Information Classification: PUBLIC



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12-year-old girl

“The Laughing Mask – My Story”

“It felt like my soul was slowly disappearing, like it had been eaten away. I felt so alone, like everyone was laughing at me, and there was nowhere safe to go to escape the pain. So, I built a wall around myself. I learned to pretend, to smile, to laugh, to act like everything was fine. On the outside, I looked happy, but inside, I was crying. My mask shows a crying child hiding behind a laughing face. The mask was my protector. It helped me survive by acting in ways that kept me safe. Sometimes that meant being quiet, sometimes pretending I didn’t care, or doing whatever I had to do to avoid trouble. Over time, I forgot what the real me even looked like. But making this mask helped me find her again. It helped me show what I couldn’t say out loud, the truth hidden behind my smile.”