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Dramatic Publishing

THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING

A Play

by

PRINCE GOMOLVILAS



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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for Brighde Mullins

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THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING

A Play in Two Acts
For 3 Men and 4 Women (all Asian American)

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

PATTY 39; a Thai American; immigrated to America
at the age of 16; Hiro's wife

GILBERT 21; a Filipino American; immigrated to America
at the age of 1; Shimmy's son

LANA. 21; a Chinese American; born in the U.S.A.; Nef's sister

MAY 65; a Thai immigrant; immigrated to America
at the age of 42; Patty's mother

HIRO 41; a Japanese American; immigrated to America
at the age of 26; Patty's husband

SHIMMY 43; a Filipino American; immigrated to America
at the age of 23; Gilbert's mother

NEF 26; a Chinese American; born in the U.S.A.;
Lana's brother

HIRO, MAY and SHIMMY have the thickest accents among the characters. **PATTY** has a minor accent. **GILBERT, LANA and NEF** have no accents. The various characters' accents have not been written into the script.

SETTING: Las Vegas, Nevada.

TIME: The present (Act One: Saturday, Act Two: Sunday).

Approximate running time: 1 hour, 45 minutes.

ABOUT THE PLAY

The Theory of Everything received the International Herald Tribune/SRT Playwriting Award, the Julie Harris Playwright Award and the PEN Center Literary Award for Drama.

The Theory of Everything was originally commissioned by South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa, California, and originally developed by Ma-Yi Theatre Company in New York City.

The Theory of Everything received its world premiere in a co-production between Singapore Repertory Theatre in Singapore and East West Players in Los Angeles. It opened in Singapore on October 19, 2000; it opened in Los Angeles on November 8, 2000. It was directed by Tim Dang, with the following cast:

Patty.....	EMILY KURODA
Gilbert.....	KENNEDY KABASARES
Lana.....	MICHELLE CHONG
May.....	MARILYN TOKUDA
Hiro.....	KEN NARASAKI
Shimmy.....	MELODY BUTIU
Nef.....	BRENDON MARC FERNANDEZ

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

(PATTY stands, facing the audience.)

PATTY. I want to talk about aliens. Not people from other countries. I want to talk about space creatures. Those types of aliens. You know what I'm talking about: big head, big black eyes, tiny holes where the nose should be, extremely thin lips. They fly around in large metallic ships covered with bright lights, and they abduct normal human beings like you and me.

I read that the chances of a person seeing a UFO is equal to the chances of a person witnessing a bank robbery.

I'm thirty-nine, and I have never seen a UFO. But I have witnessed *five* bank robberies.

I am *way* overdue for a Close Encounter. I mean, just look at the odds.

Sometimes when I watch reruns of *The X-Files* and see all these amazing things happening to ordinary people—to ordinary white people—I get angry. Jealous, maybe. When is it going to be my turn? Can't life be fair for once? I deserve to see a UFO. I deserve to be abducted

by aliens. I've been waiting so long for *something* to happen. *This* is my something, and I want it now.

So here's what I've figured out: they're not going to come to me until I've shown them that I'm ready. I think that they think that I've been unprepared.

But no longer. I rent videos, read books, watch documentaries, do research at the library. I've taken in an enormous amount of information on the subject. I know everything there is to know about Area 51, about Project Blue Book, about Roswell. I've written letters to the President, to my congressman, to the military, to NASA and to David Duchovny.

What do they say?

"Be Prepared."

Well, guess what?

I am.

(Blackout.)

SCENE TWO

(A wedding chapel in downtown Las Vegas. The roof. The roof is flat and is not on any kind of incline. Eight or so lawn chairs; a patio table with a ceramic Japanese Maneki Neko lucky cat in the center; the receiver of a cordless phone near the cat; a stack of photocopied documents, newspapers and magazines near the phone; two patio chairs around the table; a small trash can nearby. A door, which leads to the roof access stairwell, is

where all the characters will make their entrances and exits. MAY sits in a lawn chair L; she is apparently in her own world, and will remain so throughout the entire scene. GILBERT and LANA stand near the table.)

GILBERT. I—

LANA. No.

GILBERT. I—

LANA. Don't.

GILBERT. I—

LANA. I don't want to hear it.

GILBERT. I have—

LANA. Stop.

GILBERT. I have an—

LANA. Gilbert, stop it.

GILBERT. I have an announcement—

LANA. Stop talking.

GILBERT. I have an announcement to—

LANA. Shut up.

GILBERT. I have an announcement to make.

LANA. Silence is golden.

GILBERT. Are you listening to—

LANA. I'm not listening to you! Do you understand me?

I've got things to think about here, and I can't do that *if* I'm listening to you. So, therefore, thus, hence, I'm *not* listening to you!

GILBERT. So what's your point?

LANA. Do you want me to hit you? 'Cause I *can* hit you.

GILBERT. Fine. We'll sit in silence.

LANA (*pause*). I'm sorry. I've been complaining all day.

Me, me, me. I know. I'm self-centered. Maybe that's another reason Frank dumped me.

GILBERT. You're not self-centered.

LANA. I'm not?

GILBERT. Okay, you *are*, but in a good way.

LANA. Look, I don't want to talk about me anymore.

GILBERT. Then let's talk about me.

LANA. Why?

GILBERT. I have an announcement to make.

LANA. Fine. What is it?

GILBERT. Okay: well: it's like this: I don't wanna be called Gilbert anymore.

LANA. I don't understand.

GILBERT. I will no longer answer to Gilbert.

LANA. That's your name.

GILBERT. I know. Bear with me here.

LANA. But that's your name.

GILBERT. I know.

LANA. You're changing your name?

GILBERT. Yes.

LANA. To what?

GILBERT. Well: *(Pause.)* Here it is: *(Pause.)* From this moment on: *(Pause.)* I now wanna be known: *(Pause.)* As Ibuprofen.

LANA *(pause)*. You are a sick and depraved individual. I'm leaving.

GILBERT. Lana, hold on.

LANA. Look, I have other things to do, like walk up and down the Strip and cry and complain about my existence and play keno.

GILBERT. Lana, I'm not joking here. Sit down. Please.

LANA. You want me to call you Ibuprofen?

GILBERT. I want *everybody* to call me Ibuprofen.

LANA. Why?

GILBERT. I don't know. It just hit me this morning. I was in the shower. Ibuprofen. I just need to be called that from now on.

LANA. Fine. I'm not doing it, but fine.

GILBERT. You see, Lana, we're both at this crossroads.

LANA. So?

GILBERT. Listen:

LANA. What?

GILBERT. This just occurred to me now:

LANA. What?

GILBERT. I've got a great idea:

LANA. What?

GILBERT. Let's you and I get married.

LANA. What?!

GILBERT. Wouldn't that be cool?

LANA. What're you, crazy?

GILBERT. Lana, c'mon, listen, we're both at this very weird juncture in our lives, right? This, this, I don't know, this meeting place of, of fundamental, uh, you know, *loneliness*, and something monumentally good needs to happen, or we might, hell, we just might end up in a depression deep enough to institutionalize us. And since we've known each other almost all our lives, it's logical that you and I should take the plunge together. So: *(Pause.)* Will you marry me?

LANA. No.

GILBERT. No?

LANA. No way in hell. No, I will not marry you.

GILBERT. ...I don't really like the way that answer just rolled off your tongue that quickly and easily.

LANA. Look, first of all, I'm too young and you're too young.

GILBERT. We're twenty-one.

LANA. Too young. And, second of all, the most obvious reason: we're not in love with each other.

GILBERT. So?

LANA. What do you mean, so?

GILBERT. So nowadays we all place so much emphasis on love. That's so clichéd.

LANA. Once and for all, no, no and no.

GILBERT. Is it because I'm Filipino? "Those dirty South-east Asians." You Chinese have really got some nerve.

LANA. I'm not Chinese. I was born here. And the fact that you're Filipino has nothing to do with it. Goodbye.

GILBERT. Lana, where are you going?

LANA. To kill myself.

GILBERT. What?

LANA. I'm going to jump off this roof.

GILBERT. We're not that high off the ground.

LANA. So? I'm *fragile*.

GILBERT. Lana, please, listen to me.

LANA. I just broke up with a man. Which means I hate men right now.

GILBERT. I'm not just any man.

LANA. Oh, that's right: you're headache medicine. I'm leaving.

GILBERT. Don't leave.

LANA. I came here to ease my nerves, Gilbert. I mean, c'mon, my boyfriend dumped me, and I got kicked out of school, all on the same day. And these events don't just roll off me, you know. They pierce into my body so deep that my *soul* begins to bleed. And I didn't fly here all the way from San Francisco today to have idiocy thrust into my face. Goodbye.

GILBERT. Lana, wait.

LANA. I really have to go by myself to contemplate suicide. And what better place to do it than the Keno Lounge at the Stardust Hotel?

GILBERT. Look, I'm sorry. Stay. Please. I'll drop it. You're depressed. I know. I'm here for you.

LANA. Are you really?

GILBERT. Of course. Let's work out your problem. That's the important thing right now.

LANA (*pause*). What the hell am I gonna tell my parents?

GILBERT. Tell them the truth.

LANA. I can't tell them that I got kicked out of school. Both of them would go into simultaneous cardiac arrest. I mean, on top of their dreams being shattered, I've got a big fat bill for thirty thousand dollars.

GILBERT. You took out that big of a loan?

LANA. Law school is not cheap.

GILBERT. Jesus.

LANA. Defeated after only a year and a half. God, I'm a loser. Look at me. I went from child prodigy to law school dropout.

GILBERT. Well, let's not exaggerate. You weren't a child prodigy.

LANA. Yes, I was.

GILBERT. You played chess. Big deal.

LANA. It was a big deal. Those tournaments I won, they meant something. They were an indication of a little girl destined for great things.

GILBERT. You still can be great. You *are* great. (*Pause.*) It's nice seeing you again. I'm glad you flew back.

LANA. I didn't know what else to do. I got the letter this morning. "We're sorry to inform you that, due to your

poor academic performance, you're fucked." Immediately called up Frank to tell him about it, and instead of support and love I get: "Hmm. Well, I don't think this relationship is gonna work out."

GILBERT. What a prick. *(Pause.)* Maybe all this happened for a reason.

LANA. I don't believe so.

GILBERT. It was meant to turn out like this.

LANA. Oh, c'mon. What? You think I was meant to get booted from law school so I could—what—pursue my lifelong dream of becoming a keno runner?

GILBERT. What're you saying?

LANA. It's nothing against you.

GILBERT. I make good money. And you can, too. And you could work in my casino. I'll put in a good word for you. Circus Circus is always hiring.

LANA. Are you kidding me? No. Circus Circus Hotel and Casino is not my destiny, Gilbert.

GILBERT. Ibuprofen.

LANA. Oh, for Christ's sake.

(LANA begins heading out the door. PATTY enters, holding a long, slender box.)

PATTY. Lana? What're you doing here?

LANA. Oh. Hi, Patty. Um:

GILBERT. Well, you see:

LANA. I'm sort of on a break.

PATTY. In the middle of May?

GILBERT. It's sort of like a Spring Break, but sort of after Spring Break.

PATTY. May Break?

LANA. That's right. My school is strange.

PATTY. Oh. I saw your parents the other day at their restaurant, and they didn't say anything about you coming back.

LANA. Probably slipped their mind.

PATTY. Are you staying?

LANA. Excuse me?

PATTY. On the roof. Tonight. It's Saturday.

LANA. Oh, no, I'm leaving actually.

PATTY. That's too bad. Your brother will be here in a little while, you know.

GILBERT. We'll be back.

LANA. No, we won't.

PATTY. And, Gilbert, your mother is on her way.

GILBERT. We'll be back in a little bit.

LANA. No, we won't. See you, Patty.

GILBERT. Lana, stop acting like this.

(LANA and GILBERT exit. HIRO enters, sits on a lawn chair, plays blackjack by himself. PATTY begins opening the box.)

PATTY. I swear to you: I think my sister sends me presents not to make me happy or anything like that but to show off how rich she is. And it isn't even her money. What do they say? Married a Meal Ticket.

HIRO. Hmm.

PATTY. Not my younger sister. The older one who's still in Thailand. And she's always bragging about how everything in Thailand is so much better than America. "Well, in Thailand we have *this*; well, in Thailand we

have *that*.” I said to her: “You have a lot of hookers, too.”

HIRO. Hah.

(PATTY pulls an envelope out of the box, begins to open it.)

PATTY. I guess this gift is supposed to be for my birthday.
(Reading.) “Happy forty.” That’s it.

HIRO. Mm-hm.

(PATTY pulls a book out of the box.)

PATTY. “*Magic Eye*.” Oh. It’s one of those 3-D picture books.

HIRO. Ah.

PATTY. Is this supposed to impress me or something? These books—they have these colorful pictures that look like nothing, but if you stare really hard there’s a 3-D picture hidden inside the random patterns. Like the whole page, you see, is just a bunch of colors. But if you look at it long enough, you’ll be able to see an elephant or something.

HIRO. Oh.

PATTY. I have *never* been able to see the 3-D pictures. I stare and stare and follow the instructions, but nothing ever happens.

HIRO. Huh?

PATTY. I guess I don’t have very good depth perception or whatever you call it.

SHIMMY *(offstage)*. Hellooooooooooooo!

PATTY. Shimmy’s here.