

The Future Quiz

By

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INT- STUDY- COMPUTER SCREEN- DAY

A computer screen. Ding! New email alert.

From 'HAPPENSTANCE'. The subject line reads:

1 Million Dollars Cash can be yours.

Cursor clicks the email open.

The email reads:

Congratulations! You are one of 10 lucky people selected to play "The Future Quiz" for a chance to win \$1,000,000 US in cash. All you have to do is answer 3 questions. Get just one question right and you win! You win \$1,000,000.

This is not SPAM, this is not a gimmick. This is real. To prove it to you, you will see a \$66.24 direct credit into your main bank account with a reference of HAPPENSTANCE. This is your money whether you wish to participate or not. If you do wish to continue with this venture, please show up at 177 Fraser Road, Lummerville at exactly 7pm on Friday 13 November.

Kindest Regards,

Happenstance.

A new window opens on the screen. A bank account transaction record. The newest entry shows:

2 November 2015: \$66.24CR. Ref: Happenstance.

EXT: DRIVEWAY- NIGHT

A car drives up the long driveway. Passes the mail box which reads 177.

Through the windscreen we view a solitary house in the distance. A two storey, older style home. Imposing, gloomy.

Just one light illuminates from the ground floor.

The car drives closer. There are two other cars parked outside.

Time on the dashboard clock displays:

18:58

The car parks. Engine shuts down.

INT- FRONT DOOR- NIGHT

Doorbell rings.

A frail greying OLD MAN opens the door.

There stands PENNY, 28 female, a bit frumpy, a plus-size build with quite a pretty face.

Penny follows the old gentleman down the hall to the room.

INT- RECEPTION ROOM- NIGHT

Two men sit on chairs in the sparsely furnished reception room adorned in modern colour and fittings.

BRETT, 34, a large and thickly built man wears a floral Hawaiian shirt. SVEN, 21, tall and blonde, wearing a tee shirt and jeans. Muscular physique and handsome. He sits alongside Brett.

There is a table mid-room with a laptop connected to a data projector. It projects onto a white screen. Displays:

THE FUTURE QUIZ

The old man gestures Penny to sit at the only other chair available, next to the other guests.

The old man hands each a form and an expensive looking gold pen.

LATER:

The three strangers are in discussion, pointing at their forms.

Into the room arrives HAPPENSTANCE, 40's male, short and fat wearing a dark suit, dark shirt and white tie. His hair is as slick as his personality. Gold rings adorn most his fingers.

He carries three briefcases. Places them on the table. Opens up each to reveal wads of hundred dollar notes. Looks like three million dollars.

HAPPENSTANCE

(flamboyant bow)

My dear lady and honourable gentlemen. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Happenstance. Which is a peculiar name granted. So I shan't be offended if you just call

HAPPENSTANCE
me 'H'. Welcome Brett, welcome Sven
and welcome Penny.

PENNY
Um, H. How did you know my name?

Happenstance gestures with open palms to Penny.

HAPPENSTANCE
Penny, Penny, Penny. Call it
intuition, call it a gut feeling,
call it what you will. We are all
friends here.

BRETT
(points to form)
Um, this agreement you have asked
us to sign. The first four sections
are straight forward. But the last
one, number 5, the long one, I
can't work it out. What does
'pursuant to thrice succession of
discomfiture' mean?

SVEN
And, 'zoetic rights to be
unwarranted pursuant to the
aforementioned covenant under the
auspices of section 1'. I don't
think I'm too happy to sign this.

HAPPENSTANCE
Please, please. Mere formalities.
Keep the lawyers happy.

Happenstance walks to the briefcases. He runs his hand
across the loot.

HAPPENSTANCE (CONT'D)
If we are about to hand over
potentially three million dollars
tonight we just have to make the
transaction watertight, wouldn't
you agree?

PENNY
Um, the email said there were ten
people selected.

HAPPENSTANCE
Yes my dear lady, but only three,
that's you three lucky individuals,

HAPPENSTANCE
have shown the good judgement to
present tonight. So please folks,
let's hurry up and sign the
agreements so we can crack on. And
please, keep the pen.

The three look at each other. Bemused expressions for all.

Sven shrugs his shoulders.

SVEN
Ah what the hell. I don't reckon
I'll be this close to a million
dollars again anytime soon.

Sven signs the agreement.

BRETT
So if we get a question right we
win, that's right?

Happenstance gives a long singular nod.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Hang on. This seems all a bit one
sided. What happens if we don't get
any questions right? What happens
then?

HAPPENSTANCE
Just that you drive away here
without one million dollars. Simple
as that. You go back to live out
all the rest of your days.

BRETT
OK. I'm game.

Brett signs the form. Places the pen into his shirt pocket.

Penny looks across at the other two again. Clears her throat
and signs the agreement.

The old man comes from behind and collects the forms. He
offers each contestant a blank light blue sheet of paper.

Happenstance takes a silver remote and points toward the
laptop.

INT. PROJECTION SCREEN

A new PowerPoint slide. It reads:

You have 3 questions about some things in the future (for the purposes of the quiz, the future means sometime between now and 35 years).

Some things that are not yet invented, not yet known.

Answer one correctly and you will win One Million Dollars.

Answer none correctly and you will not get to see these future things.

GOOD LUCK !

RECEPTION ROOM

The contestants are fixed on the screen. Then Brett stands.

BRETT

(forcefully)

Hey! How do you know what's supposed to be in the future? And what's this about not seeing the future things?

HAPPENSTANCE

I assure you my good man that I am entirely privy to these things.

A sparkle from Happenstance's gold ring as the light reflects on it.

BRETT

Fuck me, you are a looney tune! Not seeing these future things hey? You're not some psychopathic killer are you? You'd better not try and do me in, you fucker!

Brett pushes chair back with is leg. Takes two steps towards Happenstance.

Penny lets out a short gasp. A horrified expression on her face.

Sven stands up, his arms in a karate type pose.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I'm getting out of here. You'd better not try and chase me, nut case.

Happenstance places his hands up and gestures for the men to sit down.

HAPPENSTANCE

Gentlemen, lady, please relax. Myself and my colleague have no intention to 'do you in', as our guest so eloquently espoused. In any case the door is open. You may leave whenever you want.

Brett begins to walk to the door.

BRETT

Yea well that's exactly what I intend to do. Thanks for the 66 bucks and freak show, you fuckwit!

Gives the one finger salute as he walks by.

HAPPENSTANCE

As is your prerogative sir. But please understand that whether or not you play the future quiz--
 (holds up Brett's signed agreement)
 --the contractual terms remain valid. Suffice it to say, if you don't play, unfortunately you have no chance of ever seeing these future things.

Brett stops at the doorway and turns. Glares at H.

HAPPENSTANCE (CONT'D)

(shrugs shoulders)

So mayhaps, it is still in your best interests to at least have an attempt at the questions.

BRETT

(scoffs)

Yea right you delusional fuck. I'll take my chances I reckon.

Continues through the doorway.

BANG!

The door slams. Penny jumps.

Sven is still standing. No karate kid poses now though.

SVEN

So, um how is this supposed to work? You could be making up anything and we're doomed to fail no matter what. And then die young it seems.

HAPPENSTANCE

On the contrary dear man. This is geared to be in your favour. Your answers need only be within very broad parameters of acceptance to get you the prize. Let me give you an example. Um...

Ponderous look at the ceiling.

HAPPENSTANCE (CONT'D)

If say the year was 1875 and the question, 'what is an airplane?'. If you were to answer 'something that moves in the air, or if you responded, 'a transport device', both would be acceptable answers. You just have to be on the right track. And then you have one million dollars. Trust me.

PENNY

(nervously)

I'm...I'm really not sure.

HAPPENSTANCE

My wonderful friends. You are here now. The agreements are signed. You have absolutely everything to gain. Please, please, sit down and let's make a start.

Without hesitation, Happenstance picks up the remote.

INT. PROJECTION SCREEN

The screen displays:

1. What is GALAXIUS?
2. Where would you find the iCHIP?
3. What is so significant about the date: 16th April?

Happenstance sits.

HAPPENSTANCE

Good luck my wonderful ones. You have ten minutes to supply your three answers.

Penny and Sven study the words on the screen intently. Sven begins to write.

Penny remains ponderous.

EXT- DRIVEWAY- NIGHT

From the car park the silhouette of people arguing.

Muffled shouting can be heard. Getting clearer, getting louder. Sven is storming down the hallway.

SVEN

(getting louder)

--a complete whack job. You were always going to make sure we never had a chance.

SVEN moves out the front door.

SVEN (CONT'D)

(looking back at house)

I intend to be living for another seventy or eighty years, fat boy. I don't think I'm gonna see any Glaxius-es or iChips in that time. Weirdo!

Opens car door. Slams.

Burns rubber as the car squeals away.

Penny walks out the front door. She is in tears. Happenstance has his arm around her shoulder.

PENNY

It was just a joke, right? There's no way you can know the future, no way this can influence when I die?

HAPPENSTANCE

Oh dear lady, please don't cry. Look on the bright side. These things may not surface for twenty or even thirty- five years. That could give you plenty more life to enjoy.

He rubs her back.

HAPPENSTANCE (CONT'D)

And if it's any consolation, your answer for GALAXIUS was really quite clever. One of the best I've ever seen. But alas, it was incorrect. OK, goodnight now.

Penny cries mournfully. She walks to car.

Happenstance turns to go back inside. Walks past the old man into the house.

The light is turned off.

EXT- DRIVEWAY- NIGHT

The same house, but many years before. Three cars in the driveway all late 70's models.

One of the car's windows are open. A letter on the dash. A gust of wind blows out the letter. It lands on the outside house wall. Fortunately the print is visible. Close up on the letter reads:

2nd November 1980.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Congratulations! You are one of 10 lucky people selected to play "The Future Quiz" for a chance to win \$100,000 US in cash. All you have to do is answer 3 questions. Get just one question right and you win! You win \$100,000.

Enclosed is a cheque for \$66.24. This is your money whether you wish to participate or not. If you do wish to continue with this venture, please show up at 177 Fraser Road, Lummerville at exactly 7pm on Friday 13 November.

In the window the silhouette of people arguing.

Muffled shouting can be heard. Getting louder. A MAN, 20's storms out. Wears typical attire from those of that era.

MAN

-- and you can keep your fucking fake gold pen.

Throws the pen against the wall of the house.

Smash! Obliterated.

Another man, 30's, sullen and defeated walks out silently with his head bowed.

Happenstance is at the doorway. Exactly the same age as before. Wears a suit, flared trousers with a large collared shirt.

Walks back inside past the old man...but now not so old. Thirty-five years younger in fact. He holds a briefcase. Smiles broadly.

INT- RECEPTION ROOM- CONTINUES

Happenstance walks up to an overhead projector. There is a slide illuminating to the screen.

It reads:

1. What is FACEBOOK?
2. Where would you find an iPad?
3. What is so significant about the date: 11th September?

He removes the slide and switches off the projector.

FADE OUT:

CREDITS ROLL

Black screen.

Sound of News Reports as Credits roll.

NEWS REPORTER 1

Local News at Ten. 14 November 2015. Good morning. Police are investigating a bizarre multiple fatality outside of Lummerville overnight where three vehicles were crushed in three separate landslides on the Lummerville Range. All single vehicle occupants were killed in the tragedy. Details are sketchy but it is--

(dialogue fades out)

A different News report now fades in.

NEWS REPORTER 2

--and get this John, Apple have just released information about a new research project. We soon could have telephones implanted in our brains! Code named the iCHIP, it involves a tiny data processor

NEWS REPORTER 2
surgically implanted in the brain.
The recipient could receive and
even make calls! Apple stress the
research is in it's infancy stage--

(dialogue fades out)

THE END