

PICK THE NUMBERS

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. LOTTERY OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

A plush waiting room with cheap coffee and faded posters promising "Your Big Win Awaits!"

Two ELDERLY WOMEN sit beside a sharply dressed man, mid-30s, radiant smile, designer suit. This is JACK HARPER. He twirls the keys to a cherry-red sports car around his finger.

They're all laughing.

ELDERLY WOMAN #1
How are you so lucky?

JACK
(grinning)
Hasn't always been this way.

ELDERLY WOMAN #2
This is your second lottery win. If you keep this up, they're going to ban you from playing.

JACK
Then I'll move on to bingo. Or horse betting.

(BEAT)
When your luck's in, you've got to keep playing.

The women chuckle. Jack leans back, basking in his streak.

Suddenly, the door swings open. In strides COWBOY HAT GUY, 50s, all swagger and denim. He's holding a massive novelty cheque: £100,000.

COWBOY HAT GUY
(to Jack)
Here.
(hands over the cheque)
Now get the hell out of here.

Jack stands, mock salute, still grinning.

JACK
Pleasure doing business. I'll see you tomorrow.

The others burst out laughing.

He exits, cheque in hand, keys jingling. The women watch him go, half in awe, half in disbelief.

ELDERLY WOMAN #1
He's either blessed or cursed.

ELDERLY WOMAN #2
I secretly touched him on the arm,
you know what that means?

ELDERLY WOMAN #1
He's going to get a restraining
order against you?

She shakes her head.

ELDERLY WOMAN #2
No, I'm buying a scratch card.

FADE OUT.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jack bursts through the front door, still clutching the oversized cheque. The house is sleek, modern, but lived-in. He's riding high—until he sees his brother, LIAM HARPER, (20's) pacing like a man possessed.

LIAM
He's not talking.

JACK
What do you mean?

Liam throws up his hands, exasperated.

LIAM
I don't know how else to say it.
He's shut down. He won't speak. He
won't eat. He won't drink. And he
won't make any picks.

Jack's smile fades. He steps closer, eyes narrowing.

JACK
What the fuck have you done?

Liam stares at him, guilt and panic swirling behind his eyes.

LIAM
I didn't do anything. I swear. But
he isn't doing shit.

Jack doesn't believe him. The cheque crumples slightly in his grip.

JACK
Where is he?

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PADDED ROOM - DAY

White walls. No windows. A small GLASS COFFEE TABLE sits in the centre, cluttered with sports pages—fixtures for football, hockey, rugby, cricket, basketball. Horse racing timetables. Lottery slips.

ETHAN, 19, shaved head, pale, sits cross-legged in a white dressing gown. His eyes are hollow, distant.

JACK HARPER and LIAM HARPER stand over him.

JACK
Pick the numbers.

LIAM
Pick some fucking scores for some games, for Christ's sake!

JACK
(sharp)
Let him focus. The lottery. That's what he needs to focus on.
(beat)
Pick the numbers for the fucking lottery. Nothing else matters.

Ethan looks up at them. Calm. Resolute.

ETHAN
No.

They freeze. Shocked.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
I've had enough.

JACK
You know what's at stake. We'll lose everything if you don't do this.

ETHAN
I'm tired. I've had enough. I won't do it anymore.

Liam lunges, grabs Ethan by the neck.

LIAM
You can't stop now! I can't go back
to my old life!

Ethan gasps, then speaks through the choke.

ETHAN
Every prediction comes at a cost. I
bleed all night long. Out my eyes.
Out my fingertips. Out my backside.
I can't walk anymore. The
headaches...
(beat)
It's killing me.

Jack doesn't flinch. Liam doesn't let go.

JACK
I'd do it for you.

LIAM
You're the one with the gift. Only
you can do this.

Ethan puffs out his chest. Defiant.

ETHAN
Then I refuse.

Liam goes to strike again—but Jack punches him hard in the
stomach. Liam collapses to the floor, groaning.

Jack steps forward, cold.

JACK
If you stop, then I stop feeding
you. Nothing to drink. I'll lock
this room and you'll die here.

Ethan doesn't blink.

ETHAN
I have no life anymore.

Jack picks up a lottery sheet. Holds it in front of Ethan.

JACK
Pick the numbers.

Ethan closes his eyes.

Jack's voice rises. Again. Again. Louder. Desperate. Furious.

No answer.

FADE OUT.