

"TO GET THROUGH HARD TIMES"

By

Anderson Becker

FADE IN:

MEETING GREG AND BOBBY

Ext- Greg's house - Mid day

Greg, a bumbling, widowed, father of one, stands outside of his suburban house. While watering the flowers, mowing, and doing other chores; Greg's neighbor and lifelong best buddy Bobby, walks up and leans against the fence and gets Greg's attention.

BOBBY

"Hey Greg! *scoffs* Nice grass buddy. I'm sure the wife loves it..

GREG

"Alright listen here Bobby, for your information, she DOES love it.. well she used to. And for your information, I get complimented on it almost every day; whether I'm home, at the store, or even the office.

BOBBY

"Alright then pal. *laughs again* So anyways, are you still on for tonight?

GREG

Thinking a little too hard

BOBBY

"You know... tonight"

Greg

"Right... tonight..." *Still confused*

Bobby

"The game you fool. It's only the biggest game of the season Greg. Do you honestly take me as a fool? I know you know what I'm talking about. You agreed to coming over, the rest of the gang will be there. Cliff, Darryl, and even Emma is showin' up."

Greg

"E-E-Emma's gonna be there? Gosh I haven't seen her since... well her last cleaning. Which was about six months, three weeks, and two days ago."

Bobby

Staring into Greg's glazed eyes confused and weirded out "Yeah... right... Listen Greg, you comin' or what?"

Greg

"Yeah for su- wait... *Suddenly getting nervous* I can't. I'm uh... er- I have a late-night cleaning...? Yeah that's it. A late night cleaning."

Bobby

Looks right into Greg's eyes with a dumb stare "Greg you're a dentist. A damn good one yes, but... a dentist, nevertheless. You do NOT have a "late night cleaning" at eight o'clock tonight. I know you buddy, you're sad about Carol, and that's alright, I get it."

Greg

"Do you though? My wife is dead Bobby. I don't get to upset often about it. But your wife? She's on you like nobody's business. You have GOT to stand up to her man. You're a writer... I know she hates that. She yells at you more than Coach Baltz would. You remember that?"

Bobby

"Yeah... I remember. That son of a bitch really knew how to scream. Remember how he used to make tubby Darryl run laps until he hurled--"

Greg

"Or how he made Cliff cry until his ma came and picked him up!?"

*Both laugh hysterically only to be interrupted by loud honking and loud metal music. *

Cut to:

Meeting the Gang

EXT- Greg's House/Driveway (Same Time)

Darryl arrives in his beater car honking his horn and blasting heavy metal music, completely interrupting the precious conversation.

Darryl

Getting out of his car "Looks like you pansies needed a little help watering your lawns..."
Laughs a little too hard causing him to cough

Bobby

"Now you listen here you piece of--"

Greg

Cutting Bobby off "Darryl! Hey buddy nice to see ya again. *Goes to Darryl and hugs the brute* How long's it been? Six, eight months?"

Darryl

Obviously knowing where this is going "Greg... we saw each other last weekend... remember? We rode our bikes to the Clubhouse?"

Greg

"I meant your last checkup buddy; you really should invest in some breath mints or something... *waving the air in front of his nose* "Woah..."

Bobby

"Now you jokers know what tonight is? And you KNOW I cant host again... Sharleen will kick my bald headed as-"

Darryl

"Wooooahhh, okayyy. We get it Bobby, your wife wears the pants in your house. How about we just elect my house as the spot for tonight? I'll call the others, we'll have a great time. No doubt about it" *coughs again*

Greg

"So Darryl... what is this cough you've been having? I haven't noticed it before."

Bobby

"It's probably that disease that came from somewhere in Asia"

Greg

"Well... I am a doctor, I can probably determine what it is in a jiffy. How about later tonight we discuss your symptoms and I can tell what you'll need to do to feel better."

Bobby and Darryl stare at Greg blankly

Greg (Cont'd)

"Alright alright... I get it, I'm just a stupid dentist. I forget that *looking at Bobby* a public writer and a *Looking at Darryl* substitute gym teacher; know all about medicine..."

Darryl

"Look, fellas. I'll call the other two. Meet at my place around sev-"

Coming out of nowhere a motorcycle roars into Greg's driveway. Cliff steps off his bike

Cliff

"Did I hear someone say... party? *laughs hard and goes to hug the other boys*

Bobby

"Boy are you a sight for sore eyes."

Cliff is noticeably the wealthiest of the four and the best looking; being a male underwear model for a while, now business tycoon owning an entire company that he started back when he was a kid

Cliff

"Fellas, how about this. Tonight. My place. Seven o'clock. You bring the beer, I'll provide the entertainment..." *looking quite sly*

Darryl

"Aw yeahhh... entertainment!"

Bobby

"Cliff you can't do that this time. Remember last time? Greg cried because he hasn't had the touch of a female since Carroll died-*

Greg

"Yeah? Well when you got home your wife accused you of cheating on her because of Cliff's "entertainment"."

Bobby

Looking at Greg Oh that's cold... *Starting to scale his fence to get even with Greg*

A soft voice heard in the distance

Emma

"Hey! When you two knumbskulls are done do you care if I say hello?"

The four guys stare at Emma. They all had a crush on her at one point; but they all grew up. Yes they're all friends... but what should that mean? Bobby is somewhat happily married. Darryl is dating the high school principal. And Cliff... well... he's Cliff. That leaves us with Greg... poor Greg. He was the happiest of all the boys when sadly his wife passed away those long five years ago... All of the boys except Greg stumble and fall over each other it seems like to go and hug Emma... it's been years since she was in town and they all could get together. Greg stood there at the head of his driveway staring... watering the concrete...

Fade Out:

Cut To:

The Game

INT- Cliff's Mansion Seven O'clock P.M.

The gang pull up to Cliff's mansion one by one bringing their beer and snacks through the door. Bobby is noticeably flushed as well as Darryl and Greg. Cliff enters the livingroom with a woman on each side of him.

Cliff

"Welcome to my humble abode dear gentleman...
looking at Emma and lady. Please make yourself at home, just don't touch anything valuable."

Darryl

"That looks to be about everything here"

Greg

"Okay Bozo you can drop the charade. We get it, you're successful, we are too, you just... are more... *dropping his point* suc-sess... ful."

Cliff

"Please, tonight is about the game, can we just watch it and relax?"

Bobby

"Yeah, he's right! Let's watch!"

Throughout the night, the gang laugh and cheer and shout at each other and at the screen. They share drinks, snacks and laughs for hours. It was good for them to all be together again. After a while Darryl, Bobby, Cliff and his girls really seemed to be tired and exhausted, but it was only 10:30. Greg and Emma sat at the opposite side of the room. Eventually when everyone passed out on the couch Greg spoke...

Greg

"It's uh... well- its um-"

Emma

Laughing "It's good to see you too Sparky."

Greg

"You- you remembered..."

Emma

Standing up and walking to Greg "Of course I remembered. Who could forget our high school nicknames? Do you remember mi-"

Greg

"Sunny" *Looking into Emma's eyes* "Of course I remember... gosh... that felt like 30 years ago..."

EXT: Cliff's Pool (Later)

Emma

"That was 30 years ago you goof!" *Punching Greg in the arm and laughing. She stands up and walks to the sliding glass doors. The blue pool water and lights reflecting into the room as she opens the door* "You up for a swim?"

Greg

"Bah I better not... I don't wanna get these clothes all wrinkly"

Emma

"That's why you take you shirt off silly!" *Emma then strips to her undershirt and shorts and she jumps into the gigantic pool* "Come on in, he waters fine" *she says with a sparkling smile*

Greg

"Contemplating his entire existence... he takes his shoes and shirt and pants off and before he could think, he was diving head-first into the water"

Emma

"See now isn't this fun?"

Greg

"Oh yeah, it's a blast Sunny... a blast..."

The two swim and splash for a while... acting like they did those thirty years ago... eventually they stop and sit in the deep and on a concrete bench in the pool, and they talked... for what seemed like days. Greg realizing that his crush on Emma had yet to cease and in fact was growing stronger by the minute. He stares into her eyes. She leans in to kiss him. He freaks out and panics and climbs out of the pool. Sitting in a lounge chair, he mumbles to himself. Emma climbs out after him only to find a pitiful Greg weeping in his lounge chair.

Emma

"Greg..." *sits down next to him* "Sparkyyy? Come on... look at me..."

Greg

Looks up at Emma

Emma

"There. Now please tell me what is wrong? I never meant to come on to strongly to you... I just thought... the moment was right. I'm sorry Sparky..."

Greg

"Emma... I thought I would have been happy. I graduated high school. I had friends. I went to college. I graduated. I met my wife. We got married. We had our son, Tommy. Life was good. I got my job as head Dentist. I then opened my own office... then... she was gone. Carroll was gone.

Just like that. Now Tommy is the same age we were when we met and he doesn't have a mother to take care of him like I did... like you did. And I feel as if I am failing my own son..."

Emma

Not knowing the severity of his situation "Oh Greg... I had... I had no idea. Is there anything I can do? I feel just awful for you... and I must confess... and I hope I'm not being too much... but I have always liked you. It's a shame that you lost Carroll... it really is, but there is nothing we can do about that now... I remember you telling me about her and how kind and generous she was, and how amazing she was for you. And to tell you the truth sparky... you deserved her; you deserve the world. I just wish I could give that to you..."

Greg

"Sunny... I appreciate you... and to be honest I always had a little crush on you too..."

Emma

"Little?" *giggling* *then coughing*

Greg

"Hey... you have a little cough too... like Darryl. I wonder what that's about..."

Emma

"I really don't think it's anything Sparky"
leans in and kisses Greg

*The two kiss passionately. They then talk for a while longer and Greg offers to take Emma home.

They leave the rest of the gang at Cliff's house and they head to Greg's house.*

INT- Greg's House (The Next Morning)

Emma awakes and finds herself in Greg's bed. She notices that she is quite sick and does not feel right. She notices Greg's breathing patterns and hears how raspy and choppy it sounds. She is worried because she has heard about some virus that some people have been getting. But she thinks she is in over her head. She does not worry. Greg awakes and is shocked to see Emma in his bed.

Greg

"Um... good morning Emma? Did we uh--"

Emma

"No not at all, however... I do think I am sick... and I think I may have given it to you from last nights kiss..."

Greg

"I noticed Darryl coughing yesterday, Bobby and Cliff as well... I'm just not sure what to do. I'm just glad Tommy is at his grandmas this weekend."

Emma

"Well I have heard about this disease called Covid-19 and--"

Greg

"Yes yes, I know all about it... at the office we have been taking precautions since March. Standing further apart, wearing masks, and sanitizing your hands when you can."

Emma

Staring at Greg "So like we've been doing since March all around?"

Greg

"What do you mean?"

Emma

"Greg how often do you go out besides going to the office?"

Greg

'Not at all actually. I have my groceries and essentials shipped to me. I find it highly convenient and really-

Emma

"You really gotta get out more Sparky" *she says as she giggles* "Around the world people are wearing masks and sanitizing just like you in your office. They are trying to prevent this virus from spreading."

Greg

"Well now I feel like an idiot... so what can we do about this?"

Emma

"Well according to google we must stay inside for two weeks and quarantine ourselves, as well as

any people we have been in contact with. Meaning the rest of the gang..."

Greg

"They're simply not going to believe us... we've got to call and inform them right away! We can't have any of them spreading it."

*Emma calls the gang and informs them. They somehow miraculously understand and they stay put. Emma then calls the local hospital for an appointment for a Covid-19 test. They go and take it and then return back to Greg's house. They await their results... a few hours later they receive a call and they find out that they are positive. Emma calls the gang and lets them know. She tells them to stay put for two weeks. Over the next few hours the gang calls who they need to let know and they stay put. Bobby calls his wife, and boy was she not happy. But she is thankful that her husband is okay. Darryl calls the school and lets them know that he is sick. And as for Cliff... well he's cliff. He stayed home with his... lady fiends and recovered quickly. *

Ext- Greg's backyard (Three months later)

The gang is back together for a little get together with a surprise...

Bobby

Stuffing his face with one of Greg's burgers
"Damn Greg... I don't know how you do it... but these burgers get better every time I have one. \"

Darryl

"Oh yeah... so good mmmphhh" *stuffing his face as well*

Cliff

"Eh, I prefer tofu burgers..."

They all look at Cliff like he's from another planet

Cliff (Cont'd)

"Alright... alright... they're pretty damn good."
Stuffing his face as well

Emma

Coming out of the house with a tray of food and snacks for the boys "Who's hungry?!" *She steps off the porch and kisses Greg. *

The boys are shocked to see this and ad lib their excitement and shock Ex: "Greg buddy! Woah! Did that just happen? What the..."

Greg

"I know this may be cheesy but- "*raises his glass* I would like to propose a toast... to the gang. How we stayed together no matter what. We always could get through the hard times... and those short three months ago... our lives flipped upside down. It was a scary time for all, but many good things came out of it..." *looking at Emma and getting on one knee* "Emma... we have had our differences, but there is nobody I would rather spend my crazy and boring life with than you... these past three months have shown me what it's like to love again, what it's like to be together with someone again... what it's like to feel again... anyways... Sunny... will you... marry me?"

Emma

Crying "Yes... a thousand times, YES!"

FADE OUT:

THE END

Meeting Old Friends Explained:

Out of all the options top choose which to make my project on...why a screenplay you may ask? Well here is my short and honest answer... I like writing them. Once I start writing I can't stop until the story is resolved and finished. After reading this short story you may feel as if it is either incomplete or lacking purpose to the main idea completely. I can assure you it is complete and has a deeper meaning than most would pick up on. I chose to write this story as almost historical fiction. The events in which this story unfolded were not to be true and are not true, however they could happen. I created the story of Gregg, Darryl, Cliff, Bobby and Emma based off of my own friend group. Of course, names were changed, however I wanted to embody real relationships and struggles that can and have occurred in their lives.

A little background of my experienced through this pandemic: In March, I met a girl. Her and I would study and hang out together. Things were really going well for us. It was the first time I was in a real relationship and I was ecstatic to be with someone. We only got to be together for about two weeks before I had to move home due to the pandemic reaching the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire. It was my freshman year of college and it was cut short due to this nasty pandemic. At the time all I knew is that I would have to move home. My classes would be online. And I wouldn't be able to see this girl for a long time. I was devastated, but also excited for this new chapter in my life. I got home from college and I remained at home finishing out the semester. I visited friends here and there. Some of them had contracted the virus but I was safe and knew when I could or could not see them. And my life remained the same up until the end of August. That girl and I continued to talk until this time, but it was too difficult to be in a relationship especially two hours apart. The 2020 fall semester fueled up and I began classes. I went to each class only ONCE in person before they all turned online. Since then I got a job and I have been doing classes from my off-campus apartment. The next time I heard news about COVID-19 is when a girl living below us contracted it and was in quarantine for two weeks. I felt okay but also a little nervous at the same time, being so close to someone who had this mystery disease. Since the semester started, I only visited home a few times to visit the family and see a few hometown friends. The last time I went home was three weekends ago. As soon as I got home, I visited family and friends, I did this for three days until I went back to Eau Claire. My plan was that that would be the last time I would be home until Thanksgiving. That plan fell short sooner than I thought. That night I came back to Eau Claire, I made dinner and I noticed I couldn't smell anything. And when I ate it... I couldn't taste it. I alerted my roommates and one of them had the virus in early July, he knew the seriousness of this virus. The next day I was tested and stayed home for three days until I received my results. I was positive. How was I to tell my family and friends and roommate that I was sick. I didn't feel sick at all. I am writing this short essay and project on my last day of quarantine. It sure has been interesting. I will say that my family, friends, and roommates are all safe and healthy. I did not take this pandemic as serious as I should have and I regret that, and always will.

I write this story to show the seriousness of this virus and how simply it may be passed on to others. From hugging and kissing to even being in close quarters with someone for even 15 minutes at a time. I wrote the story in a way that the main idea would not hit the reader until the end, and of course a cheesy resolve to the character plot for good measure. This is a primary source because it could happen to any one of us. It finally happened to me. I felt it first-hand. Granted the worst symptoms I have are no smell, taste and a slight headache...others are bed ridden and some even may die... We may never find a cure to this virus. We may never escape its' congested and fiery grasp. But we should be educated on what it is and how it works and what we can do to prevent it from spreading in the future.

Thankyou for reading. Be safe. And stay healthy.