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WHEN THE 'GOOD LUCK' GOD PLAYS A DUBIOUS HAND



F **PEOPLE ALWAYS** tell me that I'm lucky and normally I agree, but there have been occasions when the luck concept has been overstretched. For example when my friend accidentally smashed a squash racket into my face during match point, the casualty nurse told me how lucky I was not to have lost an eye.

'Interesting logic', I thought, as she stitched the gash on my chin. In clipped tones, she explained her premise via the 'If' factor. 'If your friend had held the racket at an angle, and if you had lurched your head forward by another five centimetres, your entire face would have made contact with the racket.'

Maths is not my forté, but even I could see that this didn't add up, but who was I to argue since her excellent needlework would save my chin from disfigurement, whilst my guilt-ridden squash partner dug into his wallet for a sumptuous compensatory dinner. Lucky me!

Another dubious lucky strike occurred five years ago, when I met and fell in love with Cornelius. Cornelius was tall (6'5"), muscular (he was a fitness instructor), with dark hair and a mysterious foreign accent (he had been born in Salzburg but had lived in Pontypridd from the age of fifteen). Though blessed with good looks, Cornelius wasn't blessed with endearing personal hygiene. We were probably the

only couple in south-east London who argued about sweat stiffened socks and marked briefs! (sorry)

Cornelius was eventually barred from my house until he renewed his acquaintance with a washing machine. My girlfriends were delighted, although disappointed that I hadn't evicted him for good.

Over lunch, the osteopath and psychologist let rip.

'Jules, he may be height and muscles but that guy stinks, and I'm not just talking about his clothes!'

'I'll second that', the psychologist chimed in.

Love is blind and I had totally lost my vision.

'Okay so he has a hygiene problem', I ventured, 'but at least he's trying to deal with it and he does have a decent sense of humour.'

Leaning across the table, the osteopath held my gaze with the expression of a concerned aunt, 'Jules, do yourself a favour and get rid of him. Besides his hygiene, this man disappears for days without as much as a phone call.'

Well, that brought things into view. She was right. I never questioned Cornelius about his disappearing acts, as I didn't want him to feel that I was possessive.

However, a week later the *Good-luck God* delivered the final reality check. Tucked amongst the weekend mail was an envelope containing an anonymous letter, a lurid

missive of duplicity, betrayal, and outright deceit with Cornelius at the centre of it. It seems that my 6'5" eye-candy had been playing the fields of Pontypridd.

Strangely, I wasn't hurt by the discovery, although angry that I hadn't read the obvious signs of infidelity.

Naturally, the psychologist had her own explanation for my emotional blind spot.

'Some of my clients are exactly the same with their kids,' she said. 'They put up with their bad behaviour because they don't want the kids to leave home!'

That was plausible, but the osteopath disagreed.

'I blame his feet! Cornelius did have a nice pair and you are a foot fetishist. That's why you put up with his foolishness!'

At that point, a telephone call from Cornelius broke this lively debate.

Once upon a time that husky voice would have been enough to forgive him a thousand sins. But on this day his luck had run out. Cornelius had lost his gloss and was now as soiled as his unclean clothes. Cornelius was dumped over the phone!

'Do you think it would have worked if he'd had better hygiene?' asked the psychologist.

'I don't know', I replied. 'It's a bit like asking whether Eve would've got off with Adam if she hadn't met a snake with a long tail.'

'THAT GUY STINKS, AND I'M NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT HIS CLOTHES!'