Talking To Himself) It should've been me. Why did he have to die? This is like the war all over again.

ETHAN rocks back and forth and starts hyperventilating. All of a sudden the audience can hear a door creaking open. Slow footsteps are heard on the stage. ETHAN has no clue what's going on. A pair of hands reaches out and grabs Ethan, there's a struggle and ETHAN is thrown to the floor.

THE SMILER

I put that sticker on your door for a reason. (In a creepy voice)

ETHAN pushes THE SMILER to the ground and then runs out of the room to the front lobby. His clothes are disheveled and his hair is messed up. The only person in the lobby is TOBI

ETHAN

Tobi! Oh thank god, Tobi! (ETHAN looks behind him) I'm so glad to see you!

STEVE pops out from backstage

STEVE

Not dead! Wink!

STEVE hides back behind backstage

ETHAN

I need help! The Smiler just tried to kill me, but I got away!

TOBI

The Smiler?

ETHAN

Yes! I think he's still in my room! We need a nurse, now! (ETHAN starts to run off Stage Left but TOBI catches his arm and pulls him back.)

TOBI

The nurses will do you no squat, no squat at all my friend. Just check the surveillance cameras.

ETHAN

The surveillance cameras... (Ethan angrily yells) You mean we've had surveillance and no one has even bothered to tell us or even check them!

TOBI

The nurses do no squat for us, not even half of one. They, they, (TOBI looks around.) Why am I talking to you?

ETHAN

(ETHAN shakes TOBI) Where are the surveillance cameras!

TOBI

(TOBI glances at ETHAN in confusion) How do you know about the surveillance cameras! Wait, we have surveillance cameras? What the oodles!

ETHAN

YAH! You just told me about them! Tobi where are they!? (urgently) You know, look around, find them for me! Remember! Please remember!

TOBI

Well, (mass confusion on his face) those nurses seem to always be staring behind those computers back there. (Points to the front desk)

ETHAN

The computers! Tobi! Why didn't anyone think of that!

ETHAN runs to the computer with TOBI in tow. STACY walks in stage left suddenly. She notices TOBI and ETHAN behind the computers right away and briskly walks towards them.

STACY

What are you two doing!?

ETHAN

We are looking at the surveillance cameras!

STACY

The surveillance cameras are off limits, No! I'm not letting you look at those!

TOBI

(TOBI walks in front of STACY, face to face and with a flat tone TOBI begins to speak) Ms. Stacy Rebecca Smith, (STACY pulls a surprised look) I don't give a squat about what you think, what's the password?

STACY

(STACY murmurs)... Golly.

Screen resumes film of surveillance. It shows ETHAN walking into the room with a knife in his hand, and then walks out with a bloody knife and a malicious smile on his face. ETHAN pauses the film, and gasps in shock

ETHAN

Oh my goodness! That can't be possible! That just can't be me. I don't believe this. (ETHAN backs up looking at his hands, terrified and trembling with fear.) But! But I was attacked by Th-The Smiler! How - - -

STACY backs away from ETHAN looking horrified. Tobi just stands there

It's possible, oh yes. There's this disorder called DID. Dissociative Identity Disorder, also known as Multiple Personality Disorder, is thought to be an effect of severe trauma during early childhood, usually extreme, repetitive physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Did you know anything that that that could have triggered this disorder? Oodles.

ETHAN

Well, my mom used to read me this nursery rhyme every night when I was younger. My brother was really aggr- -- (ETHAN cuts himself off and just stares blankly at the floor. He then starts smiling and looks up again. He starts talking, but his voice is different, it sounds blunt and malicious.) I don't deserve all the credit, our poor Sid was the original Smiler. I came out and killed him first. (Laughs) You know the rest, poor Steve! (Killer ETHAN'S sneer starts trembling until the real ETHAN'S personality starts showing through again. ETHAN shudders violently and looks to TOBI, horrified.)

TOBI

I guess that's how this all came to be.

ETHAN

What do I do now? How do I cure this? (His voice all shaky)

STACY

(While the boys were talking STACY had snuck up behind ETHAN with a syringe)
The cure is to live the rest of your miserable life in this asylum. (STACY stabs ETHAN with a syringe and ETHAN goes down.)

(The stage goes black)

THE END