

# A Reunion to Die For

By Jack Pachuta

## Act 1

*The mystery takes place at the 40-year class reunion of the 1983 class of North by Northwest High School. The Reunion Committee has decided to recreate the class senior prom, "Enchantment Under the Bay." Everyone is dressed in their 1983 prom clothes. Sherrylynn Shuster and Florence Finnegan is shuffling through a portable filing cabinet, Other members of the class are scattered throughout the room. Sherrylynn walks to microphone and speaks.*

**WRITER'S NOTES:** *Some producer's elect to have the audience and actors dress in prom clothes. This is an enhancement and not required to stage the production. AND, although the script is written around the 1983, the year is flexible with minor script adjustments.*

### SHERRYLYNN

*(Taps mic to test it.)* Hello! Hello! Can everyone hear me? *(Clears throat.)* Hello! You all know me. I'm Sherrylynn Shuster, the 1983 head cheerleader of the North by Northwest High School Chips. Let's start things off with the cheer that I used to lead at all of our football games. We'll rehearse it one time, then we'll do it like we did it in 1983. I know you haven't forgotten it, but if your memories are getting a little flaky, the words are in today's edition of "The Daily Snack." You'll find copies at your table. Okay, everyone stand up and follow along with me. *(Moves as if she's leading a cheer.)* GO, CHIPS! YOU'VE GOT THE CRUNCH! *(Spells out the letters with hand motions as she shouts them.)* C – H – I – P – S. EAT 'EM UP. EAT 'EM UP. RAH! RAH! RAH! Now, let's do it one more time. This time with emotions that you haven't felt in 40 years. *(Leads the cheer again.)* Didn't that feel good? I had a hard time controlling myself. And, of course, you remember that I was your prom queen. How could anyone forget that? Now, I run our 1983 Class Alumni Association, and I was in charge of arranging this wonderful reunion. Our committee decorated this room the same way it was decorated 40 years ago for our senior prom, "Enchantment Under the Bay." I know you all have lots of memories to share, and many of them involve our principal. She's retired now, but we've flown her in from her condo in Barnacle Beach, Florida. Let's give a big round of applause to Florence Finnegan. *(Applauds.)*

### FLORENCE

*(Moves to mic and speaks in a reprimanding tone.)* I remember every last one of you. This class is impossible to forget. I still have nightmares, and most of you are in them. A few

of you were good students, but they were outnumbered. I've kept the notes I made 40 years ago and brought them with me from Florida (*Walks to portable filing cabinet on the stage and moves it forward.*) in case I need them for evidence, so don't think that . . .

SHERRYLYNN

(*Interrupts.*) Thank you, Florence. It's nice to see you again, too. And . . .

FLORENCE

That's "Miss Finnegan" to you. I learned from all of you that evidence is very important, especially if you had nothing to do with what happened. Don't think for a moment, Shuster, that I've forgotten about that time you . . .

SHERRYLYNN

(*Interrupts.*) Yes, I'm sure you have some wonderful memories that will last forever.

FLORENCE

I keep trying to forget, but it doesn't work because . . .

ELMO

(*Speaks loudly from behind curtain.*) . . . Because!

FLORENCE

Who said that?

ELMO

(*Enters stage and talks to Florence.*) Because it's hard to forget this group. When I was the janitor here, it would take me all night to clean up the halls at the end of a school day.

FLORENCE

Elmo Wollenschlager, you haven't changed a bit. (*Puts on glasses that are hanging from a cord and looks closely at him.*) Well, maybe a little.

ELMO

(*Walks to Florence while speaking.*) I have those same nightmares, Flo. This class prepared me for my next job - working as a guard at the state prison. Those inmates were a piece of cake compared to these hoodlums. Some of the people in this room know what I mean. (*Moves to front of stage and stares at several people in the audience. Sherrylynn moves mic stand and looks frustrated because she has lost control.*) You'd be shocked if you knew

what inside details I know, but I've been sworn to secrecy by the Department of Corrections.

FLORENCE

It's funny you mention that. The state police asked to borrow my files, and some of them were returned with information missing. (*Shuffles through the files.*) I haven't gone through all of them yet, but I'll bet the authorities learned a lot from my notes.

ELMO

I'm not surprised that they were interested in these hooligans.

NICK

You can say that again! (*Florence moves to front of stage as Nick stands and clears throat*)

FLORENCE

I know that voice. Is that you, Nicholas?

NICK

(*Approaches Florence as she shuffles through files.*) Yes, it's me. I'm not surprised that you recognize my voice. The problems in this class are the kind of thing that inspired me to adopt my current profession. Greetings, my 1983 classmates. I'm now a famous family therapist. I know you all watch my hit TV show, "Dr. Nick." On it, I listen to my guests' problems and teach them how to become their parents. That's right. If anyone needs to go back to the days of Full House and Growing Pains, (*Points to audience*) all of you do. The parents in those shows were role models who are now lost in time. My mission in life is to bring back those good old days.

FLORENCE

Nicholas Niftee, you were always my favorite. You never got into any trouble. My file on you only has good things in it. I'm so proud that you're now a big star.

NICK

(*Elmo plops on couch and puts his feet on coffee table, leans back and relaxes while loudly blowing his nose as Nick speaks.*) You classmates were so rotten to me. Several of you were particularly nasty. Now that I'm rich and famous, let me quote the immortal words of Alex Keaton on Family Ties. (*Pulls easel from behind curtain with posters stacked. The top visual says: "How to Return to the Golden Days of 1983, a professional development seminar by Dr. Nicholas Niftee". He removes the visual and poster of Family Ties TV show is underneath.*)

You may remember that Alex said, “People who have money don’t need people.” *(Moves to center of stage and fakes getting teary eyed.)* The only two people who treated me nice were my parents. They understood what it takes to get along in the world. After they died in that unfortunate accident, *(Pauses.)* I promised myself to turn everyone into my parents. I know that Nathan and Nora Niftee are looking at me from *(Stammers and looks around.)* wherever they are. *(Stops his fake tears and speaks as if he’s giving a seminar.)* Memories last a lifetime, and I remember so much about all of you.

## FLORENCE

I’m so impressed, Nicholas. I watch your show every day. You know so much. You must have studied at an Ivy League school.

## NICK

You could say that. I earned my doctor of family stuff certification off-shore at the Ivy Trotter League of Love and Understanding on Sharkbite Island, Mississippi. It was an intense three-week home study course. I learned a lot. *(Moves to curtain and picks up box labeled with title of book and his name. Puts box in front of easel and pulls out a copy of his book, showing it to the audience.)* I even wrote a best-selling book, “Become Your Parents and Live a Rewarding Life.” I brought copies of it with me tonight. It’s for sale as you leave for the low, low price of \$49.95. I’ll even autograph them . . . for an additional \$25.

## SHERRYLYNN

*(Interrupts. Moves in front of Nick to take back control.)* I’m sure everyone is thrilled, Nick, but we have so much to do tonight. We have to move on. *(Nick angrily puts book on top of the box.)*

## NICK

*(Sarcastically.)* I have a lot more to say, but like a good therapist, I’ll just listen. Keep going, Sherrylynn, you never know when someone will say something incriminating. *(Nick waves to the audience while checking the remaining posters on the easel.)*

## SHERRYLYNN

*(Moves to center of stage.)* You all look magnificent. It takes me back to that night 40 years ago when star quarterback Bruce Belinsky was my prom king. He and I . . . well, let’s just say we . . .

BRUCE

*(Shouts from back of room.)* I remember that night, too. *(Chuckles.)* That was the second-best touchdown I ever scored, Sherry Baby. *(Walks to stage high-fiving audience members and making football moves. Gives Sherrylynn a big hug when he reaches the stage, then holds his hands in the air motioning audience to cheer.)*

SHERRYLYNN

*(Stammers and straightens herself out recovering from Bruce's hug.)* Why Bruce, you're here. Is it really you? How can that be? I didn't expect to see you. It's so *(Hesitates trying to find the right word.)* wonderful to be with you again. We lost track of each other after graduation, and I didn't know what happened to you.

BRUCE

Yeah, well, I had to find myself.

SHERRYLYNN

I would have helped you if only you'd have asked.

MINDY

*(Stands up and yells sarcastically.)* Hah! That's a laugh. Hello, Sherrylynn, I know you remember me. Bruce asked me for help instead of you. *(Chuckles.)*

SHERRYLYNN

*(Glares at her and shouts.)* Mindy!

MINDY

*(Moves to stage while flirting with men in the audience while Florence furiously tries to find Mindy's file.)* Mindy Tallivechio. *(Points to men in the audience and smiles.)* Yeah, that's right, THAT Mindy Tallivechio. Hello again, boys. I know a lot of you will never forget me. *(To Sherrylynn.)* Everyone knew about you and Bruce, Sherrylynn. It gave us all a good laugh. And, we all knew that you weren't really elected prom queen. I got the most votes, but you rigged the ballot boxes. I know that all of the boys in the class voted for me. *(Points to several men in the audience.)* Didn't you, boys? Just call me an election denier.

BRUCE

*(To audience.)* I had a good reason for dropping out. I wasn't the only one. A lot of people used to drop out. I knew I'd find myself and eventually I did, but it took a while.

FLORENCE

*(Pulls out a thick file and moves to Mindy who's at the front of the stage.)* I've got my file on you right here, Melinda Tallivechio. I was constantly adding more notes to it. *(Shuffles through filing cabinet and pulls out a file.)* I couldn't write fast enough.

MINDY

That couldn't be my file. *(Chuckles.)* It's too small, Finney.

FLORENCE

That's "Miss Finnegan"!

MINDY

*(Laughs and takes over the stage from Sherrylynn while talking to Florence.)* We had some other names for you, too. But, my classy upbringing prevents me from saying them out loud. Everyone in this crowd is definitely thinking them, though. *(Scans the audience then speaks to Florence.)* You tried to get rid of me, but it never worked out, did it? *(Laughs.)*

FLORENCE

I still can't figure that out. You were a terrible influence on the entire class. Just look at this file. *(Shuffles through the documents in the file and pulls one out.)* This one right here should have been enough to get you a criminal record, but . . .

MINDY

*(Interrupts.)* . . . it didn't happen. I could have told you it wouldn't. My father has the right connections. Being in prison right now is just a small inconvenience. To him, incarceration is only a temporary setback. He chalks it up to the cost of doing business, and his lawyer has assured him that his conviction will be overturned. Have you ever heard the saying, "It doesn't matter what you know, but who you know?" Think about it, Finney.

FLORENCE and MINDY

That's "Miss Finnegan."

MINDY

Yeah, I know.

SHERRYLYNN

*(To Bruce.)* Bruce, we must drink a toast together tonight in honor of old times.

BRUCE

*(Hesitates.)* That might be a little awkward.

SHERRYLYNN

Why? *(Pleading.)* Please don't tell me you're married.

BRUCE

I said our prom night was the second-best touchdown I ever scored. Well . . .

MINDY

*(Shouts)* Six points! And you made the extra point, too, Brucie Boy.

SHERRYLYNN

You married Mindy? Why? How could you? I'm still single. I always thought you'd come back to me and we'd be together forever.

STANLEY

*(Stands and yells from audience.)* That's not what should have happened! *(Moves to front of room and speaks to Sherrylynn from floor.)* You ignored ME, Sherrylynn. I was the one who really loved you. You probably don't remember passing by me in the hall while you were practicing your cheers. Many nights I cried myself to sleep because of you.

SHERRYLYNN

Stanley Stover, I never knew.

STANLEY

*(Walks up stairs to stage and speaks to Sherrylynn with emotion.)* How could you? You only had eyes for Bruce. I didn't stand a chance. I was madly in love with you, Sherrylynn. Why did you ignore me? *(Wipes tears from eyes.)* We have the same initials, SS. You wouldn't even have had to change your monograms. We could've ordered matching unisex bowling shirts. We're a match made in heaven.

SHERRYLYNN

But . . . I . . . You . . . How?