

The Raffle

written by

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EXT. WHITMORE BACKYARD - DAY

The yard is large, beautiful, and well-maintained. The owners have plenty of room but are not completely secluded- other houses are off in the distance.

Near the back right side of the yard is The Quarter Lounge- think pool house meets outdoor man cave.

The exterior of the house is beautiful, the kind of home you own just to show off how much money you have.

Party GUESTS, ranging in age but all extremely wealthy powerful men- are scattered amongst the yard and the house- mingling and drinking.

Twenty black wooden folding chairs are all facing away from the house and towards a small round table. On the seat of each chair is a deck of cards, custom designed for this event.

On top of the table rests two crystal bowls each with small slips of paper in them. One is mostly empty. Along with a pad of paper with twenty names written down.

A server, LYNN, kind, intuitive, weathered, early to late 40s is weaving through the guests, some in mid-conversation, with a silver tray of champagne glasses and whiskey tumblers - some full, some empty.

GUEST 1

- I just threaten to pull our funding if their president doesn't let my guys in.

GUEST 2

So he knows about the games?

GUEST 1

He's not an idiot, I'm sure he's put it together. But what's he gonna do? Let his people go back to starving?

She walks into the house.

INT. WHITMORE HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The interior is large and luxurious. Pieces of art are displayed proudly and some family photos are scattered throughout.

One photo is of THOMAS WHITMORE, 60, yet still attractive, and his younger wife, CLAIRE, 45 and beautiful, on their wedding day a few years back.

Lynn continues through the house with her tray of drinks.

INT. DEN- DAY - CONTINUOUS

Lynn silently walks around allowing guests to pick up new drinks and dispose of their old ones.

The walls are lined with Whitmore's accomplishments- graduation certificates, law degrees, high school and college athletic awards, etc...

A framed used battle map hangs on the wall, gold letters titling it "Battle of Nigotia". As well as an old framed magazine front page. "Billionaire Sponsors Third World Country - Meet Nigotia's Savior"

Nearby is an "In Loving Memory" frame with a photo of Whitmore's younger brother, THEODORE, 40.

As Lynn makes her way through the room, she walks past a table with a new battle map on it, labeled "Langcrest vs. Sanork". MAXWELL, 30's, new money, and NICK, 40's, thinks his self-made fortune makes him better than everyone else, are reviewing it.

NICK

If we have to do a raffle instead of the draft, we should at least get to change the team order.

MAX

You're just upset that your team isn't up first.

NICK

Aren't you?

Lynn leaves passing as Thomas Whitmore enters locking eyes with her until she breaks eye contact. He's 65 now. Charismatic yet selfish. There's something untamed behind his eyes.

Again we follow her...

INT. HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

As she runs into BENJAMIN WHITE, late 50's, butler, leaving the bathroom while wiping his mouth with a kerchief.

This once-strong man is a pale and nervous-looking mess. The kind of frightened nerves that bubble up no matter how hard you push them away.

Behind them is a photo of Theodore and Claire, both in their 30's, from when they were a married couple. Whitmore is next to them smiling, but his eyes tell a story of jealousy and contempt.

LYNN

They're back at it.

They walk together.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Several people are cooking, mixing drinks, etc... Despite the chaos, the workers are silent. Whitmore likes a quiet house.

LYNN

Want me to go out there?

He shakes his head and grabs an empty silver tray from the counter.

BEN

I need something to do.

He leaves the room.

Another server, AMBER, 22, kind but naïve, approaches Lynn. The two speak warily in hushed tones.

AMBER

He still worried about his son?

LYNN

Wouldn't you be?

She would.

AMBER

Mr. Whitmore gave him his word though, right? That he'd put him on a team that doesn't play yet?

LYNN

Do you really think he'll rig the raffle in favor of his butler?

EXT. WHITMORE BACKYARD - DAY

The guests are seated and Whitmore is back at hosting the raffle. There are only a handful of names left to draw.

WHITMORE
- Roy Dugigh.

Some guests are intrigued and look for the card in their deck while others don't care.

Benjamin makes his way through the rows of guests with twenty single-sized wooden cigar boxes on a silver platter - each guest taking one.

Two of the guests in quiet conversation- MARK RIED, mid 40s, thinks money is the answer to everything, and BILL LANGCREST, 42, laid back- take a cigar box without even looking at Benjamin.

MARK
This egalitarian raffle is killing me. Half the guys I work with are going to other teams.

BILL
But you never could have picked up Whitmore's son during a regular trade either.

As Benjamin continues down the line DONALD, British, 70s, takes a cigar box and then takes hold of Benjamin's arm, pulling him to his level.

DONALD
Thanks, old chap. So, Langcrest or Sanork, whose your choice for the opener?

BENJAMIN
Oh, I -

WHITMORE (O.S.)
Alexander Russel to Drassgark Industries.

Donald has a realization.

DONALD
Of course it's Whitmore, you work for him.

Benjamin nods in agreement wanting to get out of this conversation.

DONALD (CONT'D)
 Too bad your guys closed out the
 season. When do you play again?

Polite very forced smile by Benjamin

BENJAMIN
 I'm not positive.

Donald, pleased with their conversation, lets Benjamin go.

Benjamin continues along the aisles and comes up to Maxwell
 as he is examining the Alexander Russel card.

These decks of cards aren't normal playing cards, rather they
 are custom trading cards. Extravagant but with a 'cold war
 meets *Streets of Rage*' twist.

The front of each card has a picture of a specific soldier
 and his position. Alexander is a sniper.

The back has each soldier's most recent stats listed.

Alexander's stats are --

Kills: 10

Injuries 3

Hand to hand combat: Level 2

Speed: Level 1

Obedience: 9/10

Battles fought in: 1

This is the first time Benjamin has actually seen the cards
 and he is taken aback by them, stopping in his tracks -
 everything else an inaudible blur.

Until he overhears part of MAN C and MAN D's conversation.

MAN C
 - lose an eye?

MAN D shakes his head.

MAN D
 You're thinking of Lewis Caplan.

MAN C
 You sure?

MAN D

Think they'd still keep him on as a sniper with one eye?

Man C laughs. This is grotesque but only to Benjamin.

WHITMORE (O.S.)

It looks like Ethan Vaughn is going to Langcrest.

Benjamin quickly continues passing out the cigar boxes, listening to these conversations is making him sick.

He finally makes his way to Whitmore and discreetly places the last cigar box on the table.

WHITMORE (CONT'D)

Thank you, Mr. White

Benjamin meets Amber behind the chairs where they wait for their next task.

Whitmore takes out the second to last piece of paper and opens it.

WHITMORE (CONT'D)

Bishop and Smith, I think you'll be quite happy with Winston Miller.

There is only one piece of paper left and Benjamin feels the weight of it like a ton of bricks.

WHITMORE (CONT'D)

Before we finish today, I want to thank you all for your generosity. Raffle years like this one make it possible for our newer Marshalls to build valuable experience and powerful teams.

Benjamin is waiting on bated breath. Amber looks over sympathetically at him.

Whitmore takes the last slip of paper out and opens it.

WHITMORE (CONT'D)

Before I forget, I see that you all have your cigars.

This is torture on Benjamin and Whitmore knows it.

WHITMORE (CONT'D)

Please feel free to join me in The Quarter Lounge.

(MORE)

WHITMORE (CONT'D)

Where we will be reviewing some highlights from the last thirteen years.

He motions to it. Some of his servants are setting up a projector and screen.

WHITMORE (CONT'D)

And for the last teammate of the raffle, we have Christopher White. It looks like he is going to...

Whitmore glances down at a sheet of paper. Smiles at Benjamin.

WHITMORE (CONT'D)

Sanork. Congratulations, Mark. I'm sure he'll be a valuable addition to your team.

The crowd gets up. Some mingle and some head directly to claim their seat in The Quarter Lounge.

Benjamin stands there trying to suppress the wave of emotions he's feeling. Planning and grieving simultaneously.

Amber longs to say something, wants to help, but doesn't know how. Finally, she tears away, as Lynn approaches, a silver platter of hors d'oeuvres in her hand.

LYNN

Well?

AMBER

Sanork.

Amber hurries off as Lynn touches Benjamin's arm.

LYNN

We'll figure this out.

Benjamin suddenly strides off and heads towards Whitmore who is chatting with Mark and Bill.

BILL

The secret to getting your team past their customs is-

BENJAMIN

Mr. Whitmore, sir. If I could have a moment.

Whitmore is surprised by Benjamin's boldness and takes a few steps away from Bill and Mark- though they are still in earshot.

WHITMORE
What is it, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN
I'd like to take my son's place.

Whitmore is impressed...

WHITMORE
Well this is a first.

...But he recovers quickly.

WHITMORE (CONT'D)
Especially because no one is forcing your son to be a part of this. He did join on his own freewill, did he not? Something about money, a new baby?

Benjamin is humiliated and infuriated at the same time

BENJAMIN
Yes, sir.

Whitmore thinks for a moment.

WHITMORE
I'll allow it...

A moment of restrained relief for Benjamin.

WHITMORE (CONT'D)
If Mr. Reid agrees.

Whitmore motions for Benjamin to approach Mark.

MARK
I couldn't help but overhear your offer. Quite noble.

Mark puts his arm around Benjamin and leads him away.

MARK (CONT'D)
Let's talk.

As they walk away, Mark looks over his shoulder and grins deviously at Whitmore.

FADE OUT.