

A Penny for you thoughts

by

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INT. DINER

A teenage girl sits at a table. She appears frustrated or anxious about something. Her fingers are tracing through salt spilt in a small pile on the table, as if she is trying to unravel some sort of riddle. This is PENNY. Across from her sits her friend. A boy about the same age, wearing a NASA T-shirt and glasses. He's a bit awkward, but in a geeky cool way. He is sipping on his fountain drink. Blissfully unaware of Penny's state of mind. He is a teenage boy living in wonderful suburban FREEPORT MAINE, lost in his bubble of security and blissful ignorance. He has a major crush on PENNY.

PENNY

I don't know how to do this.

CHARLIE

Do what?

PENNY

This.

CHARLIE

I'm not sure I know what you're talking about Penny.

PENNY

You never listen do you?

Charlie is watching the daily news highlights on the TV over the diner's counter. Something has caught his attention.

CHARLIE

(eyes still on TV)

I listen. You said pass the ketchup, so I passed the ketchup.

Penny is clearly frustrated.

PENNY

That's not what I'm talking about.

Charlie is still fixated by something he's watching on the news.

CHARLIE

Uh huh.

PENNY

Are you kidding me.

Charlie turns to Penny.

CHARLIE

What?

PENNY

Nothing. Forget it.

CHARLIE

OK. It's forgotten.

He goes back to watching the News.

PENNY

God that's so typical. You're all the same aren't you?

Long Exhaustive BEAT.

Charlie takes the bait. With a warm smile on his face.

CHARLIE

OK. I'll bite. What's wrong?

PENNY

Look at you. Sitting there with that smug look on your face. Watching TV like nothing's happened. Then you turn to me casually and pretend to be some hero coming to a poor little girls rescue. I'm just a poor little girl in need of rescuing aren't I Charlie. I should be so lucky that Mr. Charles Preston, is here in the nic-of-time to save me.

CHARLIE

Now you're starting to act a little bit strange. Did I offend you or something?

PENNY

Did you offend me. You're a man, isn't it your God given right to offend women?

CHARLIE

Penny, what's going on? You've been acting strange ever since we got here.

PENNY

Am I not allowed to act strange Charles? Is that one of your rules? Sit up. Be polite. Speak only when spoken to little lady.

CHARLIE

OK. This is starting to feel like invasion of the body snatchers.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Please tell me what you've done with the real Penny Marshall.

PENNY

What's the matter Charlie. Not used to a woman saying NO to you. Standing up to you. Telling you exactly what's on their mind.

CHARLIE

Penny, you've never had a problem telling me what's on your mind. And every women has said NO to me. Many, many times. You, asked me to come here remember. I was at home studying for our mid-term tomorrow and you said and I quote, "YOU HAVE TO COME, IT'S IMPORTANT." So I'm here. But ever since I've gotten here, you haven't said two words to me, other than, pass the ketchup.

PENNY

That's three words.

CHARLIE

What?

PENNY

Pass. The. Ketchup. Three words.

CHARLIE

Whatever. The point is. You called and I came. And now you're acting like I'm the villain of some crazy movie that's playing in your head. What's going on? Why did you ask me to come?

Penny is clearly frustrated.

PENNY

(beat)

I can't do this...

Penny visibly shaken gets up and rushes out of the diner. Charlie watches her leave and before we know it he slaps some money down on the table and he is out the door after her.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINER

Penny is now seated on a bench near a park. We can see tears in her eyes.

Charlie sees Penny as he exits the diner. He notices that she is crying and approaches.

CHARLIE

Hey! What gives? You bolted out of there like someone just told you your dog died or something!

Penny snaps at Charlie like a dog protecting a bone.

PENNY

And what if it did?

CHARLIE

What?

PENNY

What if my dog just died Charlie. What would you do? Would you try to say something smart to make me feel better? Would you try to hold me, to calm me down? Tell me everything was gonna be alright. That my dog was in a better place now. What? What would you do?

Charlie is just standing there speechless.

CHARLIE

I don't know. I don't know what I would do.

PENNY

I told you, I don't know how to do this!

CHARLIE

Do what? You haven't done anything since we got here, expect twiddle your fingers in salt...

Cutting him off.

PENNY

Where breaking up Charlie.

CHARLIE

Excuse me?

PENNY

You heard me. I can't see you anymore.

CHARLIE
 (shocked)
 I didn't even know we were dating!

PENNY
 (over reacting)
 GOD! Boys really are so dumb!

CHARLIE
 OK Penny, you need to calm down so I can figure out what the heck is going on here.

PENNY
 I just told you. I can't see you anymore.

CHARLIE
 Fine, you can't see me anymore. Whatever that means.

PENNY
 It means. I. Can't. See. You. Anymore.

CHARLIE
 Thanks for spelling it out Mrs. Rogers.

Long awkward silence.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 Look...something is obviously bothering you. You asked me to meet you, because you need to tell someone, yes?

Penny nods in agreement.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 Great. So. What is it?

Just as Penny is about to open her mouth to speak...

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 And don't say, "I can't see you anymore." We've established that already. WHY? Why can't you see me anymore? Something I've done? Something I've Said? Something I'm going to do?

Penny closes her mouth.

She just sits there, not sure whether she's in the upside down world, or if this is all really happening to her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 A Penny for your thoughts?

PENNY

Jerk.

Penny cracks the first small smile we've seen.

CHARLIE

Loser.

Then...

PENNY

My dad's leaving my Mom.

CHARLIE

(shock)

Oh Geez. That, I didn't see coming.

PENNY

It gets worse.

CHARLIE

What? Worse, HOW?

PENNY

My mom says were moving out of state, because she's found a job in Chicago. And my dad, is moving to California to be with his new friend.

CHARLIE

(utter disbelief)

WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? HOW? WHY?

PENNY

You forgot the WHO doofess.

CHARLIE

I know WHO the WHO is...I just, I mean... it's... like.. Gawd. This really sucks.

PENNY

Tell me about it.

They both just sit on the bench and stare out into the void for what seems like an eternity.

Charlie breaks the silence in an effort to try and cheer Penny up.

CHARLIE

Well, at least your not pregnant!

Penny slaps him on the shoulder.

PENNY

Jerk. I'm still a virgin.

CHARLIE

Sorry... how would I know. I'm your lab partner in class, not your boyfriend. Speaking of which. Why am I here? Why are you breaking this news to me? Sure we chat and hang out, and you steal answer off me in class, but its not like I'm...

PENNY

My boyfriend.

Another awkward silence.

CHARLIE

Yeah, about that...

PENNY

About what?

Charlie appears as though he is about to say something really important. Then...

CHARLIE

Nothing.

More silence.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(awkwardly)

So...moving huh? That's gonna be rough. Not to mention the whole thing with your dad.

PENNY

(incredulous)

Wow. That's it. That's the best you got? You're not even gonna try to make me feel better. Here I thought you were gonna be different than the others. I thought, maybe Charlie will know what to say to make me feel something that isn't hate. Maybe, he could make me laugh. See a silver-lining in all of this. Nope. Not our Charlie. I guess, I was wrong again. Way to go Penny. You picked another winner!

(In game show announcer voice)

Congratulations. Let's tell Penny what's she won this time. Well Penny, you've won a lifetime of loneliness and despair.

(MORE)

PENNY (CONT'D)

Followed up, by an inability to ever feel whole or complete again. Not only will you spend the rest of your life trying to rebuild trust with men, women and in general, the whole of the human population, but, you will have to question whether or not your parents split up because you can be such a bitch to everyone all the time. You never clean up your room or do your homework like they ask you to. You start fights, for no reason at all. Like what the color of your nail polish should be, or which ear to pierce next or how many bad boys you can date in a month. Penny, you have hit the Tri-Fecta this time. And will reap the bounty of these prizes for a lifetime to come. And Charlie, will go on to live a modest uneventful life in the suburbs of Freeport Maine, blissfully unaware of a life he could've lived. (Pause) You were supposed to be my hero you jerk.

CHARLIE

Hey that's not fair.

PENNY

Suck it. Life shit's. And it's usually, all over us.

CHARLIE

You can't blame me for this.

PENNY

I'm not, I'm taking full responsibility for everything.

CHARLIE

You can't do that either. It's not all your fault. You just think it is.

PENNY

"Know it all". Forgot to add that one to the list. My mom and dad are getting a divorce, that much is true.

CHARLIE

Penny I think I LOVE YOU!

PENNY

What the bleep did you just say?

CHARLIE

I've sat beside you for the last 4 years trying to work up the nerve to tell you how I've felt about you. I've watched you date the biggest douchebags our school has to offer and said nothing. Each time they broke your heart, mine broke as well. Because when you hurt, I hurt. And I never once tried to stop you. Or try to tell you how to live your life. Because its yours. And I respect your choices, even if you're choices never included me.

And I'm not blaming you. I was a coward, because I never said anything. You were right, this part is all my fault, not yours. Do you understand? If I had said something, maybe things could have been different.

(Beat)

Talking to you has always been so easy. You're not like the other girls. You think your own thoughts. You have your own opinions - even if I don't always agree with them - you go your own way.

Its weird and I don't know how to explain it, but everything always seems to feel right when I'm around you.

My science buddies, all laugh at me through there beakers. They say that I'm in the friend zone and will be stuck their forever, so I should just forget about you. But I can't forget about you and never will. You're my lucky Penny.

And now, none of that matters, because I have just wasted the last 4 years of my life, sitting beside the most perfect girl I have ever met and never her told her. And just as I've finally worked up the courage to say something, you're being ripped away from me. Pulled half way across the country, to a city far cooler than Freeport Maine, with boys, that will most likely be men, by the time you get there. And you'll forget all about pathetic little Charlie, and the fact that he never had the nerve to stand up to anything that didn't look like a test tube or a beaker. That's why I can't be your hero PENNY.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I can't be anyone's hero, because I'm a coward. You're right. Life shit's all over us.

Penny is overcome by emotion.

PENNY

You're a real shit you know that.

CHARLIE

(defeated)

I've been called worse.

Penny takes a beat before responding.

PENNY

YES.

CHARLIE

Thanks for reminding me.

PENNY

(Beat)

I mean. YES. I'm not saying NO to you Charlie. I'm saying YES.

Charlie with a puzzled look on his face.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I think I LOVE YOU too.

Charlie is completely caught off guard. He is stunned.

CHARLIE

(shock)

You...you do huh?

PENNY

Yes. I do.

CHARLIE

OK then.

They both just sit there, even more confused than before.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Now what?

PENNY

I don't know. College next year.

CHARLIE

Then start a career.

PENNY
Marriage to a guy I'll never really love.

CHARLIE
Have a kid.

PENNY
And a dog named chuck.

CHARLIE
Followed by a mid-life crisis.

PENNY
Then divorce at 45

CHARLIE
Stumble upon a lucky penny.

PENNY
A chance encounter.

CHARLIE
Then a coffee.

PENNY
And a kiss?

CHARLIE
To the girl I should've married.

PENNY
A new beginning.

CHARLIE
In California.

PENNY
It's always sunny there.

CHARLIE
San Diego.

PENNY
An even 72 degrees.

CHARLIE
What about my wife?

PENNY
She'll understand, eventually.

CHARLIE
My daughter?

PENNY

She'll probably hate you. But she'll come around.

CHARLIE

And You?

PENNY

Me?

CHARLIE

Yeah. You.

PENNY

I'm your lucky Penny.

Charlie gets up to leave. Penny stands. They embrace. Long and warm. A hug that feels like forever. They let go of each other slowly. Tears starting to form in their eyes.

CHARLIE

Goodbye Penny.

A tender kiss on the lips.

PENNY

See you later Charles.

Penny breaks down, just as Charlie walks away.

FADE TO BLACK.