

HOW PENNY GOT HER PEP BACK

A short comedy by
Laura King

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www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com
424-703-5315

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

PENNY, female high school senior, Type A personality, Howard High Pep Squad president.

CINDY, female high school senior, sweet and simple, Howard High Pep Squad member.

DEB, female high school senior, tough and pragmatic, Howard High Pep Squad member.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

How Penny Got Her Pep Back premiered at the Dover Little Theatre One Act Play Festival, Dover, New Jersey, April 24-26, 2015.

(Lights up on the Howard High School gym roof. PENNY, holding pom-poms, sits staring into space. DEB and CINDY enter.)

CINDY: Here you are.

DEB: We've been looking all over school for you.

CINDY: Tommy said you went this way.

DEB: We didn't believe him at first. You know how he is.

CINDY: But when we couldn't find you, we came up here to look.

DEB: What are you doing on the gym roof?

PENNY: Thinking.

CINDY: That's so unlike you.

DEB: You don't have time for thinking now. Pep Assembly starts in 15 minutes. We have to get fired up.

CINDY: *(Chanting with synchronized movements:)* Let's get fired up! *(Clap, clap, clap, clap, clap.)* Let's get fired up! *(Clap, clap, clap, clap, clap.)*

DEB: *(Mocking Cindy:)* Let's just simmer down! *(clap, clap, clap, clap, clap)*

CINDY: Sorry.

DEB: Come on, Penny. We've got to go.

PENNY: I'm not going to assembly.

DEB: But you're Pep Squad leader. You have to be there to lead the spirit chant.

CINDY: *(Chanting with synchronized movements:)* L-E-T-S-G-O
Let's go, let's go
L-E-T-S-G-O
Let's go!

PENNY: I'm not going anywhere. Deb, you can lead the chant.

DEB: You never let me lead the chants. You always say I'm too aggressive.

CINDY: Your Fight Tonight chant did almost cause a riot at the last game.

DEB: I can't help it if those marching band morons took me literally.

CINDY: Who knew tuba players were so tough?

PENNY: Then Cindy can do it.

CINDY: But you always say I forget the words.

DEB: She's not wrong. You can't even remember the words to the ABC song.

CINDY: There's a lot of letters.

DEB: Anyway, it's your job, Penny.

PENNY: Not anymore. I hereby officially resign as president of the Howard High Big Horned Toads Pep Squad. I've brought nothing but disgrace to the title.

DEB: How can you say that?

PENNY: Look at everything that's happened on my watch.

DEB: You can't take all the blame yourself.

CINDY: It's been a rough year.

PENNY: Rough?

CINDY: Okay. Disastrous.

PENNY: That's an understatement.

DEB: Just because we've lost a few football games.

PENNY: Every game.

DEB: And the homecoming dance was cancelled.

PENNY: For lack of interest.

DEB: And the parade...

CINDY: Shut up, Deb.

PENNY: No, go ahead. Just say it.

DEB: Look, it was unfortunate but...

PENNY: Unfortunate? It was a nightmare. I planned that event to the last detail. I worked my fingers to the bone building floats and making costumes. Do you know how long it took me to make that seven-foot *papier mâché* toad?

DEB: Three days.

PENNY: Three days. Only to have everything ruined by that...that...that...amphibian.

DEB: It was kind of funny.

PENNY: Don't you dare laugh, Deb. The Howard High Horned Toad is a symbol of the Pep Squad. When Tommy agreed to be the toad he had a solemn duty to uphold. How could he do what he did?

CINDY: I don't think he meant to.

DEB: It was an accident.

PENNY: There are no accidents.

CINDY: A mistake then. Even mascots can make mistakes.

DEB: It was just a wardrobe malfunction.

CINDY: The Velcro wore out.

DEB: It wasn't his fault that his toad pants fell off.

PENNY: But he wasn't wearing underwear! So now, for the rest of our lives, we'll be known as the Howard High Big Horny Toads. And it all happened on my watch.

DEB: Penny, calm down.

PENNY: I won't calm down. I can't. Don't you see? It's a sign.

DEB: What are you talking about?

PENNY: I put everything I have into this homecoming. I planned it to the letter and I still failed. Don't you see what that means?

DEB: No.

PENNY: That even if you try your hardest, you can still fail.

CINDY: Well, sure. Didn't you take Algebra?

PENNY: So, I'm just supposed to go out there in the world, work my butt off, and fail?

DEB: Sometimes.

PENNY: I can't accept that.

DEB: But Penny, sometimes you'll succeed.

CINDY: It's the trying that's important.

(Penny begins to cry.)

Penny, don't cry.

(Penny cries louder.)

DEB: Pen, everybody fails sometimes. That's life.

(Penny cries louder.)

CINDY: Do something, Deb.

DEB: What?

CINDY: I don't know. Soothe her.

DEB: (*Awkwardly patting Penny's head:*) There, there. Cheer up.

PENNY: You better go, guys. You'll be late.

CINDY: We can't leave you like this.

PENNY: It doesn't matter. Just go.

DEB: I guess we better do what she says. Assembly's about to start.

CINDY: All right. We'll check on her after.

(Deb and Cindy exit. Penny slowly stands, picks up her poms, and walks to the edge of the roof.)

PENNY: I guess this is it. The time has come. There's no denying it. It's all for the best.

(With a pom in each hand, Penny juts out her arms in a diving position as if she is going to jump.)

Goodbye forever.

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