

Brianna Bramlett

Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Thompson High School, Alabaster, AL

Educator: Jake Huggins

Category: Dramatic Script

A Silent Mind

Characters

Emily: Female age 16 ish; unable to feel any emotion. Targeted by personified emotions throughout the play.

Fear: Can be male or female. Literally the personified emotion (dark, frightening, etc). Behaves and dresses in a dark fashion.

Anger: Can be male or female. Personified emotion (hothead, easily angered, etc). Dresses as stereotypical biker or someone associated with fury.

Lust: Can be male or female. Personified emotion (sultry, overly flirtatious, etc) Outfit that suggests a ‘trying too hard’ personality.

Joy: Female. Personified emotion (bubbly, constantly smiling, etc) Dressed in bright clothing, topped off with a flowery headpiece.

Extras: Emily’s classmates. Mill about to set the scene. (Specific extras; Girl giving a presentation, fighting teens, and the couple in the hallway) Dressed in a way that doesn’t draw too much attention a.k.a modern school clothing.

Place:

Scene 1-3: a high school

Scene 4: a courtyard

Time:

Modern-day

A SILENT MIND

SCENE 1

(Lights up. Several desks make up a classroom setting. A bell rings and students file in with ad-libbed chatter and laughter. EMILY trailing just behind the other students, FEAR looming closely behind her, unseen by anyone else.)

EMILY: *(taking her seat, emotionless.)* Follow me all you want to, it won't work.

FEAR: *(grinning darkly)* I have very good reasons to doubt that.

EMILY: Is that so? In all of your attempts, I've still yet to feel anything at all. What would give you any reason to doubt another failure?

FEAR: *(moving closer to EMILY)* Because everyone gives into fear eventually, darling. You can't be free of me forever

EMILY: It seems to have worked for me so far.

FEAR: This is what you call 'working for you?' Not feeling anything? You may see me only as darkness and terror, darling, but I can assure you I am so. Much. More.

EMILY: You're Fear. That seems to be the gist of it.

FEAR: While I'll admit that trauma and malevolent acts are.. perks of the job, that is not even a fraction of what I am. I am the rush of excitement that comes on a roller coaster. The butterflies in the stomachs of secret admirers. I am the very reason humanity moves forward, and the reason one man stays behind. End and beginning. As long as humanity lives, they will need me for all things.

EMILY: You seem to think very highly of yourself.

FEAR: *(contemplating)* You know, I did *(he pauses and looks intently at EMILY)* Until you came along.

EMILY: You can't tell me that I killed the ego of the catalyst of humanity.

FEAR: *(laughing and shaking his head)* Don't be vain

EMILY: Not like I have that option

FEAR: *(ignoring the comment)* You did spike my curiosity, however.

(FEAR moves steps back and looks away)

FEAR: The first thing an infant feels as they enter the world is my power. That initial fear of the unknown. The very first thing! *(turning back to her)* Now imagine my surprise when a child, this is where you come in, Emily dear, is not only unable to feel me, no, but can SEE me as well! Quite the shock, I'll admit.

EMILY: clearly not enough shock to deter you from forcing me into feeling

FEAR: on the contrary, it made me all the more interested. *(A pause)* in fact... I'm still rather impatient to see your terror.

(FEAR drops until he is at eye level and grabs EMILY by either the face or hand, somewhere noticeable, but somewhat tender. She shows no reaction and after a few moments FEAR releases her. In the class, a girl stands shakily to prepare for a presentation)

FEAR: *(straightening himself)* Well I suppose I will have to be patient for a while longer *(he looks toward the girl beginning to present)* Patient with you, that is.

(FEAR moves toward the girl and rests a hand on her shoulder. She begins to become visibly distressed- stuttering, wiping her palms, etc. After this increases for a few moments, she can't take the anxiety and runs offstage. Other students make sounds of surprise and laugh at the outburst. FEAR steps back and watches her run before turning back to EMILY)

FEAR: Maybe a bit over the top, but it proves my point nonetheless.

EMILY: And that would be...?

(FEAR grins again, walks, and drops to be eye level with EMILY)

FEAR: You'll never be free of me, darling. As you can see *(gestures to the whole room)* I am everywhere. I will always be here, waiting.

(He stands and brushes off his jacket and makes to exit the stage, but turns back to look at and address EMILY)

FEAR: And mark my words, Emily. Fear WILL be the first thing you feel, just as you should have when you were born.

(FEAR exits just before the bell rings and the students, save for EMILY, file out to their next class EMILY moves to where the girl presenting was standing and mimics her actions, trying to feel as she did. After a few tries of her doing this and checking her heart for racing, she gives up. EMILY exits.)

(blackout)

SCENE 2

(Lights up on a minimal high school gym class. Students stand to wait for a turn to bat in a small baseball game. EMILY stands among them. ANGER makes a fierce and raging entrance and stalks towards her.)

ANGER: You ready for an adrenaline rush, little girl?

EMILY: *(unamused)* If only that would work

ANGER: Oh it will. I have the strongest power over mankind.

EMILY: And yet you still haven't held any power over me.

ANGER: *(seething)* I don't think you understand, little girl. I wage wars. I put fury into the hearts of men. I make even the saints see RED. *(Points to self with every 'I' and takes steps closer to EMILY until he is right in her face.)*

EMILY: *(pushing ANGER back slightly)* Fine. Do your worst.

ANGER: *(a laugh)* You'll regret saying that to me *(He grabs EMILY roughly by the shoulders)*

(Nothing happens. ANGER becomes more visibly impatient as EMILY is still unable to feel anything)

ANGER: WHY. WON'T. THIS. WORK?! *(shoves EMILY away in frustration.)*

EMILY: *(Shrugging, unfazed)* I did try to tell you.

ANGER: *(Pointing a finger at her)* You! You are *(angrily searches for word)* unnatural! You should feel blood boiling beneath your skin; rage flashing before your eyes! Even as a child, you were unable to feel the wrath I bring! It isn't human!

(At this, ANGER grabs a bystander's shoulder, grinning as a furious look overtakes his face. He then grabs another student and does the same. The two begin physically fighting over the sport they are playing with ad libbed yelling and argument. Extras crowd around them, as would be seen in an actual school fight)

ANGER: *(Shouting in glee)* This is human! This is what you should feel! The primal instinct to fight in your life!

EMILY: *(Looking at fight with disinterest)* Even if I could feel, I certainly wouldn't want it to be this.

(EMILY parts the crowd surrounding the fight, stepping forward and grabbing both fighting students by their ears and pulling them apart, ad lib sounds of pain. Crowd gives her odd looks for stepping in. Both involved in the fight give her the same looks before going opposite ways, muttering words like 'freak' as they go)

ANGER: *(stepping behind EMILY and clasping her shoulders)* You must hear the things they say about you. 'freak' *(a pause)* 'emotionless.'

EMILY: *(stepping out of his grip)* They're right. And being around you makes me think not feeling anything is more of a gift than a curse.

ANGER: Aw, why'd ya have to go and ruin the things that make me happy?

EMILY: It makes you a monster.

ANGER: *(feigning innocence)* Me? A monster? That's a bit unfair coming from you, isn't it? I mean, at least I feel SOMETHING! Rage.. Fire.. Negative things, yes... *(a pause. he steps closer to EMILY)* But I am also heat and passion. The ambition of an athlete, the connection of lovers.. *(mocking)* At least I can feel alive, which is more than can be said for you. So truly, who's the monster?

(EMILY doesn't respond. A bell rings and students, save for EMILY exit. With a self-satisfied grin, ANGER exits, leaving her alone on the stage.)

EMILY: I'm not sure I would want the wrath Anger brings *(a pause. as she looks to where ANGER had exited)* But would passion be such a bad thing to feel?

(EMILY exits)

(blackout)

SCENE 3

(Lights up on a school hallway. Students stand at their lockers and in groups of scattered chatter. A couple stands somewhere in the mix. EMILY stands apart at her locker. LUST enters and surveys the scene, nodding her head in approval before spotting EMILY and focusing in on her. LUST approaches and dramatically waits to be noticed. EMILY is still turned.)

LUST: *(continues tapping her foot and checking a watch she isn't wearing. She clears her throat several times before giving in and tapping EMILY's shoulder.)* Hi.

EMILY: Can I help you?

LUST: *(Taking a moment to eye her up and down)* Oh, no, honey. *(looking back up to her face.)* But I can help you.

EMILY: I don't need any help.

LUST: I can see where you think that you don't, but believe me when I say the opposite is the truth.

EMILY: And what could I possibly gain from you?

LUST: (*incredulous*) Um, I'm Love, honey! What could you possibly lose?

EMILY: (*shaking her head*) I may not have met you before, but I KNOW you aren't Love.

LUST: Excuse me?

EMILY: You aren't Love. You're Lust. There's a big difference and the only thing I stand to gain from you is puppy eyes.

LUST: (*feigning hurt*) How mistaken you are! There's nothing but a three-letter difference.

EMILY: I've heard that Love uses the heart. You use... something very different.

LUST: You've heard this? You've never experienced Love?

EMILY: (*taking a breath*) No, I haven't.

LUST: Well then you won't even know the difference!

(*LUST hugs EMILY dramatically and tightly. EMILY just waits in the awkward embrace for her to realize and let go*)

LUST: (*Stepping back after a few moments and looking puzzled*) Well that's strange... That usually works easily on teenagers.

EMILY: (*brushing herself off*) Yeah, well, I'm not quite your normal teen.

LUST: I suppose I should have guessed from you being able to see me. (*Perks up again*) No matter. If you can't feel my power, I'll simply have to show you its effects in another way.

(*LUST eagerly looks around before her eyes settle on the couple and points them out. She moves between them and gently touches both their faces, looking like a proud mother hen. She steps away and walks back to EMILY. Instantly the couple are in each other's arms- giggling, whispering, hugging, and other stuff shameless couples are prone to doing*)

LUST: (*sighing*) isn't that nice? Young love.

EMILY: It isn't love.

LUST: They can't tell the difference (a giggle) and even if they did, they wouldn't care.

EMILY: They wouldn't care that they were being cheated out of real love by cheap desire?

LUST: (*temper rising*) And what do you know about real love? The girl who can't feel anything wants to give a lesson on the subject?

EMILY: it's not-

LUST: And it's not like you can have a relationship without me. Have Love visit you all you want, but you'll still need lust. After all, what's a relationship without desire? (*looks to hallway couple*)

EMILY: I guess I wouldn't know

LUST: (*turning back to her*) No, you wouldn't. I don't recommend challenging the powers of the rest of us in the future. Though I'm sure they're all after you now, once you feel, you'll be chasing them. Perhaps you'll need us one day.

(*LUST exits.*)

(*blackout*)

SCENE 4

(*lights up. EMILY stands alone on the stage, a bench center stage and nothing else*)

EMILY: (*talking to herself*) All my life, I haven't been able to feel a thing. I've managed to see every emotion.

Not just as they are physically. I can see it IN people. I see the joy on the face of an elderly man. The anguish on the face of a grieving man. The love in the looks that simultaneously pass between two people. I see everything and feel nothing.

(*she sits down on the bench*)

EMILY: Perhaps they're right. I'm a monster, a freak for not feeling anything. But would i really want to?

(*throughout her monologue, JOY is moving into the scene with her, listening to her delima*)

JOY: We're not all bad, you know.

EMILY: No?

JOY: *(smiling)* No

EMILY: Well, I haven't had an experience to make me think otherwise.

JOY: That's too bad. I know there are those that could bring you good feelings

EMILY: Good or bad, it couldn't help me anyways. I can't feel anything at all.

JOY: Maybe you just haven't felt the RIGHT thing.

EMILY: You don't understand. I'm numb. No amount of trying can change that.

JOY: You truly believe that?

EMILY: Its all I know

JOY: Do you want to feel something, Emily?

EMILY: I'm not really sure anymore.

(JOY circles behind EMILY while speaking to her.)

JOY: You've been haunted by the emotions that people tend to go lengths to avoid. Everything from fear to wrath... but I'd like you to give happiness a try.

(JOY wraps her arms around EMILY from behind. EMILY gasps and smiles as she is finally able to feel something.)

(blackout)