

# Interlude: Class Reunion

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## A Modern Interlude

*Interludes* are short encounters, designed for modern d20 System games, in which the heroes find themselves in a situation all too common in everyday life: speeding tickets, rude waiters, long waits in the hospital emergency room, chance encounters at airport terminals, and so on. These brief encounters can be dropped into an evening's adventure to give the heroes a little "slice of real life" diversion from the main excitement—and maybe just a chance to shine, in situations that, for a change, don't involve enemy agents, serial killers, alien conspiracies, or any of the campaign's grander themes.

*Interludes* are opportunities for extraordinary people—the heroes—to tackle life's little problems in their own extraordinary way.

"Class Reunion" catches one of the heroes in an airport cocktail lounge while waiting for a connecting flight, and bumping into an old high school friend. This encounter works for heroes of any level, though it's best presented to a character who has a few encounters (the more extreme, the better) under his belt. And any sort of character will do; this interlude is about two people from the same walk of life, and how differently their lives have turned out—and how they feel about it. "Class Reunion" works best with a male hero—preferably one in his 30s—but the Gamemaster can easily adapt it to a female hero, or a younger hero, if desired.

## The Setup

The heroes are en route to another city, and are waiting out a two-hour layover. One of the heroes has wandered into the cocktail lounge, and is sitting at the bar when he hears a man's voice call his name. Read the following text aloud:

A beefy man, about your age, wearing a navy-blue suit and a dark red tie, comes toward you with a quizzical look that rapidly becomes a huge grin. "Son of a gun!" he bellows happily. "I thought that was you! It's me! Mike Weber! How the hell are you? Man, it's been forever!"

This individual is Mike Weber, an old friend of the hero from high school. Like the hero, he's just passing through, and when he spotted the hero, he couldn't resist saying hello. Now that the hero can't get away, Mike wants to use this opportunity to brag and show off—or, at the very least, subtly belittle the hero's lack of similar success. Mike's questions about the hero's life are an opportunity for the hero to examine his adventures and motivations; Mike's own story is an example to the hero of how his own life could have turned out, had his

life taken a more mundane direction—especially if he had abandoned ethics and morality in pursuit of power and money.

GMs can use the low-level politician archetype to represent Mike Weber. See the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, Chapter Eight: Friends and Foes.

## Developments

All Mike really has in mind is conversation—and maybe a chance to show off some of the prosperity his greed and ruthlessness have brought him. In his mind, his accomplishments make him a wealthy man, and while he does, in fact, have plenty of money, he's not really all that happy; he's just so used to the rat race that he's managed to live in constant denial about the things that make him unhappy.

Mike tells his story—and thus, brags—by asking questions that he himself would like to answer. He lets the hero answer first, then tells his own success story, as a not-so-subtle way of saying "I'm doing better than you are." Of course, if the hero tells a better story—even if the hero uses Bluff to make something up—Mike gives in and retreats.

Below are some questions that Mike asks (in bold), along with his answers to the same questions (in quotations). The GM should feel free to ask follow-up questions, or just make up new questions, depending on how the conversation goes. Mike just keeps talking until the GM decides to move on. (See "Resolution" for how this might go.)

**When does your flight leave?** "I'm out of here in about three hours. So, hey, we've both got some time to kill. Let me buy you another drink, and let's do some catching up!"

**Where are you headed?** "I'm headed to Houston to meet with an important client. It's one of the 'make-or-break' accounts, if you know what I mean. But, hey, my company trusts me with the big stuff; that's why they pay me so much. But it's not all cake, you know? You're always watching your back."

**What business are you in?** "I'm in corporate acquisitions, for Harding and Spender. We mostly handle corporate law, though my job, specifically, is negotiating buyouts. Weird, huh? Pretty much straight Cs all through high school, and now I buy companies for a living. I guess I just made a good impression on the right people, because H and S pretty much snapped me right up as soon as I graduated from college."

**Do you make a good living?** "I gotta tell you: I made enough last year to *buy* our old high school. No joke. In addition to my salary, I get a bonus based on the deals I negotiate. The more money

I save for my client, the bigger my bonus. It's all about finding ways to cut jobs or slash salaries. It sounds cruel—but if these people deserved jobs or high salaries, we wouldn't be able to buy them out in the first place."

**Where are you living these days?** "I have a house in San Diego, but I keep an apartment in Manhattan. You should come visit me some time! The view's spectacular—in either place. I also spend a lot of time in Houston. Oh! And I just picked up a time-share in Bermuda. Can't believe I forgot that! Rum drinks and beautiful island girls, as far as the eye can see, and not a one of 'em can resist a rich American. Get 'em drunk enough, and they don't even mind the ring on your finger, y'know?"

**Are you married? Do you have kids?** "I'm married to a gorgeous gal. Estella. Here's a picture. She's the former Miss San Antonio. Yeah, she's only 22. She's actually my second wife. My first wife lives in Denver, with our kids. Do you remember Carol Myer? She was a junior when we were seniors? Yeah ... she was my first wife. We dated right through high school, and college, and got married right after I got the offer from Harding and Spender. Should've been a warning sign. About the time I started making the real money, she suddenly wanted a divorce. She got the kids, the house, the Mercedes—and sucks a big chunk out of my bank account twice a month in alimony. It's like she turned into some kind of 'success vampire.' I make the money, and she gets to enjoy it. That's why I made Estella sign a pre-nuptial agreement. I can sleep around all I want, and so long as nobody gets me on film, Estella can't touch my money. I tell you, man, pre-nups are the way to go, unless you want your ex draining you dry."

**Who are your friends?** (If any of the hero's companions are female, Mike tucks his wedding ring neatly into his pocket.) "That gal's kind of pretty. Is she single? How about you introduce us?" (If the hero does so, Mike loses interest in their conversation and devotes his attention to the female hero.)

**Have you done anything exciting lately?** "Oh, you've got to take up scuba diving. That's actually how I met Estella, my second wife: scuba-diving in the Gulf. It's so tranquil, down there. But, hey, if adrenaline is your drug of choice, skydiving. I did it for the first time, last year. Big outing with the

firm. About a dozen of us, executives and junior execs. Man, I felt like I was going to wet myself. Just you and the wind, and the earth coming up at you. Primo. Beats any of the drugs I did in college, I'll tell you that—and almost as good as sex. You want some excitement in your life, you call me, and I'll take you skydiving, the next time I go. I guarantee, you've never felt anything like it."

## Resolution

So long as Mike thinks his life is more interesting than the hero's, he keeps talking. Eventually, the heroes have to board their flight, and Mike walks his old pal to the gate, says one last goodbye, and promptly forgets all about the hero, having more important things on his mind. If the hero ever contacts him again, Mike makes good on his promises to get together—because it's another great opportunity to show off.

Of course, this assumes that the hero doesn't particularly rise to Mike's repartee. If the hero does turn the tables somehow, Mike's reaction is somewhat different.

**The Hero Upstages Mike:** The hero can shut Mike up by telling more interesting stories than Mike can—which shouldn't be difficult, considering that Mike's challenges are pretty tame, by comparison to the average hero's. Should the hero upstage him, Mike says his goodbyes in the bar, and stays there to have a few drinks. He eventually gets drunk enough that he calls his ex-wife, just to talk about old times.

**The Hero Angers Mike:** If the hero attacks Mike's lifestyle, or otherwise belittles him, Mike gets irritated and defensive, and accuses the hero of being jealous over his success. He pays the bar tab and storms off. Later, at his gate, he calls his wife and yells at her over some trifle, then does the same with his secretary. The hero might learn later that the deal with the client in Houston fell through, costing Harding and Spender hundreds of millions of dollars.

## Experience Awards

"Class Reunion" is treated as an EL 1 encounter. Multiply the experience award by 125% if the hero upstages Mike; divide the experience award by 50% if the hero angers Mike.

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