

## Bedazzled

The studio lights dimmed; the stage went black.

“Three – Two – One, and... ACTION!”

In the spotlight, a small figure– instantly recognisable – stood, centre-stage. Arms out, face split by a toothy, pearly-white, grin.

“Good evening and *welcome!* I’m Bobby Dazzler and this is...?” He punched the air...

“LUCKY COINCIDENCES!” the audience screamed as BD pirouetted and a dazzle of further lights lit up the contestants.

“That’s right folks! *Welcome* to a new series of Lucky Coincidences! And pray, remind me, oh lovely audience: ‘What do *Coincidences* give?’”

“*Convertibles!*” The audience roared; then waited, in rapt anticipation.

Behind BD, ten ‘Girls’ (aka ‘Women’) and ten ‘Boys’ (you get the picture) flanked the stage, left and right. Numbered, 1-10, each blinked, unseeing, into the bright spotlights.

BD spoke seriously into Camera-One.

“A reminder of the rules: From *thousands* of applicants, the computer, has picked just *ten* lucky boys and *ten* lucky girls to play tonight. *One* lucky boy, *one* lucky girl, will drive away from this studio in one of...”

Slowly, from below the stage, two bright yellow Mazda MX5 convertibles, inched their way into view. Numberplates: LUCKY 1 and LUCKY 2. “*And,*” when the gasps faded, BD continued, “each winner takes away *ten thousand* pounds... for the petrol!” he added, winking directly to camera.

“So, to remind our viewers, each of the contestants has provided written answers to ten identical questions, and the ‘aim-of-the-game’ is to match one girl to one boy – the pair that have the most...” “LUCKY COINCIDENCES!” the audience thundered. Next came the game’s rules, so complicated that no-one, least of all the contestants and the audience, understood.

BD concluded: “Now, the computer will ask questions until our lucky pair are revealed!” He turned on his heel. “Computer! Randomly select one boy and girl!” The stage went black, two contestants left blinking into the spotlights. Question after question, answer after answer, came and went as, one by one, the contestants were eliminated. Finally, just two remained

BD: “Question *nine*: Where was your *first* holiday abroad?”

Girl #3: “Torremolinos.”

Boy #9: “Torremolinos!”

The audience gasped.

BD dropped his voice.

“And finally, please, reveal your names...”

To his left... the consul lit up.

“Tammy.”

Then to the right. Ten seconds passed...

“*Tommy!*”

BD waited, looked worried, then shouted, “THE COMPUTER SAYS YES!!!”

The place erupted, and a hundredweight of golden tickertape filled the auditorium.

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Behind the studio, the roads were almost gridlocked.

Tammy sat at the wheel of LUCKY 1. Her boyfriend looked at his phone. “Swing a left, Babes, I’ve found a short-cut.”

Tommy, behind, swore at the congestion. His wife gripped his knee. “Darling, chill! Take a right then follow the road. There’s a backstreet I know.”

Two gleaming MX5’s roared into the night.

As Tommy’s new convertible entered the pitch-black rat-run, a pair of rapidly approaching headlights burned into his eyes – they’d been dazzled all night.

Tommy’s almost-namesake’s numberplate was the last thing he, or his wife, would ever see.

Not such a lucky coincidence after all...