

# Living the Dream

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I had taken the call from the lady from the Postcode Lottery, but my hearing isn't good, not on the phone anyway.

I'm sure I had signed up to remain anonymous. At least I think I did. I always tick that box. Bob has grilled me about this, over and over. We haven't told a soul about our big win.

My best friend Susie from across the road was very put out when I wouldn't say where we were going today. Susie and I share everything. She's a widow with lots of time on her hands. She helps me with my garden. If it wasn't for her, I might go mad listening to Bob banging on about 'the state of the planet' and 'gas guzzling cars'.

Since the phone call, Bob has spent hours and hours on the Internet browsing for a new car. He wants an EV, a Tesla like his brother in London but a bigger one, a 'performance' model with a boot big enough to take my old folding wheelchair.

I've booked a three-day spa experience for Susie and me. When I told them about my rheumatoid arthritis, they gave me a ten percent discount which means it will be three thousand five hundred excluding food and before extras. I had to pay an upfront non-returnable deposit of two hundred. She said I would be amazed at how many people book then cancel at the last minute.

Bob was against the Postcode Lottery, saying it was a 'waste of space'. Almost everything Bob dislikes is 'a waste of space'. He went on and on about the cost until I said I would pay the ten pounds from my disability allowance and pointed out that his football channels on Sky cost over a hundred. That shut him up.

It was a long drive. Bob thought from the postcode I copied down from the lady that it was to be Hamilton but it was Blantyre. From Torrance, it was a bit of a long trek as we got lost several times before we found the place. The car park was empty so getting me out of the van was easy but the path was thick with mud. Bob moaned about having to powerwash my wheelchair again. The last time he did this, it was out of action for weeks with an electrical fault.

When I saw we were at a row of dilapidated shops I thought I must have copied down the wrong address.

Bob was on his high horse again:

'Well, Christine Delaney, are you sure this is the address?'

I look at the abandoned unit and know this is all wrong. I have a sudden squidgy feeling in my tummy.

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'Bob, perhaps they've moved. What does the notice say?

He fiddles out his best reading glasses, cleans them thoroughly and reads aloud a telephone number which I tap into my mobile phone.

I listen, press ONE for replay and put on the speakerphone at full volume and close my eyes. Bob won't admit he's nearly deaf.

*"Hi Mrs Dopey, this is Angela Rip-Off here. Have a nice one, Yah hear?"*

I hang up.

Bob starts on another rant.

'I told you winning ten million was too good to be true. I said the Postcode Lottery was a waste of. . . .'

My phone trills out the Z-Cars theme.

Susie.

I dread what she is about to tell me.

'Chrissie, your niece Angela from Birmingham was here. She seemed such a nice girl, very polite and quite well-spoken. Is she from Jamaica? Anyway, I let her in to your place to use the loo and make herself a cup of coffee. I was in the middle of baking and when the scones were ready, I took some over with a pot of home-made raspberry jam.'

There was a delay, then I heard her sob:

'I'm standing here in your Lounge. Oh Chrissie, your lovely house has been trashed. I've called the police. . . .'

I hung up.

Bob asked:

'What did Susie say?'