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### My Face and Me

The clock was ticking, ticking, ticking, but not literally because it was digital. I just felt so tired and bored that I could hear the nonexistent clock ticking regardless. I was staring at the assignment in front of me, frowning. The motivation I had for school work had left my body like the Europeans heading to America, quickly and tired of nonsense. Something kept flooding my brain, and drowning my attention span. It was something that an acquaintance had told me only hours ago.

"That's the first time I've ever heard you be positive about anything Emily!" It echoed in my brain. I kept thinking to myself, *this can't be right. Was I really that much of a Debbie downer?* This all brought me back to a horrible memory from freshman year. The day my perspective of everything had changed forever. The day I got yelled at for smiling.

I know what you're thinking, "oh god, is this lunatic of a girl seriously going to whine about this?" I would have to say yes with intimidation, but you need to put yourself in my shoes. I am a very shy person. I am quiet, and apparently I do not talk very much. However in my head, I feel like I say plenty.

I was sitting in my design exploration class which is full of boys, most of them older than me, and one of them named Trayvon was talking back to the teacher. Treyvon had always been nice to me, and it wasn't like he was completely out of line, but Treyvon and Mr. Searles butted heads more than a couple of mountain goats.

Now I learned two things that day, one is when the teacher is mad, you show no emotions, two is that not everything in life is something to be happy about. The teacher, Mr. Searles, was older and had absolutely no clue how to interact with kids. He had this dopey smile that screamed "I'm trying too hard to be cool", yet he was very controlling of things he had no clue how to control. He wore old-timey glasses with round lenses, and had a blond painters brush mustache. The front portion of his head was bald, which I can only assume was caused by male pattern baldness. There also were freckles and age spots visible from any angle when you looked at his shiny dome.

So Treyvon was back talking him, which isn't out of the ordinary. One minute Mr. Searles would be smiling ridiculously, the next glaring angrily, all the while Treyvon was as cool as a cucumber. Mr. Searles was like that bad parent who wants to be your friend, and also yell at you all hours of the day, it just isn't going to turn out well. I thought it was a bit funny that Mr. Searles was practically impersonating my grandmother who has Alzheimer's and I smiled like a dufus. He just acted like a forgetful, innocent old man, and I couldn't help but see the resemblance. Instead of yelling at the kid, who wouldn't conform, he yelled at me... for smiling. He said I was encouraging Treyvon, even though this kid was facing the complete other direction from me. I immediately turned red and just avoided looking anywhere but the white brick wall in front of me. The feeling of 32 sets of eyes on my back came soon after, even when Treyvon and Mr. Searles continued to quarrel. I waited for my face to turn to a lesser shade of red and my watery eyes to get a hold of themselves before I turned back around. They continued arguing for a good 5 minutes after that, and finally once they stopped we went back to busy work.

I'm fairly sure everyone in that class forgot about that incident by now, all except for me. Mr. Searles did apologize afterwards, but the deed was done. The already fragile format of how I perceive the world had been torn in two and I was broken. Some people may have brushed that

off but remember, I am an over achieving, shy, and overly critical teen. After that statement had hit my eardrums I had began frantically over analyzing everything I've ever done. I became a sad person who didn't know what to do with my facial muscles whenever I felt any type of emotion. Even now when walking in the hall and I see something funny I have to bite my cheek to make sure I don't make myself look dumb by smiling. Let me tell you how awful it feels to know that your personal happiness is a nuisance. It feels horrible, every time you feel a bit of happiness you want to cry. Your anxiety of what the people around you might be thinking floods your mind. You are always frantically blinking because no one can see you cry, and apparently smile.

I am no longer the happy-go-lucky freshman I was before, and I have Mr. Searles to thank for that. Apparently I am more negative, and according to my writing a tad over dramatic, but self improvement comes in strides. The ticking of the silent clock is still there, only fainter now. I think to myself about how silly I will feel in ten years over this whole ordeal, but now I try to smile.