

At the Awards Ceremony

By Daniel Hakimi

Click. And then, *flash.* The gluttons capture every image they can find of the men, in their suits, and the women, in their elegant gowns. The lights shine. Tensions rise, and fall, and rise, on the red carpet, before The Awards Ceremony.

The Distinguished Man, at the peak of his career, arrives, confident, strong. His wife, next to him, is the one who picked out his cufflinks. She is wearing a shawl, to maintain a hint of modesty, while still adhering to modern popular standards of beauty, and showing just the right amount of skin. He is distinguished, and prepared to win The Award. This is his time.

The Old Man, now, enters the scene. White shirt, no tie. The Old Man is laughing—of course; the Old Man is the crazy old man, and everybody loves the crazy old man. He cracks jokes for the reporters. He is a little rowdy now and then, but he never goes too far—he is a family-friendly debaucher.

He howls, now, as the Lady comes in, in her stunning red dress, with her red lips, and red hair, done up. She ignores him, and moves on with perfect poise. She smiles for the cameras and gives the reporters exactly what they want. She has them in the palm of her hand. Everything perfect, she has nothing to worry about.

And in comes the crowd pleaser, the Young Man. He has a beautiful girl of his own on his arm—blonde hair, large breasts. Probably just a one-night thing, right? How could a guy like that want to commit to one woman for any longer than a night? He's handsome, and debonair. He gives his date a ravenous kiss.

The Old Man, seeing this, curls his lips upward, in a nice, big, toothy smile. His eyes squint, holding back an underlying anger. He is a good actor, and nobody can tell his disgust in the Young Man. *He doesn't have any respect. He can't even act well. They just think he's fun to watch. But they don't know any better. I'll get my due from The Committee.* The Old Man does not consider the fact that his movie actually sold better than the Young Man's, to those poor plebeians whose wills no longer matter. If they prefer explosions and computer graphic imagery over good acting, their opinions must be invalid, despite their strength in numbers.

You see, the Old Man never does stupid movies like *Action and More Action* or *Your Favorite Superhero 3: Witty Subtitle*. The lowest he's gone is *Buddy Cops Go Against the Rules*, and back when he did it, it was original. The Distinguished Man prides himself on never having stepped too far from a serious dramatic work, even though they all know that comedy is more

difficult—especially the Lady, who can barely string together a joke. Well, at least she’s never sold a movie by wearing a skimpy outfit—well, except for that time in *Passionate Killer Mystery*, but that doesn’t count.

And, so, here, at The Awards Ceremony, comes the decision that does matter. *When they pick me, I will finally be validated.* Each one of them knows this; each one knows that he will win, and each one knows that he will find value in this—in the opinion of The Committee. They know movies better than anybody else, and *they will pick me.*

They sit down in the auditorium. The Old Man sits on the back of his chair, at first, with a superior look on his face, before sitting down properly, and laughing at his own bit of large, physical humor. The Distinguished Man pretends to be nervous, and his wife takes his hands in a comforting way. They get close, to satisfy the sensibilities of the American family. The Lady, meanwhile, is satisfying those, and, at the same time, the sensibilities of the 13-year-old boy. Whereas the Young Man is nibbling on his sweet young thing, pretending to be ignorant of the cameras around him.

The lights dim, the drum rolls, and they sit at attention. Each of the lesser awards comes and goes. Sometimes, people win. More often than not, people lose, and are stuck clapping for the people they lost to. Slowly, the final award of the night approaches.

This is all that matters. The fans don’t matter. The critics don’t matter. The box office doesn’t matter. It’s The Committee. It’s their opinion. It’s their vote. It’s their Award.

They give it to the Old Man. He walks on stage, pretending to be only a little bit more feeble than he is. The others clap as he takes his time—what feels like ages. He pulls what seems to be a small acceptance speech out of his jacket, and opens his mouth to speak, before pretending to sneeze into the speech. And then, he pretends to ad-lib the real speech he planned, the one he rehearsed fifty times, but still not enough. The crowd laughed. He ended the speech, though, with a serious, touching note. After he is done with the claims that he did not deserve it, he thanks the fans who love him so much.

I can’t believe it. This was my year! The Distinguished man does not know that this is the peak of his career. He planned on winning this year, and a few more to come. *His movie was okay. Mine was a masterpiece! Those hacks. I’ll show them. I’ll make a movie that will make them cry.* He holds his wife tightly, in his outrage. “Maybe next year,” he says to a reporter. *Maybe next year, those damn critics will open their eyes and see who deserved to win.*

The Lady smiles a graceful smile, and then pouts, trying to find just the right face, and fighting the urge to turn up her nose. *That pig won? That hack beat me? Hah. That’s rich. They’ll forget about him.* They don’t. *But they’ll never forget me.* They already have.

Still pure, the Young Man is the only one who acknowledges that he has been beaten. *Wow, that guy is just great. I went up against that?* He feels a deep pride to be in the same room as the Old Man. He goes home, and drops off his girlfriend. They will be engaged to be married in just a couple of weeks. They will live a happy life together, until he, too, inevitably feels that he deserves an award.

No medal, nor certificate, nor ribbon, nor trophy, will ever mean anything in comparison to the absolute value of your work – it is immeasurable. Take solace in that fact. And, at the awards ceremony, when they announce the name of The Winner—even if it isn't yours—smile.