



It had been raining for days, and everyone was grumpy. Everyone except Sizwe, who woke up with a smile every morning.

“Yoh! Sizwe! That smile is magic!” said Gogo. “Is it for me?” Sizwe clapped his hand over his mouth. “But it’s MY smile, Gogo,” he whispered.



His mother laughed. “Sizwe! A smile is something you can give away without losing it. Look!”

She lifted him up to the mirror. There was his smile, just as bright as before.



It was time to go out. Mama buttoned up Sizwe's raincoat, and off they went, through the rain, to the library.

Down the street, Sizwe's best friend Zanele stood at the window of her house, looking sadly at the rain.

Sizwe felt his smile creeping, creeping up. Before he knew it, his smile LEAPT out, and flew across the garden to Zanele.



Zanele held on tightly to the smile – it was far too precious to let it get away.

As Sizwe walked away to the library, Zanele's doorbell rang. It was the postman, with a letter from her favourite cousin.

Zanele was so happy, that the smile bounced up, and beamed out at the postman. "Thank you, Mister Postman!" she said.



Zanele's smile was the brightest thing the postman had seen all morning. It kept him warm as he trudged off through the rain.

He came to a big house. Inside the gate, a dog was spinning around in circles, barking, barking, barking. He was so silly, that the postman couldn't help smiling.

The smile bounced through the gate with a glitter of glee.



The dog stopped barking. He pricked up his ears and wagged his tail. Then he turned and ran back to the house with the precious, warm smile.

A bent old man opened the door. “Oh, no! You can’t come inside. You’re all wet!” he told the dog. But right away, the smile beamed up at the old man.



The old man stood a little straighter. “Eish,” he said, “Who cares if it’s raining? Let’s go for a walk, boy!” And off they went, splashing in the puddles.

There, at the zebra crossing, stood grumpy Mrs Makabela, the traffic cop. She looked cold, and wet, and miserable.

The old man knew just what to do. “Morning, Mrs Makabela!” he called, and smiled his biggest, brightest smile.

But Mrs Makabela... did not smile back.



Standing in the rain for days can make a face sad, sad, sad. But a smile is a magical thing and, by now, the smile was so strong, and so bright, that it was very hard to keep inside. It didn't work right away, but bit by tiny bit, it began to creep out until, at last...!

A great, big smile lit up Mrs Makabela's face!

The school bell rang, and children ran to cross the road. Mrs Makabela put up her sign, and smiled, and smiled, at each and every child.



The children smiled at their moms and dads, and their gogos and tatas and brothers and sisters. They smiled at the bus driver and the greengrocer, and Mme Makau, who went off to smile at her husband, who smiled at the mayor...

The smiles leapt and rolled and beamed and gleamed until EVERYONE was smiling and giggling and laughing out loud in the rain.



In the library, everything was quiet except for the sound of the rain. “It’s time to go,” said Sizwe’s mother, closing her book. “Aw, mom!” said Sizwe, who had run out of smiles.



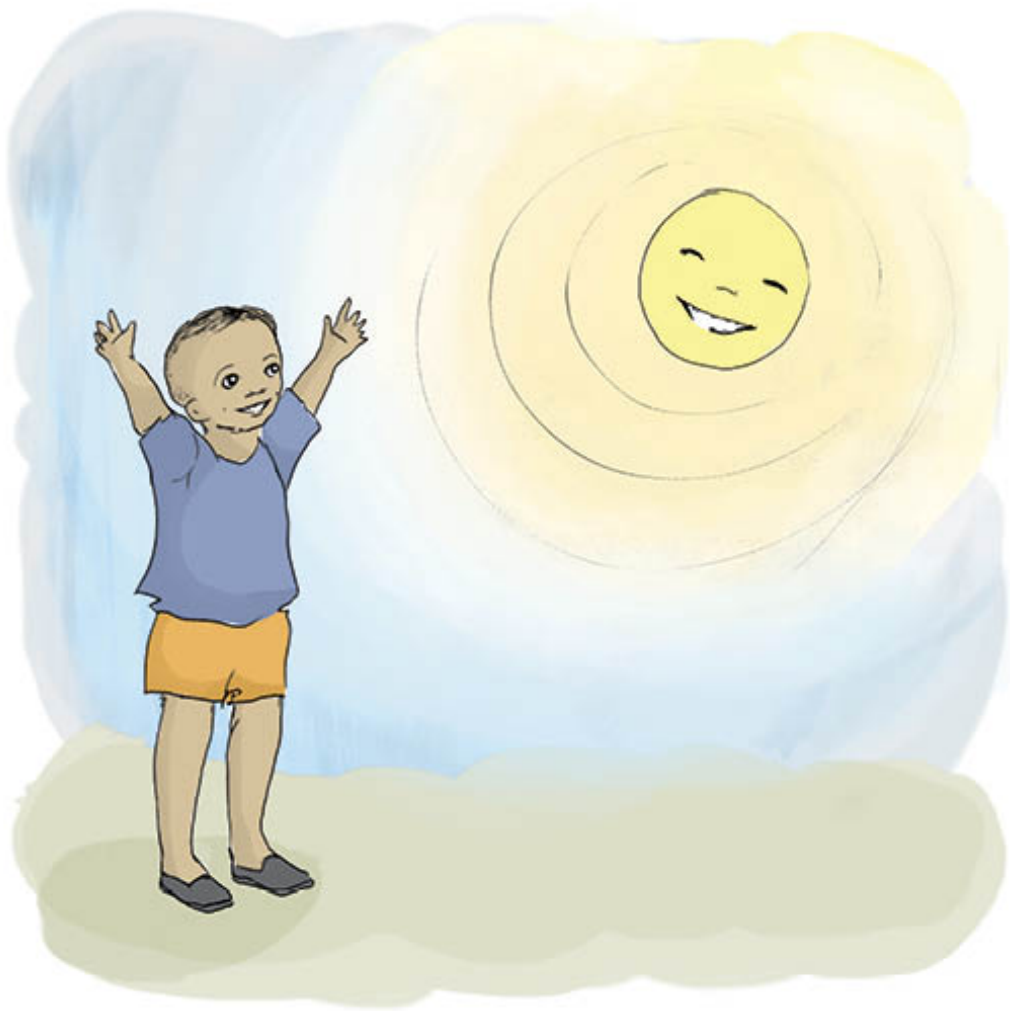
But as they stepped out into the street...

WHAT A SIGHT!

Everyone in town was there!

Everyone!

And they were ALL smiling!



The smiles bounced around and beamed at Sizwe. They warmed him, and tickled him, and crept up, up, up from his toes... to the TOP of his head. He was so full of happiness that the smile burst out, brilliant and beaming bright.

And something changed. The dark, gloomy, rainy afternoon didn't seem so dark anymore.

Could it be...? YES!

The clouds parted, and the warm sun shone down on them, with the biggest, brightest, most brilliant smile of all.



Sizwe's Smile

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