

I got dressed then I kissed Rocky goodbye and headed to LA. On the way Holly called and said she already booked me on the same show Zack announced his involvement in the reunion. I knew the host as I'd worked with him before. I headed directly to the studio. I arrived and got ready and then I was announced.

"Please welcome, the one and only, Michelle Morris." Jimmy, the host, said.

I walked out on stage as the fans screamed and cheered. I smiled and waved to them as I went to the seat in front of the host desk.

"Michelle, thank you so much for joining us."

I smiled, "Thanks for having me. After I found out you had my brother on I couldn't say no."

"So then you already know I'm hard at working trying to get the PH cast back together for a reunion."

"Yes, I'm aware of that. I heard about your efforts. It's noble."

"Can we count on your support?"

"Well, after a lot of consideration, yeah, I'm in."

Everyone cheered so loud it was unreal.

"Hear that?! We got another one! That leaves two cast members and we can make this reunion a reality!" Jimmy said.

I laughed as he brought out a tracker board and added my participation to it.

"So Michelle, do you think we can get Kelly and Sam involved?" he asked.

"Honestly, I'm not sure. I know Kelly has a new show in the works and really is wanting to focus on that and I'm not really on speaking terms with Sam so I have no idea about him." I said.

"What happened between you and Sam?"

"He's an a...um, jerk." I said as I caught my curse almost-slip. This was network TV. Had to watch the language.

"Does this have to do with the book?"

"Mostly, yeah. I mean, I had issues with him before that. They guy is a self-absorbed jerk with no real talent. I know the fans don't want to hear me talk that way, but it's true. And you know, I think the fans know that. He was on a reality fitness show and the whole world got to see him for who he is. It's no secret that I'm not the only cast member to have issues with Sam. But yes, after the book I lost any remaining respect I had for him. We are no longer friends at all."

"But you'd be willing to do the reunion with him?"

"I don't want to see him again, but the fans deserve a full reunion, so yeah, I would do the reunion with him."

"What sort of terms are you on with the rest of the cast?"

"Well of course my brother and I are still the best of friends and I consider Kelly, my dear sister-in-law, to be one of my best friends as well. I don't really speak with Jessica or Lisa much anymore, but I have no ill-will towards either of them and I still watch their current works whenever possible. I actually would love to see them again. I actually saw AC recently, and I wasn't the friendliest person. I was going through a lot and I could have been much nicer than I was. I really need to apologize to him because he's always been a good friend when I needed one. If he forgives me then we're on good terms. I love the cast, except Sam. I really have no hard feeling towards any of the other cast members...except Sam."

Jimmy laughed, "I think we understand. So looking back, how do you feel about the show all these years later?"

I paused, "It was good times...good memories. It was the start of my career and I'm honestly honored to have been a part of something so lasting. The fact the reruns are still on the air today amazes me. But, you know, I've always felt that way. I've always been the singled out cast member that never turned my back on the show at any time. I never refused to talk about it in interviews or pretend it didn't happen. That being said, I also broke away from it career-wise the easiest so I can't really blame the others that did try to separate themselves from it. Zack, for example, had to work his butt off to prove he was a real actor. He put so much into getting an identity outside the show that I understand why he refused to discuss it for awhile. I didn't agree, but I understood. To me the show is my youth. Honestly. I watch that show and it's literally like watching home video of myself growing up, because that's really what it was."

"You were only 10 or 11 when the show started, right?"

"Yeah, about that. I was young...especially if you count the first 13 shows of the prequel series. We were in junior high...although I should have been in elementary still...but anyway, not the point."

"That's one thing I never really understood. Your grade never made much sense."

"I know. They portrayed me as being so smart I skipped a grade so I'd be in the same grade as Zack, which is kinda true because I did actually skip a grade when I started regular school, but it wasn't from being so smart, it was from being

forced to do work above my grade level for so long. Anyway, yeah, then they decided to make Zack and our friends a grade older, so that made me two grades over what I should have been.”

“Ah. Ok, makes sense now.”

“Staged reality Jimmy. We did and were what they wanted us to do and be.”

“Do you think a reunion show would be that? Or would it be more real?”

“I think it would have to be more reality than staged after all these years. We’re used to living normal lives. You can stage situations but I don’t think you can stage our personalities anymore. We’re all adults who are who we are now. I think in any sort of reunion you’ll really see who we’ve become. I know that holds true for me anyway. Everyone knows now I wasn’t the innocent All-American girl I was made out to be at the time. These days I refuse to be something I’m not. If this reunion comes together you’ll see me. Michelle Morris. I’m just who I am.”

“Any regrets?”

“None. Everything that happened then made me who I am now and I actually hope this reunions works out because I think it would be fun to revisit where I started.”

“Thank you so much joining us and for agreeing to the reunion.”

I smiled, “Thank you for caring enough to try to make it happen...all of you. Thank you.”

I went backstage. Holly was waiting for me.

“Good work.” She said.

“Thanks.” I said as I sat down to unwind.

“Are you ok?”

“Yeah, I just feel like I’m in déjà vu.

“Oh?”

“It’s nothing I’m sure. Probably just all the reunion talk going to my head.”

“Are you sure you’re ok with doing it?”

“Of course I am. I’m psyched.”

“OK...because if you want to pull out, now is the time.”

“No. I’m not pulling out. I’ve been pushing this reunion for years. Zachary finally agreed. No way am I backing out now.”

Holly nodded, “OK...if you’re sure you’re ok.”

“I’m fine. Just tired. I’m gonna go home and take a nap.”

Which is what I did. I was woken up some hours later by someone shaking me.

“Mich, wake up.” Zachary said as he continued to shake me.

I opened my eyes, “What? I’m awake.” I mumbled.

“You were completely passed out. I was banging on the door and you didn’t answer. I was worried.”

“I’m fine. Just tired.”

“Get up, you need to eat dinner.”

“OK.” I sat up, “What are we having?”

“Want to go eat at the café on the corner. It’s small and not much press lurks.”

I nodded.

We went to the café and ordered. While we waited for our food, we talked.

“So I hear you’re officially in...did the interview and everything.” Zachary said.

I smiled, “Yeah, I’m in.”

“It’ll be fun.”

“I hope so.”

“You’re nervous about it too aren’t you?”

“Yup.”

He laughed, “It’ll be ok. All that’s changed is time.”

“You sound like me...or how I used to.”

“Yeah, before you became so jaded.”

“Eh, happens.”

“So what are you plans for the night?”

“Thinking about calling Mia and heading out to Sunset.”

Zack looked at me with that over protective big brother look, “You’ve been spending an awful lot of time on Sunset lately.”

“Yeah, I have. And?”

“And I worry about you. I know what happens when Sunset sucks you in.”

“Zack, I love you for worrying, but I’m not a kid anymore and this isn’t the height of glam metal. Sunset isn’t what it used to be.”

“I know, but some things just don’t change Mich.”

“I’m just having fun.”

“I’ve heard that before.”

“I’m smarter than I was when I was 12. I can handle this now.”

“I guess you’re right. I just worry.”

“I know. But you shouldn’t. I’m fine. You’re welcome to come hang with us if you want.”

“No thanks. I have a family I need to get home to. Filming has been insane and I need to spend as much time with them as I can...especially with Kelly getting a new show too. Our schedules are going to be insane.”

“Yeah, I heard Kel got a new show. I’m so happy for you guys. This is the first time you’ve both had a show at the same time in awhile.”

“I know. It’s normally one or the other, not normally both.”

“This will be great. So is this new show the reason Kel is hesitant on the reunion?”

“Yeah, I think so. I told her I think it’s a good idea but at this point I think it’s best to back off and let her make her own decision.”

I nodded, “Probably a smart move. Have you spoken with the rest of the cast?”

“Yeah. AC is psyched about a reunion. He’s raring to go. Jessie isn’t sure, but she’s willing to go along with it. Lisa was thrilled at the idea. Sam said he’s considering it...honestly, I think he’s looking to see how much he can cash in before he agrees.”

I rolled my eyes, “Sounds like him.”

“Yeah, I don’t know what happened to him. He’s not the same kid we grew up with.”

“He let himself become a child star cliché and he’s bitter.” I said.

“Yeah, he kinda did.”

“I don’t even know how you still talk to him. I want to pelt the TV with rocks everytime I see him on-screen even.”

Zack laughed, “I know, but he was my best friend for years.”

“He was your childhood best friend...but we all grew up. AC is the one that’s really been a best friend to you.”

He nodded, “Yeah, I know.”

“Sam is lame...but I’ll do the reunion and fight the urge to fry his ass with all the lightening I can muster.”

Zachary laughed, “That’s probably a good plan.”

I sighed, “I know. I’m smart that way.”

“So you coming to the reunion with pig-tails?”

I looked at him like he was insane, “Not even if hell froze over. You bleaching your hair?”

“No way. Maybe I’ll wear a wig for the occasion and let fans think I bleached it...but...no.”

I sighed, “Stereotypes.”

“Type-casting.”

I nodded.

“Mich, are you ok? You aren’t looking very happy these days.”

“Zack, think about this. I’ve lost my daughter, husband, best friend, the love of my life, and I’m currently more famous for tabloid rumors than I am my music. You do the math.”

“Have you thought about calling Hunter and trying to make up?”

Something about that statement made me burst into tears.

“What did I say? Mich, what’s wrong?” Zachary asked as he put his arm around me.

I couldn’t stop crying.

Zachary took me home and we sat on the sofa. I was still crying. He pulled me into his arms.

“What’s wrong kid? Mich, talk to me.” He said as he brushed my hair with his hand.

“I have talked to Hunter. We’re seeing each other.”

“That’s good, right?”

I shook my head, “He’s still with Ronny.”

“Then...whoa, he’s screwing around with you?”

I nodded, “So are three other men.”

“Oh kiddo...”

“What’s wrong with me Zack? Why am I good enough to have an affair with but not to keep a guy of my own?” I started to cry harder.

“Oh Michelle...you are good enough. You’re more than good enough. You just have to stand up to these guys and tell them you won’t settle for second place anymore. Michelle, I’m really worried about you. You don’t see it but you’re falling back into what you were. Sunset...messaging around...low self-image...your whole outlook and attitude. You’re becoming Sunset Michelle again.”

“I am not.”

“You are...and you never see it until it’s too late. Listen to me Mich, I want to do a reunion...I don’t want things back the way they were. You need to stop partying and messaging around. You need help.”

“What, I do not!”

“Yes, you do.”

I stopped crying and stood up, “I’m 29 years old, there is nothing wrong with going out and having fun. Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m going to get dressed and go to Sunset.”

“Mich, please listen...”

“I think you know the way out.” I said as I went to the bathroom and started to get dressed.

I looked in the mirror as I put on my make up. Zack was wrong. I wasn’t becoming Sunset Michelle again. I was just an adult having fun. Right? I mean, I wasn’t doing anything wrong. Was I?