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■ HUMOUR ■

AN INTROVERT'S GUIDE TO SURVIVING CLASS REUNIONS

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How you will feel at reunions wholly depends on your personality type. For extroverts, it's an opportunity to celebrate old friendships, but for introverts, it's an unwanted confirmation that the people they avoided in high school are exactly as exhausting as they remember.

DON'T GO

You certainly don't want to go. But you do so anyway, because people you barely remember keep reaching out, and you don't have the emotional fortitude to say no.

QUESTION ITS VALIDITY

Five years ago, you made questionable decisions on purpose. Now you've wised up a lot and only make questionable decisions by accident. Why on earth is there a reunion already?

The implied "We made it" makes no sense. Made it where? Made it to midterm trauma, last-minute submissions, and explaining your major to relatives who still believe engineering is the same as fixing computers?

REVISIT THE PAST

Rationally, you are aware that everyone is busy with their own lives and no one, but you, is still obsessing over that thing

you did back in 2019. No one cares; it's more than likely that no one even remembers. But your brain strongly disagrees, swears up and down that the moment was far too embarrassing to ever fade, and promptly begins to show you the highlight reels of your most humiliating high school experiences (like the time you waved back at someone who was waving at the person behind you).

BADGER A FRIEND

Villains aren't born; they are made by the trauma of attending reunions alone. So, you immediately try to rope your friend into it, starting with the "We're a team" speech. If that doesn't work, you try flattery, bribery, begging, and guilt-tripping until they agree.

RECONNAISSANCE

You need to gather intel to avoid making a social faux pas. You need to know which topics are off-limits, who hates whom, who's dated or is dating whom, whose names must never be mentioned to whom, what to ask or not ask, and what to answer or not answer. Moreover, you must know who has done well for themselves, because nothing makes you spiral faster than unexpected success. So, you channel your inner Joe Goldberg and scroll through Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

PICK A PERSONALITY

Your real self hasn't been trained for public use, so you choose a persona that would invite the least amount of follow-up questions. Pick traits that are enough to survive small talk without sounding interesting. Piquing someone's interest, even accidentally, will land you in a lengthier conversation.

DRESS PROPERLY

Since you're already mentally distressed, no need to also subject yourself to physical discomfort. Comfort should be your primary concern, but not to the extent that it appears you are going through something and can't be bothered to take care of yourself.

ARRIVE LATE

Show up after the initial greetings are over, everyone has paired off, and is in mid-conversation. Slip in quietly to ensure you will be neither noticed nor acknowledged.

STAY TOGETHER

Separating would invite conversations you're not ready for. So, you stand angled towards each other, and try to project that you're in the middle of something important. If some misguided extrovert still breaks through and starts talking to one of you, the other should be ready to cause a diversion when the interaction turns weird, boring, or worse, about their startup.

LAUGH

When people tell stories you have no memory of or remind you of something embarrassing that you had successfully forgotten until that moment, you must laugh anyway because this is not the hill to die on. Reminiscing, you'll notice, is a communal activity designed to humiliate the weakest participant.

BE NORMAL

When someone asks how you've been, they are being polite. Do not overthink what to say and answer perfunctorily. If someone starts bragging, try to look suitably impressed and offer a compliment.

LOW-KEY EXIT

During goodbyes, people indulge in unnecessary public displays of affection. Leave without fanfare. By the time others deign to take notice, you're already home and finally happy.

LET IT HAUNT YOU

Later, you'll replay every moment, second-guess every action, and come up with witty, clever responses you could have given. It's imperative that you overthink the entire ordeal.

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