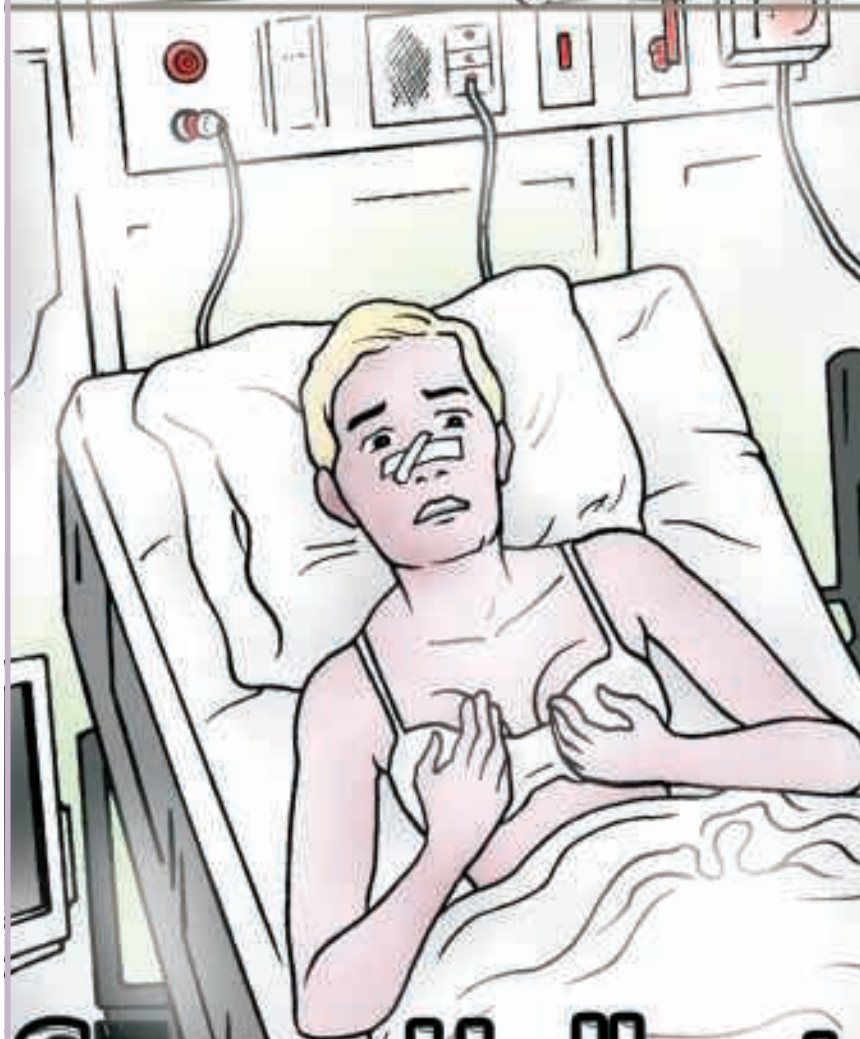


# The Winning Ticket



## Susan Hulbert



A "Her TV" Novel



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For information address  
Reluctant Press  
P.O. Box 5829  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413  
USA

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# The Winning Ticket

**By Susan Hulbert.**

“Michael, could you come here for a moment?”

Michael heard his wife’s call; no please, just a command. He guessed he was in trouble again.

It was that sort of relationship. Louisa was always a challenge to him, and he thought that he’d fought hard to get her. She was a few years older and light years more sophisticated than he was. He wondered who had trapped who but, as time went by, he knew that Louisa had chosen him.

He never knew what attracted her to him and why she agreed to marry him remained a mystery. It had always been a relationship that she drove. After all, she was the one who picked him up rather than the other way round. She told him where he was to take her and it was she who told him they were getting married.

She was effortlessly successful, chic, and beautiful. Nothing slowed her down and if she decided on anything, then that was always the way it had to be.

Gradually, Louisa had taken over all the big decisions in their lives. Michael felt guilty that his income wasn't up to her level but she didn't seem to mind and they did well enough to be comfortable through the ups and downs of the economy.

She said that they'd started as equals, but as Louisa's income and status had grown, Michael's "work from home" electronics income had stagnated.

"Have you seen this?" Louisa held out a sheaf of papers. "It just came in the mail."

"Err... no." Michael saw her expression and didn't think this was going to go well. "What is it?"

"It says you've won a lottery." Louisa put her hands on her hips, waiting for a reply.

"Well, that must be good news," he suggested.

"It's a lottery for cosmetic surgery, for breast implants." She stood, challenging him to answer.

"Oh," he said, turning a bright shade of red.

"What's more, the tickets cost a hundred dollars each." Louisa looked at him. "Since when did you have a spare hundred dollars and who did you think wanted cosmetic surgery in the first place?"

"It seemed like a good idea," Michael replied. "I was out with the boys and we all bought a ticket."

"I'll bet you were all a little over-served and that there was some leggy blonde with big breasts who enticed you into parting with good money for no good reason."

"It wasn't like that," Michael replied.

"Tell me what it was like then." Louisa's anger was mounting. "Did the old lady in the library sell the ticket?"

"I don't remember," Michael replied. "It's all so long ago, and it's a bit hazy."

“I’ll bet it is,” Louisa snapped.

“There’s no harm done,” Michael replied. “Anyway, who’d have thought that the ticket would win anyway? We never win.”

“But you did this time,” Louisa replied. “And at the cost of a hundred we didn’t have to spare.”

“All the guys were doing it,” Michael said.

“And you didn’t have the sense to leave it alone. You had to be one of the guys.”

“I guess...” Michael started but Louisa sighed, turned away, and went into her den.

“I’ll ask if there’s a cash alternative,” she said as the door slammed.

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“Guess what,” Louisa came back, angrier than ever. “There is no cash alternative and the prize is awarded to the holder of the winning ticket only.”

“So *you* could have the surgery.” Michael was glad that he was sitting on the opposite side of the table from her.

“No. Not now, not ever,” Louise said emphatically. “But it gets better.”

“Better?” Michael asked.

“Just listen,” Louisa said, walking round the table and stroking the back of his neck. “You are the holder of the winning ticket, not me. Your name is on the stub.”

“I’m sure they’d transfer it to you.”

“But I don’t want it,” Louisa replied. “Get that understood.”

“Okay, so we let it lapse, do nothing.”

“Oh no, you don’t get away with it that easy.” Louisa smiled a rather evil sort of smile.

The hairs on the back of Michael’s neck stood on end as she glared at him.

“The winner has to take part in publicity for the clinic, specifically in before and after photos, and will be paid for a minimum period of twelve months to undertake at least twelve personal appearances at a place and time to be determined by the sponsors.”

“Are you sure that you don’t want...”

“Quite sure, and don’t interrupt me,” Louisa said. “These personal appearances will be paid at the rate of five thousand dollars each, plus expenses and accommodation for the winner and partner at prestigious locations.”

“So, are you still sure...”

“That’s sixty thousand, plus expenses. I bet you’ll be able to pull some more money in too; personal appearances, chat shows and that kind of thing.”

“That’s a lot of money,” Michael agreed.

“But it’s only available to the purchaser of the winning ticket.” Louisa started at him. “And that’s you. So get ready for your own pair of snuggle bunnies.”

“But I’ll be known as the guy with the breasts,” Michael protested in horror at the realisation.

“Better than being known as Michael who got dumped by an angry wife, then went bankrupt,” Louisa replied. “That kind of money could set us up comfortably for a while.”

“I know, but think of the cost,” Michael pleaded.

“Shut up and let me think about this.” Louisa smiled to herself. “I have an idea. I’m going to call them back.”

“Are you going to tell...?” But Michael was talking to thin air as she’d gone back to her office.

Michael took a deep breath and prepared himself for a few nights in the spare room if he was lucky. If he was unlucky, he’d have to make do with the old chair in his electronics workshop.

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“We may have a solution,” Louisa announced when she came back to speak to him a couple of hours later. “Let’s face it. That money would come in really handy. We could pay off some loans and maybe have enough left over for a car or a holiday.”

“But you said you wouldn’t,” Michael said.

“I did and I haven’t changed my mind,” she replied. “You won the prize fair and square. I’ve explained and told them that you’d accept it along with all their conditions.”

“*I’d* accept?” Michael said and stood with his mouth hanging open in shock.

“That’s what I said,” Louisa replied.

“But I can’t.”

“You can and you will,” she said. “You work from home most of the time and probably could do everything online anyway.”

“But men don’t have breast implants,” Michael said.

“Maybe there aren’t that many,” Louisa replied. “But I know one who’s going to get them and like it, at least for the time it takes to get the money.”

“Lou, please. I can’t.” Michael looked for an escape.



“Why not?” Louisa was in no mood for compromise. “You were ready to see me with big boobs on my chest. You can try them and learn how it feels.”

“That’s awful,” Michael tried again.

“It can’t be that awful,” Louisa replied. Anyway, you were prepared for me to be the one ogled and pawed. Now you can find out what it’s like to be an object.”

“You’d never be an object.” Michael tried to calm things down.

“You can tell me how it goes,” she replied. “We girls often feel we’re being ignored while men speak to our chests and don’t really listen to any replies.”

“You can always cover them up,” Michael said weakly.

“Okay, *you* can cover them up,” Louisa said. “Then you can tell me how successful that’s been at the end of the twelve months.”

“But Lou...”

“No buts. I’ve arranged for the first consultation to be tomorrow morning, so I suggest you get some beauty sleep tonight.” Louisa smiled sweetly. “I think I’m going to enjoy this.”

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“You’re not going to make me go through with this, are you?” Michael pleaded next morning.

“Of course I am,” Louisa replied. “You chose to waste the hundred dollars without my permission. Now that you’ve a chance to earn a few thousand, I expect you do so.”

“But...”

“No buts about it,” Louisa replied. “You’re going through with this and you’re going to look happy

about it. A happy employee is what they want and that's what they're going to get. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes dear." Michael quailed at the thought of getting further into trouble.

"You could always pretend to be a real girl, instead of a guy with breasts." Louisa grinned as she said it.

"I couldn't do that."

"I'm sure the clinic would love the publicity that would bring. I must ask them about it. Maybe they'd pay more if they thought you were serious about turning into a girl." Louisa looked thoughtful. "It might be really exciting to see you learning about the problems we girls have every day."

"Problems? I didn't know you had problems."

"Of course I do. Every girl does unless she's totally unattractive. It's the penalty for having breasts and, I suppose, dressing nicely to look our best. We do it for ourselves, you know. It's not because we want to impress the men, or to be eye candy."

"I didn't know you felt so strongly," Michael replied. "I don't treat you like that, do I?"

"I wouldn't let you," Louisa said. "You know who wears the trousers in this marriage, and it's not you."

"I've always tried to support you." Michael was surprised by the vehemence of her reply.

"I know you have." Louisa smiled. "And this is one more way you can show your support. And you'll learn all about carrying this weight on your chest."

"Yes, Dear."

"I know you've always been a breast man," Louisa said in a softer tone. "Just think what fun you'll have when you have your own."

"Yes, Dear."

Michael decided that it was easier to agree than argue. He could work on changing her decision later. Right now, he dare not say anything more to annoy her.

"I've arranged for your first appointment later this week," Louisa called as she left the room. "I'll take a day off and drive you there myself."

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"I'm really scared about this," Michael whispered as he lay next to his wife. "I can't sleep."

"It's really nothing to worry about." Louisa wrapped her arms around him. "If you can't sleep, I can think of something that might help."

She coiled around him and before he knew it, she was straddling him. He felt himself rising.

"Not with that," she said. "Not yet. Use your tongue, like I taught you."

Michael shuffled across the bed and got into position.

"Like this?" he asked.

"Like that." Louisa sighed. "This is so relaxing. Remember when we first used to do this?"

Michael nodded, hoping she would recognise the movement. He couldn't speak right then.

"It was awful," Louisa said. "You got quite good at finding the right spot, but your chin was like sandpaper."

"You had me get it all lasered away." Michael came up for air.

"And you didn't want to do that at all." Louisa pushed gently down again so that his tongue could reach further. "You said it would be the end of your masculinity, silly boy."

Michael shook his head, hoping again that she'd recognise the movement.

"Then when you were all smooth, with no more wicked whiskers getting in the way, we really started to enjoy ourselves." Louisa's breaths were coming noisier with every thrust of his tongue. "I think your breasts will be like that."

"How so?" Michael came up for air with some urgency in his voice.

"You'll hate it at first, then when you and I have had time to play with them, you'll love them." Louisa shuddered in a way that Michael recognised.

There wasn't much talking after that.

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"I don't want to hear any arguments," Louisa said as they got into the car. "You will go to the clinic. You will consent to everything and you will do your level best to do whatever they want. Remember how much is on offer."

"Yes, Dear," Michael replied. "I'm so scared though. I don't want to be a freak."

"If you're a freak, then you're *my* freak," Louisa replied. "I suppose I should be pleased that you've got this opportunity to earn so much. It could solve a lot of problems."

"I know, but you're not the one..."

"Stop moaning," Louisa said firmly. "We're here. I want you to be excited and positive about everything. Don't let me down."

Michael looked at her. "I'll do whatever you want me to do."

"That's my boy." Louisa pulled into a space and switched off the car's engine. "Or maybe I should say

that's my *girl*." She giggled, trying to lighten the mood. "Come on. It's going to be fun."

Michael said nothing, allowing her to take his hand and almost pull him along towards the entrance.

Michael was surprised how routine it all seemed. It was like his last insurance medical. Heart, lungs, blood pressure were all checked. A blood sample and a urine sample followed before he even saw a doctor.

"Good afternoon." The doctor breezed in, cheerful and slim, with an air of no-nonsense competence about her. "I should offer congratulations on being the lucky winner of this lottery." He looked at Louisa.

"It's not me; it's him," she said, indicating Michael who blushed fiercely.

"Oh, that's very brave." The doctor's eyes turned to Michael. "Have you always wanted breast implants?"

"He won the prize and it's non-transferrable." Michael tried to speak, but Louisa spoke for him. "I decided that he should go ahead. The money on offer for personal appearances was far too good to turn down."

"I can imagine," the doctor replied.

"Have you done this sort of thing before, Doctor?" Michael asked in a small voice.

"Of course; it's what we do here, along with noses and a few other cosmetic procedures." The doctor looked him in the eye. "I'm really looking forward to operating on you, though."

"Why would you say that?" Louisa asked.

"I don't get many chances to do breast augmentation surgery on men," she replied, ignoring Michael as she warmed to Louisa. "It's quite a change and a bit of a challenge."

"I'm happy to be bringing you a new experience." Michael's sarcasm was lost.

"What size were you expecting to achieve?" she asked Louisa.

"I hadn't really thought about that," she replied. "It needs to be proportionate but something he can't really hide."

"Perhaps a modest cup size and a more natural profile would be easier for him," the doctor suggested. "We have to be constrained by the elasticity of his skin."

"I'm sure the promoters of this project will have their own ideas," Louisa said.

"Yes, and they're quite specific. They require a noticeable change in breast size."

"That won't be a problem," Michael added grumpily.

The doctor stared at him. "I took the liberty of contacting the lottery organisers and I'm aware of their requirements. They need a good before and after photograph, and an attractive display of breast for personal appearances."

"This is me you're talking about," Michael interrupted. "What about asking what *I* want?"

"What you want was apparent when you bought the ticket," Louisa said. "Your choice was made then. Now shut up and listen." She turned to the doctor. "Of course, we'll rely upon your advice," she said. "When do you want him in surgery?"

"Assuming all the tests come back as they should, next Monday morning would be good. He should come in on Sunday evening for the pre-med, and he should be back home with you before weekend."

"That's excellent, isn't it, Michael?" Louisa's look of triumph shocked Michael.

“Yes, of course, Dear,” he mumbled in shock.

He realised it was really going to happen.

The rest of the day was spent at a photographer’s studio. Michael was photographed from all directions, with close-ups galore. He was dressed formally and then casually, in swim shorts and to his dismay, naked.

I feel like a piece of meat,” he mumbled.

“Get used to it.” Louisa’s patience was wearing thin and he knew he’d lost.

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Sunday evening and Michael was back in the clinic. It was such a slick process. He took the tablets he was offered without asking what they were for and then before he knew it, he was dressed in a hospital gown and lying on a bed.

“I feel spacey.” He rubbed his forehead and tried to focus on his surroundings.

“Don’t worry, that’s what you’re meant to feel.” Louisa squeezed his hand. “Just relax and it’s all going to be over soon.”

Michael wanted to protest. He felt a panic and knew he should stand up and get out of here, but at that moment, his body wouldn’t do anything. He didn’t sleep, but he didn’t stay really alert. Before he knew it, the dawn was breaking.

Distant sounds told him that the clinic was coming to life that Monday morning. A nurse in scrubs bustled in and started taking his temperature and blood pressure once more.

There was a scratch on the back of his hand; he tried to look and find out why. He felt a warm glow and everything was slipping away. The voices were

echoing and a rainbow of bright colours seemed to slide across his vision.

A drip was attached to the cannula in his hand – for that’s what it was – and slowly the warmth took him and his mind floated away into dreamless oblivion.

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“I must fight it.” He started to come round and tried to swing his body off the bed, but he was too weak. “I don’t want this.”

“Lie still and try to relax. It’s all over and you’re in recovery.” A nurse in uniform came into his view. “It’s all right. Things will seem normal in a few minutes.”

Michael lay back as the mists cleared. “This can’t be real.”

He felt the dressings across his chest, and winced at the bruising. “It hurts,” he gasped.

Then he realised that there were dressings on his face and over his nose. He started to explore them with his free hand.

“I’ll give you something for that.” The nurse injected something into the cannula and again, Michael drifted away.

Sometime later, Michael’s senses returned to find Louisa sitting beside his bed. She saw that he was awake and stood over him.

“It’s all done,” she said. “Isn’t it exciting? I know you can’t see anything right now, but in a few days you’ll see what lovely breasts you’ve got.”

“I can’t feel anything,” Michael whispered. “And why are there dressings over my nose?”

Louisa thought quickly. “You had a bad nose bleed in surgery and they had to plug it to stop cross contamination.”



She didn't want to tell him that his nose had been contoured to make it more feminine. The sponsors wanted really attractive "after" pictures and had paid well to make it happen.

"These dressings are very tight," Michael complained.

"That's to keep everything secure while your body adjusts," Louise replied. "You'll feel better in a week or two when the bruising has gone down and you can wear a normal bra."

"A bra?" Michael asked, still a little drowsy. "Men don't wear a bra."

"But *you* do from now on," Louisa said. "You'll find it's much more comfortable."

"I'm not doing that." His voice became stronger.

"Of course you are," Louisa told him. "Going braless isn't a good idea, and I'm sure Doctor will tell you that you need one to hold everything in place, at least for the first few weeks."

"Tell me that it's all a joke," Michael pleaded. "Tell me that I'm dreaming all this."

"It's real." Louisa's hand touched his chest gently. "I'm so excited. I can't wait to see what your breasts look like."

"It's time for him to rest now," the nurse interrupted. "I've got his medication. You can come back tomorrow when everything will be easier."

"How can it be easier?" Michael asked bitterly.

"Oh, it can," the nurse replied. "Most people have some doubts at this stage. When morning comes, it will all seem very different."

"And how," Michael said as he surrendered to the medication once more.