

RAINBOW ROWELL

Powerball odds don't play fair

I learned a fine lesson yesterday. Satan led me to the top of the mountain and showed me all the riches that could be mine. And what did I do?

I bought a Powerball ticket. I wasn't going to; I never have before. But the jackpot was up to \$100 million. One-hundred million clams. That's a whole lot of seafood.

You know what I could do with that much money? A lot. You know what I wouldn't do? Take my finals, come to work, send in rebates.

I knew my odds of winning were bleak — 30 kazillion to one. I knew I was more likely to get my own late night talk show than to win \$100 million.

But my bad luck is amazingly bad, so my amazing good luck should be kicking in any day now. Besides, someone has to win; so why not me?

I've been good. I've brushed my teeth and kept my room clean. I've tried to stay away from fried foods. I'd be a great kazillionaire.

I'd give lots of money to charity and I wouldn't marry Ivanah Trump or Tom Arnold. I wouldn't play polo.

So when everyone in the office was running down to U-Stop at 7:45 p.m. to buy a ticket, visions of expensive playthings danced in my head.

I caved. I forked over my dollar — a weighty portion of my paltry salary — and gathered around the television at 10 p.m.

And of course, I lost. Did I think I would be rewarded for my \$1 sin? I will never win. I could purchase every combination of numbers and still lose.

Powerball combines three things beyond my comprehension: balls, numbers and gambling.



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If it involves balls, I can't do it (get your mind out of the gutter unless you're thinking bowling). Pinballs, basketballs, ball bearings, you name it. A dodgeball almost knocked me unconscious in the fifth grade. (What sort of bizarre game makes you throw things at people, anyhow?)

As far as Powerball is concerned, I don't even know how it works. But at least there's no kicking, throwing or stupid uniforms involved.

And numbers? I took a class in probabilities in high school. I stopped trying midterm when even I could figure out I would "probably" fail.

When they announced the winning Powerball numbers, it took me a full four minutes to figure out if I had any (I did have one, I think). Numbers despise me. The number "19" once spit on my grandmother's grave.

And finally, the third dastardly element: gambling. Ever since I was a wee one, my mother taught me not to gamble. "Don't gamble," she said, "you really shouldn't gamble."

She made me feel guilty when I played with my grandma's Bingo chips (okay, so she didn't die). Besides Grandma, no one in my

family gambles. There are plenty of social alcoholics and people with eating disorders, — I even suspect that my cousin sniffs glue — but we're pretty high and mighty when it comes to gambling.

I know nothing about gambling. I don't know when to hold 'em, when to fold 'em. I don't even like Kenny Rogers.

But I have an addictive personality. I can never eat just one potato chip. I'm already sinking 60 cents a week into that Red Cross coin drop at Burger King. I'm probably already addicted to gambling, even as we speak.

I jaywalked today when I probably shouldn't have, and I probably shouldn't have said there were alcoholics in my family. But these risks seemed strangely exciting.

I don't want to be a gambler. I don't need a new pair of shoes. I don't want to lose my shirt, my house, my car, my birthright.

I want a long full life with no involvement in any 12-step programs. I don't want a big ol' pot of debt and despair at the end of this Rainbow.

Rowell is a senior news-editorial, advertising and English major and a Daily Nebraskan associate news editor.

JAMIE KARL

Immigrants need to assimilate

It is difficult to concede, but Nebraskans have something to learn from that societal mess we call California.

This past Election Day, Californians found Proposition 187 on their ballots. (Proposition 187, for those who don't know, is the proposal to deny schooling, welfare and most health care benefits to illegal immigrants.) And those same Californians overwhelmingly approved the measure by a 2-1 margin.

How could this happen, liberal elitists cried. How could this "racist, nativist" measure pass by a 59 percent landslide?

Maybe it was the issue of law. For years, law-abiding Californians saw their federal government ignore its constitutional duty to protect U.S. borders. So Californians, by themselves, decided to combat the 1 million illegal aliens crossing into California each year.

Or maybe it was the issue of economics. Perhaps taxpayers of the Golden State were tired of paying \$3 billion every year in welfare for illegals who resided in their state.

Then again, maybe it was neither of the above. Perhaps this vote was about more than money or law.

In the days before the elections, Californians watched Mexican government officials plead for the defeat of Proposition 187. CNN showed 2,000 demonstrators marching in Mexico City in front of the U.S. embassy, chanting "Damned Gringos!" Across town, rioters trashed a McDonald's to vent their rage at the measure.

Sadly, southern California looked a lot like Mexico City.

On the campus of California State University, Hispanic mobs demonstrated against Proposition 187 by draping themselves in Mexican flags. Others burned the American flag.

On one occasion, a group of Hispanic teens in San Diego beat and bloodied an elderly man who



Most disturbing is that with this rapidly changing ethnicity in America comes a steadfast refusal of the new immigrants to assimilate to the country they now call home.

waved Old Glory in support of his country. Then they burned his flag, too.

No, this was about more than money or law. At the heart of the Proposition 187 debate lies the warring ideas that all Americans hold about the most divisive issues of our time: race, culture and national unity.

The reason Proposition 187 won by a landslide was that Californians disliked what they were seeing in those demonstrations. Nor did they approve of what they encounter in everyday life.

Wrote David Halberstam, prominent chronicler of late 20th-century America: "There is a cultural anxiety about the speed of change that America doesn't look and feel like it used to."

The statistics prove Halberstam correct. Although America, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, was of 90 percent European descent in 1950, whites may be a near minority in this nation come 2050 — because of exploding Hispanic and Asian populations via immigration.

Most disturbing is that with this rapidly changing ethnicity of America comes a steadfast refusal of the new immigrants to assimilate to the country they now call home.

In today's America, ethnic militancy and solidarity are at an all-time high. The great American melting pot is suddenly more like a bowl of tossed salad, as the old

institutions of assimilation are wasting away.

Every vote for Proposition 187 was a vote to give Californians the right to shape the character of their own state and country. Each vote was a show of force against the immigration onslaught that their own federal government refuses to address.

The majority of Californians have this idea: If America is to survive as "one nation, one people," we need to bring a temporary halt to all immigration — legal and illegal — so that we may assimilate the tens of millions who have recently arrived. We need to get to know one another, to live together, to learn together America's language, history, culture and traditions. We need to become a new national family before we add another 100 million to our congregation.

We need to destroy this idea of hyphenated Americanism.

Looking back on the 20th century, we see that all the great multinational states — Czechoslovakia, India, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, South Africa — have either broken apart or are in bad shape.

Is America immune to all this? Californians have answered already. Now the rest of us must do the same.

Karl is a junior news-editorial and political science major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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