

# NO PLACE LIKE HOME

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INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A grand, large auditorium is crowded with people, all talking and drinking and laughing. The hall is decorated with hanging streamers and suspended signs that read:  
WELCOME BACK! CLASS OF '97!

Each person wears sticky tags on their chests, all reading:  
HELLO, MY NAME IS...

Near the dance floor, A YOUNG MAN sits with a few empty cups before him. This is PATRICK, black, about thirty, rough mannered, carrying thick stubbly facial hair. He has an athletes build to him.

EMILY, pale, in her late twenties, sits next to him. She's chattering on like a squirrel, restless, perhaps flirting, her hand gestures emphasizing every other sentence. Patrick sits weary.

EMILY

So you sure you didn't go to school with me?

PATRICK

(nodding politely)

I'm sure.

EMILY

But you look really familiar.  
What's your name again?

PATRICK

Patrick.

EMILY

Well, Patrick, we must've met somewhere. You're face is just much too familiar.

PATRICK

(flat out)

Probably, but not likely.

EMILY

Well you're face is a lot like  
Denzel Washington's, you know that  
actor? He's an African American as well.

(then)

You just have his bone structure,  
so toned and your skin tone is so  
smooth too. Were you a model? You  
could be you know. It's amazing. But,  
that can't be it. Maybe we met at  
a pep rally-

PATRICK

(snaps)

Look, it's not me!

EMILY

..Oh, okay.

With whatever remaining dignity, she gets up and walks off.  
Leaves Patrick alone for a moment, before a figure appears  
from behind..

Patrick turns, smiles.

PATRICK

Hey.

He sees BRAD, a strapping blond also in his late twenties.  
Brad's less compact than Patrick, but still in great  
physical shape. He's carrying drinks in hand.

BRAD

'lo there, I come bearing gifts.

He lowers them on the table.

PATRICK

Thank god.

Patrick gulps it down, nearly all gone in one swallow.

BRAD

Calm down, I'm the one who should  
be nervous remember. It's *my* high  
school reunion, talk about a blahh day.

PATRICK

(tense)

I am calm.

BRAD

Okay, fine. But what was with  
Emily trying to get in your pants?

PATRICK

Was that her name?

BRAD

Any moment I thought her hands were  
just going to rip your pants off.

PATRICK

I should've just said I was gay  
and had it over with.

BRAD

God no - that big mouth of hers  
would've told the world by now.

(remembering)

Ugh, like in high school we'd make up  
these fake rumors, like "oh my gosh  
Bobby totally just slept with Brenda"  
type of thing, just to see and if it  
would get around. And when it did,  
we knew it came from that massive mouth.  
And she had braces then, so it wasn't  
pretty. Spit flying as she denied  
the whole thing.

(a moment)

Too bad I didn't know you in high  
school. We would've gotten along.

PATRICK

Yeah, well, you wouldn't be as deprived,  
all the sex we would've had. And  
at least everyone would know the truth.

BRAD

Like they'd care.

PATRICK

Why don't you say something?

BRAD

To who? Why? No one needs to know.  
(beat)  
And why do we have name tags? Like  
everybody doesn't look the same.

PATRICK

(pointing)  
Well that one guy is looking pretty old.

BRAD

That's Mrs. Robinson, my old gym teacher.

PATRICK

Oh...

Brad scans the room for a familiar face. He doesn't find one.

Until a good looking girl spies him and waves, smiling.

Brad smiles vaguely, waving back. A moment before he realizes she's waving to a guy right behind him. Brad tries to turn his wave into a maneuver, fixing his hair. Patrick sees him embarrassed.

PATRICK

You want to dance.

BRAD

Nah, not here.

PATRICK

(offended)  
Why *not* here?

Brad speaks in a hushed tone.

BRAD

Listen, not everybody needs to  
know about me. Especially these idiots.

PATRICK

You mean not anybody.

BRAD

Shut up -

PATRICK

Oh God, like you being gay is the most interesting thing about you. Get over it.

Brad shoots a nervous look, looks around as if somebody's heard.

BRAD

Shut up. Just shut it.

(with a heavy breath)

I can't believe I'm back in this fucking shit again. I'm surrounded by these assholes and nothing I've done even matters, ten years later and I still feel like the same loser?

PATRICK

If you thought you were going to feel that way, why'd you come?

BRAD

You practically dragged me here!

PATRICK

Because I thought you'd see how much better you were than these guys.

BRAD

Oh please.

PATRICK

You obviously don't see what I see.

Brad looks into Patrick's eyes, and his face suddenly relaxes. He smiles.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

So, where's that guy?

BRAD

Who?

PATRICK  
(mock-school girl)  
The quote unquote *coolest* most  
*smartest* absolute *cutest* boy alive.

BRAD  
Oh, well, Scotty's not here.

PATRICK  
Fuck you bitch, he is here.

BRAD  
How would you know?

PATRICK  
Emily.

BRAD  
That bitch.

Patrick lets out a laugh.

BRAD  
Whatever, there's not much worth  
seeing anyway... he has a beer gut where  
his six pack abs used to be. Totally  
fat now. Poor guy. Poor me actually,  
he completely ruined my fantasy.

PATRICK  
Poor baby.

BRAD  
Shut up, you're loving that my high  
school fantasy boyfriend got fat and  
has bloated chipmunk cheeks.

Their attention is pulled to the group behind them,  
laughing hard, a little too loud. People are seizing each  
other by the shoulders, hugging mightily.

PATRICK  
I don't understand if he constantly  
made fun of you, why'd you like  
him in the first place?

BRAD

He didn't make fun of me, per se,  
just stood by as his friends did.

PATRICK

Same shit.

BRAD

No, just - whenever he was involved,  
it just seemed like he noticed me.

PATRICK

He should've noticed your fists.

BRAD

Just don't talk to him. Promise me.  
If you see him, go the other way.  
Just stay clear and watch your  
surroundings.

PATRICK

You need therapy.

Patrick notices Brad's stiffening face. He looks to a crowd, and figures it out. Patrick takes the last sip of his drink.

PATRICK

Any idea what I should talk  
about if I run into him, you  
know, accidentally.

BRAD

I'm a joke to you, huh? Do you  
even care? God, not even my  
boyfriend's on my side.

PATRICK

Of course I'm on your side,  
don't be stupid.

BRAD

Gee thanks.

PATRICK

I'm just teasing.

BRAD

No, you're not. You know I really do sometimes think about if you're on my side, I really do. I'm saying like if I fell off a cliff, wouldn't you be choking with tears and want to follow behind me.

Patrick starts laughing.

PATRICK

No.

BRAD

See, you're such an asshole.

PATRICK

Other than the idea of you falling off a cliff being completely ridiculous, I'm not that kind of cheese-ball romantic. You know it. But listen- I'm all for you.  
(considers)

You cry. I cry. You laugh. I laugh. You jump off a cliff. I laugh even harder.

BRAD

Fuck you.

PATRICK

I love you, you idiot.

Brad softens, comes into a slight smile.

BRAD

... love you too.

His palm slips into Patrick's.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Thank you.

PATRICK

No problem, now get me some punch.

Brad loosens his grip. Pulls away.

BRAD

No, get it yourself.

PATRICK

Talking to your pathetic ass  
took the energy out of me.

BRAD

Well if you're really thirsty,  
somehow you'll find your  
way to the punch bowl.

Patrick looks onward towards the punch bowl. His eyes widen in surprise, a grin appearing over his face.

PATRICK

Sure.

Patrick gets up and makes way for the snacks table. He stands next to a MALE ATENDEE, compact, with blonde hair and blue eyes, a compelling boyish quality about him. Patrick pretends not to notice him, just continues to pour punch into his cup.

The guy looks at him. There's something, a vibe between them.

GUY

We know each other?

PATRICK

Don't think so.

GUY

You're not part of the reunion?

PATRICK

Nope.

GUY

Good, I'm having a huge thing with  
names.

PATRICK

(re: name tags)

That's why we wear these.

GUY

Right. Right. But really, we don't know each other? Not at a club?... or something?

PATRICK

I doubt that.

The guy sticks his hand out.

GUY

Name's Scotty.

PATRICK

(shakes hands)

Patrick.

SCOTTY

Who are you here with?

PATRICK

Brad Garrison, he's over there.

SCOTTY

Oh wow.

PATRICK

You remember him? No lie?

SCOTTY

Yeah, didn't even see him.

PATRICK

Stop by the table, say hi or something?

SCOTTY

Yeah I will.

Patrick begins to go, until Scotty calls out.

SCOTTY

Hey!

Patrick stops in his tracks, turns.

SCOTTY  
(hesitant)  
Are you - and Brad by any chance...

PATRICK  
Are we what?

SCOTTY  
Nah nothing.

Patrick grows irritated.

PATRICK  
No, are we what?

SCOTTY  
No, it's stupid. I thought I  
remembered you, but I don't.

PATRICK  
Was that really what you were  
going to say?

Scotty tries to remain friendly.

SCOTTY  
Yeah, it's nothing man, I'll see  
you guys later.

PATRICK  
See I just thought you were going  
to ask if we were having sex?

Scotty's at a complete loss, can't believe what he's  
hearing.

SCOTTY  
What? No...

PATRICK  
Because we do, you know. Have sex.  
Lots of it. And you know what,  
it's really really gay.

Scotty stands like a deer in headlights.

SCOTTY

Oh, okay.

Patrick walks on towards Brad.

PATRICK

Fucking cracker.

Patrick seizes the opportunity, takes Brad by the finger, leading him to the dance floor.

PATRICK

We're dancing.

BRAD

No, I can't.

PATRICK

Yes you can.

On the floor, the two begin to dance. And it's immediately clear Brad cannot dance. He tensely shifts himself, aware of everyone watching. But Patrick doesn't mind, just takes advantage of the moment.

A GIRL at a nearby table watches the two. Turns to her friend, says:

GIRL

Who're those guys? They're fuckin hot.

MINUTES LATER:

The dance ends, and they return to their table.

PATRICK

Hey I'm gonna go catch some air.

BRAD

You mean smoke a cig?

PATRICK

Same diff. Love you.

BRAD

You too.

Patrick kisses Brad, surprisingly. And leaves. Brad looks around, startled. But grows more confident, just lets out some air.

BRAD  
(to himself)  
Oh my god, is that Eric Ruby.  
(intrigued)  
Who's clearly had a nose job.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Brad's standing in line outside a bathroom. He's waiting, looking around the hall, until he notices Scotty walking past. Brad stiffens, waiting for him to pass. But Scotty doesn't, instead he gets in line.

Brad purposely looks away, his breathing becoming shallow. His heart drops when he hears:

SCOTTY  
Brad? Brad is that you?

Brad cringes, as he turns to Scotty.

BRAD  
(fake enthused)  
Scotty? Oh man, hey. How are you?

SCOTTY  
Almost didn't recognize you, wow.

BRAD  
You look different too.

SCOTTY  
Well I'm great, I'm great. But look at you, you're not frail and bony.

Brad forces out a small chuckle.

BRAD  
Nope, that got old. So what's up with you?

SCOTTY  
Not a whole lot, I'm an intern at the Sea Crest hospital.

BRAD

Wow, you're smart.

SCOTTY

Excuse me?

BRAD

No nothing, just saying I didn't think you'd end up - Well you weren't really... nothing.

SCOTTY

And you've made new friends. Met one guy who said he was with you.

Brad freaks a little.

BRAD

Really who?

SCOTTY

Name's slipping right off the tip of my tongue. But boy was he... angry.

BRAD

And now I know who you're talking about.

Brad takes a moment, briefly envisions the encounter the two could've had.

SCOTTY

Listen I don't have much time, pretty much have to go. But I wanted to ask you, if you aren't doing anything. Maybe we could, we *should* do something. Apologize for me being a huge dick. If you want, bring your irate friend.

Scotty hands him a sheet of small paper.

SCOTTY

That's my number. Whenever you're in the mood to relax, or hang, just call.

Scotty begins to back away. Brad's baffled, tries to think of something to say. He comes up with:

BRAD

Bathroom.

SCOTTY

What?

BRAD

Uhh, aren't you - going to use it?

SCOTTY

Line's too big.

BRAD

Oh... okay.

SCOTTY

Well give me a call.

BRAD

Will do.

SCOTTY

Can't wait.

Brad stands, somewhat tense, but proudly triumphant.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Brad's standing in a stall, pulling a small sheet of paper out from his pocket. Written on it is a number. Above the number is written: **SCOTTY**.

Brad considers, grins, then waits a moment, before dropping the number into the toilet. He flushes it, exiting the stall.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Patrick rests against the wall, smoking on a cigarette. Looks out into the night sky.

He stands that way for awhile, before Brad gives him a gentle push from behind.

PATRICK  
You lookin' for a fight, cause  
I can take you.

BRAD  
You wish.

PATRICK  
So what's up?

BRAD  
I'm glad you got to see where  
I grew up.

Patrick stares, a grin forming. They stay at a standstill,  
comfortable in silence.

PATRICK  
(by rote)  
I'm glad you brought me along  
for the ride.

Brad leans into him, and they embrace. Patrick breathes  
Brad in...

BRAD  
(after a moment)  
C'mon, lets go home.

They part, and start down the parking lot.

PATRICK  
So, how was the reunion?

BRAD  
All in all, better than expected.  
And your encounter with Scotty?

Patrick can't help but laugh nonstop.

PATRICK  
(mocking)  
Uh-mazing. But I had a problem  
with his fat. It looked strikingly  
similar to my muscles.

BRAD  
His are slightly bigger.

PATRICK  
Snap.

BRAD  
Burn.

PATRICK  
He into threesomes?

BRAD  
I flushed his number.

PATRICK  
Dumb ass.

BRAD  
I know.

PATRICK  
You know they didn't expect you  
to be this hot.

BRAD  
It's sort of comforting actually.

They continue walking along the street, into the night.

PATRICK  
So we're at the place you grew up.  
Met your friends, stayed in your  
hometown, what's next for me?

BRAD  
..You still haven't met my grandparents.

PATRICK  
Fuck.

FADE OUT.