

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

Student One-third-grader

Student Two-third-grader

Student Three-third-grader

Student Four-third-grader

Student Five-third grader

Miss Simms-third-grader teacher

Stagehand-changes time on clock and date on board

Time: Modern day third-grade classroom. Noon

### Setting:

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

Portable whiteboard stands beside teacher's desk showing date.

Classroom door offstage left.

Clock on wall upstage center.

PRODUCTION NOTES:

CHARACTERS: 7 Characters 2 female 3 of either gender

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  
Portable whiteboard

COSTUMES:

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

SETTINGS: Row of six student desks face teacher's desk stage right.  
Portable whiteboard stands beside teacher's desk showing dates.  
Classroom door offstage left  
Clock on wall upstage center

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

SOUND: Loud gurgling stomach noises

MUSIC: No special music

## SCENE 1

Time: Present day third-grade classroom. Noon

Setting: Six student desks are arranged in a row, facing teacher's desk stage right. A portable whiteboard stands beside teacher's desk with *April 2* written on it. The classroom door is offstage left. A wall clock upstage center reads 12:00.

At Rise: STUDENTS 1,2,3,4,5 and EMILY (seated last in the row) are working in math books at their desks. MISS SIMMS sits at teacher's desk, grading papers.

EMILY looks up, alarmed, and places hand on belly.

EMILY

Oh, no. Please no. Not again.

(A loud sound gurgling sound fills the room. STUDENT'S 1-5 turn toward EMILY and snicker.)

STUDENT ONE

Blast off!

STUDENT TWO

Sounds like a garbage disposal.

STUDENT THREE

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

EMILY

(places math book on her belly and leans forward.)

Stop. Please stop. No, no, no!

(More gurgling fills classroom. More laughter from the class.)

STUDENT FOUR

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle!

STUDENT FIVE

Rumble, rumble, rumble!

EMILY

(to self)

Every day it's the same. My stomach growls, and everyone laughs.

MISS SIMMS looks up from her desk and checks the clock.)

MISS SIMMS

Goodness, look at the time. It's lunchtime already. Put away your math books, class, and line up at the door.

(Students return math books to their desks and take out lunch boxes or sacks. They form a line stage left facing the offstage door. Emily joins last.)

STUDENT ONE

(to Student Two

That was good one today.

STUDENT TWO

(to Student Three)

Music to my ears.

STUDENT THREE

(to Student Four)

Twelve o'clock on the dot.

STUDENT FOUR

(to Student Five)

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle!

STUDENT FIVE

(to Student Four.)

Rumble, rumble, rumble!

EMILY

(to self)

Why does my stomach grumble have to grumble at lunch every day. I've become the class joke.

(Miss Simms walks to head of line.)

MISS SIMMS

All right, class. Off to the lunchroom. Walk quietly. No running in the hall.

(Miss Simms and class file out. Emily trails behind.)

LIGHTS FADE.

## SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP:

Time: The next day, noon

Setting: Third-grade classroom.

At Rise: Students sit at their desks working on math. MISS SIMS sits at her desk helping STUDENT ONE with subtraction problem. STAGEHAND enters from stage right, erases *April 2* on whiteboard and writes *April 3*. Clock reads 12:00. STAGEHAND exits stage right.

MISS SIMMS

(to Student One)

Now regroup from the hundreds place and carry it to the tens place.

STUDENT ONE

Carry what to the ten place?

MISS SIMMS

The ten tens. Cross out the six and write five above it. Then add the little one to the three and make it thirteen tens.

STUDENT ONE

Okay, Miss Simms. If you say so.

(Miss Simms continues silently helping Student One. Meanwhile STUDENTS 2-5 glance at clock and exchange looks.)

STUDENT TWO

Any second now.

STUDENT THREE

(checking clock)

Here it comes.

STUDENT FOUR

I'm starving.

STUDENT FIVE

And I brought sushi for lunch. Can't wait

EMILY

(looks up, to self)

No, please no. Not again. Why every day?

(Classroom fills gurgling stomach sounds. Class snickers.)

MISS SIMMS

(checking clock)

All right, class. It's 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 stand in line stage left. Emily stay seated at her desk.)

STUDENT ONE

Emily's stomach never lets us down.

STUDENT TWO

Best sound at school.

STUDENT THREE

We'd starve without it.

STUDENT FOUR

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle.

STUDENT FIVE

Rumble, rumble--hello sushi.

(Miss Simms walks to head of line.)

MISS SIMMS

Enjoy your lunch, everyone. And remember--no running in the hall.

(Miss Simms and students file offstage. Emily remains, fuming. Her stomach gurgles again.)

EMILY

(to self)

Why oh why must my stomach make that embarrassing racket every day. They all think it's hilarious.

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

EMILY

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. Gurgling stops.)

EMILY

Funny. My stomach stopped rumbling. Just like that.

(Emily takes another bite of sandwich)

EMILY

Maybe...just maybe, it growls because it's empty. Maybe if I eat before math, it won't embarrass me again.

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

EMILY

I have a plan. Tomorrow my stomach will be the quietest thing in the room. Just wait and see.

LIGHTS FADE.

### SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP:

Time: The next day, noon

Setting: Third-grade classroom.

At Rise: Students sit at desks doing math. STAGEHAND enters from stage right, erases *April 3* on whiteboard and writes *April 4*. Then STAGEHAND stands beneath wall clock, which read 12:00.

Emily's shirt pockets are stuffed with soda crackers.

EMILY

(to self, patting her pocket.)

Today I'm ready. Crackers in my pocket to keep my belly full. No rumbling today. No giggles. No this time

(Emily checks clock.)

EMILY

It's lunchtime. Time to make my move.

(Emily removes a cracker from her pocket and eats it. Then she takes out another and eats that, too.)

EMILY

So far so good. All's quiet down below.

(Emily continues eating crackers. Stagehand moves the clock hand to 12:05. Other students check clock and look toward Emily. Miss Simms sits at desk grading papers.)

STUDENT ONE

(checking clock)

Somethings's wrong. No sound.

STUDENT TWO

No rumble? This could be bad.

STUDENT THREE

We might sit here the entire lunchtime.

STUDENT FOUR

Where's the grumble, grumble?

STUDENT FIVE

Where's the rumble, rumble? I need my sushi!

(Emily shoves another cracker into her mouth. Stagehand moves clock hand to 12:10. Miss Simms continues grading papers.)

EMILY

This is better. No belly noise today. No laughing. No jokes. Peace at last.

STUDENT ONE

Man, I'm starving.

STUDENT TWO

We're losing precious lunch minutes.

STUDENT THREE

She's never gonna release us.

STUDENT FOUR

All the good seats in the lunchroom are probably taken.

STUDENT FIVE

My sushi's just sitting in my lunch bag, getting warm.

(Stagehand moves clock hand to 12:15. Miss Simms finally looks up.)

MISS SIMMS

Oh, my! It's already 12:15. We're late for lunch. OK, class, put away your math books and line up at the door.

(Students toss books in desk and grab their lunches. They rush to line up stage left. Emily stands last in line holding a cracker.)

STUDENT FIVE

(turning to Emily)

Emily, what happened?

EMILY

(making a face)

What do you mean?

STUDENT FOUR

You know... the Lunch Alarm.

EMILY

(shrugging)

Lunch Alarm? What are you talking about?

STUDENT THREE

You know, the way your stomach always growls right at noon.

EMILY

(making face again)

You mean the thing you all laugh at every day.

STUDENT TWO

Are you kidding? We depend on your rumbling stomach. It's the only thing that reminds Miss Simms it's time for lunch.

STUDENT ONE

She gets so busy, she forgets to check the clock. Your belly sounds gets her attention.

STUDENT FIVE

We don't laugh at you, Emily. We laugh at the way Miss Simms looks up when she hears it.

STUDENT FOUR

Right. That's the funny part. We count on you.

STUDENT THREE

You're our lunchtime hero.

STUDENT FOUR

So go ahead--let it rumble!

STUDENT FIVE

Gurgle, gurgle gurgle! I need my sushi.

ALL STUDENTS

And 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 no  
running in the hall.

(Students file out. Emily lingers  
a moment, looking at the cracker  
in her hand.)

EMILY

(smiling to herself)

Well, what do you know? My stomach wasn't embarrassing me. It  
was just being helpful. The *Lunch Alarm*. Who knew?

LIGHTS FADE.

END OF PLAY