

Love Potion 1 18 15

by

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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Desk Workers watch "breaking news" on their computer screens. JOHN, 40s, burly, joins the crowd that stands around one guy's monitor.

SCIENTIST

(on screen)

...whoever stole this sample of 1 18  
15 must reach out to us. At once.  
15 is not a thing you can handle.  
Return the bottle unused and against  
legal counsel, our enterprise will  
reward you with one million dollars.  
Cash.

John, like everyone else, is agape at the announcement. Behind him, sitting at her desk, is KAREN, 30s, who admires him. John turns around, marches toward her and she softly gasps, surprised.

JOHN

You're not watching this?! You do  
know what's going on, right?!

Self-aware now, he eases up, and offers her a handshake. She leans back.

JOHN

Whoa. I don't bite. I did barge  
over here like some kind of flea  
bitten terrier. Sorry about that.

Turned pink, she shakes his hand.

KAREN

Karen.

JOHN

I'm --

KAREN

John. You're John James Dryer.

JOHN

(leery)

Yeah. Listen, I'm new here so... I  
focus on the job. That's all.

So she sees it, he plays with his wedding ring.

JOHN  
 Yep. High School sweetheart. Twenty  
 years. Well... uh...

He turns around and starts to leave, but she asks:

KAREN  
 John? If you had 1 18 15... you'd  
 turn it in?

John thinks about it, and sighs.

JOHN  
 It feels better to think I would.  
 (meant as a goodbye)  
 Need to make a call, then it's lunch.

He leaves. Her eyes stay on him.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Karen sits in her parked car. The "breaking news" carries  
 on via the radio while Karen puts on surgical gloves. From  
 within her purse, she pulls out a...

CLEAR GLASS SPRAY BOTTLE

...that holds a red liquid inside. The Bottle is labeled "K-  
 SAMPLE".

SCIENTIST (O.S.)  
 (on radio)  
 People should beware. 1 18 15 is a  
 spray, like cologne, or perfume,  
 except 15 is odorless.

Karen moistens a tissue with many sprays of the red liquid:  
 1 18 15.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)  
 (on radio)  
 Sir, so we're clear, you're confirming  
 the headlines that state that whoever  
 gets a dose of this potion of yours  
 will do whatever anyone else says...  
 For a year?! Jeeeeeeez! Can you  
 picture the basket-case that gets  
 his hands on this?!

SCIENTIST (O.S.)  
 Hence our hunt.

Karen turns the radio off. She watches...

JOHN

...walk by. He's oblivious to her.

Karen exits her car and follows John quietly through the garage. When she gets close, she smells him, and basks in his aroma. Then, she wipes the moist tissue in her hand across the back of his neck.

John jumps, startled. He turns around and glares at her, then gently pulls her out of the way of a coming car.

JOHN

(to Karen)

What do you think you're doing?

Karen unfolds a hand-written letter she pulls from her pocket and John sees his name up top.

JOHN

Look. Karen --

KAREN

(reads)

Don't move.

John doesn't move... and is spooked that he can't.

KAREN

(reads)

Someone said you like to have dinner with your wife and daughter on Friday nights. Well... forget about them. Tonight, come have dinner with me. Don't hurt me John, and I swear not to hurt you either. My address is under your wiper blade, so please arrive at eight.

Methodically, she tears the note into pieces and looks in his eyes.

KAREN

And... don't listen to anyone else. Okay? Don't talk about what I've done with anybody. Not your wife -- nobody. You understand? Answer.

JOHN

I understand.

Karen exhales.

KAREN  
I love you, John. Please tell me  
you love me too.

JOHN  
(helpless)  
...I love you, Karen.

Karen is speechless, and smiles from ear-to-ear.

EXT. KAREN'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

We approach. TV light glows in the front windows. We hear  
CRICKETS.

INT. KAREN'S BUNGALOW - BATHROOM

Karen applies lipstick in the mirror. We hear her TV ON in  
the main room as the DOOR BELL RINGS. Karen shivers.

KAREN  
(amazed)  
...on time.

MAIN ROOM

Karen shuts the TV OFF. A clock reads 8:00. She approaches  
the door nervously and opens it for...

JOHN

...who stands on her porch, wearing a bitter expression. He  
peers over her shoulder and sees delivery pizza on a fancy  
candle-lit table. He glares at her, and his eyebrows rise.

KAREN  
(embarrassed)  
I'm klutzy with stoves. Come in.

He doesn't want to, but does.

INT. KAREN'S BUNGALOW - MAIN ROOM

Karen and John sit at the candle-lit table. Neither touch  
their pizza. It's silent.

JOHN  
You don't have to do this, Karen.  
You have beauty -- brains. The longer  
you keep me here, the more quicksand  
you're going to be in.

She grabs a bottle of wine and fills his already half-full glass. She motions for him to drink up and he does. Ceaselessly.

John puts the glass down, emptied. Afterwards, the expression on his face slowly changes into one of bewilderment. Because he notices...

PICTURES OF AN UNKNOWN MAN

...all over the room, and the man uncannily resembles him. Some of the snapshots are of Karen's wedding to the man.

JOHN

Wait. What is this? Why does he look like me?!

KAREN

Because he is you, John. See? Me and you were married once.

JOHN

...holy mother of God.  
(truly realizes)  
You... are... sick.

He stands up.

KAREN

Sit down.

He does.

KAREN

You died John, but I can see it in your eyes and feel it in my bones that the stars have breathed new life in you and fate has swept you my way. And 15 is a revelation! It's the absolute miracle I needed to bring you home. Eat.

John, stunned, eats. She eats too.

JOHN

(warns as he chews)  
Karen. A few miles from here, they're building a prison. Do you know that?

She drops her pizza, gets up, walks to the stereo, and plays a HOME-MADE LOVE SONG. To his alarm, John realizes that the voice that comes from the speakers, is his.

KAREN

That's nice. That they're building  
a prison I mean. Jobs and everything.  
Come dance with me.

John stands and approaches her. They hold each other. He  
fiercely studies the pictures of the man who resembles him.

KAREN

You wrote and performed this song  
for me during our first romance.

(blushes)

Gosh. If I told you how 1 18 15  
happened, you wouldn't belie --

JOHN

I don't want to know. I don't give  
a damn how you got it.

She looks at him, and smiles.

KAREN

Well, I'm glad I kept the bottle  
because now I know what I have.

(beat)

John? I want you to stay.

(re: his shirt)

Take it off.

John looks at her. He unbuttons his shirt slowly, and removes  
it uneasily. Karen, wide-eyed, ogles his body.

KAREN

...now... just... kiss me.

John takes a breath.

He pulls her close.

Their lips meet as the love song climbs to its peak.

Finally, John lets go and Karen just gazes at him. She looks  
upset.

KAREN

Kiss me again.

He does. With no joy.

KAREN

John... kiss me again!

He does. Afterwards, tears well in her eyes. She goes and  
grabs his dinner plate and hurls it at the stereo, where it

shatters. The love song ends, but starts again, on a loop. We hear SIRENS outside, many blocks away, climbing in volume.

KAREN

...talk.

JOHN

It can make people do or say things, but 1 8 15 is not some shortcut to people's hearts. It's not some love potion. I can't just feel what you want me to, I don't --

KAREN

Punch yourself!

He lands a left to his own face and staggers from the blow. The SIRENS outside are louder now and Karen gasps. She suddenly realizes...

KAREN

Oh no! What did you do?!

John clamps his hands over his bleeding mouth, which muffles his answer. Karen is incensed. She runs and opens a curtain, which reveals that the night is drowned in police lights. She marches to her butcher block and grabs a...

KNIFE

...and she chases John with it, the blade raised high.

KAREN

What did you do, what did you do?!?!  
Stop running!!!

John halts but is able to shift just enough to avoid a downward knife slash. Panicked, he faces her, about to slap her, but can't bring his raised hand forward. It's "frozen" in the air. She holds the knife to his neck and a line of blood forms at the edge of the blade's contact.

JOHN

Karen!

KAREN

Told you "don't hurt me"... so you can't! Now tell me what you did!

He whips out his cell phone and points to it.

JOHN

You shushed me!  
(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 "Don't talk about what I've done  
 with anybody". That's what you said!  
 You ever think that a phone is not a  
 person?! I finally did!

SHAKY CAMERA PHONE FOOTAGE (EXT. KAREN'S BUNGALOW - EVENING)

John records himself as he approaches the front door.

JOHN  
 (on camera)  
 Her name is Karen Heller! She lives  
 here at five-five-two lemon street!  
 She has 1 18 15, no hoax! I'm being  
 kidna --

INT. KAREN'S BUNGALOW (BACK TO SCENE)

Stunned, Karen takes the knife off of John's neck and listens  
 to a HELICOPTER arrive outside. NEIGHBORHOOD DOGS BARK.

KAREN  
 This was supposed to be about love!  
 Remember I swore not to hurt you!

The front door is repeatedly kicked from the exterior.

JOHN  
 I'm not your husband Karen, I'm sorry!  
 Just give them back their 15 and let  
 them try and survive it! All that  
 stuff is ever going to do is corrupt!

The front door breaks open and a TRIO OF DARK-SUITED AGENTS  
 enter. All of them are armed. SIX COPS trail them in but  
 look scared and subordinate. The Agents glimpse the knife  
 in Karen's hand and raise their guns and target her. The  
 Cops hold back, helpless.

AGENTS  
 Drop the knife! Drop it!

JOHN  
 Fuck! No! No! Help her!

The Center Agent shoots Karen in the gut. John screams. He  
 catches Karen as she slowly crumbles. He scoops her up in  
 his arms and carries her. Her blood drips between his feet.

AGENTS

Where's the serum?! Give us 1 18  
15! Where's the potion?!

JOHN

Wait! I'm JJ Dryer, I sent the video!  
This woman needs help! She's ill!

Karen's bloodstained hand touches John's face.

KAREN

Ignore them, John. Only pay attention  
to me now.

The room around Karen and John darkens slowly. Sound fades dramatically. The shouting Agents become menacing silhouettes with muffled voices. To John, all that exists... is Karen.

JOHN

Karen, stop!

KAREN

These people won't spare us, John.  
They're after money and power, they  
don't have souls like ours.

JOHN

Stop this!

The center silhouette advances toward John and Karen. Another silhouette tries to stop him but gets fought off.

KAREN

John, out of all the people on earth,  
we have proof we're meant for each  
other.

She is pale. Blood soaks her clothes. John's eyes deaden, but he manages a small smile. For her sake. Softly, he kisses her on the lips... and means it.

JOHN

Stop now. Please.

KAREN

(dazzled)

Oh. John. Is this a dream?

A gun barrel is shoved under Karen's chin. John can't look away.

AGENT'S MUFFLED VOICES: "Agent 92, fall back! Do not fire"!

John's eyes react to a loud...

BLAM!

Gunshot. Karen's blood marks John's face.

JOHN'S POV: Karen, in slo-mo, falls out of his arms and lands with a thud at his feet, dead.

John can't look away. He's stuck focused on her. MUFFLED VOICES HOLLER CHAOTICALLY in the b.g.

THE BARREL OF A GUN

...meets John's temple and he falls apart emotionally. He is a blubbering mess.

JOHN

Don't shoot! I'm on 1 18 15, look  
for it, it's here! Keep the reward,  
I just want my life back! Don't  
shoot! Don't shoot! Don't shoo--

BLACK SCREEN.

The HOME-MADE LOVE SONG creepily echoes in the darkness.

THE END