

The Lottery

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A very short play

By David Jones

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Jessie, a young, eager employee at the store

Aunt Claire, the now owner of the family store

Will, a shopper

Dylan, a decision-maker

SETTING

Family owned corner store

LIGHTS UP ON: \*

*Family owned corner store as  
JESSIE, seventeen, sits on the  
counter, by the register.* \*

*Jessie closes her eyes and  
meditates at the register.  
Occasionally, opening one eye.* \*

*AUNT CLAIRE, early forties, takes  
inventory as the store approaches  
closing time.* \*

JESSIE

Ommmmmmmm...Ommmmmmmmmm..... \*

Aunt Claire looks back at Jessie  
then continues to take inventory. \*

Jessie opens one eye and stares at  
Aunt Claire. \*

OMMMMMMMMM... \*

Aunt Claire spins around to catch  
Jessie's eye. Jessie closes both  
eyes. \*

...ommmmmmm... \*

AUNT CLAIRE \*

What-- \*

Jessie SHOOTS her arm out and  
SHOUTS unclear gibberish. \*

JESSIE \*

I'm getting something, I'm getting something, I'm getting... \*

Jessie breathes deeply.  
Is there something you want to ask me? \*

AUNT CLAIRE \*

At this point, I feel obligated to. What the hell is  
happening? \*

JESSIE \*  
I was meditating. \*

AUNT CLAIRE \*  
We do that at work now? \*

JESSIE \*  
I have to or else my third eye will never be open by the \*  
summer solstice. \*

AUNT CLAIRE \*  
Riiighhhttt. \*

JESSIE \*  
I mean, in theory, I could acquire enough amethyst and garnet \*  
by that time to recharge the rest of my crystals so my \*  
chakras align like the stars of Orion's belt, but that just \*  
wouldn't be right. \*

AUNT CLAIRE \*  
You have to charge your crystals? \*

JESSIE \*  
(laughing) \*  
Don't be crazy, of course you do. How else would they work? \*

AUNT CLAIRE \*  
Ya know, you got me there. \*

JESSIE \*  
I mean, unless you want really lame surges, you should \*  
probably charge them. \*

AUNT CLAIRE \*  
Where does the plug go? \*

JESSIE \*  
No. You charge crystals by leaving them out over night. After \*  
sunset, you put them out, after sunrise, you bring them back. \*

AUNT CLAIRE \*  
I'm gonna go back to checking on the chips. \*

Aunt Claire returns to checking  
inventory.

Jessie makes a matter-of-fact face  
and closes both eyes. She  
meditates.

A beat.

JESSIE

Chips...chips...barbeque chips...jalapeño chips...kettle  
cooked--

AUNT CLAIRE

I cannot think while you do that.

Jessie stays in proper meditating  
form.

JESSIE

Am I not supposed to meditate?

Aunt Claire thinks for a moment and  
then takes inventory.

AUNT CLAIRE

No.

Jessie jumps back a little.

JESSIE

What?

AUNT CLAIRE

Sorry.

JESSIE

Fine, I won't talk about chips.

AUNT CLAIRE

Not the chips, the meditating.

JESSIE

I won't meditate with them either.

AUNT CLAIRE

In general, I mean.

JESSIE

I don't know what you want from me.

AUNT CLAIRE

Maybe some customer service?

Jessie gets out of the meditating position.

JESSIE

I'm employee of the month.

AUNT CLAIRE

I couldn't keep giving it to myself.

Jessie scoffs.

JESSIE

Pretty soon you'll have to admit that what I do around here matters.

Aunt Claire stops taking inventory.

A beat.

**Aunt Claire grabs a bag of chips.**

\*

AUNT CLAIRE

Want some Fritos?

JESSIE

Will it make you appreciate me more?

Aunt Claire makes eye contact with Jessie, opens the bag of chips, and eats chips by chip as she walks towards Jessie.

AUNT CLAIRE

I do appreciate you, really. But...I'm not sure how to say this...

JESSIE

Just spit it out.

AUNT CLAIRE

Alright. I'm sure you know and have been able to tell that *recently*--uh--that um, there isn't really a need for two people to work this store and--

JESSIE

Are you firing me?

AUNT CLAIRE

No, no--

JESSIE

Oh my God, you're firing me.

AUNT CLAIRE

No--

JESSIE

My horoscope said I'd face challenges today!

AUNT CLAIRE

I'm not / firing you.

JESSIE

I knew it, I knew it. I just can't believe this is actually happening. I had a feeling this morning that today was gonna be a bad day and I said to myself, I said Jessie you go and you do what you do best and here I am getting--wait...Whatcha say?

AUNT CLAIRE

I'm not firing you.

JESSIE

Aunt Claire are you out of your goddamn mind?

**DYLAN, twenties, walks into the  
store, looks around, buys nothing  
and leaves.**

\*  
\*

AUNT CLAIRE

See, that's what I'm talking about?

JESSIE

Stoners?

AUNT CLAIRE

No. The business--or, I guess, the lack of it. I mean, okay, here we go, I haven't gotten a chance to tell your mom this yet either, so you're the first to know. But, uh, I think its time.

JESSIE

Holy shit, where are my cards?

Jessie searches for her tarot cards.

AUNT CLAIRE

Are you listening to me right now?

**Jessie slams a pack of tarot cards on the countertop.**

JESSIE

Huzzah!

Aunt Claire grabs Jessie by the shoulders.

AUNT CLAIRE

Listen to me!

There is silence between them as they keep eye contact.

JESSIE

(in a squeaky voice)

Are you and Connor pregnant?

Aunt Claire's hands fall to her side.

AUNT CLAIRE

Noooooooooooooooooooo. I'm in my forties, that ship sailed.

JESSIE

Hey! I have a friend whose mom didn't have him till she was 43.

AUNT CLAIRE

What made you even think that I was pregnant?

JESSIE

You said you didn't tell mom yet and you think its time-- wait, are you sick?

AUNT CLAIRE

No, Jess, I'm not sick. The business is just...closing, for good.

JESSIE

Oh, huh, happy you're not sick, ya know.

AUNT CLAIRE

Yeah, well, we aren't getting the business we used to so in a few months...that's that.

JESSIE

Just pack it up like it wasn't even here?

AUNT CLAIRE

Yeah, I guess so.

JESSIE

That's--no, no, how can it close? I mean, its been on this corner through generations.

AUNT CLAIRE

The store just isn't making enough to support it being open.  
A beat.

JESSIE

When are you gonna tell Mom?

AUNT CLAIRE

Soon, I really have to now that you know.

JESSIE

You seem to be handling this all okay?

AUNT CLAIRE

I've known for sometime now, a business doesn't just close without any warning signs first.

JESSIE

What are you gonna do?

AUNT CLAIRE

(jokingly)

Excuse me?

JESSIE

Well, I have graduation then college and on so I knew I couldn't stay here forever but...

AUNT CLAIRE

I have a life outside of running this place, thank you. And, this is never where I wanted to spend my life.

JESSIE

Yeah, I don't wanna spend mine here either.

AUNT CLAIRE

Oh, no?

JESSIE

Yeah, like, don't get me wrong. As a first job, this has been an awesome experience--couldn't ask for a better introduction into the working world--and as a boss, I mean, my own aunt? Couldn't be a sweeter situation, but say forty, sixty years from now...

Jessie shivers.

AUNT CLAIRE

I'm gonna finish up checking the inventory and then we can head out of here.

JESSIE

How long do you think it'll be till its all closed up?

AUNT CLAIRE

A few more months. I'm gonna cut back on what we order in. I'm just not making enough back...which is why I had to bring this up to you today because, well, I can't afford to pay you to work here anymore--I'm not firing you, I meant what I said, but I just don't have the money. I'm sorry.

Jessie looks down for a second, makes a face like she has finally come to a sudden realization, and then lightly chuckles.

AUNT CLAIRE

What's so funny?

Jessie laughs more.

AUNT CLAIRE

Okay, I really thought you meditating on the counter tripped me up but are you hearing me?

Jessie stops laughing.

JESSIE

Yes, I am hearing you!

AUNT CLAIRE

Okay...

JESSIE

I'm hearing how ridiculous you sound. You don't have to pay me.

AUNT CLAIRE

Are you sure? You can go find a new job.

JESSIE

I'll have you know that over the next 9 days Mercury will continue to be in retrograde, before birthing in a new moon-- I was reading about it last night on all the astrology instagram accounts I follow--and they said that this means a time of great struggle is coming to an end and new opportunities are on the horizon!

Aunt Claire's jaw is on the floor.

AUNT CLAIRE

Oooooookaaaayyyyy...

JESSIE

In layman's terms, now that this is a strictly voluntary position, I can pursue my new career as not only a full-time psychic but also the first full-time psychic whose business is ran out of a corner store. \*

AUNT CLAIRE

Oh boy.

JESSIE

Just hear me out. I could make a sign and put it in the window and then when customers come in I can offer them a tarot card reading or give them good juju as they trek on.

AUNT CLAIRE

Your plan is to charge for these readings and givings of good juju?

JESSIE

Suppose I can't charge much for those, right? \*

AUNT CLAIRE

I'm not familiar with the regulations of the spiritual world.

JESSIE

If I can't do that, I can at least offer complimentary readings. \*

AUNT CLAIRE

So the keystone to your entrepreneurship is your ability to read cards? \*

JESSIE

Not just cards, I do palms too. \*

AUNT CLAIRE

Oh yeah, like with that customer who came in here last week that you harassed until she stormed out?

JESSIE

She must've been a fire sign.

AUNT CLAIRE

Why do you even want your own business anyway? Did I make it look fun? \*

JESSIE

Starting and running businesses is in our blood and if this one won't be around anymore. Then, as the next generation, I take it upon myself to continue this tradition. \*

AUNT CLAIRE

It's not because you want that car?

JESSIE

Oh, that too. But, I know mom won't go for it.

AUNT CLAIRE

Right, psychic.

JESSIE

No, she just checked the price and I told her nothing good comes from googling prices or symptoms.

**WILL walks into the store and wanders the aisles.**

AUNT CLAIRE

What do you think he's gonna get?

JESSIE

Allow me to hone in.

Jessie hones in.

JESSIE

Among other things, I think he will check out the candy and not be able to decide between a right or left twix and settle on a kit kat.

AUNT CLAIRE

Hmm.

**Aunt Claire walks parallel to Will.**

JESSIE

(to Aunt Claire)

Don't mess with it.

**Aunt Claire falls back as Will approaches Jessie.**

**Will puts a bottle of water, a pack of gum, a pack of condoms, and a bag of trail mix on the countertop.**

Will smiles. Jessie forces a smile.

JESSIE

Would you like to try anything from our candy selection?

Jessie gestures to the candy below the counter. Will looks at the candy, then back at Jessie, and then back at the candy.

**Will looks at and then settles on a  
Reese's Peanut Butter Cup.**

\*

JESSIE

Good choice. A personal favorite. Would you care to have a complimentary tarot card reading?

WILL

No, thank you.

**Will pays and leaves.**

\*

JESSIE

Have a nice night!

Aunt Claire re-joins Jessie at the counter.

AUNT CLAIRE

After a quick re-eval of the inventory, I can report the number of kit kats remained constant.

JESSIE

He didn't even take the free card reading. I mean COME ON, its free. What more could I do?

AUNT CLAIRE

You saw what he was getting, I don't think he wanted to know how it was gonna play out.

Aunt Claire laughs to herself.  
Jessie does not laugh.

AUNT CLAIRE

Don't beat yourself up too much about it--you don't have to be psychic to know you're not psychic.

JESSIE

(frustratingly)

You don't get it.

\*

AUNT CLAIRE

This really bothered you, huh?

JESSIE  
(dismissively)

\*

Doesn't matter.

AUNT CLAIRE

You can talk to me.

JESSIE  
If I'm not psychic, I don't know what to do.

AUNT CLAIRE  
You'll do exactly what you said you're gonna do. You'll graduate, you'll go to La Salle, and on, like you said.

JESSIE  
I'm undecided.

AUNT CLAIRE  
That's fine.

JESSIE  
I was hoping being psychic would help me decide.

Aunt Claire rolls her eyes.  
A beat.

AUNT CLAIRE  
Maybe you aren't not psychic.

JESSIE  
You know, I was watching Dr. Phil and he said that constant contradictions like that lead to complexes so--

\*

AUNT CLAIRE  
I'm not saying you are psychic, just maybe not not psychic.

JESSIE  
What's the difference?

AUNT CLAIRE  
Well, someone would have to prove they ARE psychic, how can you prove you're not not something?

JESSIE  
Uhhhh--

AUNT CLAIRE

All I'm saying is, you think Mike Schmidt never struck out? \*

**Dylan walks back into the store and wanders the aisles again.**

AUNT CLAIRE

(to Jessie)

Batter up.

AUNT CLAIRE

(to Dylan)

Excuse me sir, we are closing up in the next minute in or so.

DYLAN

Yeah, yeah, yeah...

**Dylan picks out an assortment of items.** He turns and Jessie sees the outline of a handgun in his pocket. \*

**Dylan places the items on the counter.** \*

Jessie does not speak.

AUNT CLAIRE

Did you find everything alright?

Aunt Claire moves around Jessie and helps Dylan with his items.

DYLAN

What's wrong with her?

AUNT CLAIRE

(laughing)

That's just my niece. \*

Dylan snaps in Jessie's face.

DYLAN

Hey, you, hello...

AUNT CLAIRE

Hey. Jackass don't do that. Your total is \$10.51.

Dylan reaches for his pocket.

JESSIE

Why do you have a gun in your pocket?

AUNT CLAIRE

What?!

Dylan's eyes widen.

\*

DYLAN

What???

\*

AUNT CLAIRE

Are you insane, Jessie?

DYLAN

(to himself)

\*

This is new to me.

\*

AUNT CLAIRE

I am so sorry. She has never accused a customer--

JESSIE

No other customers have had guns, besides cops.

AUNT CLAIRE

(to Jessie)

Stop it right now.

JESSIE

(to Aunt Claire)

No, he has a gun in his POCKET.

\*

DYLAN

I can hear all of this.

**Dylan whips out the gun.**

AUNT CLAIRE

Sir, I apolo--HOLY SHIT.

Dylan scans the gun back and forth  
between Jessie and Aunt Claire.

DYLAN

This was not how it was supposed to go. I put this on my  
vision board and everything but never the less, I fucked up.

AUNT CLAIRE

Don't point your gun at her.

DYLAN

I mean honestly I have watched sooooo many youtube videos of  
corner store robberies--I mean you could go through my  
history and its all "Guy steals 5 sandwiches" or "Supreme  
Patty does a Reverse Robbery at a Corner Store." And you know  
what they all had in common?

Dylan scans his gun back and forth  
between Jessie and Aunt Claire.  
They both shake their heads.

DYLAN

They ALL were successful--and trust me, that's not always the  
case. I watched something called "Burger King Brawl" and the  
employees fought back. I knew I wasn't fucking with them. So,  
here I come, walking in, just *meandering* through, profiling  
this place, and I think, I'm about to rock this shit--but my  
parent's were right when they kicked me out, I really do  
suck.

AUNT CLAIRE

(disgusted)

Oh my god.

Dylan points the gun at Aunt  
Claire.

DYLAN

Shut up.

AUNT CLAIRE

This is just sad.

DYLAN

This is not how this is supposed to go, okay! You ruined  
everything--both of you. I have the gun!

Dylan waves it around their faces. \*

JESSIE \*

You were never gonna out smart me. I'm psychic. \*

AUNT CLAIRE

Oh, fuck. \*

DYLAN

Psychic! \*

(whining) \*

I picked the only corner store with a psychic running it. \*

JESSIE

(to Aunt Claire)

Told you.

AUNT CLAIRE

(to Jessie)

This is not the time.

JESSIE

(to Aunt Claire)

It is never the time.

AUNT CLAIRE

(to Jessie)

You are not serious right now.

JESSIE

(to Aunt Claire)

We might not get another chance. So I just want you say, Jessie, you were right. \*

DYLAN

What the actual fuck is happening, am I not robbing you right now? I mean, I know it might seem like I'm not the most experienced in this and everything but like at least have the decency to pay attention to me when I'm waving a fucking gun in your face--I don't know who raised you-- \*

JESSIE

Don't talk about my mom like that.

AUNT CLAIRE

Don't talk about my sister like that. \*

DYLAN

Do I really need to go over this again? I just want your fucking money. I don't care about your family.

JESSIE

Well, we didn't exactly wanna hear about your Mommy and Daddy issues either but here we are.

DYLAN

Ahhh! Why are y'all so difficult, I mean, would a little cooperation really kill ya?

AUNT CLAIRE

I'm in a coma. That's gotta be it. This isn't actually happening--I'm lying in a hospital bed somewhere in a coma. This. Is. Guilt. Projection. This can't be real.

DYLAN

I know! I mean, how is this happening?

JESSIE

Oh, this is very much so real.

DYLAN

So, you're really psychic?

JESSIE

Mhm.

DYLAN

She really psychic?

AUNT CLAIRE

She knew the gun was in your pocket.

DYLAN

Damn. You are good.

JESSIE

Thanks, I'm a Pisces with a Libra moon. *Anyway*, I'm recently unemployed so I'm starting a business, this was a rather recent venture, so I don't have any business cards on me but you can find me on LinkedIn. That's J E S--

Dylan SLAMS his hand down on the counter. They both jump.

A beat. \*

DYLAN \*

Listen, this is taking so much longer than I had initially planned for, like I have my dinner waiting for me in my car and that shits cold by now, so, please, just give me your fucking money. \*

JESSIE \*

What if I can give you something better than money? \*

DYLAN \*

What's better than money? \*

JESSIE \*

More money-- \*

AUNT CLAIRE \*

What are you talking about Jessie? \*

DYLAN \*

Let her finish. Where is this mysterious pile of money that isn't in your register? \*

AUNT CLAIRE \*

Trust me, there's nothing in that register. \*

JESSIE \*

The money's behind me. \*

**Jessie reaches for the power ball tickets.**

AUNT CLAIRE

Jessie, stop.

**Dylan points the gun at Aunt Claire.** \*

DYLAN

Let her get what she's getting.

JESSIE

It's fine.

**Jessie puts a row of power ball tickets in front of her.**

DYLAN

I don't trust psychics. Tell me what you got planned.

JESSIE

All I wanna do, for you, is run my hand above this pile of power ball tickets like a metal detector until I find the winner. Then you can have it. All you.

Dylan thinks.

DYLAN

Do it.

**Jessie scans her hand over the tickets. She picks one up.**

JESSIE

This moment will change your life forever.

DYLAN

How do I know you're telling the truth?

JESSIE

You don't think I'm psychic?

DYLAN

I said I don't trust you.

JESSIE

Have a little faith. How about a reading?

Jessie gestures to the tarot cards.

DYLAN

I don't know--

JESSIE

Fine. How about one card then? I pull out one card at random. But before I do, you have to think of a question and see it in your mind's eye.

AUNT CLAIRE

I don't know about this...

DYLAN

I'm ready.

JESSIE

Let's do this.

**She shuffles the cards and picks  
the card called: The World.**

\*

DYLAN

What does that mean?

JESSIE

The world, it begs for you to try your luck.

\*

**Dylan contemplates for a moment  
then grabs the power ball ticket  
and flees.**

\*

\*

Jessie hyperventilates. Aunt Claire  
wraps her arms around her.

AUNT CLAIRE

Oh my God, Jess, do you need water?

JESSIE

I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine...

Jessie controls her breathing.

AUNT CLAIRE

Are you sure you're alright?

JESSIE

Yeah...it is Pisces' season.

\*

AUNT CLAIRE

I have to tell your mom.

JESSIE

Can we tell her together?

AUNT CLAIRE

Yeah, I guess we can--gives me a chance to let her know about  
the business. I just can't believe you're actually psychic.

\*

\*

4/9/19

22.

I'm not.

JESSIE

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF PLAY

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