

Lucky

Dave worked as the janitor for the local high school. He was the only one, and as he wasn't able to clean much during school hours, he worked long shifts into the late evening. He figured, since the school barely paid him anything, they could surely afford to hire another janitor or two? But, he admitted, being the only one allowed him to play his favorite music on full blast, without anyone to tell him to stop.

He had just finished one such shift and was walking back to his beat-up, old car when he spotted something glinting in the fading sunlight, out of the corner of his eye. Upon further inspection, he found it to be a penny, a lucky one at that, heads-up on the ground. He picked it up and held it up in the sunlight. Pretty. He slipped it into his pocket and got into his car. Driving away, he noticed he was running low on gas, so he pulled into the gas station that was near the school, less than five minutes away. He went inside, resolving to purchase a scratch ticket, as he often did. He had never, and didn't expect to, win any more than twenty bucks. Behind the counter was a bored-looking teenager, who Dave buys some gas and a five-dollar scratch ticket from.

Stepping back outside, he fills up his tank and scratches the ticket, once he's back in the car. As the numbers are revealed one by one, the tension grows, until the final number is scratched off. A flicker of excitement: a winner. Hurriedly, he scratches off the prize. To his complete and utter astonishment, he's won ten *thousand* dollars. Quickly, he steps back out of the car and hurries inside to redeem the ticket. The attendant looks somewhat surprised, as he rings in the number to confirm his winnings. He explains to Dave that it is indeed a winner, but he'll have to go to the Lottery Commission in order to claim his winnings. He nods and pockets the ticket. He'll go tomorrow. What luck! Feeling the high of winning such a large sum of money, he notices the current lottery prize on a glowing display above him. Wouldn't that be something? He buys a ticket, for the hell of it. The drawing is tomorrow. He returns home, and goes to bed, planning to go to the Lottery Commission tomorrow, a Saturday.

That night, he had wild dreams, of winning the lottery, becoming rich and famous and powerful. Never having to clean another toilet or mop another floor. He wakes up early and checks his phone for directions to the Commission. He drives his beat-up car over there, about an hour's drive away. He parks his car, but before he walks in, he spots a news truck parked outside. Setup in the lot is a woman talking into a microphone, with a man pointing a camera at her. She looks around, and spotting him, she exclaims: "Excuse me, sir! A moment of your time!" Begrudgingly, Dave walks over to her. "Tell us, as a member of the public, what's your opinion of the current era of politics?"

He thinks for a moment, before telling her, "Well, I'm not too happy with the current state of things. I think the President is doing a poor job of things, and ought to be replaced, ASAP."

She nods thoughtfully, "Well-spoken, thank you. Your name?"

"Dave."

"Thank you, Dave." She turns back to the camera, and Dave turns away and heads inside.

Inside, Dave sees a young woman, quite pretty, sitting behind a counter. He goes up to her, introduces himself, and hands her the ticket. She seems a little shy, but she cashes his ticket all the same, handing him an envelope with the money in it after a minute or two. She also slips a piece of paper into his hands at the same time. Her number? She blushes. He does too, a little bit, and leaves quickly. Returning to his car, he thinks to look up the lottery numbers that were drawn last night. He checks social media first, for no particular reason, only for his face to be the first thing he sees. It's a clip from his live news appearance. Apparently, there are many, millions even, who think the same. There's a bunch of people commenting on how they should remove the President from office, by force if necessary. Crazy stuff. He looks up the winning lottery numbers, cross-referencing them with his bought ticket. Wouldn't it be something, he thinks. The first number is a match. So are the second, and the third, fourth, and fifth. He won. He screams out loud, ecstatic about how much money he won. What now?

He looks at the back of his ticket, finding a number to call about jackpot winnings. They tell him to meet at their headquarters. He starts the car, and turns on the radio, to listen to the news as he drives there.

A woman. "This just in, it seems like a mob of people is storming the White House. Thousands of people! Police are arriving at the scene. But wait, they're joining the mob, not stopping them! Maybe they're onto something... I'll be right back!"

A man now. "Damn, that guy was right. We have to take back what's ours. Get this country away from the cowards and the capitalists. Put someone in power who knows what's what. Like Dave. Everyone, join the cause! Take the Capitol! And find Dave!" Footsteps, as he leaves the radio station.

Dave pulls over, astounded by what he's just heard. Because of something he said? Outside the car, a woman yells excitedly. "There he is! It's Dave!" She calls someone on her phone, and within seconds, his car is surrounded by a swarm of... fans? A school bus pulls over, and he hears the driver, "Alright, everybody out. Our President needs his chariot!" A group of middle-schoolers swiftly get off.

This is the moment, Dave. You can open up the car door, and give yourself to the people, an apparent symbol of all that is just and true in this world. Or, you can crush their spirits, tell them it's all been a big misunderstanding, you never wanted all this, please just go home. *What do you do, Dave?*

Dave opens the door and walks towards the bus. His followers climb aboard with him, and a road trip to DC ensues. What a string of occurrences that lead him here, to this place! How lucky would he have had to have been? Or, is he really lucky at all? Perhaps in a month, or a year, or a decade from now, he will long for the day when all he had to worry about was a plunger and a mop.