

The Reunion
by
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FADE IN:

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT

A brightly decorated room. Silver mirror balls dangle from the ceiling. A BAND performs on stage. Above the band, a banner reads "CLASS OF '99 - CLOVEDALE HIGH"

A crowd of people, dressed to impress, pay more attention to each other than the music.

One member of the crowd is CHRIS, 27, sharp suit, killer smile. Next to him is BLAKE, 27, chunky, receding hairline. They each hold a plate of food.

CHRIS

At least some things never change. The band is still terrible.

BLAKE

I've never envied a disabled group as much as I envy the deaf right now.

Blake picks up a piece of sushi off his plate and motions shoving it into his ear.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

If only they made the sushi smaller.

CHRIS

If only they made all your food smaller.

Chris taps Blake on his stomach.

BLAKE

Hey it's only because I'm sympathizing with Marcy's pregnancy. The doctor said it's normal for me to gain weight.

CHRIS

Did he also say it's normal for you to gain the weight three years before your wife got pregnant?

Before Blake can respond, Chris's attention is caught by a WOMAN at the buffet table. She scoops some food onto a plate.

Chris stares at her, mesmerized.

BLAKE

Dude do you think they got any dessert here? Chris? Hello, Earth to Chris!

Blake waves his hand in front of Chris's face. Still no reaction. He looks over to see what has him transfixed.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

Oh shit, isn't that --

CHRIS

--Yep.

BLAKE

And didn't you --

CHRIS

--Yep.

BLAKE

So why don't you go over and --

CHRIS

--Nope.

BLAKE

Why the hell not?

CHRIS

Why not? Because she's Ashleigh Sims. I'd never have a shot with her.

Blake slaps Chris in the face. Hard.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Did you just... bitchslap me?

BLAKE

Yeah, because you're acting like a little bitch. We aren't in high school anymore. Who cares if Ashleigh Sims was one of the popular girls and we were lower on the totem pole than Paris Hilton's underwear.

Chris looks back over at ASHLEIGH SIMS, perfectly neat black hair, perfectly sculpted body, perfectly fitting red dress. She talks and laughs with TWO OTHER WOMEN, oblivious to the attention from afar.

CHRIS

Well, it has been ten years. And we're not the same losers we were in high school.

BLAKE

Exactly!

Chris turns back to Blake who now has sauce on the front of his shirt and food stuck to the side of his mouth. Chris sighs, slumps his shoulders.

He is startled by a tap on his shoulder. Spins around, comes face to face with --

ASHLEIGH

Excuse me, do you mind taking a quick picture of us?

CHRIS

Uh...

ASHLEIGH

Thanks.

She hands him a digital camera, poses in between her two friends. A rose between roses.

Chris fumbles with the camera, wanting to savor this moment forever. The flash goes off, illuminating Ashleigh in her rightful position in the spotlight. Chris, as usual, outside of it.

Ashleigh comes up to Chris and retrieves her camera. She looks at the picture.

ASHLEIGH (CONT'D)

How did I look?

CHRIS

Beautiful. I mean... it turned out well.

ASHLEIGH

Thanks. So did your girlfriend or wife graduate from Clovedale?

CHRIS

No, actually. I did.

ASHLEIGH

Oh I'm sorry. I don't recognise you. Um...

CHRIS

Chris Sampson.

Ashleigh shows no hint of recognition.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You probably don't recognise me without a mouth full of metal and a lisp.

ASHLEIGH

Oh right, of course. I always thought your name was Chris Thamthon for some reason.

CHRIS

Yeah that's okay, everyone did.

ASHLEIGH

Well you've certainly changed a lot, you look great. The braces obviously did the trick.

An awkward silence, Chris doesn't know what to say.

ASHLEIGH (CONT'D)

Okay well it was good seeing you again Chris. I'm going to go and catch up with a few other people.

Ashleigh turns to walk away, Chris instinctively yells out to her.

CHRIS

Ashleigh!

She turns back around.

ASHLEIGH

Yes?

CHRIS

(nervously)

Uh, I was just thinking that, it would be a shame to wait another ten years to see you again. Do you think there's any way that we could, maybe, stay in touch?

ASHLEIGH

Yeah absolutely.

Chris looks shocked and excited.

CHRIS

Really?

ASHLEIGH

You have Facebook, right? Add me.

And as quickly as that, she is gone once more.

Chris, dejected, looks for somewhere to hide.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chris enters the men's room and stares into the mirror. Shakes his head and turns on the faucet. Splashes his face with water.

A stall door swings open and Blake steps out, wiping his shirt with toilet paper.

BLAKE

Dude, why didn't you tell me I had sauce all over my shirt?

Chris doesn't respond, still looks into the mirror.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

So, how did it go with Ashleigh? Did you ask her out?

CHRIS

Well yeah, kinda.

BLAKE

Kinda? What does that mean?

CHRIS

I said it'd be great if we could stay in touch, and she told me to add her on Facebook.

Blake slaps Chris in the face again. Harder.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Ow! Will you stop doing that?!

BLAKE

Will you stop being a bitch? What the hell are you going to do with her Facebook address? Sit at your computer and jack off to her picture while you read about what kind of mood she is in? Fantasize how at our twenty year reunion you might be able to get her mobile number and have text sex with her? At this rate by the time you actually go out with her you'll both be ready for the retirement home.

CHRIS

Maybe I just have to accept that I'm not supposed to be with a girl like that.

BLAKE

What are you talking about? I have seen you with girls hotter than Ashleigh over the last few years.

CHRIS

It's more than her looks I liked. It was... everything really. Plus with girls now I don't feel like they are seeing me as the nerd I used to be in high school.

BLAKE

Listen, you run your own company, have some money saved up, are in good shape and dress well. Ashleigh would be lucky to go out with you.

CHRIS

Thanks Blake.

Chris turns on the faucet, washes his hands. Feigns splashing water on his face and instead throws it at Blake's crotch.

BLAKE

Hey!

CHRIS

That's for slapping me in the face.

Chris runs out of the room.

BLAKE

(yelling)

Asshole!

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - BAR - LATER

Chris pours himself a glass of punch from the punchbowl. An attractive ASIAN WOMAN beside him does the same.

CHRIS

Here's what we'll do. You stand lookout while I spike the punch.

The Asian woman gives him a dirty look and storms off.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What? It was a joke.

Blake sidles up to the bar, trying to cover his wet crotch with his jacket.

BLAKE

Man this will never dry... hey how was Cindy Lee?

CHRIS

Who?

BLAKE

Cindy. The woman you were just talking to.

CHRIS

That was Cindy? I didn't even recognise her... wasn't she the girl who --

BLAKE

--got molested by half the football team after her punch was spiked at prom? Yep.

CHRIS

Oh, right. I forgot about that.

BLAKE

I'm guessing she hasn't.

CHRIS

I think you might be right.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Excuse me everyone, can I have your attention?

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN holds a microphone on stage.

MAN

Just want to let you all know that this evening's festivities will be wrapping up in half an hour. But the band will be back on stage in about five minutes to give us another set.

There is a collective groan from the entire crowd.

Chris scans the room and rests his eyes on Ashleigh, chatting effortlessly with various people.

CHRIS

Maybe I should go over and say goodbye to her.

BLAKE

Or maybe you should stop torturing yourself and just get over her already. It was bad enough when I had to listen to you obsess over her back in high school.

CHRIS

I never obsessed.

BLAKE

Really? You came over after school everyday for a month to make me learn that stupid song you wrote for her. What was that supposed to achieve again?

CHRIS

I don't know, I thought if you played the piano while I sang her a heartfelt song, I might have a chance to... woo her.

BLAKE

Woo her? Who says the word 'woo' anymore? You sound like a gay cow.

CHRIS

And you look like the before shot in an incontinence commercial.

BLAKE

Touche.

Chris pours another glass of punch for himself and Blake.

CHRIS
I still remember it y'know.

BLAKE
What's that?

CHRIS
The song. I still remember the song I wanted to sing for Ashleigh ten years ago. I was just too much of a pussy to do it.

BLAKE
Well, why don't you do it now then?

CHRIS
(laughing)
Yeah sure, good one.

BLAKE
I'm serious dude, why not sing it for her now? If you don't do it now then you'll be kicking yourself that you never had the balls to step up and let her know how you feel.

CHRIS
But there's all these people here, I'd be too nervous... and besides, there's no music to go with it.

BLAKE
Well I might just be able to help you out on that one.

Blake turns to the stage and eyes off the piano. He turns back to Chris and the two friends share a conspiratorial grin.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Ashleigh talks to A COUPLE who hold hands. She hugs them and kisses them on the cheek.

ASHLEIGH
It was so great seeing you guys again. Congratulations on the wedding, I'm really excited for you.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Testing... testing... is this on?

Ashleigh spins around to see Chris on center stage, as he taps the microphone.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Um, hi everyone. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Chris Sampson.

Silence amongst the crowd.

LONE VOICE (O.S.)

Who?

CHRIS

Uh, you might know be better as Chris Thamthon.

LONE VOICE (O.S.)

Oh yeah. Hey everyone, it's Metal Mouth Chris.

The crowd finally registers their former classmate in front of them, a collective "Oh yeah" echoes the room.

CHRIS

The braces came off a long time ago. Anyway, you're probably wondering why I am up here. In fact I'm starting to wonder what I am doing up here.

He looks behind him at Blake who sits at the piano and gives Chris two thumbs up, followed by a fist pump.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

The truth is there was something I wanted to do ten years ago but I never had the guts to do it. And I've regretted it ever since. But I figure it's better late than never.

Ashleigh looks up at Chris, a bemused smile on her face. She has no idea what is about to happen.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I have to warn you that I'm not much of a singer, and I wouldn't want to pollute your eardrums... but considering the competition so far this evening I don't think that'll be a problem.

The crowd laughs. Inspired by this reaction, Chris relaxes and looks more confident than ever this evening. His shoulders are back, his head is high.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

There was this girl back in high school that I had a major crush on. I always wanted to tell her how I felt but could never seem to find the right words. So I hope this song can say what I was never able to.

Chris turns his back to the crowd to compose himself and gives the signal to Blake to start playing.

Blake runs his fingers up and down the piano with the flamboyance of a fatter, balder, more heterosexual Elton John. Damn, he's actually good!

As the music begins to play, Chris turns back around to face his awaiting audience. Picks up the microphone.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(singing)

Ooh my darling
My little darling
I watch you from afar
You're my shining star
And I would run a mile
Just to see you smile
My darling Ashleigh
You make me happy

At hearing her name Ashleigh turns a bright shade of red. She looks genuinely shocked. She locks eyes with Chris and smiles nervously.

Other people in the crowd stare at Ashleigh now and murmur amongst themselves.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(singing)

Ooh my darling
My little darling
You're the one for me
The only one I need
I long to touch you
I long to kiss you
Let me make you happy
Yes this song is sappy

Chris puts the microphone back in the stand.

Blake hops up from the piano and jogs up to the microphone, places a hand around Chris's shoulder.

BLAKE

(into mic)

Chris Thamthon everybody.

An awkward silence for what feels like an eternity. Then a few people clap, then a few more. Suddenly the whole place goes crazy. People cheer and scream for Chris.

Chris leaps down off the stage and makes his way over to Ashleigh, eyes locked on her.

CHRIS

I have a confession to make.

ASHLEIGH

What's that?

CHRIS

I don't want to be your Facebook friend.

Ashleigh laughs, looking charmed by his innocence.

ASHLEIGH

Yeah I guessed that. Why didn't you ever say anything back in high school?

CHRIS

Do you remember what I used to be like back then? That's why.

ASHLEIGH

Okay good point.

CHRIS

I hope I didn't embarrass you in front of everyone. I just had to get it off my chest after all these years.

ASHLEIGH

So how do you feel now?

CHRIS

Pretty good actually. I've realized two things tonight. One, letting you know how I felt wasn't as scary as I imagined. And two, I should never ever be allowed to sing in public again.

ASHLEIGH

(laughing)

And do you know what I've realized?

CHRIS

What?

ASHLEIGH

I find rock stars very attractive.

As she says this she leans in close and gives Chris a quick kiss on the lips.

Chris is stunned, unable to find the right words. Blake however, can.

BLAKE (O.S.)

Awesome!

Chris and Ashleigh turn around to see Blake standing there with a big goofy grin on his face.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

It looks like my work here is done. I'll leave you two lovebirds to it.

ASHLEIGH

That was a really amazing performance you gave on the piano by the way.

BLAKE

Thanks. Don't tell anybody, but I was actually really nervous.

Ashleigh looks down at Blake's wet trousers.

ASHLEIGH

Apparently so.

BLAKE

No it's not like that, I... ah forget it. I need a drink.

Chris and Ashleigh laugh as Blake heads off to the bar.

CHRIS

Actually a drink sounds good. I know a great little lounge bar just near here if you'd like to join me.

ASHLEIGH

On one condition.

CHRIS

What's that?

ASHLEIGH

You have to promise not to serenade me in front of the entire bar.

CHRIS

(laughing)

That I can manage.

The pair turn around and head for the exit.

As they walk out, Ashleigh notices Cindy Lee standing to the side of the room, arms folded. Her eyes shoot daggers at Chris.

ASHLEIGH

Why does Cindy look like she wants to kill you?

CHRIS

Uh... guess she wasn't a fan of the song.

FADE OUT.