Penny for Your Thoughts

A One-Act Comedy

By Scott Haan

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DEDICATION

For Jerry "Mongo" Thompson, with love, respect and gratitude.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Penny Ramsey is a young woman who, like all of us, has different sides to her personality. They are personified in the story by comically stereotypical characters, collectively known as the Egos. The five Egos make up her decision-making process, which gets a lot more complicated when Penny overhears only one side of her boyfriend Matt's phone conversation and believes he has betrayed her. It's a stressful time for Penny, made even more confusing by the introduction of a potential new suitor named Rick and the nosy involvement of Penny's mother (and Matt's boss) Mrs. Killian. Maybe things could get straightened out if the people in Penny's head could just get along, for once!

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

February 19-22, 2015 by the Clinton County Civic Theatre in Frankfort, IN. Director: Brian Nichols. Assistant Director: Larry Price. Cast: Kayla Bennett, Erin VanEmon, Chelsea Hubbard, Elizabeth Fink, Jean Warren, Andy Best, Griffin Hundley, Linda Benge, Luke McLaughlin, and Kelsey Lukasik. Crew: Janeen Burrows, Terry Reck, and Wendy Thompson.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m and 7 w)
(With optional extended ending: 7 m and 8 w)

PENNY RAMSEY (f): A kind and independent woman. Dating Matt, daughter to Mrs. Killian.

BUFFY (f): An Ego. The beauty queen who has a big heart but just isn't all that bright.

JESSICA (f): An Ego. The casual girl, sarcastic and moody, most at home in sweatpants and a t-shirt.

MYRTLE (f): An Ego. The nerdy brains of the operation, who is intellectual and overly cautious.

GERTRUDE (f): An Ego. Sweet old grandmother type who always has a warm smile on her face.

ADAM (m): An Ego. Male who likes puns and juvenile humor, and represents Penny's masculine side.

MATT LANE (m): Penny's boyfriend, sweet but a little socially awkward, and too humble for his own good.

MRS. JANET KILLIAN (f): Penny's mother and Matt's boss, all-business and more than a little frightening.

RICK WINTERS (m): Matt's bigger and taller co-worker, intimidatingly handsome and confident.

DARLA (f): Rick's sister, pushy and clever.

Optional: Five Egos for Matt *(4 m, 1 w)* who are counterparts to Penny's Egos. DARLA could also double as ROSE, if needed. See the optional extended ending.

A NOTE ABOUT THE EGOS

The Egos – Buffy, Jessica, Myrtle, Gertrude and Adam – are not real. They are merely aspects of Penny's personality, the components of her mind. Although their actions sometimes directly influence her, Penny will never acknowledge their presence in any way, nor will the other real people. The Egos are invisible to everybody but each other.

SCENES

Scene 1	Saturday morning
Scene 2	Thursday morning, five days later
Scene 3	Friday morning, the next day
Scene 4	Later that day, after work
Scene 5	Saturday morning, the next day

SETTING

The modest first floor apartment of young Penny Ramsey, who lives alone. There are 3 entrances on the set. On SR is the front door with a peephole. The CS doorway supposedly leads to Penny's bedroom. The SL doorway supposedly leads to the kitchen and to the back door. DSC is a couch, with a table in front of it. Next to the SR door is a small table or dresser with at least one drawer. USL is a rocking chair, frequently used by Gertrude. Please see props and costume list at end of play.

OPTIONS FOR SHORTENING
[<<< bracketed passages can be cut, if needed >>>]

The running time of this play will vary greatly with each production, but may run around 55-60 minutes. If you are performing at a timed event and need to reduce the length, some passages have been noted that could be eliminated without disrupting the overall narrative. They are marked within **[<<<** brackets **>>>]**. You can pick and choose as many of the bracketed passages to cut as you need in order to stay within the designated time limit. However, these passages do provide a lot of crowd-pleasing humor and character in the play, and should not be cut unless necessary. If you have no time limit, you'll get better results from performing the play in its entirety.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: The apartment of Penny Ramsey on a Saturday. PENNY is holding three outfits on hangers, draping them all over the back of the couch. Scattered around the stage are PENNY'S EGOS, each doing their own thing: MYRTLE is reading a book, JESSICA is pacing, ADAM is playing a hand-held video game, and GERTRUDE is knitting in her rocking chair. BUFFY stands front and center, holding a camera at arm's length as if filming herself.)

BUFFY: *(Into the camera.)* Hello out there! Please allow me to, like, intro-duct myself. My name is Buffy…and in case you can't already tell, I am, like, super smart. Oh, and also, I'm not REAL. *(Walking over to PENNY.)* See, this is Penny, and I'm just one part of her brain. The five of us live in Penny's head, like, helping her make decisions and stuff. I am responsible for her fashion sense, obviously. The others have different roles, but just like me, they aren't real either. We are all just pigments of her imagination. *(Proudly.)* I am the most intelli-gentle. That's why they call ME the "airhead" of the group. You know, because, like, air is mostly oxygen, which is what runs the brain, so, like, "airhead" means "smartest." *(Thinking hard.)* At least, I THINK that's what that means.

JESSICA: Buffy, what are you doing?

BUFFY: Oh, I wanted to record myself for, like, posterior.

MYRTLE: I hope you mean "posterity." But it's time to focus. We need to choose today's ensemble.

(BUFFY puts the camera down, runs over to PENNY and stands next to her, looking excitedly down at the clothes. During this conversation, Penny picks up various outfits and holds them against herself, debating.)

BUFFY: Oh, goodie! It's the moment of tooth!

JESSICA: "The moment of TOOTH"?

BUFFY: You've never heard that phrase? It means, like, an important decision, and if you make the wrong choice, it really bites. Moment of tooth.

JESSICA: *(Shaking head in disbelief.)* You are such an airhead.

BUFFY: *(Genuinely grateful.)* Aw, thank you, Jessica!

JESSICA: Besides, it's not a big life decision. Grab a sweatshirt, some jeans, we're done.

BUFFY: *(To JESSICA.)* A sweatshirt and jeans? Ugh. Why don't we just take a giant trash bag and cut arm and leg holes in it?

[<<< MYRTLE: All of those clothes look too…flashy. Why don't we wear something conservative, like a nice turtleneck, and maybe those knit pants with the elastic waistband?

BUFFY: *(Disgusted, she messes up "O.M.G.")* O.C.D., Myrtle! I think I'd prefer the trash bag.

GERTRUDE: You girls don't know how good you have it. When I was little, we had to MAKE all our own clothes, and the only fabrics available were from animals you skinned yourself. And we didn't even have thread, so you had to make do with something else…like spider webs!

MYRTLE: Spider webs? How could they possibly have the tensile strength to—

JESSICA: *(Interrupting.)* Let it go. You don't want a ticket on that crazy train. **>>>]**

MYRTLE: All right. The conundrum at hand is, what should Penny wear today? So let's vote. I prefer the scarlet. *(*Adjust to one of the 2 shirts PENNY is holding up.)*

BUFFY: I vote black.* *(Adjust to the other shirt.)*

JESSICA: Don't care.

ADAM: *(Still not looking up from his game.)* REALLY don't care.

GERTRUDE: *(Yelling this loudly into PENNY'S ear.)* We need to buy a cat!

ADAM: *(Finally looking up for the first time.)* What? How did we get THERE?

GERTRUDE: Cats make me happy.

End of Freeview

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