# REUNION AT SALEM HIGH

by Jason Earle Helgerson FADE IN:

INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

The gym floor plays the role of part-time battlefield; the weapons of choice: the basketball and volleyball. Tonight the basketball hoops are retracted, the balls safely stowed away.

A scant few PEOPLE mill about engaging in awkward conversation.

A poster near the double doors announces: THE SALEM HIGH BULLFROGS WELCOME YOU! A card table sits under the poster.

Suddenly the doors swing open, light spills into the gym.

In walks JAY, (33), he is handsome in a rugged sort of way; his hair just above the shoulders and his goatee trimmed. A bottle of water dangles from his fingers.

Beside him is MORIAH, (48), pretty and motherly, a large purse over her shoulder. She rubs Jay's shoulders.

JAY I just don't see why I needed to come.

#### MORIAH

This will be great. You can reconnect with your friends - celebrate your accomplishments since graduation.

Jay shakes his head.

JAY

I didn't need to come for that, Mom. That's why Dad invented Twitter.

Moriah gives her son a stern look.

#### MORIAH

Grab your name tag and go enjoy yourself. I'll be over by the buffet table.

JAY You're staying?

MORIAH Of course. I was on the PTA.

She walks off waving and smiling.

JAY (grumbles) Great.

He looks down at the table, shuffles through the remaining name tags and picks up the one that reads: JAY C.

Jay sticks the name tag to his chest, takes a swig of water and scans the gym floor.

He sees a MAN and WOMAN. The woman looks up, notices Jay, waves him over and calls out:

WOMAN

Oh my God! Jay! Get over here.

Jay lifts his hand in a half hearted wave, steps out into the abyss of the gym floor.

A SKINNY GUY bumps into Jay causing him to drop his water. The Skinny Guy doesn't bother to stop or apologize.

JAY

Just my luck.

Jay looks down at the fallen bottle. Its entire contents have formed a puddle around the bottle.

Jay shrugs, walks through the puddle.

INT. BUFFET TABLE - NIGHT

The long table is covered with a cheap table cloth and trays of cold cut sandwiches and fruit. Moriah stands near the punch bowl stirring its contents with a ladle.

A WOMAN stands nearby looking like a trapped animal desperately trying to break free from the steel trap that is Moriah.

MORIAH So then Doc Gabe tells me I'm not sick from eating bad fish. I was pregnant! Can you believe that?

The Woman sips her glass of punch, shakes her head.

MORIAH It's true! Boy was Joe pissed. See... (she leans in) ... We hadn't consummated yet.

The Woman looks around trying to find an avenue of escape.

INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Jay reaches the Man and Woman.

The woman is MAGGIE, drunk, desperate to look younger than her thirty-some years. She wears too much makeup and a tootight dress that shows too much cleavage.

The man is JUDD, (30s), balding with smart glasses.

Maggie throws her arms around Jay, squeezes him tightly. Judd scowls at this.

JAY Nice to see ya again, Maggie.

MAGGIE I'm so glad you made it, Jay. You remember Judd?

JAY How could I forget?

MAGGIE Oh, that's right...

Jay shakes his head, waves it off.

JAY Water under the bridge.

Jay shoots a thumb over his shoulder at the man who bumped into him.

JAY Who's that skinny guy over there?

MAGGIE Oh, you remember Abe Lot. Can you believe it? He lost like a hundred and twenty pounds. Low sodium diet.

Jay gives an approving nod.

MAGGIE You need a drink. Punch?

Jay begins to protest. Maggie spins on her heel and takes off toward the buffet across the gym.

JUDD (mumbles sarcastically) No, thanks. I don't need anything to drink. Jay and Judd move off to the side, near a rack filled with balls, jump ropes and other sports equipment.

JUDD So, what you been up to?

Jay shifts uncomfortably.

JAY

Oh you know. Took over the family business. Carpentry... framing mostly.

JUDD The crap housing market must have hit you pretty hard.

JAY Yeah, but I dabble in remodeling to make ends meet. You?

JUDD Tax attorney. Exciting stuff.

JAY

Really?

Judd laughs.

JUDD No, not at all.

JAY So, you and Maggie. An item?

JUDD I dunno, I wouldn't mind taking her for a spin... oh, sorry.

JAY

What?

JUDD Well, you two had a thing in high school...

JAY That was a long time ago. We we're young and stupid.

JUDD So you don't mind if we --

Jay shrugs.

JAY Free will.

Judd nods, rubs his chin as if he is formulating a plan. He suddenly remembers something.

JUDD Did you hear about the James brothers?

JAY The James Gang? No, what happened?

JUDD (matter of fact) Dead.

JAY Both of them? How?

JUDD Big James in a Four wheeler accident. Low hanging branch took his head clean off.

He draws a finger across his throat.

JUDD And little James Od'd.

JAY Seriously? I never pictured him getting stoned. A real shame.

They take a moment to remember their friends.

Maggie slides up to them, glasses of punch in hand. She thrusts one at Jay and sips the other.

MAGGIE Why the long faces? Let's party!

She starts to dance about. She comes to a stop next to Jay, puts her arm around him.

MAGGIE You were always a great guy. How come we never stayed in touch after school?

Jay smiles uncomfortably.

(to Judd) This guy... Get this... Sophomore year, Adam Gotha ate Miss Kurios' apple. She was ready to give the whole class detention, but then Jay here stepped up and took the fall for us.

Jay shrugs. She hugs him.

MAGGIE And that's why you are the shit!

Jay squirms away from her grasp.

JAY It was nothing.

MAGGIE Oh, I forgot! Your mom is freaking out. She wants to talk to ya.

Jay rolls his eye, sighs, hands his punch to Judd.

INT. BUFFET TABLE - NIGHT

Moriah paces the length of the table, biting her nails.

Jay hurries up to her.

JAY What's going on? Everything ok?

MORIAH (frantic) No, everything isn't ok! The reunion is falling apart.

She continues to pace. Jay grabs her.

JAY Will you just tell me what's wrong?

MORIAH There are no snacks. No dessert at all!

Jay relaxes a bit.

JAY That's it? We'll survive.

He turns to leave. Moriah grabs him by the arm.

### MORIAH

No! You have to do something. Anything. Liven this party up.

JAY You want to liven the party? Ok. What have you got for me. Anything in your purse?

Moriah frantically digs through her purse.

### MORIAH

Um... tweezers, chap stick, tape measure? Ah, here we go. I have a package of Fig Newtons.

She pulls out a small package of cookies. Jay grabs them.

#### JAY

I guess these will work.

He sets the package on a tray, covers it. He runs his hand over the lid.

#### JAY

Ok, there you go.

Moriah reaches out cautiously, lifts the lid to reveal a large pile of brownies.

### MORIAH

Brownies?

JAY My own special recipe. These'll get the party started.

Maggie sneaks up behind Jay, covers his eyes.

### MAGGIE

Guess who.

Before Jay can answer she gives up on the game and removes her hands.

### MAGGIE

Oh! Brownies.

She grabs two and takes a big bite of one. Jay smirks.

INT. GYMNASIUM - LATER

Jay and Judd stand off to the side, Maggie dances around them, brownie in hand. She tries to look sexy, but fails miserably.

She starts grinding on the motionless Jay like a sow scratching herself on a fence post. Judd does not look amused.

JUDD What's in those brownies?

Jay lets out a soft chuckle.

JAY There may be a little... ahem, cannabis in them.

JUDD Pot Brownies? I need to make a phone call.

He storms away.

MAGGIE What's his problem? Such a stick in the mud.

JAY You know, he likes you.

She makes a face.

MAGGIE Eww, he's kindda creepy.

Jay changes the subject.

JAY

What's going on over there?

He points to a GUY going from person to person, handing out fliers.

MAGGIE That's Harry King. He's trying to recruit people into some sort of marketing network.

Jay fumes.

JAY That chaps my hide. Taking advantage of these people in this economy. I need to do something about it.

He looks around, grabs a ball off the rack, inspects it, trades it for a jump rope and storms off toward Harry.

As he approaches Harry he lets the jump rope uncoil, cocks his arm and yells:

JAY You make me sick, exploiting these people. Begone you thief.

Harry looks up, eyes widen like a deer in headlights.

Jay lashes out with the jump rope. Harry breaks free of his trance and makes for the door. Jay pursues until Harry is out the doors. Everyone claps loudly.

Jay lets out a long sigh, lets the jump rope fall to the floor and makes his way back toward Maggie. Judd is now at her side.

Behind Jay a POLICE OFFICER enters the gymnasium.

Judd nonchalantly gestures toward Jay.

The officer grabs Jay by the arm.

POLICE OFFICER Come with me sir.

JAY Wait. What? What's going on?

POLICE OFFICER I received a tip that there were some brownies laced with narcotics being distributed here.

JAY Aw come on. It was just for fun. No one got hurt.

Just then, a drunk and high Maggie drops to the floor. She giggles uncontrollably. Judd helps her up.

POLICE OFFICER No one? Come with me.

He tugs Jay toward the door. Moriah runs up, eyes filled with tears, grabs the officer's arm.

MORIAH Where are you taking him? Please don't take my boy.

The officer looks down at her hand.

## POLICE OFFICER Ma'am, please remove your hand or I'll have to take you in for assault.

Jay nods to his mother.

JAY It's ok. I'll be fine.

Moriah releases the officers arm. The officer pulls Jay closer to the door.

Judd slinks toward the officer, clears his throat.

JUDD Excuse me sir... officer. (lowers his voice) I believe there was talk of a reward...

The officer sighs, reaches into his pocket, produces an envelope. Judd snatches it from his hand and slinks back to the others.

The officer exits the gym silently, Jay in tow.

Fighting back tears, Moriah asks no one in particular:

MORIAH When will my son be back?

JUDD

Well, it is Friday. I'd say the hearing won't be for three days.

Moriah breaks down and cries loudly. Judd steps around her and goes to Maggie.

Maggie's eyes look vacant. Judd puts his arm around her, props her up.

JUDD Lets get out of here.

He ushers her to the door leaving Moriah behind in a heap.

JUDD Have I ever told you I'm well hung?

The door closes behind them.

FADE OUT: