

THE TICKET

24-DE04-W22

After finding out that they won the lottery, a family must decide if claiming their winnings is more important than claiming a soul for Christ.

FADE IN:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

JOHN, 50's with his hair nearly permanently molded into the form of a hard hat, groggily sits up in bed and holds his lower back. He moans in discomfort and reaches for a bottle of Motrin on the nightstand.

He grumbles to himself as he plops two pills onto his palm.

JOHN  
One of these days...

He plops them into his mouth and swallows. No water needed.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
...I'm gonna retire.

He slowly gets out of bed and makes his way downstairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

JENNIFER, late 40's with hair rolled up in curlers, sits in front of the family computer. She sips on coffee before checking their finances.

The credit card account reads: "CREDIT BALANCE -\$48,000." She grimaces and picks up her coffee mug. She's about to take a sip when loud FOOTSTEPS on the stairs startle her.

HENRY, 18 with plaid pajama bottoms and a Trojan's T-shirt, thumps loudly down the stairs.

HENRY  
(through a yawn)  
Morning mom.

He walks by Jennifer at the computer who holds up an envelope. Next to her on the desk sits a lottery ticket.

JENNIFER  
This came for you the other day.

The envelope reads "USC Scholarship Committee" in bold letters. Henry excitedly snatches the letter and opens it up.

HENRY  
Yes! They got my scholarship app-

His excitement quickly turns to disappointment. He dumps the envelope into the trash and heads to the kitchen.

John walks downstairs next, clutching his lower back, and looks around.

JOHN  
Where's Emma?

Jennifer points to the front door. John turns around to see EMMA, 15 and already fully dressed for church, leaning against the front door while texting.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
What's the deal?

Emma checks the peephole and sighs.

EMMA  
Luna's gonna be here any minute.  
Are you guys ready for Church?

John exhales.

JOHN  
Ah that's right, your weird friend.

EMMA  
She's NOT weird. She said she'd try  
this out *one time!* It could be my  
last chance to-

John puts his hands up in defense.

JOHN  
Ok, ok. We'll get her to church,  
don't worry.

EMMA  
I'm serious! We can't mess this up!

John salutes Emma and turns around when Jennifer clears her throat. She waves the lottery ticket in front of his face.

JENNIFER  
Busted.

JOHN  
That was like two months ago!

Jennifer looks at John for a moment before sighing.

JENNIFER  
Did you at least win anything?

JOHN  
 (shrugs)  
 Never checked.

Jennifer throws it in the trash but Henry quickly snatches it and holds it up to the light.

JENNIFER  
 Henry!

HENRY  
 What? What've we got to lose?

Jennifer hesitates. She looks at John who shrugs. She rolls her eyes and pulls up the lottery page. They lean in as they read the numbers from two months ago.

EMMA (O.S.)  
 Guys she's on her way! Get ready!

They all ignore Emma as they check the lottery numbers.

JENNIFER  
 1...

Henry checks the ticket and confirms.

HENRY  
 1.

JENNIFER  
 9...

HENRY  
 9.

JENNIFER  
 5...

Henry can't contain the excitement in his voice.

HENRY  
 5.

JENNIFER  
 7...

Henry and John lean closer.

HENRY  
 7!

JOHN  
 7!

Jennifer takes a deep breath as she reads the last number.

JENNIFER

3...

Henry and John deflate like balloons.

HENRY

8.

Jennifer takes the ticket and looks it over.

JENNIFER

We matched the power-ball but... oh well.

She throws the ticket in the trash again.

JOHN

Well it's probably for the best.  
Money brings out the worst in people.

John turns to leave but Henry squints at the screen and tugs on his dad's shirt.

HENRY

Hold on! Look! We got 4 out of 5  
*plus* the powerball! That means we  
still won \$50,000!

John whips around quick as lightning.

JOHN

How much?

Jennifer and John both lean in towards the computer with Henry. Their eyes all widen and they look at each other.

A beat.

Jennifer, John, and Henry all lunge towards the trashcan to retrieve the winning ticket. Henry gets to it first and plants a kiss on it.

HENRY

Forget the scholarship! I don't  
need it anymore!

John snatches the ticket from his hand.

JOHN

Scholarship schmallerhip. I'm  
gonna quit construction and finally  
finish that book!

Jennifer and Henry groan in unison.

HENRY  
THAT lame book?

JOHN  
What do you mean "lame?"

HENRY  
Nobody cares about a suburban mom  
fighting zombies with essential  
oils!

JOHN  
They will.

Jennifer gently takes the ticket while John pouts.

JENNIFER  
You can finish your book anytime.  
But THIS is going to pay off that  
credit card. And then Cheryll can  
stop bragging to me about being  
debt free all the time!

John and Henry begin to protest when Emma's voice PEEPS in  
from the front door.

EMMA  
We should give it to the church!

Everyone leans over and eyeballs Emma.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
What?

Henry rolls his eyes.

HENRY  
(mocking)  
"We should give it to the church."

John grunts and Jennifer forces a smile.

JENNIFER  
(overly sweet)  
Well sweetie, the church gives to  
the needy. We have needs. We're  
just cutting out the middle man.

Emma crosses her arms.

EMMA  
I can't believe you guys! You-

She's interrupted by her cell phone ringing.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
 (into phone)  
 Luna? You're WALKING?!

With Emma distracted, John, Jennifer, and Henry huddle up.

JOHN  
 Here's the deal. Jennifer, it's your fault for letting Abby sucker you into a pyramid scheme.

JENNIFER  
 I should be making 200k a year!

JOHN  
 Henry, let's be honest, you're not gonna become a doctor. Just go to community college.

HENRY  
 Who says I wanna be a doctor?! I'm gonna be a movie star!

JOHN  
 Exactly.

Jennifer pokes John angrily.

JENNIFER  
 Oh and YOUR goals are so noble? You've been working on that book for years! It's never gonna happen!

JOHN  
 Oh it's happening! I can see the opening act. Zombie Slayer Karen-

JENNIFER  
 No! Close it! Close the act!

While Jennifer and John argue, Henry sloooooowly pulls the ticket out of Jennifer's hand. She doesn't notice. He goes to the computer to find the directions on claiming it.

He squints and looks down at the ticket, up at the computer, down at the ticket again, then back to his parents.

HENRY  
 Uh... dad? When did you say you bought this ticket?

They're still arguing.





EMMA

Finally!

Emma taps her foot restlessly as she listens to the CLINK and CLONKS of her family getting ready in a hurry.

They all rush down the stairs at the same time and crash into the front door.

John has changed into a button up but the buttons aren't aligned. Jennifer pulls curlers out of her hair. Henry swapped out the pajama bottoms for jeans but still wears the Trojan T-shirt.

JOHN

*I'll go claim the ticket. You three go to church!*

JENNIFER

You're not going anywhere without me!

HENRY

Or me!

They all fight over the door handle.

JOHN

*I bought the ticket!*

JENNIFER

*I found the ticket!*

HENRY

*I checked the ticket!*

Henry grabs the door handle.

EMMA

Are you kidding me?! We're supposed to be taking-

Henry swings the front door wide open. On the other side is LUNA, 15, sporting a crop top and hair dyed blue. She has a hand held up in a fist like she was just about to knock.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Luna! I'm SO glad you made it!

The rest of the family stares at Luna in bewilderment. Emma steps forward and drags Luna to the Kitchen.

LUNA

Uh... yeah...

## KITCHEN TABLE

Emma pours Luna a cup of coffee and sits down next to her. John, Jennifer and Henry sit across from them. The kitchen clock reads 9:45am. It TICKS mercilessly.

EMMA

You'll LOVE our Church. Everyone is super warm and friendly! You'll feel right at home!

Luna nervously fiddles with her coffee and cracks a smile.

LUNA

(quietly)

That'd be nice.

She glances up at Emma's family. They're all staring at the lottery ticket in John's hand.

LUNA (CONT'D)

Uhm... is everything ok?

EMMA

(staring daggers at her family)

Yes!

HENRY

No!

John, Jennifer, and Henry glance at the clock. 9:50am. John clears his throat and sets the lottery ticket on the table.

JOHN

Well, truth be told... we... won the lottery...

Luna looks at them confused.

LUNA

But I thought... you guys weren't supposed to be into that stuff.

JOHN

Well it's not a *sin* or anything. What's important is... where your heart's at!

JENNIFER

That's right! Your heart!

Luna raises an eyebrow.

LUNA

Oh. So you're gonna donate it?

JENNIFER

We could but... you know, sometimes it can be used to pay off debt!

HENRY

Or pay for college!

JOHN

Or write a book!

LUNA

Right...

There's a long pause filled by the TICKING of the clock. John kicks Jennifer under the table and she shoots him a look.

JENNIFER

Hey Luna... sweetie... so the lottery thing is kind of urgent. Is there... any way *your mom* can take you and Emma to church today?

Luna blushes and looks down nervously at her coffee.

LUNA

Uhm... yeah I'm not sure...

JOHN

It's not far! We'll even give you gas money!

LUNA

She's just not really...

HENRY

What? It won't take her long to-

Emma slams her fists down on the table.

EMMA

(shouting)

I told you already! Her mom is in PRISON!

Everyone goes quiet. Finally, Henry breaks the silence.

HENRY

Can your dad take you then?

John elbows Henry.

LUNA

This was a mistake.

Luna stands up abruptly and knocks the chair over. She ignores it and makes a break for the door.

EMMA

Wait!

Emma follows after her but stops and looks at her family.

EMMA (CONT'D)

"What matters is the heart" huh?

She leaves them in the kitchen to contemplate their actions.

John, Jennifer, and Henry all stare at the lottery ticket. John rubs his eyes.

JOHN

We messed up... didn't we?

A beat.

Suddenly they all stand up. John grabs his Bible and Jennifer takes the car keys. They all rush to the entryway.

ENTRYWAY

Luna's reaches for the door handle when Emma grabs her hand.

EMMA

Luna! One more chance! Please!

LUNA

Forget it. I thought this would be different but...

Her eyes begin to well up.

LUNA (CONT'D)

Money is clearly more important to you guys too.

Luna grabs the handle and twists.

JOHN

You're right Luna.

Emma darts her head around to her family. Jennifer holds up the car keys and smiles.

JENNIFER

We lost our way for a minute.

Luna loosens her grip on the door.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry Luna.

HENRY

We all are.

John holds up the Bible and Luna glances at it.

JOHN

*Nothing* is more important than  
someone who wants to know Christ.

Luna wipes a mascara filled tear away.

LUNA

So you're... going to Church then?

Emma holds Luna's hand.

EMMA

With you. If you're still up for  
it.

A beat.

Luna squeezes Emma's hand and nods.

LUNA

I am.

Emma opens the front door and the morning light floods in.  
Luna follows Emma outside with John, Jennifer, and Henry  
right behind them.

Left behind, still on the kitchen table, sits the unclaimed  
lottery ticket.

FADE TO BLACK.

