

Four No More



C. B. SMITH

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A CHILD'S SONG TO THE WORLD
FILL ME WITH YOUR HUMOR
UNDERSTANDING AND GENTLE CARE
I AM A CHILD, I NEED YOUR SMILE
AND THE WARM ACCEPTANCE THERE

MY WORLD IS SO ENCHANTING
SO BEAUTIFUL AND RARE
HELP ME GROW, AND YOU WILL KNOW
THE LOVE I HAVE TO SHARE!

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The Spaghetti Hair of Charlie O'Dare

Charlie was a round faced boy with wide blue-green eyes and orange hair of spaghetti. At least it LOOKED like spaghetti. All the kids at school said so. Even his teacher, Miss Grackle. "Please get that spaghetti hair out of your face, Charlie O'Dare."

Every morning his mother combed it first to one side, then the other, each time throwing up her hands and saying, "I don't know WHAT to do with your hair, Charlie."

Even when his parents cut his hair shorter, it grew back instantly so he always had a head full of thick and wild spaghetti hair. His father said, "Just cut it off. Make him a fuzz head."

Charlie didn't like the idea of cutting his hair entirely off. Sure it was a problem to control. But still, it was HIS hair and he kinda liked it just the way it was.

Anyway, his parents made him a fuzz head and his hair grew back right away. Not knowing what else to do, his parents took him to a hair doctor.

"The boy needs more vegetables in his diet," he said. "Put him on a broccoli diet."

This his parents did and Charlie didn't mind the broccoli too much. Especially when his mother coated it with melted butter.

After one week his mother cut his hair short to see if this new diet was working. His hair grew back quick as always. Only this time it was GREEN!

So back to the doctor they went. The doctor scratched at his bald head in amazement. "I don't believe it," he said. "Never have I seen such a thing. Put him on a rhubarb diet instead."

On the rhubarb diet he went and within a week his hair changed color to blazing red, like an apple. Back to the doctor he went.

Then the diet games began:

Cauliflower: white hair.

Potatoes: brown hair.

Eggplant: purple hair.

Yams: yellow hair

Radishes: red hair

Turnips: pink hair

After so many changes in diet, Charlie's hair not only changed color every time but did not grow any less. His parents decided to put him on a carrot diet to get his hair back to its original color. Then they went to see a different doctor.

The new doctor said, "Oh the answer is as easy as the spaghetti hair on Charlie's head. Cut his hair and cover his head with plaster. Voila!"

Father thought this was a wonderful idea, mother did not.

"I'm not going to have my son going around with plaster on his head," she said. "There must be another way"

Off they stormed to forget about the bad advice from the doctor and think about this hair business on their own.

They put Charlie back on his regular diet and cut his hair. Within two weeks his hair grew out in its original color, long, glorious, and in his face.

Frustrated and out of ideas, his parents asked Charlie if HE had any ideas.

"How about a cap," he said. "I could wear a baseball cap."

They looked at each other in amazement and realized this was the best idea of all. So his parents told him he could wear a baseball cap and tuck his hair up underneath it to keep it tidy and out of his face. This is what he did and from that point on Charlie never again had to worry about hair in his face, or doctors with zany

ideas. Of course, his hair still looked like spaghetti. But he was okay with that, as he had always been.

Myra Picklebee's Sunshine Soda

In a land where grey and cloudy skies were an everyday thing, a little girl had to try hard to smile. Myra was a girl who lived in Molehill Meadows, a place of grey and cloudy skies. Sometimes when she looked out the window at the grey outdoors she found it difficult to smile.

She wanted to go outside and play but found it too cold and gloomy.

“I think the kids who live here need something to help them smile. I know lemonade makes me smile. Maybe I could make some yummy lemonade. I'll call it Sunshine Soda!”

Myra asked her mother where she could get some lemons and her mother said, “It's easy as singing, honey. Just go outside and pick them off our lemon bush.”

“Right, the lemon bush. I totally forgot about that,” said Myra.

First she turned it into a game where she was hunter hunting for lemons. Off she went into the backyard to hunt lemons.

“Oh there you are you sneaky old lemons, hanging on that bush.”

She held one up and looked at it against the cloudy sky.

“Wow! You look like the sun little lemon. I bet you'll make great lemonade.”

Into the house she bounced with her arms full of lemons. Her mother cut the lemons in half and showed Myra how to squeeze them using a lemon juicer.

“Now, just some water and a spoonful or two of honey and Voila! Lemonade for you!”

Her mother filled up a big glass with lemonade and gave it to Myra. Then Myra took a big sip and wiped her mouth on her sleeve.

Her mother frowned at her.

“Um...sorry for wiping my mouth on my sleeve, ma.”

“It’s okay this time,” said her mother. “But here’s a napkin for next time.”

Myra took a bigger sip this time, swallowed, and smiled wide.

“Yes! It does make you happy. I’m calling this Sunshine Soda, ma.”

“Good name,” said her mother.

Myra and her mother set up a table in front of the house where Myra planned to sit and sell lemonade. She made a big sign to stand up in front of the table.

SUNSHINE SODA 10 CENTS.

Soon there were people lining up all around the block to get some Sunshine Soda. Myra was doing so well she had to go inside twice to ask her mother to make more lemonade. Now she could see that people really WERE starting to smile.

“Yum,yum,” said a big man with a mustache wider than his head. “This lemonade you have is the best I’ve EVER had.”

“Yes,” said Jill, the girl who lived next door. “This really makes me happy.”

“Uh huh,” said Layla, a girl who lived across the street. “I think you’ve got a winner here, Myra.”

By this time Myra was feeling very good about herself and her decision to make lemonade so everyone had a reason to smile. Of course, she had only wanted to make something for all the children to smile. But if her drink made the adults smile too that was okay with her.

That night when she went to bed, Myra dreamed big dreams of lemonade rivers and smiley people and lots and lots of dancing dollars and happy little girls whose wonderful idea had made such an amazing change in her world. Like her world was suddenly magical.

It was by far the best sleep she ever had.

Lester Tillman's Giant Feet

Happy, smiling, and full of boyish mischief Lester was a boy like many others. Except for one thing: his feet were giant.

His feet were so big his parents had to have his shoes specially made. "There's very few size 24 shoes out there, Mrs. Tillman. Even for boys," said the shoemaker.

But Lester was happy with his giant feet. The kids at school called him Giant Foot. A name he was not entirely happy with. Of course, when someone said here comes giant foot, everyone knew exactly who they were talking about. At first some kids called him bigfoot. But this was silly because everyone knew Lester was not a big hairy beast who lived in the woods.

One day a bunch of his classmates decided to go swimming in the Mile Wide River. Some of the kids were afraid and did not want to go in. Especially Tilda, who Lester thought was the prettiest girl he'd ever seen.

"Hey," said Lester. "You can ride on my shoulders and I'll sail down the river like a speedboat!"

Tilda thought this was a great idea and the other kids agreed. "A giant idea," they said. "A great big giant one!"

So onto Lester's shoulders she went and down the river they went fast as the wind.

Seeing how riding down the river on Lester's shoulders was much more fun than swimming, two more girls asked if they could come along.

"Sure thing," said Lester.

Onto his shoulders they hopped.

First one.

Then two.

Then three.

And soon Lester was a speedboating tall thing with many arms, legs, and wide eyed faces. On and on they went. Down the river and back until soon their day of river fun was done.

But even though this day was done, riding down the river was not. Many more times Lester and his new friends visited the river for a fun day of “Foot Boarding.” Finally, it was Tilda who gave Lester a new name. “He’s not Giant Foot anymore. He’s now Foot Boarder.”

Nobody disagreed. Especially Lester, who was very happy with his new name.

Balloon Head

Jeremy is a ten year old boy who loved to play race cars and mad scientist. Happy, active, a big eater, he was an easy kid to like. Mostly. You see, the problem here was not really a problem at all, unless you had eyes and a wicked tongue.

When he was born it wasn't hard to see that he had an extra-large head. So large that his mother thought she gave birth to a bowling ball. But this was immediately questioned when the doctor tried to hand baby Jeremy to her. Up, up, up, he started to float as if he was a balloon. His mother held on to him tight, being careful not to squish the little tyke.

“Yikes. Oh wow wow wow!!” his mother squealed. “Is this normal, doctor? Do all babies float out of their mother’s arms like they’re filled with helium?”

“No, Mrs. Longfoot. It is not typical. Although some say children are born angels so it makes sense, I suppose.”

“Um, that’ nice doctor but not helpful. Do I need to keep him strapped to me or something so he won’t float away?”

“Well, that’s certainly ONE option. On the other hand if you got him some heavy shoes or a heavy helmet to wear this could help you avoid having him strapped to you, as you say.”

“Heavy shoes?”

“Yes. Heavy shoes. Like the kind worn by deep sea divers.”

So in one easy step it was settled. Jeremy would right from the start wear heavy deep sea diver shoes.

As he grew up, his parents spent less and less time with him, their jobs keeping them away from home more often than not. Because of this they took to leaving him in the care of numerous babysitters.

Being a happy sort, Jeremy didn't seem to mind. He was quite happy to play by himself and make up all sorts of games and funny stories to keep himself entertained.

It was hard for him to make friends because his parents kept him so protected from the horrible nasty children who made fun of him that he was taken out of school and taught at home. In his own little world at home Jeremy was able to do pretty much what he wanted.

As long as the babysitter wasn't looking.

But he became good at hiding things. Especially things the babysitter wouldn't want him to have. Like a pet mouse he named Henry. In Henry was found the friend young Jeremy sorely needed. And the best part was, this little friend could go everywhere with him if he kept him hid in his pocket.

Not his pants pocket of course.

His pants would have to be HUGE so the little mouse would not get squished. What Jeremy decided to do all by himself was take to wearing a wonderfully colorful short jacket his first babysitter had given him as a birthday gift.

Suddenly Jeremy was easy to identify for anybody who cared to look. He was the boy with large head, colorful jacket, and clink clink heavy shoes. Of course, all anyone had to do was use their ears to know when he was close by. They could hear a clink clink clink as he walked.

Not a very pleasant thing but this gave him his very own "walking" sound.

Probably the biggest change in Jeremy's life came when new people moved in to the house next door. A big green house with yellow roof and doors. So colorful it almost blinded you when you looked at it. And into this very colorful house moved a family with a smiley faced little girl. A girl named Natly. Now Natly had the most agreeable sort of personality. Always smiling and

laughing about something or other and from the moment Jeremy saw her he knew he would like very much to be her friend.

“Hi, um...” he said waving to her. “My name’s Jeremy. I live over there,” he pointed to his house.

“Oh...well...” said Natly, running her hands through her hair. “Mine’s Natly. Natly Nuttly. Funny name, don’t you think?” smiling so hard her face turned red.

“Kinda rhymes like. My name’s Jeremy Longfoot. Now talk about a FUNNY name!”

“Not as funny as mine, though.”

“Maybe both our names are funny.”

Natly wheeled her eyes around and looked up at the trees as if she was trying to find something.

“You’re right. Okay, Jeremy Longfoot. Guess that makes us friends.”

“But before we can be real friends, we need to have our own special super-secret super fantastic super wonderful handshake.”

Jeremy got a confused look on his face.

“Um...”

“It’s okay. Already got one. Just do what I do.”

She held out one hand in a fist and Jeremy did the same.”

“Now, bump your fist on mine like you’re pounding it.”

Jeremy did this.

“Then, I do the same to your fist, clap my hands in front of me one time, spread my arms wide up high and say KAPOW!”

“Why come you do all that and I just pound your fist once?”

“No, silly, “she said with a smile. “I’m doing all the stuff in the secret handshake. We both do it at the same time. Fist, fist, clap, KAPOW! Got it?”

“I think I got it. Can we try it?”

So on they went performing their special super-secret super fantastic super wonderful handshake until they got so tired out they had to stop.

“Now...” said Natly, sitting down and breathing hard from all the handshaking business. “Now, we’re really and totally friends.

“Yeah,” said Jeremy, thinking this was the way all people made friends.

For what seemed like forever they sat in the grass and looked at each other. Then at the trees, Then at the sky.

Finally Natly, done with just looking around, pointed at Jeremy’s feet.

“So, new friend. Why the big shoes.”

Jeremy stared at her like she was speaking a foreign language. Nobody had ever asked him that before. And he didn’t quite know what to say. It’s like his tongue was stuck to his teeth.

“Um...well...if I don’t wear these I float away,” simple and clear, as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

“Oh, c’mon,” said Natly, smiling and shaking her head. “You serious?”

“I’ll show you. Here,” he said. “Now hold my hand and I’ll take off only one shoe.”

“Um, new friend. I can’t hold your hand. It’s not like I’m your girlfriend.”

“No,no. Not like my girlfriend or nothing. You don’t hold on to my hand I’ll float away.”

Natly squinched her eyes and thought about this.

“Still think you’re messing with me, but okay. I’ll hold your hand. But not in a girlfriend kinda way.”

“Okay,” said Jeremy. “In just a ‘friend’ kinda way.”

The minute Jeremy took off his shoe he slowly began to lift off the ground.

“Hurry, Natly. Grab my hand.”

“Uh...Uh..,” Natly mumbled, too stunned to do anything but look at him with her mouth wide open.

“Hurry...my hand!”

Natly moved quickly to grab onto his hand. When she did, he stopped floating upward and just hovered steadily over her head. Like a balloon on a string.

“Wow,” said Natly. “I didn’t believe you. I mean it’s so...so.”

“Weird, right?”

“Uh, different for sure.”

“The first time I was in my room when I did this. Talk about weird.”

“I know, right? I mean...”

Suddenly Natly stopped talking. With his feet pointing up to the sky, Henry fell out of his pocket right onto Natly’s head. She began grabbing at her hair with her free hand.

“Aach...what’s that? A...a... RAT!!”

“No, a pet...”

But Jeremy’s words were cut short as he suddenly had bigger things to deal with. In her panic over a “rat” in her hair, Natly had let go of Jeremy’s hand as she ran around screaming, “rat, rat.”

Panic set in for Jeremy as he slowly floated away. He was looking at the ground, looking at Natly, looking at Henry, when his eyes caught sight of the big birch tree not too far away. Frantic like a swimmer drowning at sea, he began waving his arms trying to make himself float over toward the tree before he got up too high. Closer, closer, closer he got, until he got tangled in the branches.

“I’m okay,” he yelled out, after catching his breath.

As if waking from a dream, Natly stopped running in circles and looked up to see where the voice was coming from. A look of shock raced across her face.

“Oh no...oh no. I’m like so sorry...” she stammered, running over to the tree. “I mean it’s like...”

“S’okay. Not like you did this ever.”

“Yeah, but still.”

“f you just help me down it’d be good.”

With Natly’s help Jeremy got himself untangled and out of the tree. Once on the ground she helped by holding him in place as he put on his shoe. They were so busy getting Jeremy out of the tree and into his shoes he had totally forgotten about his pet mouse. Jeremy began scanning his eyes around him and calling out.

“Here, Henry. Come on boy.”

Minutes passed in absolute scared silence. Minutes crept on it seemed forever. Then, magically Jeremy could see the blades of grass begin to sway and part. As if Henry was a trained circus animal he came scurrying back toward Jeremy. Natly saw the mouse heading her way and her eyes flew open in shock.

“Oh no. That rat again. Aach!!” said Natly, taking cover behind Jeremy.

“My pet mouse. That’s all. Only friend I had till you,” he said, picking Henry up and softly rubbing his furry back.

Natly watched this display of affection, her eyes going all wet and dreamy.

“Aww...your little friend. How cute!”

“Uh huh. Now your little friend too, right Henry?”

The mouse looked at him intently as if he understood. Which was just fine. Jeremy thought of his pet mouse like the brother he never

had. As far as he was concerned, Henry understood what he said just fine.

“Henry says it’s okay by him. You can tell by the way his nose twitches and stuff.”

“Totally,” said Natly. “His nose is totally going wild.”

“That means he’s happy.”

“Happy I’m not trying to squash him I bet.”

“Yeah, I guess,” agreed Jeremy.

“All this stuff’s got me kinda hungry. Wanna go to Buffo’s for ice cream?”

“Buffo’s?”

“Yeah. Around the corner over there. My cousin says I don’t need no money or nothing.”

“Wow. I didn’t know there was a free ice cream place so close.”

Natly started laughing and slapped Jeremy on the knee.

“No, silly. Not a free ice cream place. Free for me cuz I’m his cousin.”

“Oh, your cousin, so he’s like—”

“I’m Lenny’s little cousin, right? So he gives me stuff...sometimes.”

“Woo hoo, Lenny. Let’s go then!”

“Um...not until you put Henry away, okay?”

“Sure. In my pocket.”

“He stays there, right?”

“Always does.”