



2018

## Smile

Emma Patton

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### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Patton, Emma (2018) "Smile," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 39 : Iss. 9 , Article 54.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol39/iss9/54>

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## Book Review

### Smile

#### Author

Raina Telgemeier

#### Illustrator

#### Reviewer

Emma Patton

#### Rating

Excellent

#### Level

Intermediate, Young  
Adult

#### Pages

213

#### Year

2010

#### Publisher

Graphix

#### ISBN

9781442090521

Sometimes, it takes courage to smile. After Raina knocks out her two front teeth, she embarks on a journey of surgeries, procedures, and orthodontia that will last for many years to make her teeth look “normal.” At every turn, some new development pops up and prolongs the amount of time she’ll have to wait for her “real” smile to be ready. Amidst drama with her teeth, Raina faces conflicts with friends, boys, and the transition to high school. It is difficult for Raina to maintain hope that her dental drama could finally end one day, but she is ultimately able to find the courage to be herself and smile at the world, even if she is still a work in progress. Though her teeth cause her quite a bit of physical and emotional pain, Raina’s situation helps her to find true friends and appreciate the value of self-love during the most difficult times in life.

Smile is a graphic novel that is actually a memoir of the author’s real experience in middle and high school. The narration style is very conversational, which keeps the story interesting and easy to read. The writing and art both seem directed toward a more intermediate audience, though any older reader may enjoy the story as well since the author’s memories of adolescence could be relatable to those who have already passed through that phase of life. Smile is an important book because, though it is often lighthearted and comical, it provides a very honest perspective of adolescence. It outlines how fun this period of life can be with the development of new interests and exploration of identity. But the author also refrains from glamorizing the process of growing up and instead discusses some of the unattractive and confusing realities of this time as well. Too often, young readers are not able to find books that have an honest and balanced view of adolescence, but they can find it in Smile.