

# Chubby the Mime

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Charles, better known by his performance name, Chubby the Mime, stared at himself in the mirror. His make up now applied, he sighed, inaudibly, attempting to stay in character. He had even trained himself not to snore at night. His Felix the Cat clock made the only sound in the tiny apartment, ticking away the moments of Chubby's sad existence. The mime practiced one last smile in the mirror before leaving, reassuring himself he still possessed the ability. There it was.

Outside the door of the apartment complex, the mangy old hobo who begged for change every day sat in his usual spot. He waved his tin can when Chubby walked by. Digging into his pocket, Chubby produced a dollar bill, and gave it to the hobo with a curt nod. Sometimes, he wondered how the hobo spent his money. He never asked, though, refusing to speak on his way to work. He considered it unprofessional.

He spent much of the walk to work pondering matters like the hobo and his money. He wondered if, through his miming, he would eventually lose his ability to speak. He wondered who really shot JFK. He wondered if Andre the Giant could really drink fifty beers. He could never find an answer to any of these questions, but it gave him something to focus on other than his own life.

Every day he walked the same route to Frog Park. He wondered if he feared change, but didn't know how to tell. Every day he walked the path, he saw stray cigarette butts, and wished that people would stop throwing them on the ground. He considered these butts to be the worst type of litter, because people never even considered them as litter. He sent multiple letters to the Mayor, complaining about the problem, but to no avail. Unlike the cigarette

butts, he enjoyed seeing all the pigeons. He always dreamed of getting a messenger pigeon to send love notes back and forth. He frowned. He needed to find love before he could do that.

From a young age, talking to women made Chubby uncomfortable. At first, adults considered it cute. However, when he entered high school, and he still ran away from any girl kind enough to smile at him, it lost any semblance of being cute. Once, soon after college, he fell in love with a librarian named Gretchen. However, she, at the age of fifty-seven, hardly noticed Chubby. A newspaper clipping on his fridge told of her untimely death a few years ago, taken too young at the age of seventy-nine.

He had reached the park. His last place of solace on Earth. At least down in the park, people appreciated his act. But he could see the shrinking interest in it. He didn't see much difference between his job and Charlie Chaplin's. Maybe, he thought, it was the mustache. He felt his bare upper lip and quickly dismissed the theory.

His father used to take him to this park a lot as a child. They were the only fond memories he kept of his father, who quickly disowned him after Chubby decided his future lay in miming. Soon after the disownment, his father died of a heart attack. Chubby blamed it on himself, thus making his vow of silence even easier. A form of penance.

He approached his usual spot, close to the fountain, in the middle of the park, the flowing water brought him tranquility. However, standing in his spot was the human statue. He hated her. A girl covered in gold, standing as still as possible. She had taken his spot. Chubby had always hated her. All she did was stand there and smile, there was hardly any art in that. She had shown up a few months ago, but her spot was over by the benches. What was she doing here? Chubby could feel the back of his neck heating up in anger. Who did she think she was, taking his spot? Walking behind her, he pretended to point a pistol at her, firing off several bullets before shuffling off.

He found a different spot, and took a deep breath. First, he felt around, trapped in a box. His face grew more and more concerned, searching for a way out. His mother used to love this trick. She came to his shows frequently, until she ran off with a

funnel cake maker from a local fair. She never said good-bye, but he occasionally received soggy funnel cakes in the mail accompanied by a post card. Sometimes there would be a nibble or two missing, from an unapologetic mailman. When the practice started, he attempted to eat them, only to find the first bite resulted in tears, and he lacked the ability to eat and cry. That skill came later in life. Now, he simply threw out the funnel cake, and filed away the post card in a crate he kept on his refrigerator. A funnel cake stand had recently moved into the park, and Chubby always made sure to face away from it, lest his make up smear.

Sadly, his box trick failed to catch anyone's attention. However, miming ran through his veins now, and he shrugged it off. He decided on a more interactive bit. Twirling his arms above his head, he pretended to wield a lasso. He threw it on the first person to walk by him. The man, on a cell phone, ignored Chubby. The mime wondered just what was so important the stranger couldn't even stop. He let out a small huff. He tried again, on a young woman walking with her friends. The girl scoffed at Chubby, called him a loser, and told him where to stick his invisible lasso. Chubby frowned sternly and placed his hands on his hips, to which the girl flipped him off.

He turned away from the crude young woman, but heard her talking about how amazing the human statue was. He looked, the statue still hadn't moved. Who was this golden girl? He looked around, struggling to find some reason to stay in the park. The children devoted their attention to the break-dancers and beat boxers, while parents devoted their attention to each other, having a free moment from their children. Chubby recognized the end of the mime business as he stared it in the face. He threw his beret on the ground. They all thought he was a fool. They were all probably laughing at him when he wasn't looking. Was the statue smiling because she thought she was better than him? Paining yourself gold was not entertainment.

What might he do without his act? Miming filled his days, while his nights echoed of Cheers reruns and the clanking of beer bottles. Perhaps he could look for into the JJ's Good Time Party Co. and work birthday parties. That held some promise. However, he

feared the gig might only accept clowns. Chubby the Mime refused to become Chubby the Clown. He wondered if a mime's union existed, but how could they every really have a meeting? Unless the issue at hand dealt with small glass boxes or lassos, nothing would get accomplished.

Chubby threw his arms in the air, and pretended to scream wildly. He began to flail about, stomping and kicking everywhere. He ran around pushing small children out of the way, heading to the human statue. The children cried out, but Chubby smiled at them, crazed. He swung his invisible lasso at the crude girl, who stared at him in fear. He pretended to tug it hard, and she ran away with her friends. The statue stood just as still as ever. Chubby began shaking with quiet laughter, tears rolling down his cheeks. She continued to smile at him. He wanted to shake her, but he was afraid she wouldn't even move then. Chubby was afraid of what she might really be. More statue than human. He ran off, breathless and red

As he thought of Gretchen, his parents, and Norm from Cheers, everyone watched Chubby the Mime step straight in front of a school bus. The crunching sound filled the air for a brief second, followed by the screeching of tires. Chubby never even made a noise. Before everything faded, he wondered if he finally caused the human statue to move.

The next day, Chubby the Mime's name filled the headlines. His life memorialized as: Man, Mime, and Martyr.