

The Vote

Written by

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Logline: Five girls selected by a dystopian council must decide which OF them is most worthy of their country's affection and which won't live another day.

INT. AN OFFICE IN MONTE VE LEERS- DAY

Five girls sit in a line. Each wearing a fancy, unique monochrome outfit one red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. HANK (50s) sits across from them in an all black suit.

HANK

Congratulations. The board deemed you each worthy of being the new Darlings of Monte VeLeers.

The girls look at each other excitedly. ROSALIE (19, wearing all red, wealthy and never lost anything in her life) speaks.

ROSALIE

I thought there were only three Darlings of Monte VeLeers a decade?

HANK

That is correct.

Some he girls look confused now. YVETTE (18, wears all yellow to match her hair, a beauty queen) speaks out.

YVETTE

But there's five of us here.

HANK

This is where the fun happens, ladies. Every decade the council announces every possible candidate. There's no maximum number of selected girls because more than three might be worthy. But yes, only three will actually become a Darling.

GENEVIEVE (18, wearing all green, desperate and impulsive).

GENEVIEVE

Which three?

HANK

That's up to you.

REESE

You have to explain.

HANK

You ladies will have an hour to decide which among you are fit to be Darling.

GENEVIEVE

I thought the council already  
decided we were all fit.

HANK

They did. Each of you girls is  
eligible. But the council is aware  
that they do not see everything,  
and they have accounted for this.  
As peers, you guys will decide  
together which of you will hold the  
honor.

Briar (18, wears all blue, analytical and rebellious) raises  
her hand.

BRIAR

What happens to the other two?

OCTAVIA (18, wearing all orange, emotionally fragile) looks  
like she's going to cry. Briar turns to look at each of them.  
No one makes eye contact.

HANK

The three of you chosen will be  
announced Friday at the Darling  
Ceremony in the capital. I'm sure  
you're each too young to remember  
the last Darling's initiation, but  
it's quite fun. There will be a  
parade and a dinner and you will  
each get a hall in the castle, of  
course. Designed just for you,  
they're actually drawing up plans  
right now. So you guys better  
decide soon so they have time to  
paint.

BRIAR

What happens to the other two?

HANK

The world is so excited to meet you  
guys, really. Such beautiful and  
intelligent women are inspirational  
in times like these.

BRIAR

Sir.

Octavia is crying silently now.

OCTAVIA

"Candidates selected by the Council but not affirmed by peer consensus shall be classified as derelict. Such individuals, are determined to have compromised communal integrity and therefore relinquish all access to public life. While numerous applicants may satisfy baseline eligibility each decade, statistical testing confirms that no more than three women can serve as Darling's as anymore would dilute their status and affect."

Rosalie looks appalled. Briar's mouth drops. Yvette doesn't flinch, eyes glossed over. Genevieve looks over to Reese as if deciding how she should react. Octavia wipes her tears.

OCTAVIA (CONT'D)

My mother was a Darling. There were only three girls chosen by the council that year. She said it was rare for the council to find more than three.

HANK

That is true. The council only picked more once this past century. That year there were four. Penelope Highland. But, of course, you girls know the population rose while we were at peace. Next year there probably won't be as many.

He avoids eye contact and straightens some papers.

HANK (CONT'D)

You ladies should be honored the council saw so many perspective candidates.

His smile shows he doesn't believe it either.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

The girls each sit at a circular table inside a room with no art or windows. They're all silent. After a few moments, a countdown covers one of the walls. Counting down from 49 minutes by the second. Rosalie stands to address them.

ROSALIE

We shouldn't wait now just to rush  
it in the end.

BRIAR

We shouldn't have to at all.

OCTAVIA

It's the rules.

BRIAR

Fuck the rules.

The other girls all make eye contact with each other. Briar notices and chooses her next words more carefully.

BRIAR (CONT'D)

I just mean, the council's wrong.  
They can't do this to us. The rules  
are outdated. It's not like they  
still sacrifice the Darlings like  
they used to. Things can change.

OCTAVIA

They only stopped that because one  
of them got pregnant and they can't  
choose favorites.

YVETTE

We don't have a lot of time. There  
are no special circumstances here.

BRIAR

But we never would of agreed to  
apply for the selection if we knew  
there was a chance we'd get chosen  
and not voted in.

ROSALIE

We can't dwell on this now. We need  
to choose.

They shift uncomfortably. Octavia fiddles with her necklace.

OCTAVIA

Should we vote each other in or  
out?

GENEVIEVE

What?

OCTAVIA

Should we vote in who deserves it most? Or vote out who deserves it least?

YVETTE

I think who deserves it most.

GENEVIEVE

Well, we know who doesn't.

Everyone but Yvette looks away. She's searching for eye contact, but no one will give it.

YVETTE

Me? Why?

ROSALIE

Yvette, you're gorgeous, but Darlings are typically also-

YVETTE

Darlings are the most beautiful and intelligent women in the country. Don't dismiss me because I'm slightly less on one scale. I'm still the top of the other. Even if bottom of one I'd even out in the middle. Besides, Rosalie, you're only here because your family's wealth.

ROSALIE

At least wealth is earned and not based on luck and genetics.

YVETTE

Yeah, I'm sure you "earned" your father's oil company.

Rosalie storms over to Yvette when Octavia coughs loudly. Her bright orange sleeve contrasts starkly with new blood.

GENEVIEVE

Oh my Darling! Are you coughing up blood?

OCTAVIA

No.

BRIAR

That's black blood. You have Reynolds disease?

ROSALIE  
Isn't that deadly?

BRIAR  
Extremely. We need to get her to a  
hospital. Now.

Briar stands, but she's alone. Rosalie takes her place across from Yvette. Genevieve hovers for a second, then sits back down.

REESE  
No, but like, fatal? There's no  
cure.

Yvette catches on.

YVETTE  
Darlings serve 10 years...

Octavia shakes her head.

OCTAVIA  
No Darling has died during service.  
They have the best medicine in the  
world dedicated those in the  
palace.

YVETTE  
Is that why you applied?

ROSALIE  
Doesn't anyone else think it's a  
little weird she knew about this  
little rule and still applied?

YVETTE  
That's quite selfish. To apply only  
for the doctors favor.

ROSALIE  
To knowingly want to trade one of  
our healthy lives for yours?

OCTAVIA  
I DIDN'T KNOW THEY'D PICK FIVE.

ROSALIE  
I think... it might be fair if...  
you volunteered? You might not live  
anyways.

Octavia's panicking and coughs again. She sobs loudly.

OCTAVIA

No. I don't "volunteer". I'm a legacy!

Octavia stands up, pleading. Rosalie raises her hand. Yvette follows suit. Genevieve raises her hand quickly after doing the math. All four of them turn to Briar. She looks to Octavia to let her know she's sorry and raises her hand.

BRIAR

The rule doesn't say they'd kill us. Only that we can't go back.

The door bursts open, and two men in white soldiers uniforms enter. She tries to run, but there's nowhere to go. They drag her away as she screams. As soon as the door closes, a loud GUNSHOT is heard and her screams stops abruptly.

The girls jump when the timer announces "10 Minutes". Genevieve is sobbing now. Tears run down Briar's face.

ROSALIE

I don't suppose anyone else wants to volunteer?

Yvette smirks. Rosalie looks at her. The two reach an understanding. Briar and Genevieve catch it too.

GENEVIEVE

Briar doesn't even believe in the system!

BRIAR

Because it's a flawed system!

GENEVIEVE

The Darlings represent the system!

BRIAR

What if we don't pick?

ROSALIE

We have to.

BRIAR

But what if we don't?

"5 MINUTES." Genevieve raises her hand first. Rosalie and Yvette follow. The men in white appear. Screams. Another gunshot is heard.

The door opens and Hank stands with three giant bouquets. The remaining three are ushered away while grand music plays. They're horrified, but they each muster a smile anyways.