

The winning smile

by Stanley Gazemna · Language: EN

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Overview

Stanley Gazemba's "The Winning Smile" tells the heartwarming story of Juma, a young boy in Kenya who idolizes his football hero, Black Mamba. Black Mamba is not only a talented player but is also renowned for his captivating "winning smile." Juma, believing that this smile is the key to success and happiness, embarks on a determined quest to acquire one for himself. He tries various methods, from practicing in front of a mirror to observing and imitating others, often leading to humorous and sometimes frustrating outcomes.

Juma's journey is one of self-discovery, as he grapples with the idea of outward appearance versus inner confidence. He learns that true success and happiness don't come from mimicking others or conforming to an ideal, but from embracing one's unique qualities and finding joy in one's own identity. The book subtly explores themes of self-acceptance, individuality, and the often-misguided pursuit of external validation, ultimately delivering a powerful message about the importance of being true to oneself.

Key Takeaways

- Embrace your unique qualities rather than trying to imitate others.
- True confidence and happiness originate from within, not from external appearances.
- Perseverance is valuable, but it's important to direct it towards self-improvement, not self-alteration.
- Hero-worship can be a source of inspiration, but it should not lead to losing sight of one's own identity.
- The most genuine and beautiful smile is the one that reflects your true self.
- Focus on developing your skills and character, as these contribute more to success than superficial traits.

Chapter Summaries

Juma's Hero

Juma, a young boy, is captivated by his football hero, Black Mamba. Black Mamba is not only a star player but is also famous for his distinctive and seemingly magical "winning smile" that appears after every goal. Juma believes this smile is the secret to Black Mamba's success and popularity.

The Quest for the Smile

Inspired by Black Mamba, Juma decides he must acquire a "winning smile" of his own. He begins a determined quest, convinced that having such a smile will bring him similar success and admiration on the football field and in life. He starts by practicing in front of a mirror.

Mirror, Mirror

Juma spends hours in front of the mirror, trying to contort his face into what he imagines is Black Mamba's perfect smile. He tries different expressions, but none feel natural or look quite right, often resulting in comical or awkward grimaces rather than the desired winning look.

Observing Others

Frustrated with his mirror practice, Juma starts observing other people's smiles, trying to find a model. He notices different types of smiles among his friends and family, but realizes that each smile is unique to the person, making it difficult to simply copy.

The Disappointment

Despite his persistent efforts, Juma fails to replicate Black Mamba's smile or find a satisfactory alternative. He becomes disheartened, feeling that he might never achieve the success he desires without this crucial attribute. His focus on the smile distracts him from enjoying the game itself.

A Friend's Wisdom

A wise friend or family member notices Juma's preoccupation and offers a different perspective. They gently suggest that true happiness and a genuine smile come from within, from enjoying what you do and being yourself, rather than trying to be someone else.

The Realization

Juma begins to understand that his hero's smile is a reflection of Black Mamba's own joy and confidence, not a separate magical entity. He realizes that his own smile, whatever it looks like, is perfect when it comes from a place of genuine happiness and self-acceptance.

Juma's Own Smile

Embracing this new understanding, Juma stops trying to force a smile. He focuses on playing football for the love of the game and being himself. When he finally scores a goal, a natural, joyful smile spreads across his face—his own unique winning smile, born of genuine accomplishment and happiness.

Themes

- Self-acceptance

- Individuality
- Hero worship
- Inner confidence
- Appearance vs. reality

Frequently Asked Questions

What is The winning smile about?

"The Winning Smile" is about a young boy named Juma who idolizes his football hero, Black Mamba, and believes that Black Mamba's "winning smile" is the key to success. Juma embarks on a quest to acquire a similar smile, only to learn that true happiness and confidence come from within and from embracing one's own unique identity, rather than imitating others.

Is The winning smile worth reading?

Yes, "The Winning Smile" is a charming and valuable read, especially for young children. It delivers an important message about self-acceptance, individuality, and the futility of trying to be someone you're not. Its simple narrative and relatable protagonist make it an engaging story with a lasting moral lesson.

How does The winning smile end?

Spoiler: The book ends with Juma realizing that his hero's smile is a reflection of genuine joy and confidence, not a superficial trick. He stops trying to force a smile and instead focuses on playing football for the love of it. When he eventually scores a goal, a natural, authentic smile appears on his face, which is his own unique and truly winning smile.

Who should read The winning smile?

"The Winning Smile" is ideal for young readers, particularly those aged 6-10. It's a great choice for children who might be struggling with self-esteem, comparing themselves to others, or learning about the importance of being true to themselves. Parents and educators looking for a book with a positive message will also appreciate it.

How long does it take to read The winning smile?

Given that it is a children's book, "The Winning Smile" is a relatively quick read. Most readers can expect to finish the book in approximately 30 to 45 minutes, depending on their reading speed and engagement with the story.