

Emily's Rumbling Stomach
A one-act play for children

By Douglas Evans



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Characters

Emily-third-grader with a stomach that rumbles at lunchtime

Roger-third-grader

Veronica-third-grader

Ember-third-grader

Paul-third-grader

Taylor-third grader

Miss Simms-third-grader teacher

Time: Modern day third-grade classroom. Noon

Setting:

Row of 6 student desks face teacher's desk stage right.

Portable whiteboard stands beside teacher's desk showing date.

Unseen classroom door stage left

Clock on wall upstage center.

PRODUCTION NOTES:

CHARACTERS: 7 Characters 4 female, 3 male

PLAYING TIME: 20 minutes

PROPS:

Classroom clock with moving hands
Math workbooks for students
Pencils for students
Lunch bags and boxes for students
Sandwich for Emily
Package of crackers

COSTUMES:

All students-modern school clothing
Emily-shirt with pocket
Miss Simms-modern teacher clothing

SETTINGS: Row of 6 student desks face teacher's desk stage right.
Portable whiteboard stands beside teacher's desk showing date.
Unseen classroom door stage left
Clock on wall upstage center reads 12:00

LIGHTING: light rise and fade to signal start and end of each scene.

SOUND: Gurgling stomach noises

MUSIC: No special music

SCENE 1

Time: Present day third-grade classroom. Noon

Setting: 6 student desks in row face teacher's desk stage right. Portable whiteboard stands by teacher's desk displaying date. Unseen classroom door stage left. Clock on wall upstage center.

At Rise: Students are sitting at desks working in math workbooks. Clock reads 12:00. MISS SIMMS sits at teacher's desk, grading papers. April 2 is written on whiteboard. EMILY sits at third desk in row. She is doodling in her math book. Classroom fills with sound of Emily's stomach gurgling.

EMILY

(places hand on belly. to self)

Oh, no. Please no. Not this again.

(Other students snicker and exchange looks. More growling sounds fill room.)

EMILY

(places math book on belly and leans forward. to self)

Stop. Please stop. No, no, no!

(More gurgling fills classroom. Class continues to snicker and point at EMILY.)

EMILY

(to self)

Every day it's the same. My stomach growls and the other kids laugh at me.

(More snickers from classmates Emily's stomach growls again)

MISS SIMMS looks up from desk. She checks clock.)

MISS SIMMS

Look at the time, class. It's lunchtime. Please put away your math books and line up at the door.

(Students cheer. They put math books in desks and take out lunch boxes and sacks. They stand and form line stage left. Emily stands last in line.)

ROGER

(first in line to Veronica behind him)

Loud and clear today.

VERONICA

(to Roger)

Right on cue. It never fails

EMBER

(standing third in line.)

That sound is the highlight of the day.

PAUL

(standing fourth in line.)

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle.

TAYLOR

(standing fifth in line.)

Rumble, rumble, rumble

EMILY

(to self)

Yi, yi, yi! Why must my stomach grumble every lunchtime. I've become the class joke.

(Miss Simms walks to head of line.)

MISS SIMMS

(to class)

All right, class. You may proceed to the lunchroom. Slowly. Keep in line. No running in the hall.

(Class files from room with Emily straggling behind.)

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP:

Time: Next day third-grade
classroom. Noon

At Rise: Class sits at desks
doing math. Miss Simms sits at
teacher's desk helping EMBER with
subtraction problem.
April 3 is written on whiteboard.
Clock reads 12:00.

MISS SIMMS

(to Ember)

Now you regroup from the hundreds place and add it to the
tens place.

EMBER

Add what to the ten place?

MISS SIMMS

The ten tens. See you show this by crossing out the six
hundred and writing five above it. Then you add the little
one to the three in the tens place to make it thirteen tens.

EMBER

OK, Miss Simms. If you say so.

(Miss Simms continues silently
helping Ember. Class stares at
clock and exchanges looks. Emily
works in math workbook.)

ROGER

(checking clock. To rest of
class.)

Any minute now.

VERONICA

(checking clock)

Here it comes.

PAUL

I'm starving.

TAYLOR

And I have sushi for lunch. Can't wait

EMILY

(looks up. to self)

Yi, yi yi! No, please no. Here it goes again. Everyday. Why
does this happen?

(Room fills with rumbling stomach
sounds. Class laughs and points
at Emily.)

Stop. Please stop.

EMILY

(Emily's stomach continues to rumble.)

Thar she blows

ROGER

Sounds like a garbage disposal.

VERONICA

Or an earthquake. I'm surprise her stomach doesn't set off the earthquake alarm.

PAUL

Hello sushi.

TAYLOR

(Emily's stomach rumbles some more. Class laughs.)

MISS SIMMS
(checks clock)

OK, Class. Lunchtime. Put away your math books and line up at the door.

(Students put math books in desk and take out lunchboxes and sacks. They form line at door. Emily remains at her desk.)

ROGER
(first in line to Veronica behind him)

Right on cue again.

VERONICA

Best sound at school.

EMBER

Emily's stomach never fails us.

PAUL

What did we do before her stomach started erupting.

TAYLOR

Math period was sure a lot less exciting.

MISS SIMMS
(standing at door)

OK, Class. Enjoy your lunch. No running in the hall.

(Miss Simms and students file from the room. Emily sits at desk stewing. Rumbling stomach sounds fill room.)

EMILY

(To self)

Why oh why oh why? Why must my stomach make that embarrassing racket every day during math. My class thinks it's the funniest thing in the world.

(Emily opens lunchbox and takes a bite out of her sandwich.)

EMILY

(crying)

I'm going to run away from school and live with bears. Then my stomach can growl all it wants. Bears would never laugh at me.

(Emily takes another bite of sandwich. She pauses and stares at the bread.)

EMILY

Curious. My stomach stopped rumbling. As soon as I ate something it got quiet. Maybe my belly only growls when it's empty. Like before lunchtime. Maybe if I keep my stomach full during math, it will never embarrass me again.

(Emily closes her lunchbox. She stands and walks stage left.)

EMILY

I have a plan. Tomorrow my stomach will be as quiet as a mouse.

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP:

Time: Next day third-grade classroom. Noon

At Rise: Class again sits at desks doing math.

Clock reads: 12:00

April 4 is written on whiteboard.

Emily's shirt pockets are stuffed
with soda crackers.

EMILY

(to self)

Today I'm prepared. Today no one is going to laugh at me and my rumbling stomach. I'm fed up with being the joke of the class.

(Emily checks clock. She removes
cracker from pocket.)

EMILY

It's lunchtime. Time to make my move.

(Emily stuffs cracker in mouth.
She chews and swallows. She takes
out a second cracker and eats it
as well.)

EMILY

So far so good. Not a sound is coming from my belly.

(Emily continues to eat crackers.
The clock hand moves to 12:05
The other students fidget. They
check the clock and look toward
Emily.
Miss Simms sits at desk grading
papers.)

ROGER

(whispers to others)

What's going on? No sound. No rumbling

VERONICA

(whispers to others)

This could be a disaster.

EMBER

(whispers to others)

We must do something. We could sit here the entire lunchtime.

PAUL

(whispers to others)

Emily's stomach has never let us down before.

TAYLOR

(whispers to others)

Why is Emily eating all those crackers. Someone stop her or we'll never get to lunch

(Emily continues to shove
crackers into her mouth. Her
cheeks bulge.
Clock hand moves to 12:10.
Miss Simms continues to grade
papers.)

EMILY

(smiling)

This is much better. No belly noise today. No laughing. No
jokes about me.

ROGER

(whispers to others)

Ten after twelve.

VERONICA

(whispers to others)

This is a disaster.

EMBER

(whispers to other)

Miss Simms will never check the clock. Her mind is on grading
papers.

PAUL

(whispers to others)

And Emily is still eating those crackers.

TAYLOR

(whispers to others)

I should be in the cafe right now eating my sushi.

(Clock hands moves to 12:12
Miss Simms looks toward clock and
stands.)

MISS SIMMS

Goodness, look at the time. We're very late for lunch. OK,
class. Put away your math books and line up at the door.

(Students toss books in desk and
pull out lunchboxes. They rush
stand in line stage left.
Emily stands last in line. She
swallows more of the crackers in
her mouth.)

ROGER

(first in line)

Man-oh-man, I'm starved.

PAUL
(second in line)
I thought she'd never release us.

EMBER
(third in line)
Half our lunchtime is wasted.

VERONICA
(fourth)
I bet all the good lunchroom seats are taken.

TAYLOR
(fifth in line turns toward
Emily behind her)
Man, Emily, what happened?

EMILY
(makes a face)
What are you talking about?

VERONICA
(turns toward Emily)
What happened to the Lunch Alarm, Emily?

EMILY
What's a Lunch Alarm?

VERONICA
(to Emily)
You know, the way your stomach makes those sounds just before
lunchtime.

EMILY
(making face again)
Yeh, you all think that's a big joke. You laugh are me every
time my belly rumbles.

(Entire class turns toward
Emily.)

TAYLOR
(to Emily)
Are you kidding? Your rumbling stomach is the only thing that
reminds Miss Simms it's lunchtime.

PAUL
(to Emily)
Right. the teacher gets so busy grading paper she forgets to
check the clock.

EMBER

(to Emily)

But when your belly sounds off, it get her attention. We call your noisy belly *The Lunch Alarm*.

VERONICA

(to Emily)

But today your stomach was silent, so we're way late for lunch.

ROGER

(to Emily)

We don't laugh at you, Emily. We laugh at the way the teacher looks up when she hears your stomach.

PAUL

(to Emily)

Right. That's what's funny.

EMBER

(to Emily)

So please, no more eating crackers before lunchtime.

VERONICA

(to Emily)

Let your stomach rumble all it wants.

TAYLOR

(to Emily)

Or we'll starve!

ALL

(to Emily)

We need our *Lunch Alarm*.

(Miss Simms walks to front of line.)

MISS SIMMS

OK, Class. You may go to lunch. Please stay in line. And don't run in the hall.

(The class files from the room. Before she exits, Emily examines a cracker in her hand.)

EMILY

Yi, yi, yi. My rumbling stomach was just being helpful. It's the *Lunch Alarm*. Well, how about that?

LIGHTS FADE.

END OF PLAY