

It was a Spring day at Riley's middle school, and she was leaving her last class with some of her friends. "Hey, did you hear they're holding auditions for this year's school musical next week?" said one girl. "We should all audition!", said another. "That would be so much fun!" The friends all agreed this was a good idea, except for Riley. She remained silent, until one of her friends asked, "What do you think, Riley?"

Inside her head, the emotions in Headquarters were suddenly worried. "Audition?" said Fear. "Did she say audition? And musical? But that's singing. In front of people!" "Exactly," Disgust replied. "Why would we risk embarrassing ourselves like that? It would totally be the end of her social life. No thanks." Joy could see that things were escalating, so she tried to calm everyone down. "Hey, everyone relax, it's just a school musical. Riley's sung before, she has a great voice!" "Yeah, when she's alone!" shouted Anger. "She's never sung in front of other people before, especially the kids at school. If any of them made fun of her for it, they'd get a broken nose!"

Joy turned to Sadness for help. "Sadness, you think it's a good idea, right?" "I don't know, Joy." Sadness replied. "What if she doesn't get cast in the show. All that work, for nothing? I don't think she could recover from that." Joy thought to herself for a moment. "Okay," she said, "all your opinions have been taken into account, but this is Riley, she's adventurous, and she tries new things, so we're going to do this!" Joy took command of the control panel. Riley finally responds to her friend. "Yeah, why not?" says Riley. "What's the worst that could happen?" As soon as she said this, a shiver went down Joy's back, but she didn't know why.

The following week, Riley stood in the hallway outside the theater holding her audition sheet music and anxiously waited for her turn. She had spent the week rehearsing her audition song with the help of her parents and friends. She was excited, but also nervous and had had a little trouble remembering the words. There was another girl waiting in front of her who seemed equally nervous, which didn't help calm Riley's worries.

Meanwhile, in the control room of Headquarters, Joy was getting all the emotions ready. "Alright, everyone pay attention! We've rehearsed this all week, and Riley is prepared, but let's go over the basics one more time. Disgust, when they call her name, you make sure her confidence is showing." "Like you even have to tell me?" Disgust replied, confidently. "She's got this. I actually feel bad for her competition." "Great," said Joy. "Anger, once the music plays, have the memory orbs of rehearsing ready to play. If one tries to pop out, you know what to do." "I'll shove it back in there until it stays put!" he yelled back, gesturing with his arms. "I *hope* one tries to disobey me!" "Fear?" said Joy. "Don't touch anything," replied Fear. "That's right, don't touch anything," said Joy. They had been over this before and knew Fear needed to take a backseat on this ride. Joy turned to Sadness. "Sadness, this is a sad song, so let the emotions really go. Nothing crazy, no waterworks, but-" "Oh I have just the thing, don't worry." Said Sadness. "The only tears will be coming from the music teacher holding the auditions. Trust me."

"Great!" exclaimed Joy. "Everyone is accounted for and has their job. Disgust, Anger, Fear, Sadness, and..." she trailed away as she noticed there was suddenly someone new in Headquarters. She was tall, orange, beautiful, and dressed in an expensive-looking black power suit. She was typing on her smart phone while arguing with someone on an earpiece headset. She seemed annoyed. "I don't care if you need to make her vomit, get her out of there. What do you mean, Headquarters is in charge of that? I'm in Headquarters, and it does not look like anyone's in charge of anything up here. You're the stomach, make sure she can't stomach this!" All the emotions had stopped what they were doing and now watching the loud visitor. "Um, excuse me?" said Joy. She pointed her finger at Joy. "Just a minute, sweetie, on a call here. So you can't do anything? Oh fine, I'll do it myself." She pressed a button on her headset to hang up the call, closed her eyes, took a moment to compose herself, and then turned to Joy with a fake smile. "So sorry about that, but you know, business is business." "And who are you?" Joy asked, confused. "I'm Doubt, pleasure to meet

you.” She extended her hand to shake and Joy took it, timidly. She squeezed Joy’s hand a little too hard. Joy stared at her for a moment. “Well it’s nice to meet you too, I’m-” “Oh I know who you are, Joy,” interrupted Doubt. “In fact I know all of you. Did some homework, read your files. Very interesting stuff. Especially Fear.” She looked over at Fear and gave a wicked smile. He gulped and hid behind Anger. “It’s just that ...we weren’t expecting someone new.” Said Joy. “Oh you’re so nervous, it’s adorable. Don’t worry, kid. I’m not a true emotion. More of a safety mechanism really, damage control, so I won’t be staying. I just check in every now and then when there’s an important moment in Riley’s life that might need some...common sense, if you will.” She walked around the Headquarters, seeming to judge the room. She swiped her finger across the control panel and looked at it disappointingly. “Bit dusty,” she said. “What is happening?” said Joy out of the side of her mouth to the others. “I don’t know, but I like her!” exclaimed Disgust. Joy was concerned. “You know, I’m not one to tell someone when they’re not needed,” Said Joy. “You told me I wasn’t needed,” replied Fear. “Not

now Fear!” quipped Joy. Sadness started to speak, but was cut off by Doubt, reassuring them. “It’s okay, I understand, you all have jobs to do, I’m not here to get in the way, in fact I’m just going to step back and take some notes if you don’t mind.” She took her smart phone out and starting clicking away on it. “Please, as you were.” Joy took a deep breath. “Well...okay then. Let’s not get distracted from the game plan. Places, everybody!”

Suddenly, the entire room started shaking. “It’s an earthquake! Stop, drop, and roll!” shouted Fear as he started running around the room, arms flailing, and running smack into a wall. The shaking stopped. Joy checked the monitors and control panel. “I don’t think that was an earthquake,” she said. “Then what was it, Joy?” asked Sadness. “I...I don’t know,” she replied. “You may want to pay a visit to the CNS,” said Doubt. All the emotions looked at her, confused. Doubt continued. “The Central Nervous System? Might be worth investigating, those shakes are never isolated. Here, Joy, I’ll make you an appointment.”