



Steve walks across the tarmac, he climbs the stairs leading up to the plane, and he shows his ticket to the flight attendant, she looks at his ticket, and she points to his seat. Steve thanks her and he continues into to the plane. Getting to his seat, he puts one bag in the overhead and the other he places in the seat.

Standing there, with his arms above his head, adjusting the bag he hears footsteps and he glances out of the corner of his eye. Steve freezes, because he cannot believe whom he sees.

“Isn’t this a coincidence?” Steve says.

Neal stops in the middle of the aisle, he looks at his ticket, and then at the seat he is standing next to. He opens up the overhead and he puts his bag in.

“You’re on this flight too?” Neal asks.

“You’re eyesight hasn’t changed any.”

Steve says with a semi-smart ass tone as he stands with his hand on one hip, the other on his bag in the overhead. Neal makes a face and he was just gearing up for a classic comeback when Ross comes up the aisle and Neal turns his head to look.

“Shit! What in the hell is this, old home week?”

Neal says as Ross brushes passed him, he finds his seat, he looks up the aisle at Steve, and Steve grins and wags his fingers at him. In the next second Smitty comes through the door and he stops when he sees the other three and immediately Jon runs into the back of him, almost knocking him into Neal.

“Hey Smitty! What in the hell...?”

Jon puts his hand on the back of a seat to brace himself and he looks at them looking at him. Smitty finds his seat and he swings his bag into the overhead as Gregg comes through the door.

“Oh, this reminds me of a Twilight Zone episode.” Ross says.

“This is the frigging Twilight Zone man!” Neal says.

“Well, to make this complete we still need one more person.” Steve says.

From outside the plane, they hear footsteps hitting the stairs, then they see Steve Augeri come through the door, and he stops.

“Bingo!” Steve says as he points.

“I need to fire my travel agent.” Gregg says as he finds his seat.

“We all need to fire our travel agents.” Jon says as he looks around the plane.

Steve reaches into the overhead, he pulls out his bag, he grabs the one from the seat, and he starts up the aisle.

“This has been interesting but there are other planes.”

Before Steve gets too far up the aisle, the flight attendant pulls the door to and she locks it into place.

“Too late.” Jon says.

“That answers my question.” Smitty says as they look at him.

“Me too, I was wondering who else had a ticket to this weird late night movie.” Augeri says as he stows his bag in the overhead.

Steve heaves a sigh, he turns and goes back to his seat, and he puts his bag back in the overhead.

“Come on buck up Perry, it’s not to kill you to be with us for awhile.” Neal says with a smirk.

Steve gives him a sideways look as he closes the door on the overhead and he sits down. Everybody finally gets their things situated and themselves and Steve was just starting on a new book when the flight attendant’s voice came over the intercom.

“Good evening, my name is Monica and I will be your flight attendant on this flight.”

Steve drowns out the voice of the flight attendant as he concentrates on the book then he glances up at the back of the familiar heads in front of him. Bizarre, yes that is a good word for this situation. Steve marks the place in his book and he leans his head back against the seat and he studies the backs of their heads. Someday, when I tell this story and tell it I will, Steve thinks to himself, nobody will believe me. The years roll away, like a leaf tossed by the wind where there is no contact, no words have passed between them, each pretending that the others have died and now they all end up on this plane together, a small plane at that, bizarre or better yet, somebody’s idea of a cruel joke. A joke, now that is another good explanation. Steve looks towards the front of the airplane, where the cockpit is and half expecting Herbie or Irving to jump out and yell, ‘Surprise!’

Behind The Music, oh yeah, things were progressing on a nice, even keel until Behind the Music. Steve knew he had to do it, for the fans, to explain things and set the record straight, as much as he could. He knew it would open up old wounds and maybe even create new ones. Well he always heard that confession was good for the soul. Either this confessing would fill that rift, that was now as wide as the Grand Canyon and start them all talking again or they would all slip, slip and fall into that abyss. That abyss were everyone ends up eventually and now Steve finds himself at the bottom looking up.

Steve rubs his eyes then he puts the book in the seat next to him and he leans his head back. Together again on another plane and it almost feels like old times. Except this plane ride is too quiet, no Neal running up and down the aisle doing his Chuck Berry imitation and no Ross practicing his many voices, Steve smiles as he thinks back to some of those other plane rides. Oh, this is too much to think about at this time of night Steve thinks as he looks at his watch, almost 11:00, way pass my bedtime he thinks. A little nap would be good. Just sleep and let the world stop, who knows when I wake up, this will all be a dream. Yeah a dream, that is another good explanation.

As soon as the flight attendant started her spiel Neal put his headphones on and he tried to forget about the take-off, he wasn't bothered usually by flying, just the take-offs and sometimes the landings but now once they were airborne Neal took them off and he looked behind him at Steve. Steve seem to be asleep, eyes closed and head back, content with his surroundings which Neal thought was strange, because for awhile there Steve didn't care much for flying. Sometimes trying to get Steve on a plane was like trying to give a cat a bath. Well, he must have overcome that or something, Neal thought as he turned back around. Neal did not know for sure because they really had not talked in years and now they are all on the same plane. Crazy Neal thought. Well, it certainly was not unusual for most of them to be on the same plane but the others, Gregg, Smitty and of course, sleeping beauty back there turned a simple flight across the country into a freaking Journey Reunion Neal thinks.

Neal was looking forward to this flight, getting back home to California and his mind was already there with his family and his children, and the last person he expected to see was Steve. Neal thought he was dreaming when he saw Steve and he had a very eerie feeling of déjà vu, Steve standing there putting his bag away and he remembered all the other flights and Neal thought he was going to have a heart attack, that is how shocking it was. He and Steve standing in the same aisle, looking at one another, it was as if all those years never happened. Neal sneaked another glance over his shoulder and Steve has not moved. A cruel, inhuman and not so funny joke perpetrated by somebody, somewhere to accomplish what, Neal did not know.

Behind The Music, oh yeah, that is where all this insanity started. Why air your problems in private when you can go as a group on nation wide frigging TV. and spill your guts. Oh yeah just a wonderful idea! Neal was so lost in thought that he didn't notice that Jon had slipped into the seat next to him and Jon put his arm across the back of Neal's seat and touched him on the shoulder and Neal jumped liked he had been shocked.

"Damn Neal, you are wound tighter than an eight day clock. You okay?" Jon asks.

"Yeah, yeah just fine"

Neal says then he leans in closer to Jon and he whispers,

"Have you ever had a feeling, you know, of déjà vu?"

Jon turns his head slightly and looks over his shoulder at Steve and Neal looks too.

"Yeah tonight, when I got on this plane and especially when I saw him."

Jon nods in Steve's direction.

“How long has it been, I mean, all of us being in the same location let alone the same room.” Jon asks.

“Centuries, eons, millenniums, lifetimes, pick one, they all fit.” Neal says.

Smitty, sitting to Neal’s left and just up a little looked up from his magazine and he saw the two of them with their heads together. Nothing unusual there, that was a typical positioning for them but what was atypical was this flight into object weirdness. Smitty glances around and he could not honestly remember the last time he spoke to some of these guys, let alone be in the same room with them. The flight attendant was making the rounds with the drink cart and Smitty ordered a beer, he thought this situation deserved a beer or maybe even two, he thought as he took a sip.

Ross leaves his seat, he goes over to Augeri’s, and he taps him on his head with his beer bottle.

“A dollar and a half for your thoughts!”

Ross says and Augeri looks up at him and he laughs.

“Oh no, right now, they are worth about five dollars!” Augeri says.

Ross takes a sip of beer and he looks over at the other Steve still sleeping.

“I can see how that would be, trust me. You know, if the press ever got wind of this.”

Ross does not finish because Augeri slaps the arm of his chair and he points at Ross, his eyes lit up with the spark of an idea.

“That’s it!” Augeri says.

“That’s what?”

Ross says as Augeri stands up and he puts his hands on his shoulders.

“This! All of this, all of us on this plane, it’s a publicity stunt!”

Gregg raises the shade on the window and he looks out at the night sky, stars above and a million lights below and from the reflection in the window he sees Ross get up and go over to Augeri’s seat. He looks at them as their conversation becomes more animated then he looks out the window again and he takes a sip of his drink.

He knows that he has seen this scenario before; it was either an old movie or an old television show. Bring six estranged people together, who, at one time was close but by now who haven’t seen each other in years and each of them has built their own

walls around them, impossible to scale. A book, yeah, a book that is where he has seen this before, no wait, oh hell, it does not matter anyway, Gregg says to himself. He does know that he has been here before, this time, this place with all these people. Gregg looks over at Augeri and Ross, well except of course for Augeri, he is the new fly in the ointment, but everyone else fits. Gregg looks back at Steve, off by himself, asleep pulling a typical Perry.

If Gregg ever had enough time on his hands he could sit down and add up all the hours they spent in hotel rooms, buses, planes together and he is more than sure that it would come out that he has spent more of his life with these people than his family. Gregg chuckles to himself, 'these people' now that sounded funny, his old band mates, Neal, Ross, Smitty and Steve. Ha Steve, an enigma wrapped inside a mystery, he always had his own way of doing things, even when Steve lived in his basement for a time.

Gregg turned and he was face to face with the blanket that the flight attendant was holding, Gregg smiled and took it from her then he watched her walk off and hand the rest of them out. By the time she made her way over to Neal, she only had one left and she took a few steps in Steve's direction but Neal grabbed her by the arm and he took the blanket from her. Neal gestured to her that he would take it to him and she smiles and she turns and walks off and Neal holding the blanket walks up the aisle to Steve.

He stands there a moment, watching him sleep, Steve's arms crossed over his chest his head tilted to one side and Neal drops the blanket in his lap. Steve jumps and he opens his eyes and he turns his head slightly and looks at him through sleepy eyes and Neal looks back. Neal's hands on his hips, rocking back and forth, realizing that this has been the closest that he has been to him in awhile, a few thousands a while.

"If this is your idea of a joke, it isn't funny."

Neal says as he continues to rock back forth and Steve arranges the blanket over him and he looks up at him.

"What?"

Steve says to him as he laughs slightly.

"I said...."

Neal starts to say something but Steve raises a hand to stop him.

"No, I heard what you said; I just don't know why you said it. You think what? That I planned this."

Steve gestures as he looks around the plane.

“Maybe.”

Steve looks at the floor then he runs his hands through his hair then he looks up at him.

“Why would I do that?” Steve says.

Neal then bends over, he puts his hands on his knees, and he looks closely at Steve.

“I don’t know but don’t you think it’s strange that all of us would end up on the same plane! The same small frigging plane, what are the odds, what are the chances?”
“

Before Steve even had, a chance to open his mouth the plane makes a sickening lunge to the right and Neal would have found himself in Steve’s lap if Steve had not reached out when he did and put his hands on Neal’s shoulders to stop him. Neal’s hand resting on the back of his seat the other around Steve’s wrist and they both look at each other, noses practically touching.

“So Neal, you think I planned that too?”

Steve says quietly as Neal removes his hand from the seat and he takes Steve’s hands from off of his shoulders. Neal stands and he feels his stomach drop as the plane seems to lose altitude and dips back to the left and the ‘Fasten Seat Belts’ sign comes on. The flight attendant comes over the intercom and says something about turbulence and for everybody to return to their seats.

“You heard the lady Neal.”

Steve looks up at him with one eyebrow raised, Neal backs up, and as he goes up the aisle to his seat, he turns and looks back at Steve. Steve watches Neal go up the aisle as he readjusts his seatbelt and then the blanket.

Jon was just talking to Neal when the flight attendant came around with the blankets and Neal stopped her. Jon could not believe what he was doing, well yes, he could. Neal could be somewhat of a hothead and he reacts before he thinks so why should he be surprised by anything that Neal does. Jon watches as Neal gets up and goes to Steve, he listens to the conversation that ensues, and Jon covers his eyes when he hears the part about Neal accusing Steve of orchestrating this whole thing and once again, that is nothing new either. They have always been yelling at each other for something since day one. Two volatile personalities and both of them so much alike it is not even funny.

Jon continues to watch them as the plane makes that lunge to the right, Jon grabs onto the arms of the seat, and he turns around quickly, eyes wide as he scrambles for the seat belt and he cinches it tight and Neal plops down in the seat next to him and he fastens his seatbelt. Neal looks at Jon.

“Turbulence.” Neal says.

“I’ve noticed.”

Jon says as he looks knowingly at Neal.

Augeri was still trying to turn Ross onto his way of thinking when Neal gets up and Augeri points and Ross turns to look.

“Oh shit.”

Ross says as he takes a sip of his beer and Ross wonders what took Neal so long. Neal is little older and maybe it takes him awhile longer to build up a head of steam because otherwise Neal would have jumped on Steve before the door was even closed. This is a small plane and their conversation is easily heard and Augeri feels like that he is intruding somehow but it is like watching a train wreck, you don’t want to watch but it is hard to turn yourself away. Ross and Augeri are so absorbed in Steve’s and Neal’s melodrama that when the plane lunges Augeri is thrown off balance and he falls into Ross and Ross is only stopped by the seat behind him and Ross puts his arms around him and they look at each other.

“I like you man, but not like that.”

Ross says with all seriousness, Augeri smirks at him, and he pulls away from him.

“The feeling is mutual I can assure you.”

Augeri says as they find their way to their seats and they fasten their seat belts. Well now that Gregg has a blanket, he just might take a page from Steve’s book and go to sleep. Sleeping is a good prospect and this is certainly a good place to do it. Turn off the old mind for a while and, Gregg is stopped in mid-thought by movement and he looks up and he sees Neal get up and make his way over to Steve. Oh not good, Gregg thinks because Neal has that look and he has seen it before. From across the plane Smitty catches his eye and he nods his head in Neal’s direction and Gregg shrugs as if to say, ‘What can you do?’

They hear Neal accuse Steve of some sort of mayhem, Steve laughs at him and that is when the plane does it dance to the right and whatever liquid is left in Gregg’s glass sloshes out and Gregg tightens his seatbelt and he looks over at Smitty who seems to have a death grip on the arms of his seat.

Steve was relaxed and sleeping, dreaming about California and his lady that was waiting for him when he felt something fall onto his lap. Steve is startled awake and he opens his eyes and looks up at Neal. He is not surprised, why should he be, he was expecting this eventually. The perfect situation for a confrontation, no place to run or to hide, all of them stuck in this sardine can with wings, granted a plush and expensive sardine can.

Steve looks into Neal's eyes and he sees the wheels turning, spinning off their axis actually and then Neal opens his big mouth and says,

"If this is your idea of a joke, it isn't funny."

Even after all of Steve's years in rock-n-roll, his hearing was still pristine but he was not sure that he heard him right.

"What?"

Steve says to him as he laughs slightly.

"I said...."

Neal starts to say something but Steve raises a hand to stop him. <p

"No, I heard what you said; I just don't know why you said it. You think what? That I planned this."

Steve gestures as he looks around the plane.

"Maybe."

Steve looks at the floor then he runs his hands through his hair then he looks up at him.

"Why would I do that?" Steve says.

Neal then bends over, he puts his hands on his knees, and he looks closely at Steve.

"I don't know but don't you think it's strange that all of us would end up on the same plane! The same small frigging plane, what are the odds, what are the chances?"
“

Before Steve even had, a chance to open his mouth the plane makes a sickening lunge to the right and Neal would have found himself in Steve's lap if Steve had not reached out when he did and put his hands on Neal's shoulders to stop him. Neal's

hand resting on the back of his seat the other around Steve's wrist and they both look at each other, noses practically touching.

"So Neal, you think I planned that too?"

Steve says quietly as Neal removes his hand from the seat and he takes Steve's hands from off of his shoulders. Neal stands and he feels his stomach drop as the plane seems to lose altitude and dips back to the left and the 'Fasten Seat Belts' sign comes on. The flight attendant comes over the intercom and says something about turbulence and for everybody to return to their seats.

"You heard the lady Neal."

Steve looks up at him with one eyebrow raised, Neal backs up, and as he goes up the aisle to his seat, he turns and looks back at Steve. Steve watches Neal go up the aisle as he readjusts his seatbelt and then the blanket and Steve thinks that Neal has finally popped his cork.

Steve looks at the back of Neal's head and he thinks that this feels like old times, oh yeah, most definitely, Neal simmers like a pot on the stove and when he finally reaches the boiling point, he explodes at the person in the closest proximity and it usually turns out to be me, Steve thinks. Same old song, second verse, let us blame Perry for everything no matter how improbable it might be. I could be in a foreign country, halfway around the world, Neal could step off the curb in Novato and twist his ankle, and somehow that would be my fault, Steve thinks.

The plane makes another dipsey doodle and off to their left they see a flash of bright light and a second later the ominous roll of thunder and large, raindrops hit the windows. A few minutes later, the Captain's voice is heard over the intercom telling them that they are flying through a storm and they are doing what they can to get out of it.

"No shit Sherlock what was your first clue!"

Ross says aloud breaking the tension and everyone laughs as the plane slowly ascends and it dips to the left and the right, the rain hitting so hard it echoes through the plane, more lightning followed by a loud clap of thunder. The lights in the plane flicker once than twice but they stay on.

"Oh shit!" Neal says.

Another clap of thunder so loud that it makes the plane rock back and forth causing the lights to flicker once again but this time they go out.

"I don't want to die!" Augeri's voice carries through the darkness.

“Oh shut up! Nobody is going to die!”

Neal says as the emergency lights come on and they are surrounded by an eerie glow as a lightning strike lights up the inside of the plane as it pitches and rolls.

“Neal how do you know that? Right now that possibility is looking better and better!”

Smitty yells at him from across the aisle.

“People said I was controlling! At least I never told anybody that they weren’t going to die!”

Steve yells from behind as the plane climbs, then falls, the wind moving the plane back and forth. Lightning illuminates the interior as the thunder rolls and the plane shakes.

“Oh, I am going to be sick!” Ross says.

“If this is it....I mean...if we are going to die..I want...no..I...need to say something!”

Smitty manages to push the words out.

“Smitty!” Neal yells

“Let him talk!” Steve yells back at him.

“You should have waited!”

Smitty yells across the aisle at him and Neal turns his head and looks at him.

“What?”

“Waited on Steve to come back from his surgery!”

Just then, the plane nosedives and it pitches to the left, the emergency lights flicker but they stay on, and lightning splits the sky as they all scream in chorus.

“I can’t frigging believe this! He fired you!”

Neal yells back at him.

“That was a collective decision!”

Steve yells from behind.

“Shut up!”

Neal flings back at him.

“Don’t you tell me to shut up!”

Steve shouts back.

“You just like him Smitty!” Neal says.

“Guys!”

Gregg yells.

“So! What is wrong with that! You liked him at one time too!”

Smitty counters.

“Guys! Let’s not do this now!”

Gregg yells.

“Why not? Seems like a good time as any!”

Neal says as the plane dips dives and climbs again, the raining beating down on the windows, the lightning is blinding and the thunder deafening.

“Neal, I am glad that I was part of your band!” Augeri says.

“I liked Steve too but he....”

Ross starts but doesn’t finish.

“I what Ross?”

Steve asks but Ross does not answer right away.

“I what!”

Steve asks a little louder.

“You changed man!”

Ross turns his head and yells back at him.

Steve laughs loudly then he says,

“Who in the hell hasn’t!”

“Never felt like part of the band? What kind of crap was that Steve?” Jon yells.

“It’s the truth! Everything I said was the truth!” Steve yells back at him.

“The truth? You wouldn’t know the truth if it bit you in the ass Perry!” Neal says.

“What in the hell did you mean by that?” Steve yells back at him.

“Couldn’t you have come up with a better excuse than your hip!” Neal says.

“What did you...oh my god! I can’t believe you just said that! You think I made that up about my hip! Want to see the freaking scar Neal!”

Steve yells at him through the gloom.

“Trial by Fire died before it had a chance to live, because you quit!”

Jon screamed over the thunder as he turned and pointed at Steve.

“All we wanted to do was go on, go on and forget, then this Behind the Music thing.....”

Neal turns and looks back at Steve. Steve looks up and he sees ten pairs of eyes looking back at him through the gloom, rain now coming down in sheets, the plane at the mercy of the elements and Steve points at Neal.

“Do you think it was easy for me? Walking away from something that was my whole life, if you wanted to forget, why in god’s name did you pick another singer that you knew would be compared to me? Steve Augeri! Give me a frigging break! Neal you are the biggest jackass I know!”

“Hey! Watch it Perry! I am not anything like you! I don’t try to be like you! I am my own person here! I have my own voice!”

Augeri turns in his seat as he yells back at Steve.

“I went bankrupt!”

Ross adds his voice to the din.

“That isn’t my fault!”

Steve yells back at him then he says,

“When Gregg quit I don’t remember you guys pitching that big of a fit, what was the difference with me!”

At that moment a ribbon of lightning shot through the cabin of the plane and Steve could see Neal’s eyes, huge like saucers and then his forehead wrinkle in anger, then he yelled,

“He wasn’t our frigging lead singer!”

“Hell no Neal I was just the co-owner, excuse the hell out of me!”

Gregg yells at him.

“Guys, we were like brothers, what happened!”

Smitty yells.

“I don’t know ask him!”

Neal points to Steve and Steve points to himself as he says,

“Me? I was not in that band by myself you know, you had a hand in its demise too, so don’t play that holier-than-thou crap with me, not now and not after all these years! When are you going to admit that you were wrong?”

“Wrong?”

Gregg, Augeri, Neal and Ross all say in unison.

“Watch it Perry, this plane is not big enough for all of us and your ego! “

Neal yells at him.

“This isn’t about ego, it’s about the truth! You would rather die than admit you made a mistake!”

Steve counters back at him.

The plane takes another dip like a crazy out of control amusement park ride and the lights flicker.

“Oh god I don’t want to play anymore!”

Augeri cries out.

“I wasn’t wrong! I made the decisions I made for a reason!”

Neal yells over the thunder.

“So did I Neal!”

Steve says back to him.

“You shouldn’t have told Steve..”

Smitty yells in Neal’s direction but Jon interrupts him while Neal bursts into laughter.

“You can’t tell Steve anything!”

Neal continues to laugh as he says,

“Steve had all the control how was I going to tell him anything!”

“Wait one damn minute! I didn’t hear any complaints when the records made the charts and we were suddenly famous and you used my ideas! I didn’t hear any complaints, Neal, Jon and Ross when we were playing sold out arenas and I didn’t hear any complaints when you bought that first house of yours Neal! It used to be about the music but oh no Neal, you have to pay the bills! When did it change Neal! When? You blame me for everything but you were there too! You were just as big a bastard as I was!”

Steve says to him as a loud clap thunder causes most of them to cover their ears and Neal’s face turns five shades of red then he scrambles for his seatbelt, unbuckles it and he makes a move to stand up but Jon grabs him by his arm.

“Neal! Neal! Sit down! Neal!”

Neal looks over at Jon and he reluctantly lets Jon pull him back down to his seat then Neal looks over his shoulder at Steve and he points at him.

“Perry, when this plane lands, I will kill you!”

The plane is buffeted back and forth by the wind and a very bright shaft of lightning that causes everyone to see spots for a moment followed by a loud clap of thunder that leaves their ears ringing.

“If you wait long enough Neal god just may do it for you!”

Steve says as they all look back and him and Jon says,

“I have a confession to make.”

Neal looks at him then he says,

“You better not say what I think you’re going to say!”

Jon looks at him,

“What?”

“That you’re gay!”

Neal yells as the plane dips and lightning flashes followed by thunder and Neal can see Jon’s eyes widen.

“What! No, of course not, don’t be an ass Neal!”

Jon says as Steve laughs behind them and they both turn and look at him and then Neal looks at Jon impatiently.

“Well!” Neal says.

“I...I had my doubts about Steve.”

“Who me?”

All three Steves say aloud and in unison as they point to themselves and Gregg and Ross look at one another.

“Augeri, I meant Augeri!”

Jon says sheepishly as he looks at Neal and Jon catches Augeri’s face, turned to him, out of the corner of his eye with a look of, something close to disbelief and horror but that could be from this plane ride from hell, but somehow Jon does not think so. The plane bucks up and down and from side to side as Neal is thrown into Jon’s shoulder, and their heads bump into one another.

“Shit! What doubts?”

Neal asks as he rubs his head and he looks at Jon.

“Yeah what doubts Jon?”

Augeri yells across the aisle at him.

“Well, I didn’t think we should have picked another singer with such a similar name. The comparisons.....” Jon says.

“.....Were bound to happen.”

Gregg says as hangs onto the seat in front of him.

“Inevitable.”

Ross says.

“Highly stupid on someone’s part.”

Steve says from the back as everyone turns to look at him and Neal glares at him.

“What’s wrong Neal, the truth hurts? It does not take much intelligence to find a copycat. “

Steve says again just as the brightest flash of lightning yet illuminates the interior of the plane and the loudest crash of thunder rocks it.

“Copycat!!! “

Both Neal and Augeri yell out in unison.

“Oh my god! Oh my god! I am not a copycat!”

Augeri yells.

“You self-centered, egotistical, control freak bastard! “

Neal yells back at Steve as the emergency lights of the plane flicker and go out for the last time, plunging the interior of the plane into darkness. From the darkness, they hear a loud explosion from the engine, on the right side of the plane, bursting into flames. The plane lunges and they hear the engines whine as the plane suddenly drops in altitude, causing the air masks from the ceiling to drop. Now all the voices in the plane converge as one, some yelling, others praying.

“This cant be happening! I won’t die like this!”

Neal yells.

“Neal, now is the time, before it’s too late, to admit you were wrong. “

Steve says calmly from the back as the nose of the plane steadily drops down lower and lower, as if pushed from behind by some unseen hand.

“For god’s sake Neal! Say it! Just say it!”

Jon says and then everyone else chimes in until their voices reach a crescendo and Neal covers his ears.

“Alright! All right! I was...!”

“Wrong! Hey driver wrong turn! You should have turned left back there! Don’t you know where the fuck you are going! “

Neal knocks hard on the window of the limo that separates him from the driver as the limo slows and it pulls to the curb and it stops.

“Wrong!”

Neal yells again as the window slowly comes down then the driver turns to him and he takes off his hat and sunglasses and he smiles as he says;

“See Neal that word wasn’t hard to say, now was it?”

Neal’s eyes widen with surprise as he falls backwards into the seat when he realizes that the driver is Perry.

Neal jumps when the alarm goes off, he rolls over, he turns it off then he sits up rubbing his eyes. What a weird dream, what a weird couple of dreams he thinks. Too much Mexican food, too much beer, too much something, too much damn frigging Perry he thinks. Yeah, yeah, it is his fault Neal thinks, this Behind the Music thing. He was sleeping good, having a great life, making music and touring and now this. That could be another reason, today is the taping for the show and it will take all the decorum he can come up with not to lose his temper. Neal throws the covers back on the bed then he swings his legs over the side, he sees his stuff all over the room, he remembers that dream, and it could be a premonition, he has had those before. He spies his cell phone on the dresser, he goes to it, picks it up and he hits speed dial.

The limo stops at the train station, the driver opens the door and Neal gets out. He carries his bags into the station, as he walks he pulls the ticket out of his pocket and he looks for the train that he will need. Okay, so he is superstition. Okay, so he did change the plane tickets into train tickets. So he can change his mind, that isn’t a crime is it. He gets out to the tracks and he finds the right train and he boards it, now all he has to do is find his room, he follows the signs down the narrow hallway until he

finally comes to it and he puts the key card in the door just as the door to the room next to him opens.

“Isn’t this a coincidence?” Steve says.

Neal stops in the middle of unlocking the door, he looks at his ticket, and then at the number on the door, sitting his bag on the floor.

“You’re on this train too?” Neal asks.

“You’re eyesight hasn’t changed any.” Steve says with a semi smart-ass tone.

Steve jumps when the alarm goes off, he rolls over, he turns it off then he sits up rubbing his eyes. What a weird dream, he thinks. Too much Italian food, too much jet lag, too much something, too much damn Neal he thinks. Yeah, yeah, it is his fault Steve thinks, this Behind the Music thing. He was sleeping good, finding some semblance of the life he had lost, doing what he wanted, and now he had to go and do this. Well excuse the hell out of me for trying to find some closure he thinks. That could be another reason, today is the taping for the show and it will take all the energy he can come up with to walk into that studio and see the guys again. Steve throws the covers back on the bed then he swings his legs over the side, he sees his stuff all over the room, he remembers that dream, and it could be a premonition, he has had those before. He spies his cell phone on the dresser, he goes to it, picks it up and he hits speed dial.

“Alright Row 47A.”

Steve repeats to himself as he walks along the rows of rental cars. It was a long day but he accomplished what he came to do, he had a great dinner, he slept well and this morning he had a great breakfast and he cancelled all of this other transportation appointments and he decided to drive. A nice leisurely drive, see the country, it’s going to be a beautiful day so why not. Steve finds the car, he goes immediately to the trunk, he unlocks it and he puts his bags in, he slams the trunk lid down and as he walks to the driver’s door, he sees Neal, across from him in the other row, looking at him.

57B, okay, he knows it is silly but he hasn’t been silly in years so he thinks he should be allowed some latitude. Nothing wrong with driving yourself, nothing wrong with that in the least even though the other guys thought he was crazy. Most of them have known him for years so they knew better than trying to talk him out of it. Driving will give him time to think, think about seeing Perry again after all these years, go over and rehash all the crap they talked about on the Behind The Music thing, how the fans will be shocked by some of it. Hell, he couldn’t believe it either. Neal finds the car, he goes to the trunk and unlocks it, throws his bags in. Then as he slams down the lid and he starts for the driver’s door he thinks he sees Perry. No it can’t be. All he caught was a glimpse of him but still the profile, which is unique, so now he stands here with his

hand on the door handle, looking over at the other car with its trunk lid up feeling like an idiot until that trunk lid slammed shut and lo and behold, it was Perry. Neal takes a deep breath as they look at one another across the parking lot, Steve standing with his hands on his hips.

Like in one of those old westerns, they each take a step towards each other, slowly at first, then a little faster until they meet in the middle of the parking lot; they hesitate for a second then they hug each other. One of those manly type hugs, where they slap each other hard on the back then they separate and they rearrange their jackets, looking at the ground, the silence falls around them like leaves in the wind.

“I.”

They both say at the same time and they laugh.

“You go first.”

Steve says as he points at Neal.

“I was just going to say you look good. You know, you look good.”

“Yeah, yeah you do too.”

Steve says back as he rocks back and forth with his hands in his pockets.

“So, what do we do now?”

Steve asks. Neal looks around.

“Well we could go and have a cup of coffee, besides I have been thinking.”

“Oh? About what?”

Steve asks as he falls into step beside Neal as Neal puts his arm around Steve’s shoulders.

“I was thinking of dumping Augeri and have you come back. Have the original band all together again. What do you say?”

“I think that is a fine idea and you know controversy is a good thing.”

They laugh as Steve puts his arm around Neal.

Augeri, the night before the Behind the Music taping, tosses back and forth in his sleep then he sits up and he screams.

“Arrgggghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!”