

Maybe I Am...!

A Play in One Act

Cast:

Tim Creedy
Emily Ricklestein
Jenna Lashard
Randy Ruddel
Officer 1
Officer 2
Officer 3
Billy
Old Man

Lights Up

The front of a house. New England style architecture. White with a brown wooden trim, two floors. The top floor has a window that opens outward. There is a man standing in front of the door, facing it. He is wearing a backpack.

The lights go up. (Tim knocking loudly on the door).

Tim (*shouting*): Come on, Emily! We're going to be late for class!

*(pause)*Tim knocks on the door again. More impatiently this time.

Tim (*shouting*): Look, You can't stay locked up forever! It's not like you're the only girl to get their skirt caught in a locker door. Sure it came completely off but... well maybe you are the only one, but still! That's no excuse! You're gonna have to face up to it sooner or later.

Tim bangs his head against the door

Tim: Emily...

A female voice comes from off-stage. It is Emily. It sounds muffled.

Emily: I can do whatever I want! A lot of people live happy lives as shut-ins. What do I need to leave for anyway? I have a computer. I can have

groceries delivered. And, I've never felt so creative in my life!

Tim: Oh! (*throws his hands up in the air*) So you're a shut-in now! Yeah a lot of successful people never leave the house. (*Sarcastically*) Why just the other day my grandmother was telling me about her new friend; a cat with an eye-infection and a gimpy leg. That brings the total up to twelve that she's got. And she's never been happier! Ya know... you're not Emily Dickenson.

(faint thumping of someone running up stairs.)

(pause).

The upper window bursts open. Emily proudly sticks her head out the window. She speaks loudly and passionately to no-one in particular.

Emily: Maybe I am! (*throws her arms out wide*) Maybe I heard a fly buzz when I died! Maybe I like the look of Agony! Maybe I would not paint a picture! I'd rather be one anyway! Maybe I dreaded that first Robin so, but he is mastered now, I'm some accustomed to him grown, he hurts a li—

(old man yells from off stage)

Old Man: SHUT THE HELL UP!

(Emily claps her hands over her mouth then says apologetically, but still shouting)

Emily: Sorry Mr. Roberson!

Old Man: Eeeeeaaaaagh!

(she looks down at Tim and speaks normally)

Emily: You want to see some of the things I've been writing. They're gems each and every one of them. Maybe after I'm dead you can cash in on them!

(she lowers a basket tied to a string down to Tim. He grabs the piece of paper out of it and reads it mumbling to himself.)

Tim: 'In the boot of my mind,
I smell the taste of green,
It is cold outside,
Next week may be sunny.'

(to Emily) You call this poetry? This is terrible Emily. You can't throw your life away for this!

Emily: I don't care what you think! I'm still not coming down, Tim. You're just gonna have to learn to deal with it (*slams the window shut*).

Tim: Fine! So that's how it's gonna be huh?

(*Tim walks away*) *The stage goes dark.*

Scene II

A few hours later: As the lights go up there is a group of small children crowded around underneath Emily's window. She is lowering a basket down to them on a rope. Tim and another girl come walking in from the right..

Tim: Thanks for coming with me Jenna. Maybe you'll be able to talk her down.

Jenna: Oh no problem Tim. I'm glad you came to me first. I'm the only one qualified to deal with this situation.

Tim: Er...right... how is that again?

Jenna: Duh, I'm a psych major, remember? I've helped so many people with their problems and I'm only a sophomore. I think I might be really good at this or something. I was thinking, like, I could be one of those, like, hostage negotiators? That's what they call them, right? The people that talk people into not killing other people?

Tim: Umm...yeah right. Hey, what are those kids crowding around?

(*Tim and Jenna walk over and look down at what the kids are doing*).

Tim: Hey. What are you kids doing?

Billy: We're not doin' nothing, man. The lady who lives here's been lowering cookies and stuff down to us all day.

Tim: Oh she has has she? You kids scam. No more cookies today.

Bill: Aw nuts. I don't care anyway. Those cookies sucked.

The kids run off, through and around Jenna and Tim.

(*Tim yells up at Emily*)

Tim: See that Emily! You can't even go a whole day without human contact! Why don't you just stop this before it gets out of hand!

(*Jenna puts her hand on Tim's arm*).

Jenna: Tim you're just going to make it worse. Emily has what we call agoraphobia. It mean's she's afraid of the outdoors. Let me handle this. (*to Emily in a whiny condescending voice*). Emily?...hun?... Why don't you tell me what's really bothering you?

Emily: Go away Jenna, I'm not in the mood for your psycho- mumbo-jumbo.

Jenna: But Emily you're experiencing an attack of agoraphobia. If you don't deal with this now you could end up having a complete psychological breakdown. That wouldn't be fun now would it?

Emily: I don't have agoraphobia or anything else. I just want to be left alone. Why can't you guys just leave me alone!

Tim: Come on Jenna this isn't working.

Jenna: No. We need to give it some time. After all Boston wasn't built in a day.

Tim: Umm... right...anyway...but...maybe we should just leave her alone. She's mental.

Jenna: Tim! In psychology we call them "people with mental disorders" because we feel that the disease should not define the person. This is a cry for help. If we abandon her now she might hurt herself or worse. 34% of all cases of extreme phobia end in fatality when not addressed.

Tim: End in fatality? What does that mean? Everybody dies eventually, mental disorder or not.

Jenna: Umm... I'm not sure. The study didn't say how long it would take for them to die. But they do! I know!

Tim: (*sighs*) So what should we do?

Jenna: (*brow furrowed, thinking. Then a thought comes to her*). Oh! I've got it. You go to the store and buy her some things she likes. I'll call that guy she's always talking to...Randy? I think... and I'll tell him to come over and see if he can't do anything.

Tim: I don't know what she likes. Chocolate? Flowers? Booze? What?

Jenna: *(squealing)* Oooh! Yeah! Buy her some flowers and a nice bottle of wine. Girls love that sort of thing!

Tim: Fine. I'll be right back.

(exit Tim)

(Jenna pulls out her cell-phone and punches in some numbers).

Jenna: Hi, Randy? This is Jenna, Emily's friend. I'm fine thanks. Yeah, yeah, hmm that's interesting. Hey shut up for a second, I need you to come over here to Emily's house right now... no, no, everything is fine. Just get here now! Oh! And bring your guitar. *(puts cell phone away).*

Emily: *(suspiciously).* What are you plotting now? Just go away.

Jenna: Oh Emily. Now you're a person with paranoia. Don't worry honey... we'll get through this together.

Emily: Why can't a person just live how they want? Why do I have to fit into some role I don't want to be in? I just want to write. I want to wake up and not have to worry about going to school. I don't like people. I don't like crowds. Yeah... maybe I am afraid... maybe I'm afraid that life doesn't have any meaning. When I die I want to look back and be able to say, Yeah I'm not successful. Yeah I lived alone. But was I happy? Hell yeah I was happy, and that's all that counts.

Jenna: Oh Emily. You're in denial right now. That's the second stage of a nervous breakdown. Next you'll enter stage 3: Rage. *(to herself)* But I have just the thing to make sure you don't get there.

Emily: What did you say?

Jenna: Huh? Nothing. *(to herself).* Nothing at all.

Scene III

Enter Randy

Randy: Hey Jenna. So what's up? Why are you just standing out here?

Jenna: Randy! I'm so glad you're here. Listen I can't go into details but Emily is on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Studies show that people in her situation

respond very well to music. So I thought maybe you could play a song for Emily to coax her down.

Randy: Coax her down? What do you mean a nervous breakdown. I talked to her last night and she seemed fine.

Jenna: Yes but that was when she was in stage 1! Now she's in stage 2 and I'm afraid what will happen if she gets to 3. So I was thinking maybe 'Lucy in the Sky with diamonds' only instead of Lucy you use Emily.

Randy: Isn't that a bit corny?

Jenna: *(offended)* Nooooo. It's sweet. Now just go stand under her window and play away. I guarantee you that within five minutes she'll be throwing herself out the window at you. Then...who knows? *(gives him a mischievous smile).*

(Randy blushes)

Randy: Ok, ok, I'll give it a shot. Emily? This one's for you babe. *(starts twanging his guitar)*

'Eeem...' *(voice cracks, then he clear his throat.)*
Eh-um, um umum.
(begins playing again)

(singing)

'Emily in the ska-high with diamonds. Emily in the sky with diamonds. Emily in the sky wi—'

(an egg comes sailing out the window and hits Randy in the head).

Jenna: Oh my god! She's entered stage 3.

Randy: Ugh. That's it. I'm outta here.

Begins walking offstage

Jenna: No Randy wait. Don't go she needs you.

Randy: To hell with that. I don't need this crazy chick, I'm not that desperate. *(pulls away and walks off stage).*

Jenna: *(yelling after Randy).* She's not crazy! She's a person with craziness! *(looks worriedly up at the window).* This calls for drastic measures.

The lights go down. When they come back up daylight as begun to disappear. There is a woman

with a microphone and a camera man. Jenna is standing next to her. Behind them to the right side are three police officers talking amongst themselves.

Newswoman: We're here live at the scene of an escalating situation involving a young girl who has lost her grip on reality and is threatening to hurt herself. Police have been called in and are now assessing the situation, but so far there has been little movement from within the house. With me now is long time friend Jenna Lashard who notified local media and authorities of this admittedly tense situation. Ms. Lashard, what can you tell us about this girl?

Jenna: Well, her name is Emily. We go to school together at AMU. She's an English major and I'm a psychology major. It was really funny how we met. I was leaving from Antwerp Hall, that's the building that has those pretty sculptures outside in the courtyard around it and so I was leaving and she was running up the—

Newswoman: What do you know about what's going on today?

Jenna: Oh! *(puts on a serious face)* Emily Ricklestein has a classic case of agoraphobia complicated by an agitation of the pituitary gland which is contributing to the decline of her mental stability. Just under an hour ago she crossed from stage two of a nervous breakdown to stage 3, which is a dangerous stage because the person is more likely to hurt themselves or others. *(back to her normal bubbly self)*. But since we're out here and she's won't come out I don't think we have to worry about her hurting us.

Newswoman: Fascinating! Thank you so much for speaking with us Ms. Lashard. We'll be monitoring this situation throughout the night and keep on top of any new developments. For News Channel 43 I'm Leslie Lipkin. Back to you in the studio, Doug.

Tim comes back on stage carrying a paper bag.

Tim: Jenna! What the hell is going on?

Jenna: Oh Tim I'm so glad you're back! Things have gotten out of hand. She's in stage 3 now!

Tim: Stage 3? No, I meant what are the police and news trucks doing here?

Jenna: Well, I thought if she saw that all these people were as worried as we are that she might have

a change of heart and come out. But so far there's been nothing.

Tim: This is crazy. We should have just left her alone. This is only making things worse.

(walks over to the officers. Two are standing and one is crouched down with a pair of binoculars.

Tim: Officer, I think there's been some kind of mistake.

Officer 1: There's no mistake. This is a very volatile situation. If we can't get to her there's no telling what she might do to herself.

Tim: No, no. She's just a little upset that's all. This has been blown way out of proportion. The other day something happened to her and now—

Officer 3: She's got a hostage!

Emily appears at the window holding a large orange cat in the crook of her arm. In the other hand she has a butter knife.

Emily: I'll do it! I swear to God I'll do it!

Officer 1 grabs a megaphone from the other officer.

Officer 1: Ms. Ricklestein, we're here to help. Release the cat so we can talk about this.

Emily: No! No more talking! Get your men and get out of here or else the cat gets it.

Officer 1: Please, Ms. Ricklestein just let the cat go.

Tim: Officer she has a basket attached to a rope. Tell her you'll leave if she lowers the cat down in it.

Officer 1: Ms Ricklestein. Just lower the cat down to us in the basket and we'll be on our way. You don't have to hurt anyone.

Emily: If I do that will you leave me alone?

Officer 1: Yes. We'll pack up all our things and be on our way. I promise. *(to Officer 2)* Get the tear gas. *(to Officer 3)*. Get your men and be ready to bust down the door on my orders.

Officer 2 and 3: Yes sir.

(Officer 3 motions to his men and moves them into the shadows around the front door.)

Officer 1: Alright Ms. Ricklestein it's all up to you now. Just lower the cat, slowly.

(Emily drops the knife and puts the cat in the basket and begins lowering it.)

As soon as the basket touches the ground and Jenna picks up the cat...

Officer 1: Alright give her the gas!

Officer 2 launches a tear gas grenade through the open window on the second floor. Within seconds, smoke begins billowing out the window. The sound of Emily screaming wildly.

Emily: AAAAAAAAAHHH! AAAAAAAAAAH!
AAAAAAAAAAAAHHH!

Officer 1: Alright men let's bring her down!

Officer 3 smashes in the door. The screaming continues the whole time unabated.

Tim: Officer, was that really necessary?

Officer 1: Look son when you've been around as long as I have you'll find out there's only one way to handle these nutbags.

Jenna comes walking over stroking the cat.

Jenna: That's 'person with mental disorder', officer.

Officer 3 comes back out dragging a struggling and thrashing Emily with him. He drags her to the door of a squad car.

Emily: AAHH! AAH! Let go of me. Let go of me! My eyes! My eyes are on fire! I can't see. I can't breathe.

Tim: Emily, please calm down.

Emily: AAHH! AAHH! I hate you! I hate you both! Why can't you leave me alone!

Officer 1: Alright get her out of here.

(Officer 2 throws her in the back of the squad car. She's still thrashing around.)

Tim: What's going to happen to her now?

Officer 1: Well we'll bring her to Mass. General and get her checked out. After that who knows? I'm a cop not a shrink.

Exit officer

Jenna: Ooo- ooo! I can tell you what will happen. They'll run some tests and see that she's had a breakdown. Then they'll give her some medication probably thorazine or something like that. Then they'll put her in a strait jacket for the night for observation. Then they'll see how she's doing in the morning. They'll give her some more thorazine or maybe a mild anti-depressant like Zoloft or Wellbutrin. After that they'll let her go. But since it's obvious she's had a nervous breakdown they'll probably give her a room and keep her there for a while until she's better.

Tim: When will that be?

Jenna puts a sympathetic hand on Tim's shoulder.

Jenna: Oh, Tim. Sometimes it takes years to recover from something like this. But we'll keep an eye on her. After all we are her closest friends and She's going to need us now more than ever. Hey! What's in the bag?

Tim: Huh? Oh. Yeah just some stuff for Emily. A box of chocolates and a nice bottle of merlot.

Jenna. *(giggly)* Ooooo. I love merlot! Let's go back to my place and have a glass. It's Monday, I think 24 is on. That show is so exciting.

Tim: Hey that sounds fun.

(They walk off stage together talking)

Tim: Ya know I don't get why Jack Bauer is always yelling at people threatening to shoot them, he hardly ever does.

Jenna: Oh I know! He's like "I'M JACK BAUER DO WHAT I SAY BECAUSE I'M LOUD AND HOLDING A GUN!"

Tim: Hahaha! Yeah that's just like him. But what about the president? He's such a dufus...

THE END