

LAST OF THE LOTTO LAITY

By JJ Jonas

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by
J.J. Jonas

(NOTE: The actor in this monologue portrays several different characters.)

MOM

My daughter had been spending her Christmas holiday with her father in South Texas, and we were speaking by phone on Christmas Eve when she informed me that she had one Christmas wish: that I purchase her a lottery ticket. My voice fell silent. It wasn't that this was some kind of outrageous request that went against the grain of my morals or pocketbook; I simply never had purchased one nor had the slightest notion of how to do so.

I had stood impatiently in line behind others who vacillated between their choices of numbers or which game to play.

CUSTOMER 1

(slowly and lethargically) Yeah, lemme have one of those thar... no, mebbe one o' those, and I wanna git me some of those green 'uns over thar... whut's that gold 'un? Iz that a good 'un? How many people won on that one?

(MOM is rolling eyes and pointedly looking at her watch, tapping her foot impatiently.)

CUSTOMER 2

(in rapid-fire dialogue) Gimme two of the SC-Mistletoe Specials and five of the Elf Surprise Tickets. I'll take four Pick Threes and a dozen Lone Star Sure Things. What's the percentage of winners at this location?

SALES CLERK

I'm not sure, sir—

CUSTOMER 2

(attackingly) Whaddya mean, you're not sure? What kind of gambit are you running here? I want statistical data and I want it now!

MOM

More often than not, I relinquished my purchase back to the refrigerated section and retreated. I had not waded into the depths of Lake Lotto—until now.

(exasperatedly) I had trouble finding a parking space at the 24-hour Wal-Mart parking lot at 2 a.m., for goodness sake, I just wasn't one of those naturally lucky people who can buy a soda at the convenience store, unscrew the cap and say, "Hey, I just won a free one!"

I didn't have any illusions about becoming a million dollar winner overnight. I had read my horoscope. There had never even been a mention of any stranger closely resembling Ed McMahon, much less lotto winnings. I had read my fortune cookies. They usually dealt with didactic wisdom from some guy named Confusion.

(MOM sighs.) Still, it was my daughter's Christmas wish and so, on December 29th, I pulled up to a convenience store, front and center, put my gear shift in park and dimmed my lights. I flipped open my cell phone like a veteran commando. My daughter had managed to finagle a visit with my sister and her family and they were all on hand to give me instructions.

MOM

Okay, I'm here. Over.

I crackled my voice to provide the appropriate static to set the mood.

DAUGHTER

What's up with your phone? It sounds like you have some static.

MOM

Oh, no, that's just me. Pretty slick, huh?

DAUGHTER

Yeah, um, well, whatever, Mom. *(pause)* Okay, look, Mom, you are just going to go up to the guy behind the counter and tell him you want a Pick Three and a Texas Lotto.

It was like we were performing some kind of espionage. It was making me a little nervous.

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