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EMBARRASSMENT

DEFINITION: A lack of composure due to self-conscious discomfort

PHYSICAL SIGNALS AND BEHAVIORS:

A flush that creeps across the cheeks
Visible sweating
The body freezing in place
Grimacing or swallowing
Ears that turn red
The chin dipping down
The chest caving, the spine bent
Hands curling around one's middle
Feet shuffling
Clearing the throat and coughing
Covering oneself (crossing the arms, closing a jacket, etc.)
Pulling at one's collar
Rubbing the back of the neck
Wincing
Covering the face with one's hands
Cringing or shaking
Fidgeting and squirming
Touching the forehead
Slanting one's body away from onlookers or an aggressor
Stuttering and stammering, growing more frustrated as words refuse to come
Flinching away from touches
Speechlessness or a weakened voice
The toes curling up
Knees pulling together
Arms tucking in at the sides
Sliding down in a chair
Looking down, unable to meet someone's eyes
Shoulders slumping or curling forward
Responding with anger (shoving, punching, etc.)
Gritting one's teeth, pressing the lips tight
Shoving one's hands in one's pockets
Fiddling with shirtsleeves
Hiding behind a book
Shielding oneself (having a death grip on a purse, etc.)
A walk that accelerates into a sprint
Using the hair to hide one's face
Glancing about for help, an exit, or escape
Tugging a hat down low or pulling a hood over the head
A trembling chin

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INTERNAL SENSATIONS:

Excessive swallowing (a lump in the throat)
Light-headedness
A tingling that sweeps up the back of the neck and across the face
A tightening chest
The stomach hardening or dropping with a manifestation of dread
The face, neck, and ears feeling impossibly hot
Rushed breathing and a rapid heartbeat

MENTAL RESPONSES:

A compulsion to flee (fight-or-flight)
Muddled or panicked thoughts
A disconnect where the mind struggles with belief: *This can't be happening!*
Thoughts searching for a solution

ACUTE OR LONG-TERM RESPONSES FOR THIS EMOTION:

Running into tears
Running from the room or situation
Plummeting self-esteem
Fear of public speaking or being on display
Withdrawing from groups, activities, and social interaction
Loss of appetite and resulting weight loss
Obsessing about the embarrassing event; reliving it

SIGNS THAT THIS EMOTION IS BEING SUPPRESSED:

Pretending to not have heard or seen
Intensely concentrating on something else; actively ignoring others
A fake smile as one tries to laugh it off
Changing the topic in any way possible
Lying or deflecting attention by assigning blame to another

MAY ESCALATE TO: Humiliation (154), Depressed (84), Regret (214), Shame (240), Anger (40)

MAY DE-ESCALATE TO: Insecurity (166), Relief (216), Gratitude (136)

ASSOCIATED POWER VERBS: Blush, bolt, burn, cringe, cry, curl, duck, escape, flee, flush, gasp, hide, pain, retreat, run, scurry, shame, shrink, squirm, stammer, suffer, sweat

WRITER'S TIP: Be wary of showing emotion too readily through the act of crying. In real life, it takes a lot to reach a tearful state, so it should be the same for our characters.