

Powerballs: Be Careful What You Wish For

Jimmy Clifton

Michael T. Hayes

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In the satirical novel Powerballs, an unhappy couple experiences the pleasure of sudden wealth—but their fortunes have a sharp edge.

A troubled couple becomes even more troubled after they buy a billion-dollar lottery ticket in Jimmy Clifton's thriller *Powerballs*.

Henry and Rose are a strained couple: he is about to lose his hated but much-needed job, and she is looking for a way out of their stale, passionless marriage. Both dream of what they would do with a sudden windfall, but they are still unprepared when the lottery makes them billionaires overnight. Floundering through the strange, exhilarating world of the super rich, they do everything that they think rich people are supposed to do—and soon find themselves in trouble so deep that not even their new fortune can buy their way out.

The money goes to Henry and Rose's heads before it even hits their bank accounts. After an explosive argument, they retreat to separate corners of the globe. Their new locations are described in exciting ways, full of beauty, intrigue, and romance. But even at the height of their adventures, Henry and Rose find that windfalls attract the attention of people whom it would be better to avoid. Henry ends up as the enforced "best friend for life" of a boisterous Russian yacht owner, while Rose's romance with a handsome polo player brings her into dangerous proximity with a notorious Colombian drug lord. The couple's closest ally is Carter, who has been hired to keep tabs on Henry, and who is in money-related trouble of his own.

As the couple meets with a series of outrageous obstacles, they prove to be too wrapped up in their own problems, and too naïve about their dangerous new realities, to properly react. And while Henry and Rose meet a bevy of people with their own agendas, and danger and the thrill of anticipation follow from these connections, some secondary characters, including Henry and Rose's poker-loving adult son, Zack, are underdeveloped and disappear by the book's final act; how their relationships with Henry and Rose might be impacted is unknown. A slur is used, and stereotypes are employed that make some of the book's developments predictable. Still, Henry and Rose's whirlwind of misadventures snowballs into an exciting, if tidy, climax that forces reevaluations of what they want—and who they want it with.

In the satirical novel *Powerballs*, an unhappy couple experiences the pleasure of sudden wealth—but their fortunes have a sharp edge.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (August 4, 2021)

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