

# "The Happiness Squad"

**A short play**

**Written and Translated from Hebrew by: Ido Setter**

**Characters:**

**GLEE**

**SMILEY**

**HAPPY**

**H.**

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## **SCENE 1**

A dark guard post. GLEE stands in post, wearing a helmet and holding a gun. He walks around the post. A noise is heard.

**GLEE:** Who's there?

He doesn't hear anything. GLEE goes to check. A noise is heard.

**GLEE:** Who's there? (waits a moment. Speaks Arabic) Stop or I'll... Stop or I'll...

A noise is heard. GLEE goes to the radio.

**GLEE:** This is Alpha one spotting movement at... Over? Over? (puts the radio back) OK. Don't panic. There you go, it's gone.

A noise is heard.

**GLEE:** OK. SOP. Standard Operating Procedure. (takes out a pad. The pad falls. Picks it up and reads)

Enter SMILEY who is also wearing a helmet and holding a gun.

**SMILEY:** Danger's close. Dirties coming in.

GLEE falls flat on the stage.

**SMILEY:** The dirties are here. They are the enemy. Counter attack.

GLEE continues to lie flat on the stage.

**SMILEY:** Well, soldier? You are fucking up both the SOP and the DOP?

**GLEE:** I'm... I'm...

**SMILEY:** On your feet, soldier.

GLEE gets up.

**SMILEY:** What you got there?

**GLEE:** A pad, sir.

**SMILEY:** And you're reading it while standing in post?

**GLEE:** Yes, sir.

**SMILEY:** Why?

**GLEE:** To know my shit. Sir.

**SMILEY:** It's not because you can't remember the DOP which is the Dirty's Operating Procedure, right?

**GLEE:** Fuck no. Sir.

**SMILEY:** So go ahead. Dirty's Operating Procedure.

**GLEE:** Yes sir.

SMILEY waits for a few seconds. GLEE tries to remember.

**SMILEY:** What's the first step in the procedure?

**GLEE:** (looks in his pad. Speaks Arabic) Stop or I'll... Stop or I'll...

**SMILEY:** Say it in English.

**GLEE:** Stop or I'll smile.

**SMILEY:** (says it in Arabic) Stop or I'll smile.

**GLEE:** (says it in Arabic as well) Stop or I'll smile. Fuck yeah. Sir.

**SMILEY:** Why, thank you, soldier. The dirty is still bleak. What do you do?

**GLEE:** Three smiles in the air.

**SMILEY:** Go ahead, then.

GLEE smiles three times.

**SMILEY:** He's even bleaker. Now what?

**GLEE:** One smile to his feet.

GLEE gets down on his knees and smiles.

**SMILEY:** Bleak like hell.

**GLEE:** One smile to center mass.

GLEE stands in front of SMILEY and smiles.

**SMILEY:** Not good, soldier. Not good.

**GLEE:** I'll memorize the procedure, sir. I promise.

**SMILEY:** That's not the problem, soldier. Your smile fucking sucks.

**GLEE:** Fucking sucks, sir?

**SMILEY:** Fucking sucks. It's slow. Inaccurate. No intensity. Not only did it not make me happier, it lowered my happiness rank.

**GLEE:** Lowered your happiness rank, sir? (almost cries)

**SMILEY:** Yes. My happiness rank rolled down from "Ever-happy" to "Content" because of your smile. Don't cry, soldier. You know that crying means an immediate dishonorable discharge.

**GLEE:** I'm sorry, sir.

**SMILEY:** Don't be sorry. Practice. Give me ten smiles.

GLEE starts smiling ten times. Enter commander HAPPY. SMILEY and GLEE notice him and salute.

**HAPPY:** (to GLEE) Now salute me with a smile.

GLEE smiles and salutes.

**HAPPY:** Dismissed. “Happiness Squad”, we’ve been roused.

**SMILEY:** Roused, sir?

**HAPPY:** Roused.

**GLEE:** W..where to, sir?

**HAPPY:** Sweden.

**SMILEY:** Sweden? isn’t it where...

**HAPPY:** Yes. Yes.

HAPPY and SMILEY laugh a big laugh.

**SMILEY:** (to GLEE) Why aren’t you laughing, soldier?

**GLEE:** What... what do we need to do in Sweden, sir?

**HAPPY:** (stops laughing. Smiley continues) Cease laughter. (SMILEY continues to laugh) Cease laughter.

SMILEY stops laughing.

**SMILEY:** Cease laughter, sir?

**HAPPY:** Cease laughter. (to GLEE) Don’t you know what do we need to in Sweden?

**GLEE:** No, sir

**HAPPY:** Don’t you know that H. is in Sweden?

**GLEE:** H.? Who’s H.?

**SMILEY:** You don’t know who’s H. He doesn’t know who’s H.

**HAPPY:** Didn’t you study history in school? Don’t you know that H. is the happiest soldier who has ever been here in the past decade?

**GLEE:** No, sir.

**HAPPY:** Let me finish.

**SMILEY:** (to GLEE) Let him finish.

**HAPPY:** I was the one who trained him. With my own two hands.

**SMILEY:** His own two hands.

**HAPPY:** (to SMILEY) Let me finish. The past decade was a very difficult one. Instability. Military operations. Reality TV. People were... bleak. H. wouldn't let that happen. Not on his watch. He planned, set in motion and executed OJR - "Operation Joyous Rejoicing" - to terminate all bleakness in our country.

**GLEE:** And... he succeeded?

**HAPPY:** The happiness levels taken near the northern border were 300 percent higher than average.

**SMILEY:** Some of the happiness even trickled into the ocean.

**HAPPY:** And then he focused it and shot it straight to some fishermen's boats. He even knew how to make fishermen happy...

When the Scandinavians heard of it they asked to get him for a year, so he can raise their continental happiness level. He even managed to lower their suicide percentages a bit. And then, one day – he disappeared.

**SMILEY:** (after a while) Commander Happy?

**HAPPY:** Yes?

**SMILEY:** Is everything alright, sir?

**HAPPY:** What? Yes. I wasn't bleak, was I?

**SMILEY:** No, no, no way, sir. Just a little weak.

**HAPPY:** Excuse me for a sec. (laughs a few times) That's better. Now, where were we?

**SMILEY:** One day – he disappeared.

**HAPPY:** Yes. HQ just received a definite ID on H. in Sierra, Echo, Whiskey, Delta, Echo, November.

**SMILEY:** Sweden.

**HAPPY:** He's being held in a compound. We need to infiltrate that compound, capture the subject and get him back. Any questions, "Happiness

Squad”?

**GLEE:** I’m staying here, right, sir?

**HAPPY:** Give us a smile. (GLEE does not smile) Give us a smile. (GLEE does not smile). Give us a smile. That’s an order. (GLEE smiles) How can we leave you here with such a smile?

**GLEE:** But sir, I’m still a rookie and...

**HAPPY:** Start packing. Roll call with full equipment in zero six hundred hours.

GLEE, SMILEY and HAPPY exit.

## **SCENE 2**

GLEE and SMILEY sit in the airport.

**GLEE:** Sir.

**SMILEY:** You can call me Smiley.

**GLEE:** Smiley?

**SMILEY:** Yes. Smiley. We go on a mission together so we can dispense with the formalities.

**GLEE:** Thanks, si... Smiley.

**SMILEY:** You wanted to ask me something?

**GLEE:** Yes. Say, Smiley, aren’t you scared?

**SMILEY:** Of what?

**GLEE:** I don’t know. All those stories about Sweden.

**SMILEY:** What stories about Sweden?

**GLEE:** They say it’s bleak. And dark. And snowy. And everyone commits suicide.

**SMILEY:** So?

**GLEE:** I’m afraid that H might have been affected by all of it. I’m afraid he’s no longer the same person commander Happy thinks he is.

**SMILEY:** Don’t talk about H. like that.

**GLEE:** Don't you think that there's a chance that...

**SMILEY:** No.

Listen, Glee, I know that this is your first mission and that you are a bit nervous. It happens to everyone. Count on us. We know what needs to be done.

**GLEE:** It's still Sweden we're talking about, after all.

**SMILEY:** Sweden doesn't impress me that much. I can melt anything with a smile. Even the snow in Sweden. It's been that way ever since I was a child. They don't call me "Smiley" for nothing.

**GLEE:** Smiley is your real name?

**SMILEY:** It's my given name. My parents had no choice. I was born with such a huge smile on my face. All the other babies were crying and I was smiling, from the first moment of my life. The doctor gave me a pat on the back. He thought I wasn't breathing.

**GLEE:** So why aren't you...

**SMILEY:** Leading the squad? It's all politics. Happy founded the squad. And he's done so much for it, really, but he's grown up already. I even think (gets a bit closer to GLEE) that he's grown tired. And everyone knows that tiredness brings on bleakness. Did you see how he almost started to cry a few hours back? In a few years the squad will become the "Smiley Squad". Do you know what is my plan, Glee?

**GLEE:** What?

**SMILEY:** But let's keep it between us, OK? (GLEE nods) To establish a special cyber force that will spread smiles throughout the internet as well. We are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, after all.

**GLEE:** Wow.

**SMILEY:** Yes. Websites full of smiles. Dot com dot smiley. What do you say?

**GLEE:** Me?

**SMILEY:** Yes. You look like someone who knows his way around these kind of things. You can be my deputy.



**GLEE:** And... Commander Happy?

**SMILEY:** Happy? He'll be discharged.

Enter HAPPY.

**HAPPY:** We need to get going. But before we board the plane – “Happiness Squad”, the anthem.

HAPPY, SMILEY and GLEE sing “Don't Worry Be Happy”. They exit.

### **SCENE 3**

A scene with no dialogues. HAPPY leads SMILEY and GLEE in their attack. It's an attack of smiles, laughs, funny faces. But it takes place as a standard military attack, with manoeuvres, holding force etc. The Happiness Squad gets into the closed compound where they find H., who is anesthetized. They carry him and exit the stage.

### **SCENE 4**

An interrogation room.

HAPPY, GLEE and SMILEY sit in front of H. H. is indifferent.

**HAPPY:** Wow. Ten years.

**H.:** Yeah.

**HAPPY:** Let me have a look at you. (looks at him) How... How do you feel?

**H.:** Great.

**HAPPY:** Glad to see me?

**H.:** Yeah.

**HAPPY:** I thought... I thought I'd never see you again.

HAPPY gets up and hugs H., who is still indifferent.

**HAPPY:** What's wrong?

**H.:** I'm tired.

**GLEE:** He's probably tired from the flight, sir.

**H.:** No, it's not it.

**SMILEY:** What is it, then?

**H.:** It's life.

HAPPY laughs. SMILEY joins him after a few moments, and a few moments after that GLEE joins them.

**HAPPY:** It's life... He always knew how to make those jokes. There was this time when we were stuck in the field, everybody was in low spirits and then he...

**H.:** Can I get some sleep?

**SMILEY:** Get some sleep?

**H.:** Sleep. I'm so tired.

**HAPPY:** Sure. No problem. But before you do – give us a little laugh.

**H.:** A laugh?

**HAPPY:** Yes. I want to hear your laughter. Do you know how many times I imagined hearing it?

**H.:** I'm...

**HAPPY:** Know what? A giggle can also work.

**H.:** I'm...

**HAPPY:** OK, we'll settle for a smile, then. Show us this gorgeous smile of yours.

They wait. H. does not move.

**H.:** I'm... I... I can't.

**HAPPY:** What's the matter?

**H.:** I'm bleak.

They are shocked. And then

**HAPPY:** What did you just say?

**H.:** I'm bleak.

**HAPPY:** How did it happen?

**H.:** One day I was walking down the street and that was that.

**GLEE:** Just like that, all of a sudden?

**H.:** Yeah.

**SMILEY:** Bleak?

**H.:** Yeah. It's irreversible.

**SMILEY:** Why?

**H.:** Don't know.

**HAPPY:** What do you mean, "don't know"? Did you forget our anthem?

HAPPY and SMILEY start singing "Don't Worry Be Happy". GLEE joins them after a few seconds. They expect H. to join them as well but he can't.

**H.:** I remember. Of course I remember.

**HAPPY:** So why are you bleak? What gives you the right to be bleak? I raised you as if you were my own son. I thought you will be the squad's next commander.

**H.:** I don't want to be the squad's next commander.

**HAPPY:** What do you want to do, then?

**H.:** Sleep.

**HAPPY:** You are not going to sleep until you give us a little smile.

**H.:** I really can't do it.

**HAPPY:** Make an effort.

**H.:** I haven't smiled in ten years.

**HAPPY:** Make an effort. For me.

H. tries to smile. Can't.

**H.:** Give me a pass. Please.

**HAPPY:** No.

**H.:** I can't.

**HAPPY:** Yes, you can. You need to remember who you are. I'll be strict with you. But it's for your own good. I'll get a smile out of you by the end of this night. "Happiness Squad" - follow me.

HAPPY, SMILEY and GLEE exit.

## **SCENE 5**

The same room, after a few hours. GLEE sits in front of a very tired H.

**GLEE:** Still no go?

**H.:** No.

**GLEE:** Say, what did they do to you in Scandinavia?

**H.:** Nothing.

**GLEE:** Did they feed you only with disgusting Salmon and were constantly polite, alienated and sarcastic?

**H.:** No. They were great. I just had enough of it all and became bleak.

**GLEE:** And what's it like, being bleak?

**H.:** It's great. Really really great. Everything is so calm all of a sudden.

SMILEY enters.

**SMILEY:** Still nothing?

**GLEE:** Nothing.

**SMILEY:** (to H.) Hey. Hey. Don't you want to get some sleep?

**H.:** I do.

**SMILEY:** So give us a smile.

**H.:** Waive it. I'll smile when I wake up. I promise.

**GLEE:** No way.

**SMILEY:** Listen, Glee, maybe we should...

**GLEE:** No fucking way.

**SMILEY:** He promised he'd smile after the wakes up. Don't you believe him?

**GLEE:** No. And besides, commander Happy's orders were very clear.

**SMILEY:** I'll handle it. Go to bed, soldier.

**GLEE:** No. I'm not going until he smiles. Look at him. We have to get a smile out of him. Right now. So he can be who he used to be. Happy will be happy... He will probably discharge himself and make you the squad's commander, Smiley.

**SMILEY:** Won't he appoint him to be the squad's commander?

**GLEE:** Not if you're the one who gets a smile out of him.

**SMILEY:** You think so?

**GLEE:** I know so. If you prove yourself Happy will have to discharge himself and let you be the squad's next commander.

You can establish that special cyber force you've always dreamt about.

**SMILEY:** Prove myself?

**GLEE:** Prove yourself.

**SMILEY:** Wait a sec.

SMILEY shoves his face in H.'s face and smiles. Stays like this for a few seconds. H. doesn't move.

**SMILEY:** You are the first person who is able to withstand Smiley's smile.

**H.:** Your name is Smiley?

**SMILEY:** Smiley. It's my given name. (smiles again) Doesn't do anything to you?

**H.:** Nothing.

SMILEY continues to smile at H. After a few moments, SMILEY looks the other way.

**GLEE:** Smiley, is everything alright?

**SMILEY:** I'm... something is happening to me. Something bad is happening to me.

**GLEE:** Smiley, what's going on?

**SMILEY:** My happiness rank... I got to get out of here.

**GLEE:** Don't leave me here alone, Smiley.

**SMILEY:** I'll be right back.

SMILEY exits.

**H.:** What's your name?

**GLEE:** Glee. I already told you.

**H.:** No. Your name is not Glee.

**GLEE:** My name is Glee.

**H.:** How did you parents name you?

**GLEE:** Glee.

**H.:** When you were a child and your mommy tucked you in bed, did she call you "Glee"?

**GLEE:** I don't remember...

**H.:** What did she call you?

**GLEE:** She called me...

**H.:** Great, you are about to remember it.

**GLEE:** She called me...

Enter SMILEY and HAPPY.

**GLEE:** She called me...

**HAPPY:** She called you "Glee".

**GLEE:** No. That's what you call me. My mother called me...

**HAPPY:** Don't say another word, soldier. (to H.) You leave me no choice, H. I thought we would be able to rehabilitate you. But now it seems we'll have to take some more serious measures. (military tone. In Arabic) Stop or I'll smile. (back to English) Three smiles in the air. (HAPPY and SMILEY smile three smiles) One smile to the feet. (HAPPY and SMILEY get down on their knees and smile). One smile to center mass.

HAPPY and SMILEY stand in front of H. and smile. H. does not move.

**H.:** (to HAPPY) What's your name?

**HAPPY:** What?

**H.:** What is your name?

**HAPPY:** Happy.

**H.:** What's your real name?

**SMILEY:** Don't answer it, sir.

**H.:** Happy? Your name's not Happy.

**SMILEY:** It's a trap.

**GLEE:** My name is Arthur.

**H.:** Hi, Arthur.

**HAPPY:** My name is Clark.

**H.:** Hi, Clark.

**SMILEY:** My name is... (to HAPPY) Can I, sir? (HAPPY nods) My name is Joe.

**H.:** Hi, Joe.

**SMILEY:** It's my given name.

**HAPPY:** (almost crying) I can't... I can't...

**SMILEY:** Are you about to cry, sir?

**HAPPY:** It's Clark, not "sir".

**SMILEY:** OK, Clark it is. But don't cry. If you do you'll be immediately dishonorably discharged.

**HAPPY:** (cries) I don't care. I can't hold it inside of me any longer.

HAPPY's crying gets louder and louder. GLEE starts crying also. SMILEY tries very hard not to cry. He smiles, he laughs, he hides under the table. HAPPY and GLEE continue crying.

**SMILEY:** (to H.) Look what you've done, you monster.

**H.:** (to GLEE) aren't you feeling a lot better now?

**GLEE:** I feel great.

**H.:** (to HAPPY) And you?

**HAPPY:** I've never felt like this.

**SMILEY:** (to HAPPY) sure, Clark. Because you have just been dishonorably discharged from the "Happiness Squad". In fact, that's it. The "Happiness Squad" ceases to exist. There's only the "Smiley Squad" from now on.

**HAPPY:** I don't care. It got out, at last. At last!

**GLEE:** Don't you feel like crying, Joe?

**SMILEY:** No. I'm focused on raising my happiness rank.

**GLEE:** Not even a few small tears?

**H.:** Try it. It'll be good for you.

**HAPPY:** It's fun.

**GLEE:** You can continue being Smiley after that.

SMILEY starts crying very slowly. He cries and cries and cries.

**GLEE:** Isn't it great?

**SMILEY:** (still crying) Yes, yes. It's great.

**GLEE:** Maybe we can found a new squad. "The Sadness Squad".

H. smiles widely, and immediately starts laughing a big laugh. He laughs and laughs



and laughs.

**H.:** “The Sadness Squad”. (continues laughing) That was all I needed.

**HAPPY:** (stops crying) He is laughing. At last, he is laughing.

**SMILEY:** What a laughter... I’ve never heard that kind of laughter before.

HAPPY and SMILEY start laughing also.

GLEE is the only one who is not laughing.

**HAPPY:** Glee?

**GLEE:** Arthur.

**HAPPY:** Why aren’t you laughing?

**GLEE:** Because I’m bleak.

**SMILEY:** OK. We were also bleak for a little while and we got over it. Now laugh.

**GLEE:** I can’t.

**H.:** Look at me, Glee. I’ve been bleak for ten years and now I’m laughing like a child.

**GLEE:** I can’t.

**HAPPY:** I’ll kick you out of the “Happiness Squad”.

**GLEE:** Fuck the “Happiness Squad”. It doesn’t exist anymore anyway.

**HAPPY:** Of course it does. I forgive all of us for whatever happened and I’m letting everyone here know that the “Happiness Squad” is now fully functional.

**GLEE:** The “Happiness Squad” or the “Smiley Squad”?

**SMILEY:** Glee, don’t...

**GLEE:** My name is Arthur. (to HAPPY) You know he’s dying to relieve you of your command.

**HAPPY:** Smiley, is that true?

**SMILEY:** Well, I...

**HAPPY:** Answer me. Don’t be afraid. Is that true? Do you want to relieve me of

my command and take over?

**SMILEY:** I do.

**HAPPY:** And that'll make you happy?

**SMILEY:** It will.

**HAPPY:** So there you go. You are the squad's commander. If it makes you happy, it makes me happy as well.

**SMILEY:** Thanks. Although... well, sir, I would like to continue being your deputy.

**HAPPY:** Why?

**SMILEY:** I'll be a lot happier being your deputy and imagining how I relieve you of your command and take over.

**HAPPY:** You see, Glee? You see how powerful the "Happiness Squad" is? Come back to us. We need you.

**GLEE:** You don't need me. I'm a lousy soldier. Always have been. I'm... I'm melancholic. My smile fucking sucks.

**SMILEY:** Your smile is gorgeous, Glee. Come back to us. You can establish the squad's cyber force and spread smiles all over the internet.

**HAPPY:** (laughs) What a wonderful idea. Dot com dot smiley.

**GLEE:** I can't stand computers. They are so depressing.

**H.:** I'll help you, Glee. I'll be your personal trainer.

**GLEE:** Arthur. My name is Arthur.

**H.:** You can't be happy with a name like that. Be Glee.

**SMILEY:** We need you, Glee.

**HAPPY:** Come back to us, Glee.

**GLEE:** My name is Arthur!

HAPPY gestures SMILEY and H and they get closer to him and whisper. They turn towards GLEE.

**HAPPY:** You leave us no choice, Arthur.

HAPPY gestures SMILEY and H. The three of them surround GLEE and lie on the stage.

HAPPY runs a bit and lies on the stage.

**GLEE:** What are you doing?

**HAPPY:** Alpha's attacking.

**GLEE:** Don't.

**SMILEY:** Bravo's attacking.

SMILEY runs a bit and lies on the stage.

**GLEE:** Don't. Don't. Please.

**H.:** Charlie's attacking.

H. runs a bit and lies on the stage.

**HAPPY:** Ready?

**GLEE:** Don't, please, don't, I'm smiling, there you go, I'm smiling, I'm laughing, look at me...

**HAPPY:** "Happiness Squad", charge.

HAPPY, SMILEY and H. get up and start laughing at GLEE. Their laughter becomes more and more ominous as the lights go out.