

THE CANDIDATE

Written by

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(AN EXCERPT)

LOGLINE: Fallon Grace (18), a young woman, is chosen as her cult community's annual Candidate, but she learns that her fate is not one of rumored luxury, but rather to die as their sacrifice.

INT. LEARNING CENTER - CAFETERIA - DAY

FALLON (18), a quiet, brunette wallflower, sits back into her chair. She has her lunch in front of her but has barely made a dent in it.

She and ANNALISE (18), a devout, optimistic blonde, sit next to each other at lunch. All of the 18 year old girls sit on one side, the 18 year old boys on the other.

ANNALISE

Fallon?

Fallon comes back from zoning out.

FALLON

Sorry...

Annalise, chewing, sets down her sandwich and swallows.

ANNALISE

Where have you been all day?

FALLON

Just... lost in thought I guess.
Everything's going to change
tomorrow. It's... weird.

ANNALISE

I know. Can you believe someone
from our year is going to be the
next Candidate tomorrow?

FALLON

(nodding towards Marianne)

Well, I don't think it's very hard
to guess who... She's been working
for the Elders the last year just
to get a leg up.

MARIANNE (18), a blonde, long-haired, beautiful young woman, is packing her things. Now wearing an added apron to her white, uniform dress, she grabs her back and begins to leave the cafeteria, while some of the young men from across the room stare at her in an obvious, hungry way.

ANNALISE

You're right. Those boys better
realize their gawking is pointless
sooner or later.

FALLON

From how much time she spends at the Elders' Chamber, she's basically the Candidate already. She probably gets all of those perks everyone talks about.

Fallon looks at the men across the room as they return their gazes amongst themselves after Marianne is out of sight. Her eyebrows furrow.

FALLON (CONT'D)

That's not really what I was talking about though. I mean, everyone else besides the Candidate... our routines will change. No more schooling, we'll have our assignments...

ANNALISE

(shrugging)

I'm kind of looking forward to it.

Fallon turns to her friend.

FALLON

Really?

ANNALISE

(nodding)

It's something new! Like, I really want to be assigned as a Housewife, though now that I think about it, I wouldn't mind being a Teacher, or Nurturer, I suppose. Plus, our husbands will be assigned, we get to start courting...!

Annalise looks straight ahead at the young men, Fallon looks down at her sandwich, debating whether or not to pick it up.

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

Ever wonder who yours might be?

Fallon meets the subjects of Annalise's eyes, staring at the young men that socialize before them.

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

(blushing)

I think Michael is really cute, I really want him. And Jacob's had his eyes on you... I mean, look!

JACOB (18) a tall, handsome brunette young man from across the room makes eye contact with Fallon, and he nods his head to greet her, smiling kindly.

Sheepish, Fallon looks down again, deciding to pick up her sandwich.

FALLON
(indifferent)
I haven't given it much thought.

She takes a bite.

INT. GRACE HOUSE - FALLON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Fallon combs her long, brown hair, looking into the mirror, her anxiety masked by a detached expression.

Dressed in her night gown, she sets down the hairbrush and looks at her reflection.

KATHARINE (O.S.)
(outside of the door)
Goodnight, Fallon!

Fallon's eyes widen and she hurries to bed, getting under the covers.

Her mother, KATHARINE (37), an older replica of her daughter, opens the door to find her in bed, pleased.

FALLON
(smiling)
Goodnight, Mother.

Katharine smiles at her daughter from the doorway.

KATHARINE
(elated)
Your father and I will be there tomorrow. Are you excited?

Fallon nods her head.

FALLON
Yes, Mother.

KATHARINE
Get your beauty rest, sweetheart.
Your future husband awaits!

Her mother winks, shutting the door.

Once the darkness falls again on Fallon's face, she frowns again, rubbing her hands over her face. She looks up at the ceiling, breathing in and out.

KATHARINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(outside of her room)
Goodnight again, Tommy!

TOMMY
(in his own room)
Goodnight, Mother!

Fallon thinks about Jacob for a moment, reminiscing of when he looked at her earlier. Her eyes are wide and strained.

A soft knock on her door takes her from her thoughts.

Fallon rises and checks the door. It's TOMMY (10) a short, dirty blonde young man, dressed in striped, blue pajamas, looking up at his older sister.

FALLON
(whisper)
Ready?

INT. GRACE HOUSE - TOMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Fallon lays down next to her brother on his bed, her brother cuddled close to her.

TOMMY
I'm sorry about making fun of you.

Fallon looks down at him with a brow raised.

FALLON
What do you mean?

TOMMY
When I told Annie what Mother said about you this morning. About the husband thing. I know you sleep in because you come here with me.

Fallon hugs her brother close.

FALLON
Don't feel bad, Tommy.

Tommy looks up at his big sister.

TOMMY
But Marianne said--

Fallon smiles slyly.

FALLON

When have I ever cared what she's said, hm? It's fine, Tommy, okay?

She kisses her brother's forehead and holds him closely. Tommy stares off for a moment, thinking.

TOMMY

Will we still get to do this, even when you get a husband? You have leave us. What if this is the last time?

Fallon's lips curve into a slight frown. Her brother looks stressed, as he tightens his grip on his sister's night gown.

She swallows thickly, blinks away any tears, and looks down at her brother assuringly.

FALLON

I'll sneak out of that house just to hug you to sleep every night if I have to.

Tommy sits up and looks back at her with worry.

TOMMY

But if you get Candidate, you can't-

FALLON

(jokingly)

You really think they'll make the girl who oversleeps the Candidate?

Tommy starts to smile a little, which brings Fallon relief.

Tommy returns to laying down at her side. They lay in the silence tomorrow.

TOMMY

I hope your husband is nice.

Fallon nods slowly, her smile withering away. Beat.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Do you know what job you might get?

FALLON

Tommy, it's time for bed--

TOMMY

Do you want to be a teacher?

Fallon sighs, knowing she won't get him to stop.

FALLON
You know how girls have less...
well, different options than boys?

Tommy nods.

FALLON (CONT'D)
Well, I don't know if I'm good at
any of them. And the ones I am
interested in... we don't get to
learn enough about them.

Tommy puts it together in his head.

TOMMY
Like how you help me on my math?

FALLON
Shhhh... Quiet down. You know you
can't ever tell Mother or Father.

TOMMY
I know.

Fallon rubs at her temples.

FALLON
(defeated)
I don't know what I'm good at.

Tommy attempts to comfort her, leaning upwards to give her a
kiss on the cheek.

TOMMY
I mean, I think you're pretty good
at nurturing. You nurture me...

Fallon smiles down at her brother and kisses his forehead.

FALLON
Thank you, Tommy.

They lay in silence for a bit.

TOMMY
(sleepily)
I think I wanna be a soldier in the
militia when I grow up.

FALLON
That so?

TOMMY

Yeah. Math's... too hard. And if
I'm a soldier, I can keep you safe.

Fallon's smile widens.

FALLON

You'd be the best soldier around.

Tommy begins to fall asleep, and Fallon stares up at the
ceiling, soaking in these quiet moments with her brother.