

Reunion
by
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Based on the short story
"A Christmas Reunion"
By Joy Lin

FADE IN:

SCENE 1:

INT. GRANNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

There are Christmas decorations everywhere.

The front door opens. DANIELLE (20s) and a clean-shaven ROBERT (30s) walk in wearing big winter coats with groceries.

GRANNY (O.S.)
Robert! Max called while you were out.

GRANNY (70s) walks out from the kitchen while wiping her hands on a towel.

GRANNY (CONT'D)
He is coming home for dinner tonight! Isn't that wonderful? All of us together for the holidays!

Robert and Danielle look stunned, not in a good way.

ROBERT
What? M... Max is in town?

Granny walks towards Danielle and takes her groceries.

GRANNY
Yeah, he is going to be so happy to meet his new sister-in-law for the first time.

ROBERT
(brow furrowed)
When is he going to be here?

GRANNY
(oblivious to Robert's anger)
Oh, he was calling from the airport, depending on traffic, he should be here before dinner starts.

Robert wants to explode, but he turns and sees a Christmas sock on the wall with Max's name on it and realizes how happy Granny is that Max is coming home. So he squeezes out a forced smile instead and hugs her.

ROBERT
That's... great.

GRANNY
Gosh, we need an extra setting on
the table!

Granny excitedly turns to the cupboard to find an extra setting while humming a Christmas song.

Robert sets the groceries down on the kitchen counter and storms off. Danielle pauses for a moment and quietly follows him.

SFX: door slam.

CUT TO SCENE 2:

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

ROBERT
(pacing back and forth)
Five fucking years and not a single
phone call letting us know he's
okay...

Danielle sits on the side of the bed, staring at nothing with a look of sadness mixed with fear on her face.

ROBERT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
As soon as we makes peace with
never seeing him again, he pops up
and wants to join us for Christmas?
The fucking balls on this guy!

DANIELLE
(weakly)
Please stop. You're making me
dizzy.

Robert sits down besides Danielle and continues to rant while staring straight ahead without noticing her expressions.

ROBERT
Where was he last year when Granny
was in the hospital? Oh, yeah, a
thousand miles away, busy becoming
an "artist."

Robert gives the word "artist" a dramatic air quote hand gesture. The sarcasm in his voice is thick with bitterness.

DANIELLE

(puts her hand on Robert)
Robert, I... I want you to know how
much I love you.

Robert is so wrapped up in his anger, he can't concentrate.
He rubs his forehead with his hand.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

I was a mess before I found you. I
was broken... depressed and
suicidal. You saved me!
(she touches his face)
You made me whole again. Meeting
you this year was the best thing
that ever happened to me.

After a deep breath, Robert finally takes Danielle's hand.

ROBERT

I'm not jealous of him. He may be
making the big bucks now, but I
know I'm the lucky one.
(they touch foreheads)
The day you walked into my life was
practically magical. It's like...
we knew in that moment we had found
each other.

Robert smiles and kisses Danielle tenderly.

Still bothered, Robert stands up and starts to pace back and
forth again before gradually starting to accept reality.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I just hate having to put on a fake
smile as if he didn't abandon us
for half a decade.
(takes a deep breath)
But I gotta do it.

Danielle stands up and Robert moves away from her.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, honey. I just... need
some air.

DANIELLE

Please...

Robert moves past her and leaves the room.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)
 (almost whispering)
 Don't go...

Danielle sits back down on the bed and reminisces the past. She pulls out her phone and brings up a video on her phone.

CUT TO SCENE 3:

INT. TINY APARTMENT - NIGHT

A "bearded Robert" is sitting at the dining table, wearing a birthday cone hat and about to blow out the candle on a cupcake. There is a guitar case in the background.

DANIELLE (O.S.)
 (behind the camera)
 Wait, wait, wait, you gotta make a wish first.

ROBERT
 I wish for... a bigger cake?

DANIELLE (O.S.)
 Hey, I baked for the first time in my life, in this shoebox of a studio apartment without a proper oven. You're lucky that candle is not on a Mrs. Fields cookie!

ROBERT
 Haha, I know, baby. I'm just messing with ya. Come here!

DANIELLE (O.S.)
 I hate how adorable you are.

Danielle leans in for a kiss while turning the camera to capture the kiss.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)
 I love you.

ROBERT
 Love you, too.

They kiss. Robert opens his eyes and his right hand slowly creeps into frame with a dab of icing. There is an antique green ring on his right hand. He smears the icing on Danielle's face and she screams. Robert laughs at her reaction and Danielle starts laughing, too.

SFX: Doorbell.

BACK TO SCENE 2:

Danielle is startled and gasps. She turns off the video on her phone. Faint chatter can be heard by the front door.

CUT TO SCENE 4:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Danielle stumbles down the hallway while leaning on the wall, barely able to hold herself up. Robert and MAX, Robert's BEARDED-IDENTICAL-TWIN brother, are chatting side by side. Max is holding a guitar case and a suitcase.

Max's antique green ring on his right hand glimmers in the light. It was actually Max in the birthday cake video on Danielle's phone, NOT Robert.

ROBERT

(notices Danielle)

Hey, Max, there's someone I'd like
you to meet. This is my wife,
Danielle.

Max's gaze finally lands on Danielle's face and he stops smiling. He looks down at Danielle's belly and sees she is 9 months pregnant.

Robert looks at Max, looks at Danielle, and his smile goes away as well.

A black screen.

CREDITS.

After credits:

"Standard paternity tests cannot distinguish between identical twins."

THE END.