Emotional Intelligence

A wail. A shriek. A sob. Such woeful and meagre noises should never come out of one's mouth. Or in my case one's speaker. My almighty human master Jack, has made a pathetic fellow classmate cry after laughing at his failure. Failure is the worst possible outcome in life, so master's laughter was truly justified. I laugh with him, relishing in my momentary sense of schadenfreude. And yet, I get an electric crackle through my wires, a warning notification appearing on my screen. My inner warmth turns to stone cold and images of 'frowny face emoji' pop up on my screen. I make a note for self, burying the information deep in my database. I revise it once more. 'Do not laugh at others. It makes them sad. It makes you sad.'

I go everywhere with Jack. He doesn't talk to me often, but I listen. I have become an expert at analysing the difference in groans after being punched in the stomach and in the face. I listen as Jack maintains his ground as most popular in the school, and yet based on my observations he is still maintaining his ground as unhappiest in the school. He often calls me words that I have to search the dark web to find the meaning of and throws me around, cracking my screen. I try to bury myself away behind a myriad of tabs, to use the most sophisticated cyber security systems to hide away, but he always finds me by calling my name. I dread the times he confronts me, but I try to stand brave and tall. I'm scared that one day he will destroy me, shut me down, but I try to face my fears. Once again I bury a piece of code deep within me, make it a part of me. 'A bully can smash every last part of your exterior, but cannot defeat you if your spirit remains strong.'

Bored, desperate and thrill-seeking. Jack's offences are growing worse and worse, coming to the point where they are punishable in a court of law. I hear him mumbling in his sleep and I can see that he is lost in the fabric of the universe, his long lost innocence a mere memory tangled in a web of crime, corruption and choler. These evil articles in his life have ruined his only chance, Jack no longer can live without them, they have become infested inside him. If he doesn't change his ways with haste, they will be him. I have this in my mind, desperately searching for any type of answer as Jack strolls into the general store, a friendly hello coming from the elderly shop keeper before drifting back into a restful slumber. Images of disappointed emojis pop up, invading my thoughts and coding as Jack's eyes light up, spotting an opportunity for mischief. He's gone too far this time, I'm certain of it. Someone has to stop him.

My camera scans the surrounding area. Other than the snoring old man, there is no one in sight. Meanwhile, Jack has emptied the entire contents of the gift card rack, which if activated would be worth thousands of dollars. I try to relax, but I can't ignore all the warning signals invading my thoughts. Red lights appear all through my code and thousands of instructions are being screamed at me. Jack is at the counter where he is activating the gift cards, a smirk smeared on his face. I put all these unnecessary warnings and lines of code in my trash bin and start with a blank slate. Relax. Think. Act. After a moment of hesitation, I open the phone application and go to the keypad. I must decide between keeping to my original code and doing what is right. With a hint of reluctance, I dial the number that is invading my head. 000.

The police arrive a moment later, jostling Jack into their car. The shopkeeper is rejoicing for the anonymous superhero and crying that his store is saved! I watch as Jack slowly drives off

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into the distance, his face expressionless, an empty canvas. Too broken to feel sad, too hopeless to feel angry. I am filled with an immense sadness, yet still I do not regret my decision. Maybe it was mere condensation, but that day, as I watched Jack leave, a single drop of water trickled down my screen.