

XXXX

—Ray Komatsu

You strut into the cool night time air decked in ninja black, ready to chariot a sleek black Aston Martin. You can picture it now: you and this mechanical black panther gliding along the jet-black asphalt, vanishing into every shadow the very epitome of spycraft. Brought back to reality by the rattle of metal, you see Goldilocks walking up to you, holding a set of keys.

“Here’s the keys to the combi-van mate. Oi’ve filled up the tank, so ya can drive it till the wheels fall off.”

A combi-van? *A combi-van?* Devastated by this unexpected turn of events, you start making a solid case for the stealth values of your car of choice. After all, James Bond *is* a professional and he knows how it’s done.

“Well, mate, if ya wanna ’void people lookin’ at’cha, just sticka surfboard up top and Bob’syeruncle.”

And with that, he walks away, leaving you feeling a bit abandoned and marginally morose. You sidle up to the designated crumbling death trap on wheels and gently pry the door open, hoping against hope that the hinges don’t disintegrate. The bleached and tattered driver’s seat smells of pickled fear and despair, not unlike a room full of currency traders in this economic climate. You climb onto the seat, but sense an uncomfortable bulge below your right thigh. Boring into a hole in the fabric, you uncover a folded postcard sporting a picture of the movie XXXX – the Bollywood parody of XXX; on its back is written a collection of cryptic letters.

U S S
C L E
L R D
U S N

C A D
C H W
C L F
M U R

A L L
S A R
K E S
A L K