

Le Petit Clown - August 9, 2002

by ABThwaites

Le Petit Clown

"Si vous plais, un petit clown, un petit clown, missure." I could still see her face. She wasn't in her clown make-up, but I could tell. She was mocking me. Not openly mind you but secretly, for she knew I wasn't going to buy one. She pleaded, but I stood there dumb.

Such as it 'tis, with the spirit which has haunted me for most of my life. It started with a lamp, known at the circus lamp. Covered in clowns. Horrible, their laughing faces stuck like that permanently in paint. Even though they might feel blue sometimes, they still must laugh, they are clowns. Oh, there are the crying clowns, but their laughing inside anyhow. It's paint after all. Paint, covers, and provides color. It hides what is underneath, and what has a clown to hide? EVIL.

"Un petit clown," her voice echoed in my mind. I couldn't shake it.

It was a feeling that something horrible was going to happen, and I feel it every time I even think of a clown. "Un petit clown." It was enough to drive me mad. I hate clowns, and I am afraid, for sure to dare a visit to a circus. My god, why did that sexy little clown ask me in the first place? She didn't speak a word of English, but the sign she showed me said,

"Our circus has been destroyed, please buy our hand sewn clowns..." I didn't have to read farther, I looked into her sad eyes, and knew she was telling the truth.

I didn't see it at first, but now I see it every where. Hanging lifelessly from my rear view mirror, and suspended below the chimney just out of the reach of flames. Dressed in its half and half

gay moon and star patterned and oversized jump suit, it had white gloves, and a matching hat. It was hanging as a display from a large colorful umbrella, just sitting on the little trapeze, with its mocking smile, just hating me. It said to me,

"Buy me, or I will haunt you forever." Fuck, thought I, for now I am doomed. If I didn't buy it, it would haunt me, but if I did, worse, it would be a physical manifestation in my reality; a clown in my house! Mercy on my soul, for what sins have I committed to be subjected to such suffering? Why did that little clown hate me so much? I couldn't take it any longer and I turned away, with out responding to the out-of-work clown.

As I walked down the market way my mind raced back to my early experiences with clowns. The serial killer Ted Bundy used to dress as a clown and kill little children. But I think there is more to it than that, as if it isn't terrible enough. Why was the clown chosen as his vehicle of destruction? Is the trust of a clown so pervasive in our society? Why has the spirit of a smiling clown chosen to haunt me? Hellishly! I can see them coming at me with a knife, just like in the movie, *Puppetmaster*. Devilish little clowns! Or how about *Chucky*, or the *Bride of Chucky*. Damn chainsaw wielding little clowns!

The pervasiveness of evil clowns is overwhelming! I think they bothered Shakespeare as well. I once saw *Falstaff* portrayed just like an evil clown. There are evil clowns all through his work. I was watching some Shakespeare, one day in the park, and predictably there was a clown. It was portrayed as hideously evil. Right in the middle of the play, although he was delivering his lines, he looked at me, took a step forward, looked me in the eye, and spoke right directly from his mind to mine,

"Die, clown fearing scum!" Augggh!! In a cold sweat, I sat through the remainder of the play. A few days later, I met up with the actor who had portrayed the clown. His hair was for real! Bald on top and wavy curls projecting from both sides. He looked at me and his eyes rolled round and round in opposite directions. He asked,

"What did you think of the play, clown hater?" It was way too much. I quaffed my heavy beer and left the bar in a hurry.

"Un petit clown," still echoed.

As I reached the end of the market promenade, I turned and headed back toward the circus performer and that evil little clown waiting to kill me. Was it the look in the out of work clown's eyes that struck me so deeply or was it my life long fear that was awakened from its depths once again. From deep inside a hidden part of my fragile psyche, came a haunting yet indescribably strong and suffocating fear. Clowns. I felt like I should buy a clown to help their cause, and the one sitting on the trapeze under the umbrella had spoken to me.

Maybe it was some hidden need to feel closer to that poignant and sad look of the acrobat. Was I merely buying the clown to feel sympathy for the little out of work clown, or perhaps in some way, I felt that by patronizing her, her suffering would ease. Or, more importantly maybe my suffering would ease. Maybe she was playing me. She would get me close enough to see again the deep disappointment in her sad eyes, the look that had first attracted my attention, and then the out-of-work and out-of-costume clown would have her way, a knife in the back or something far more sinister. A deep fear was rising as I came back down the market way to her spot.

"Un petit clown, un petit clown," it wouldn't stop, and it just grew louder and louder.

"Un petit clown, un petit clown," and I could see the out of work clown again. She was angry with me for not buying a little clown, yet. No, I think it is the little clown hanging from the umbrella, putting those thoughts into my mind. I could see him now, he was glowing in the center of my vision. He was still in his little gay jumpsuit, and just sitting there so apparently innocent. The painted smile didn't move, but I could hear his mocking ultimatum in my head,

"Buy me, or I will kill you."

She looked at me as I approached. I could see the sadness in her eyes, and the lithe movements of her acrobatic body. The little clown on his trapeze sat there laughing. Laughing out loud! Louder even, until it became almost deafening. The out-of-work clown then asked me directly,

"Un petit clown?" I collapsed, choking on the raw fear itself, unable to breath. As I pitched forward I heard the mocking laugh of the evil killer clown in my head...he knew he had won! The burning asphalt then smashed up my nose, and blackness fell.

At some undeterminable time later I tried to sit up. Someone had got a cup of water for me, and was asking in French if I was all right. I looked around and the circus performer and her little hand sewn clowns were gone. I leapt to my feet glancing about in vain. My broken nose throbbed. They were gone. I couldn't remember the name of the circus, but I knew that I should have bought a little toy clown. Now forever to haunt me. But, they were gone, and now I am forever doomed to live with the guilt of not helping others less fortunate. Doomed forever to hear again and again in my mind the ringing words damning me to hell,

"Si vous plais, un petit clown, un petit clown, missure, si vous plais?"

Written by; ABThwaites

All persons or characters in this story are fictitious, and any semblance to either living or dead persons or beast is pure coincidence.

