

THE WINNER

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FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

JOHN, mid-30's, enters from the kitchen, holding a tall glass of wine.

JOHN
Kinda early for drinking, ain't it?

CARRIE, also mid-30's, is seated on the couch. Her lab coat lays haphazardly on the couch, as if she just got home.

CARRIE
Not today. Is he asleep?

John hands the wine to Carrie and joins her on the couch.

JOHN
One bottle of formula had him out like a light. I'm good like that.

Carrie barely cracks a smile.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You okay?

CARRIE
Not sure. Hoping this will help.

She takes a long sip of wine.

JOHN
Rough day at work?

CARRIE
That's one way of putting it.

JOHN
Anything you wanna discuss?

CARRIE
You know I can't talk about my job.

JOHN
You can't talk about your research. Is it related to that?

CARRIE
No.

JOHN
See? Then you can tell me.

Carrie ponders for a beat, then shrugs.

CARRIE

Alright.

She finishes her wine and sets the glass down.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

What if I told you I overheard something today. Something that could change life as we know it?

JOHN

I'd say I wanna know more.

CARRIE

With the worldwide supply of food dwindling mixed with this ongoing drought, the government is ready to take even more drastic measures in order to control the population.

JOHN

You can't be serious. Was that ridiculous law they passed last year requiring all women to be chemically sterilized not enough?

CARRIE

I'm afraid not it seems. Thank God we had John Jr. before that.

JOHN

Thank God indeed.

(beat)

So what steps are they gonna take?

Carrie looks around, as if someone could be listening in.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Come on, babe. It may be 2030 but they still need a warrant in order to bug a house. You can --

CARRIE

They're starting a lottery. The government is.

JOHN

Okay. And the winner receives?

CARRIE

A death sentence.

JOHN
I don't understand.

CARRIE
They're gonna go door to door and have everyone in the household draw ballots out of an envelope. The "winner" will be hauled off, never to be seen again.

John laughs in disbelief.

JOHN
You're telling me their plan to reduce the number of mouths to feed is to kill one person from every household in the country?

Carrie nods grimly. John can see it in her eyes. She believes what she's heard. His smile fades.

JOHN (CONT'D)
When is this supposed to start?

CARRIE
Today.

A LOUD KNOCK is suddenly heard on the front door, startling them both to their feet.

They look at one another, terrified.

JOHN
It's gonna be okay. You work for them. Surely there's an exception.

They hold hands and walk towards the front door.

INT/EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

John opens the door, revealing --

CARLTON, a stern-looking man in a black suit, flanked by two fully-armed and masked SOLDIERS on each side.

CARRIE
Carlton?

Carlton ignores her. He speaks firmly, almost robotic:

CARLTON
Is this the home of John Hobson,
Carrie Hobson and John Hobson Jr?

CARRIE

You know it is. Why are you here?

CARLTON

To conduct the mandatory lottery that is now required of every home as dictated by the revisions to the Population Control Act of 2029.

The color drains from John and Carrie's faces.

JOHN

Revisions? When --

CARLTON

Passed by Congress and signed into law as of 1300 hours.

Carlton pulls a small manilla envelope from his jacket. The name "Hobson" is written on it.

CARRIE

Carlton. Please. You don't have to do this. You can just tell them that we weren't home.

CARLTON

I'm afraid that's not possible.

JOHN

She works for y'all. With you for Christ's sake. Surely there are exemptions to this law.

CARLTON

Only households with government personnel holding Level-7 clearance or higher are exempt.

CARRIE

I have a Level-9 clearance!

CARLTON

That has since been revoked.

CARRIE

When?!

CARLTON

A few minutes ago, when you shared classified intel about the lottery to your husband.

CARRIE
How did you --

CARLTON
We have our ways.

JOHN
That's illegal! You can't --

The Soldiers raise their guns, silencing John instantly.

CARLTON
One more objection or interruption
to these proceeding will result in
deadly force. Are we clear?

John and Carrie nod, both trembling.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
Good. Now then...

Carlton opens the top of the envelope.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
Inside are three ballots. One for
each member of the family. Two of
them will be blank. One of them
will have a smiling face. Whoever
draws the smiling face wins the
lottery and will be required to
come with us, no questions asked.

CARRIE
Our son is 18 months old. Surely he
doesn't have to participate.

CARLTON
Everyone in the household must take
part. A parent is permitted to draw
for a minor under the age of four.

Carlton holds the envelope out to them.

JOHN
Okay, okay. We'll do it. Just
please have them lower the guns.

Carlton nods to the soldiers. They lower their weapons. John
kisses Carrie's hand.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I'm gonna get that smiley face. You
tell our boy his daddy loved him
more than life itself.

Carrie nods, tears in her eyes.

CARRIE
I love you so much.

JOHN
I love you too.

John reaches into the envelope and pulls out a ballot. He turns it over...revealing it to be blank.

JOHN (CONT'D)
No! No!!!

The soldiers raise their guns once more.

CARLTON
Maintain composure, sir!
(to Carrie)
Ma'am. Please draw.

Carrie reaches in and pulls out two ballots without looking at them. She holds them to her chest, discreetly rubbing her thumbs along them, feeling for the dried ink.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
Reveal which will be your ballot.

Carrie grins and turns over the paper in her right hand, revealing a red smiley face on it.

CARRIE
My son will live. I win.

CARLTON
Indeed you have.

The Soldiers snatch Carrie by the arms and start pulling her towards their Humvee.

CARRIE
Wait! Stop! You have to let me say
goodbye to my baby!

CARLTON
The law does not required it.

CARRIE
Fuck your law! John!

JOHN
(to Carlton)
Take me! Kill me instead! I won't
fight you!

CARLTON

Kill her? Sir, your wife won the lottery. She will live.

Horror washes over Carrie's face as she is dragged away.

CARRIE

No no no! The winner of the lottery dies! I heard it myself!

CARLTON

You heard the winner was to be taken away. You incorrectly assumed it was to kill them.

CARRIE

Take my son then! Give him my spot!

CARLTON

It's too late. You are the winner.

CARRIE

I'm so sorry! John! John!

Carrie is thrown into the Humvee, which quickly drives off.

JOHN

You cruel bastards! You can't --

Carlton whips out a silenced pistol and shoots John in the head. John crumples in the doorway, dead.

The soldiers return to Carlton's side as he coldly stares at John's body.

CARLTON

Finish up here. I'll meet you at the next house.

The soldiers raise their guns and enter the house, heading towards the sound of a CRYING BABY.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.