

PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

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WGA REGISTERED

EXT. SUBURBIA - DAY

A busy Saturday. Bright sun, clear skies; picture perfect.

Couples jogs alongside one another, a shirtless man with a farmer's tan trims his hedges, and children laugh and play.

EXT. SUBURBIA - SIDEWALK - DAY

ERIC (10) sits at a wooden stand with a pitcher in front of him. Beside that, a jar of pennies.

A RUNNER (35), sweaty and out of breath, stops at the stand.

RUNNER

Oh, thank God. It's hotter than blazes out here. How much for a glass

ERIC

A glass of what?

RUNNER

Lemonade. I'm dying of thirst.

The runner rests against the stand, and wipes his forehead.

ERIC

I'm not selling lemonade.

The runner gulps, his throat dry.

RUNNER

What?

ERIC

I'm not selling lemonade.

RUNNER

Then what's the pitcher for?

ERIC

It's for me. I get thirsty when I'm in the sun.

RUNNER

Ok, then what are you selling?

ERIC

I'm not selling anything. I'm buying.

RUNNER

Buying what?

ERIC
Thoughts.

RUNNER
What? What the heck kind of-

The runner backs up and looks at the sign displayed on the front: "PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS"

RUNNER (CONT'D)
Penny for your thoughts?

Eric nods.

ERIC
Yup.

RUNNER
Like, what, you just...buy people's thoughts?

ERIC
Yup. Whatever's on your mind.

The runner doesn't get it.

RUNNER
Umm...ok. Can't I just buy some of that lemonade off of you?

ERIC
Nope, sorry.

RUNNER
Why the heck not?

ERIC
Because if I sell you lemonade, then I have to sell the next person lemonade and the person after that, and before you know it, this becomes a lemonade stand.

RUNNER
Well, why don't you just sell lemonade like a normal 8 year old boy?

ERIC
I'm 10.

RUNNER

Well, alright, I've got a thought
for you: I think you should sell
lemonade.

Eric slides a penny towards the jogger.

ERIC

Thank you.

Pause. The runner looks down at the penny, angry. He
snatches it up and storms off.

Eric shrugs. He whistles happily as he retrieves a small
book from the stand. THOUGHTS is scribbled on the front.

He opens it. Pages and pages and pages of thoughts.

He turns to the last page and writes.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Sell...lemonade...

Eric smiles and closes the book. He puts it back and grabs a
HIGHLIGHTS magazine, opens it, and kicks his feet up.

Eric laughs and shakes his head.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Oh Goofus, will you ever learn?

Off-screen, wood drags against concrete. Eric's ears pick
up. He tries to ignore the sound.

A metal chair scrapes against the street. Eric rolls his
eyes, and puts the magazine down. He looks over.

30 feet away, JILL (10) sets up a stand. She places a
pitcher and a cup on the top, along with an EMPTY jar.

She goes around to the front of the stand and hangs a sign.
She walks back, sits down, and pulls out a COSMO GIRL!
magazine and begins to read.

Eric leans over his stand, but can't see her sign.
Frustrated, he gets up and walks around to the front of her
stand to see-

PENNY FOR MY THOUGHTS

Eric stands, mouth-agape. Jill looks up.

JILL

Can I help you?

ERIC
You...you stole my idea.

JILL
Nu-uh. Your idea's lame.

ERIC
But you stole it!

JILL
No, I made it better.

ERIC
You changed one word.

JILL
Exactly.

ERIC
You can't do this!

Jill stands up and places her fists on the table. She leans forward and looks fiercely into Eric's eyes.

JILL
And what are you going to do about
it?

Eric pauses. He turns his head to the house, frantic.

ERIC
(yells)
MOM!

EXT. SUBURBIA - SIDEWALK - LATER

Eric sits back, arms crossed, face pouting. He glares at Jill who has a customer at her stand.

The customer smiles, gives Jill a penny and leaves. She drops the penny into the now slightly-filled jar.

She notices Eric's stare and turns to stick her tongue out at him. He sticks out his tongue in return.

Her face turns sour and she rises from her chair, threateningly. Eric quickly looks in the opposite direction.

A WOMAN (55) with a massive bee-hive hairdo and overdone make-up power walks up to Jill's stand.

WOMAN
 (reading)
 A "Penny for Your Thoughts" booth.

She smiles.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 Why, isn't that just about the
 cutest thing in the world!

Jill beams at this and turns to flash a big toothy-grin in Eric's direction. Eric clenches his jaw.

The woman fishes around in her pocket and pulls out a coin purse. She pops it open and sets a penny down on the stand.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 I'll take one thought, please.

JILL
 Certainly.

Jill goes under the booth and quickly riffles through her COSMO! GIRL and reads. Eric watches, an eyebrow raised. She comes back up.

JILL (CONT'D)
 You should use a bit of blush to
 accentuate your fantastically
 beautiful cheekbones.

WOMAN
 Awww, why thank you!

Eric winces in disgust.

The woman walks away and stops at Eric's stand. She looks at the sign.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 You know, it's not polite to copy,
 young man.

She walks away. Eric flops back against his chair with a grunt, arms crossed.

He thinks for a moment, then slowly turns his head to his massive jar of change. He slowly smile; a thought forming.

EXT. SUBURBIA - SIDEWALK - DAY

SLAM! Eric sets his jar on Jill's stand. He smiles, confident. She looks at it, unimpressed.

JILL
And just what do you want?

ERIC
I'd like a thought, please.

JILL
You want a thought?

Jill stands.

JILL (CONT'D)
I *think* you should go home and cry
some more to your mommy.

Eric grabs a penny and slides it to her.

ERIC
Thank you. Can I have another?

Jill puts her fists on the table and leans forward.

JILL
Oh, I'll give you another. I think
you're a little twerp who doesn't
know when to quit.

Eric slides another penny.

ERIC
Thank you. Can I have another?

JILL
I think you're a stupid cry baby.

Eric slides another penny.

JILL (CONT'D)
Loser!

Eric slides another penny.

JILL (CONT'D)
Dork!

Eric slides another penny.

JILL (CONT'D)
Moron!

Eric slides another penny.

JILL (CONT'D)

(yells)

Ugly butt-faced, puke-breath, fart-sniffing, booger-munching, panty head.

MOM (O.S.)

Jillian!

Jill's eyes go wide. She turns her head to see her MOM, hands on her hips, face red.

MOM (CONT'D)

This is what you wanted to do with your booth? Name calling?

JILL

But mom, I-

The mom swiftly approaches and grabs Jill's arm. She begins to pull her away.

MOM

I swear, some days I can't leave you alone for five seconds.

JILL

But he started it!

MOM

He didn't say anything. I was standing there the whole time.

Eric looks at the mom innocently; a total angel. She tugs on Jill's arm again, and begins to walk away with her.

MOM (CONT'D)

You better believe I'll be telling your father when he gets home.

JILL

Awww mom, no!

Jill's cries fade as the mom carts her away.

Silence.

Eric smiles, takes in a deep breath, and lets out a refreshing sigh.

ERIC

(cheerfully)

Alright, back to business!

EXT. SUBURBIA - SIDEWALK - DAY

Eric sits, his chin balanced on his hands; bored.

A KID (12) is at the stand.

KID

How much for a glass of lemonade?

Eric groans and drops his head to the stand with a THUD.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END.