

PRT 373- "Reunions and Red Herrings"

I arrived at the address Zack had emailed me. Today was the day of the interview reunion and I was beyond psyched. I got out of my car and went inside the building where I found everyone else already there.

"Hey guys!" I cried.

"Michelle? Oh my god!" Lisa cried as she ran over and hugged me, Jessica right behind her.

"It's so good to see you guys. It's been years!" I said.

"It's been too long...you sure have grown up kid."

I smiled, "Yeah, it happens."

"She's right. I've seen you on TV and everything but I still picture you as that kid. To see you in person...wow...you've grown up." Jessica echoed.

"She's become a beautiful woman." AC chimed in as he hugged me.

"Hey, I'm sorry about before."

"Don't worry about it. We all have our moments. We're cool."

"Thanks."

"It's so nice to have everyone together again." Kelly said.

"It's amazing." I agreed as the reporter walked in.

"Hey guys, glad you all could make it. Are we ready to get started?" he asked.

"Sure." Zack replied.

We walked into another room and sat down.

"OK, first off, what's it like to be together again after all these years?" the reporter asked.

"It's like a class reunion. Seriously, this is our high school reunion." Zack said.

"When you look back on the show what do you see?"

"My youth. We all pretty much grew up on the show. Had a lot of firsts and...it was our high school years...it was just filmed." Kelly said.

I nodded, "Exactly. The show means so much to all of us I think because that really was our adolescents."

"And the show did set the stage for the current shows we have of it's kind, both scripted and reality. Did you ever think your show would start a whole new genre of teen television?" the reporter asked.

"I don't think any of us could have predicted that. We started and never expected to last one season. We certainly didn't expect it to get as big as it did." Jessica said.

"At the shows height you all were the biggest celebrities in the country. What was it like to go from unknown to wildly famous?"

Zack laughed, "It was insane. Nothing...absolutely nothing can prepare you for that. We would go to mall appearances and just get completely mobbed. I'm talking clothes ripped and hair pulled. Everyone just trying to get a piece of us. It was purely insane."

"Oh yeah. I remember those mall tours. There is no fanatic like teenage girls." I said.

"On the show you all were friends. Was it that way off screen?" the reporter asked.

"The show wouldn't have worked if we weren't." AC said.

"Most of us had been friends long before the show and remained friends long after. That's how the show came together and why it worked." Jessica agreed.

"In recent years each of you has remained active in entertainment and have successful careers, but with less intrusion from the press. Is there any part of you that misses the media storm?" the reporter asked.

"First of all, although it was crazy back then, tabloids really didn't report on us. Tabloids weren't then what they are now. We didn't have the pressure that teen stars today do. Second, I don't know any sane person that would miss that." Zack said.

"And I do have the tabloids tailing my every move right now. I will be the first to tell you, it's no fun. I love my career, but being a tabloid target, sucks!" I said.

"Which brings me to a question I have been dying to ask, Michelle, back on the show you were secretly dating Jon Giovanni, a rock star twice your age. The recent tabloid rumors are that you're back with him. What is the real deal between you two?" the reporter asked.

I sighed, "OK, here's the thing, Jon and I absolutely dated back when I did the show. I don't deny that. I've admitted it since multiple times. Yes I was 13 when he was 26. Whatever. The age thing never bothered us. We were madly in love

and honestly I'm a little sick of defending what I did back then. What Jon and I had was real and yes, it was odd to some. It's the past. People need to let it go. As for the recent rumors, as I have said and will keep saying, we're just friends. Jon has been a huge part of my life and will always be special to me. Of course there's always going to be a part of me that loves him, but we've both moved on with our lives. The tabloids just print what they think will sell their trash...and that's all it is...trash. Jon and I are friends and that is where it ends."

"Speaking to that, the rest of you, what was it like to watch Michelle dating Jon back then?"

"As her big brother of course I hated it. I did everything I could to convince her not to see him. I didn't like who she was when he was around. Jon is trouble, always has been, always will be." Zack said.

"It's always hard when you know someone you care about is making a mistake, but sometimes you just have to stand back and let them make their own mistakes. There's no stopping someone who is determined and headstrong." Kelly agreed.

"I don't think any of us liked Jon or what he did to Michelle. She's like a little sister to all of us. It was hard to see her like that." Jessica added.

"Sounds like Michelle was a terror." The reporter said.

I laughed, "I was. I'll be the first to admit it. I was a nightmare. I'm not proud of the way I acted."

"What about other romance on the show? We saw Zack with each of the other girls at one point or another. Was that real?"

"Yeah, we all dated at one point or another." Zack confirmed.

"But Zack and Kelly was the couple everyone wanted to see together and you're still together. How has life been since the wedding?"

"We're like any married couple. We have our ups and downs but we love each other and have a great life. I think we're both really happy." Kelly answered.

Zack nodded in agreement, "I couldn't be happier. I have a great wife, amazing kids, and an awesome career. I'm really very lucky."

"Zack and Michelle, on the show you two seemed extremely close...almost inseparable at times. Are you still that close?" the reporter asked.

"We fight like any other siblings, but yeah, at the end of the day we are extremely close. Obviously we grew up and have our own lives now, but we're still close." I said.

"Exactly. No matter what she's still my baby sister and I love her very, very much." Zack agreed.

"What about the rest of you, are you still close?" The reporter asked.

"We all have very busy lives, but we're still friends and we still get together when we can." Lisa said.

Jessica nodded, "Yeah, I've recently been interviewed on AC's news program and Kelly and I get lunch when we have the time. We're all still friends."

"The one missing cast member is Sam. I know he was excluded as a group decision. Why did you all decide that?" the reporter asked.

"Because he betrayed us. He's writing a supposed 'tell-all' about the cast and those aren't his stories to tell. He's making money off his so-called friends. Beyond that he's become a jerk in recent years. He's self absorbed, rude, and just generally not a nice person." I said.

"That really sums it up. At one point we were friends, but if you even watch the show he always was somewhat of an outsider. It's sad, but he made his choice." AC added.

"Are any of you worried about what he'll write in the book?" the reporter asked.

Zack shook his head, "No. We really weren't that bad. I suspect he'll fabricate a lot. If he's truthful it wouldn't be that interesting. Yeah, we went to adult clubs sometimes, that's not news these days. Honestly I have no skeletons in my closet so it'll be interesting to see what he comes up with."

I nodded in agreement, "I really am the only one that was truly out of control wild, but everyone knows about it now. I've been open about my past. It's sickening he wants to use his friends to make a buck, but he's a lame person."

"Do you plan on doing a reunion show anytime soon?" the reporter asked.

"We're all very busy. The timing would have to be right to get us all together for that." AC said.

"Yeah, we all have our own projects and so I think it would be hard, but not impossible. We'll see what happens." Jessica agreed.

"OK, each of you, looking back, what is your best memory of the show?" the reporter asked.

"Sophomore prom. That was one of the most amazing nights." Kelly started.

"Hmm, this is hard. Probably the time we turned Zack's subliminal taped messages against him. It was always fun teaching him a lesson." AC smiled.

“Mine would be the time Kelly and I broke up with Zack and AC and they put on this cheesy show to get us back. It was so sweet and very high school.” Jessica laughed.

“For me, I think my favorite moment was the episode we shot that music video. That whole episode was so dramatic and real. It showed what the show was capable of...and the music video was fun.” I said.

“My favorite memory was the episode we won the U2 tickets. That was crazy, fun, and so unexpected.” Lisa said.

“There were so many amazing moments and the best part was just working with friends.” Zack added.

We all nodded in agreement.

“Thank you so much for meeting with me.” The interviewer finished.

“Thank you.” Zack said.

We went to another area to do a photoshoot and that was it.

“That was so fun.” I said.

“It was great seeing you again kid.” Jessica said.

“It was great seeing all of you again. I’m sorry I lost touch.”

“It happens. All of us lead busy lives.” AC said.

“You’re not really seeing Jon again, are you?” Jessica asked.

“I knew that was coming. I plead the 5th.” I said.

“Oh no, here it goes again.” Lisa said.

“Don’t start with me. I’m a grown woman now. I can handle myself.”

“You think you can.” Zack said.

“OK, enough. Seriously. I really do have to go. I have more damage control to do. I’ll see you guys soon. Hopefully at another reunion sort of function. Later.” I said hugging each of them before I left.

I went back to my apartment to get ready to go out. Mina may have put me in a corner, but I could dig my way out.

I got ready and took another Vicodin and headed out. I arrived at the club and found a table. I had tried to reach Mia to meet me but I kept getting her voicemail. I was a little worried but I figured she was capable of taking care of herself. I sat and had a drink while I waited. A few minutes later I felt a pair of arms wrap around me from behind.

“Hey beautiful.” A familiar voice said.

“Hey Rich.” I said turning around and kissing him.

Yes, the same Rich that was Jon’s best friend and guitar player. Let me explain this. Everyone was on Jon and me about dating, in spite of our attempts to deny. This would not do...at all. I decided the best way to change the focus of the press was to give them a bigger story to write about. That’s where Rich came in. He was single and it would take the heat off Jon if I was seen with his best friend. It was a brilliant plan, right? Well it was.

So, that is what I did. I proceeded to drink, dance, and most importantly make out with Rich and I made sure that we were seen. The press would flip, which is exactly what I had set out to do.

By the time the club closed we were both fairly drunk, although I was still functional. Rich called a car and took me to my apartment.

“Thanks. I had so much fun.” I said.

“Anytime, you know that.” He said.

“You wanna come inside?”

“You sure? No cameras in there.”

“So?”

Rich nodded, “OK.”

We went inside my apartment and started making out.

“Bedroom.” I got out between kisses.

“Are you sure Mich?” he asked.

“Yes, Rich, I want you.” I murmured as I kissed him again.

“OK.” He replied as he picked me up and carried me to the bedroom. We undressed each other and had awesome sex.

Now, this wasn't exactly part of my plan, but I was drunk and...I like sex when I'm drunk and...he was there. Ok, so there's really no excuse...but...it happened. And it wasn't half bad. Nowhere near as good as Jonny, but not half-bad.

Anyway, the next morning I woke up next to Rich, which was slightly odd. Don't get me wrong, I liked the guy well enough, but he was no Jonny. I got up and put some clothes on then I went to the computer and logged on. I went to an entertainment news site and found the following story:

In the ever changing world of Hollywood it's hard to keep up with who's dating whom. Today is no exception. Rumors have been flying for weeks that starlet Michelle Morris was having an affair with ex-husband Jon Giovanni. These rumors were denied by both parties, even after pictures of the two making out surfaced.

This story took an unexpected twist last night when Michelle was seen at an LA nightclub with Jon's guitar player and best friend, Rich Samson.

Michelle and Rich were seen dancing and making out late into the night and then left together at closing time. A witness states that he was seen going into her apartment with her.

One club patron overheard part of their conversation, "Michelle seemed very into Rich and I didn't hear Jon's name come up at all. They were all over each other and seemed very happy."

This has led to speculation that perhaps Michelle was meeting with Jon as a courtesy to gain approval before seeing Rich. Others wonder if this is just a publicity stunt to get the heat off Jon. Who is Michelle with? Time will tell.

I smiled. It was working. Soon people would get off Jon and he would be ok. That is the only thing that matted to me right now.