

Summary: Jared, a 1980s rocker with a trail of broken promises has a son who doesn't know he exists. Tyler, a junior at an elite prep school sets off on a trip to find his dad and Liz, a desperate talent agent has stars in her eyes when she rediscovers Jared.

The Rock Heroes Autograph Show started at 8 a.m. at the LAX Marriott Hotel. The line of coke Jared snorted in the restroom before manning his table barely kicked in when the first fans trickled into the ballroom.

It was like a bad high school reunion. For \$25 a ticket the public came to watch, meet and hug the aging, once-famous rock stars. For a few dollars more, fans could buy beer cozies, Rock Hero autograph decals, t-shirts, posters and buttons for the celebrity rockers to sign. From what Jared could tell, most of the attendees weren't fans. Bored businessmen killing time before their appointments walked aimlessly through the exhibition. A few travelers on layovers picked through old albums for sale.

Jared's manager played up the whole event as a charity opportunity.

"Proceeds go to cancer research. Don't you want to find a cure?" Lance Belkin was a sarcastic bastard who could care less about helping others. He was only interested in making money and neutralizing the spectacle that Jared Hunter, former lead singer of Maniac, made at The Plaza Hotel in New York City a few months earlier. A stereotypical rocker tirade started. Jared mouthed off to The Oak Room bartender for cutting him off after his seventh vodka martini. In retaliation, Jared picked a fight with his suite. Curtains yanked from their rods,

mirrors smashed, bathtub overflowing and cushions gutted for their stuffing. The New York Posts' front cover read "Relic Rocker Wrecks Room".

"I'm not a has-been. I am independently wealthy," explained Jared to his manager while looking out at the Pacific Ocean from his Malibu home. He inhaled deeply from his joint and held it.

"You're a rich ass hole who hasn't had a hit in over ten years," snapped Lance on the other line.

"I don't want to do it," Jared choked, finally exhaling.

"What else are you going to do, get stoned?"

"Yea."

"You're becoming a recluse. You don't write, perform, or do anything."

"I did some chick the other night. Dede," he said. The high kicked in.

Jared could hear Lance sigh, "C'mon man. You could tour without the band. I bet I could sell out mid level venues without a new single from you," Lance suggested.

"I'm not touring," Jared walked out on his deck, a wave crashed, its foam sliding under the posts of his beach house.

"I know you are depressed over Chrissy. She was a great girl and she broke your heart. There will be other girls. Maybe Dede will work out."

Jared tossed the remaining nub of his joint off his deck. He didn't want to talk about Chrissy either. She had given him an ultimatum after six months of dating. Marriage or she was heading back east. Her career as a dancer wasn't gaining any momentum and she was thirty-two years old, retirement age in LA for a dancer. Even Chrissy's efforts to finagle a live-in situation with Jared were rejected by him.

“Fine, I’ll do the autograph show as long as you don’t talk about Chrissy.”

“Great, you’re headlining. Dee Snyder couldn’t make it. You sing acoustic at 2 p.m. Two songs. Bye!”

At the autograph show, aisles of six foot tables each hosted a rock hero from the sixties, seventies and eighties. One table featured three video rock vixens. Jared thought he recognized one of them, Vicki Stevens. Fifteen years earlier they had sex after a concert. She was exceptional at straddling the hoods of corvettes, crawling on floors like a sex starved nympho and pouring water over her white tank top. Now her engorged breasts were unharnessed and hung out of her button down blouse. Her face didn’t fare as well, a side effect to tanning beds and a botched face lift.

There was an old soap opera star from the seventies who sang back up on her dad’s sixties folk band. Recent news said the creepy dad was the leader of a bizarre cult and his daughter was his personal pimp, luring underage girls into his Laurel Canyon harem. He died of liver failure five years before the sordid allegations and the lineup of abused, now middle-aged women who were locked up in his lair revealed their torture on TV. The daughter looked barely alive, strung out, a stutterer, and yet manning the most popular booth at the show.

Jared sat on a metal folding chair. His hair was now wavy brown with thick sideburns; he no longer dyed and permed it. An hour into the show and no one had approached him. He was a little relieved about the sparse attendance. The fewer people who recognized him the better, he thought. This wasn’t the Grammys, American Music Awards or MTV Video Awards. This was the scene of hard times. Jared’s money was intact and yet he was reduced to a ballroom on the outskirts of LA. Aside from the airport across the street, rental car terminals, fast food chains and

loitering hookers, there wasn't much else happening. Jared wasn't washed up. He self-selected out of the music scene.

Suddenly, Jared's face was looking up at an extra-large t-shirt with his Maniac persona sprawled on the front. His eyes rose to see a very rotund woman looking at him. She was crying, "Two Hearts Are One" got me through my sophomore year of high school."

Jared stammered, thinking he needed another break in the bathroom with his vial of coke.

"Is that so? Well, I'm glad."

The woman's face was heavy with makeup, applied just the way Maniac used to wear it and her hair teased and dyed the same color blonde as Jared's back in the eighties.

"I love you," the woman cried, clutching her Rock Hero's coozie and a glossy photo of Jared to her chest.

Jared reluctantly rose from his chair, happy to have the table as a buffer between him and the fan.

"Would you like me to sign that?"

"My name is Tammy. I came all the way from Idaho to see you," she handed Jared the coozie and photo to sign.

"Wow, I hope you flew."

"Oh no, I drove. I took a week of vacation time to see you. We've actually met before."

Jared scribbled his name on each of the items with his black Sharpie and when his eyes met Tammy she had pulled down her t-shirt's collar to reveal Jared Hunter's signature on her right breast.

"You signed my chest in 1988 and then I got it tattooed over so you are by my heart forever. See, 'Two Hearts are One'," she smiled, revealing a missing front tooth.

Jared had signed a lot of body parts, plenty of boobs, but never saw one inked.

“Wow, Tammy, that is -- impressive,” Jared looked around to see if there was any security. He used to have a group of former wrestlers for body guards. The beefy guys created a human wall of bulk around him as he ran from venue to venue, in and out of limos.

“Can I give you a hug?” Tammy asked.

This was why Jared wanted out. Tammy and the millions of other Tammy's were why he spent more time at his house than venturing into the world. The circus his life had become wasn't what he wanted anymore. Relentless fans clamoring and shaking the band's limo and all the guys freaking out inside, frightened that the force of the screaming girls clamoring would flip the limo over. The tour buses that traveled all over the United States and Europe were moving prisons. Cramped quarters, the snoring, poor hygiene, and clutter of his band mates was 24/7.

Tammy drove all the way from Idaho and had Jared's name on her boob, how could he say no to her request. Was this his penance for smashing the Plaza suite? He walked around the side of the table to greet Tammy who engulfed him in a python grip hug. With a face full of Aquanet sprayed hair, Jared patted her back to cue her that the hug was over.

“Wow, Tammy. This is the best hug I've had,” he spit some of her hair out of his face and gripped either side of her hips to pry himself free, then bolted for the bathroom. He pushed through a stall door and locked himself in, sitting on the toilet seat to collect himself.

Instinctively he pulled out his cell phone and dialed Chrissy.

“Hey.”

He smiled, relieved that she was willing to pick up, “Hey. I'm not calling too early am I?”

“I was just getting up.”

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He could tell she was still in bed and he envied the silk sheets entangled around her curves and long legs. He pictured her naked, silver dollar nipples, dark pubes, full lips, sleepy brown eyes and tangled, thick brown hair. He wanted to be beside her at that very moment.

“I miss you.”

It was quiet on the other line.

“Chrissy? I’m sorry,” and Jared was sorry.

“I haven’t talked to you in six months. Why now?”

Chrissy sounded far away.

“You still with your folks?”

“Yea. Just figuring out my next move. Why are you calling now Jared?”

“I made a mistake.”