

Swiss Twist

by Chloe Hannah – March 2019

SYNOPSIS

Which expat in Basel doesn't regularly question the oddities of Swiss culture? In Swiss Twist, four expats compete in a gameshow that tests their ability to blend in in Switzerland. Will it be flirtatious Victoria from Colombia, know-all Heike from Germany, dapper scientist Mario from Italy, or the clueless, loveable Randy from the US that hostess Frau Häfeli will deem the worthiest? There is a lot at stake: the winner will walk away with a Swiss passport.

CHARACTERS

HELGA HÄFELI (Gameshow hostess)
VICTORIA FLORES (Colombian expat)
HEIKE GRÖNSCHÄDEL (German expat)
MARIO BELLINI (Italian expat)
RANDY BARNES (US expat)

GAMESHOW STAGE

Four standing tables with a large dice on each are arranged in a semi-circle facing the audience. There is an unnoticeable box containing various items towards the front of the stage. gameshow music blares as the stage is lit up with HELGA taking centre stage, wearing an elegant outfit in black with a Swiss flag pin attached to her top. She carries cue cards in her hands and should use these for the questions.

HELGA *(to the audience)*

Welcome, welcome, to Swissify! Do you know how many people live in Switzerland without a Swiss passport? Over two million! That is two million people who don't have a clue what is being spoken about in Migros. We are about to remedy this. Swissify offers four expat contestants the opportunity to win a Swiss passport! *(She holds up the passport for the audience to see)* Who will take this red beauty home tonight? Will it be our first contestant, who bears the name of victory? From Cali, Colombia: Victoria Flores!

VICTORIA enters stage to gameshow music, wearing a sleek evening gown. She smiles warmly at the audience, then extends her hand to greet Helga.

HELGA

Welcome to Swissify, Victoria.

VICTORIA

Thank you very much for the welcome... uh, what is your name?

HELGA

Frau Häfeli to you.

VICTORIA

Oh. Frau Häfeli.

Victoria takes her place at the table furthest stage left.

HELGA

Tell us something about yourself, Victoria!

VICTORIA

I was born and raised in Colombia.

HELGA

How nice, I know someone from Argentina. Maybe you know him.

VICTORIA

Uh. Yes, right. I've been living in Basel for two years. I love it here!

HELGA

Two years, I see. Where do you live in Basel?

VICTORIA

Kleinhüningen.

HELGA

Oh. You want to be careful, Victoria. Kleinhüningen is crawling with foreigners.

Victoria sends a confused glance to the audience.

HELGA

Why would you like to win Swissify?

VICTORIA

As a Colombian, I need a visa for everything. Sometimes it feels like I can't even go to the toilet without a visa. I want to put down roots here, but it's difficult for Latin Americans. It takes fifteen years to get a passport. Fifteen years! I've had had six and a half boyfriends in that time!

HELGA

Six and a half, right... I'm very curious about that half a boyfriend. But let's move on and welcome our second contestant. From Mönchengladbach, Germany: Heike Grönschädel!

HEIKE enters stage to music. She is dressed in business attire and has her hair pinned up. After shaking Helga's hand, she chooses the table furthest stage right.

HEIKE

Danke, Frau Häfeli!

HELGA

Heike, nice to meet you. What makes you the best candidate to win Swissify?

HEIKE

Well, I am German. I already speak the same language as you.

HELGA

We'll get to that... Anything else that distinguishes you from your competition?

HEIKE

I'm German. You and me, we're neighbours. We're practically the same.

HELGA (*scoffing*)

I don't think so! What else do you have on offer?

HEIKE (*starting to lose her composure*)

I'm an upstanding citizen of Switzerland. Also, I work for... *Novartis*.

HELGA

You and everyone else in Basel. I think we should give our third contestant a warm welcome. From Turin, Italy: Mario Bellini!

MARIO, dapperly dressed, enters the stage to music. He walks up to Helga to shake her hand, then greets Heike and finally Victoria. He takes the table next to her. Victoria looks at him.

VICTORIA (*wide-eyed*)

You're from Italy?

MARIO

Torino, yes.

VICTORIA

What do you need a Swiss passport for? You have an EU one.

Mario shrugs.

VICTORIA (*eagerly*)

Are you single?

Mario ignores her question.

HELGA

It's my job to come up with the questions, Victoria. Mario, tell us: Are you single?

MARIO

I had a girlfriend until recently.

Helga and Heike say "Aww!" but Victoria looks hopeful.

HELGA

What happened?

MARIO

She was called Aspen. You know, an American girl. Her parents were hippies. But I liked calling her Aspirin as a joke.

HELGA

And you thought this was funny...

MARIO

Well yes, I'm a pharmacologist!

HELGA (*unimpressed*)

Aha.

MARIO

Back me up here, Heike, you work for Novartis!

HEIKE

I'm a molecular biologist...

MARIO

Potato potato.

HEIKE
Who do you work for?

MARIO
Roche.

HEIKE
Should have known.

MARIO
Anyway, Aspen thought my little wordplay was funny. If she complained that she had a head ache, I would reply, "Me too, and I need some Aspirin!" Or I would say, "Aspirin twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening. Doctor's orders!" She always laughed.

HELGA
So what went wrong?

HEIKE
Yes, what could have possibly gone wrong?

MARIO
Once in the height of passion I called out Ibuprofen by mistake. She never forgave me. So here I am, alone.

VICTORIA
Poor Papito...

Mario ignores Victoria's flirtation. He is too smart to know why she is after him.

HEIKE
Thank you, Mario, for illuminating us on the most creative way to ruin a relationship. And finally, let us get to know our fourth contestant, from Kansas City, USA: Randy Barnes!

RANDY enters the stage to music. He is wearing jeans, a Swiss flag t-shirt and a cowboy hat. He proudly shows the audience and Helga his t-shirt before shaking her hand vigorously. Then he introduces himself to the three contestants and takes the remaining table between Heike and Mario. Victoria is glaring at him.

HEIKE
Randy, how Swiss do you believe you are?

RANDY
I'm extremely Swiss. I mean check this out! I got it at Manor (*he pronounces it MAN-or*).

VICTORIA
Brown-nose t-shirts aren't going to help you here.

HEIKE (*to Victoria*)
Neither will sexy evening-gowns!

HELGA
How nice to see you all getting along. I will now explain the rules: Swissify is played through six levels. The first competitor to reach level six wins the Swiss passport. The levels will test you in various aspects of Swissness. Set your dice to one and we're ready to go.

The competitors set their dice to one, except for Randy, who sets his to six.

HEIKE (*holding up her hand like she's in class*)
He's cheating!

RANDY (*rolling his eyes and changing his dice*)
Relax, relax... I was just kidding... Sorta.

HELGA
And now, it's time to play Swissify! (*Music*) We start out on level one. And the topic is: Language.

Randy, Mario and Victoria groan.

HEIKE
Oh, goody!

HELGA
Heike, you're up first. How are you feeling right now?

HEIKE
Great! I've been practicing my German for thirty-four years, haha.

HELGA (*reading from a cue card*)
Okay. Question one: How do the Swiss say Switzerland?

HEIKE
That one's easy: Schweiz!

HELGA (*Pausing dramatically every time before she gives the verdict*)
Schweiz is... incorrect.

HEIKE
What?

RANDY (*as if Heike were hard of hearing*)
She said Schweiz is incorrect.

HEIKE
So what is the correct answer?

HELGA
The question moves to our next competitor. Randy: How do the Swiss say Switzerland?

RANDY
Sweden!

HELGA
Randy says Sweden, which is... incorrect too. That is what *Americans* call Switzerland, Randy.

RANDY
Ah, darn it.

HELGA
Mario, do you know the answer? How do the Swiss say Switzerland?

MARIO
Svizzera.

HELGA
Uh... Are we counting that as a correct answer? It's not what we were looking for.

MARIO

But in Ticino they say Svizzera! And Ticino is in Switzerland. If you don't believe me, look it up on Wikipedia!

HELGA

Yes, thank you, I don't think that will be necessary. I guess I have to accept your answer. Congratulations, Mario. You have progressed to level two.

Mario performs a tiny fist-pump and moves his dice to reflect this. Heike glares at him.

VICTORIA (*leaning in towards Mario*)

That was so clever!

HELGA

Victoria, over to you for your first question on language in Switzerland.

VICTORIA

It's not really fair to quiz us on this. I completed a six-month intensive German course in Colombia before moving here. But when I came here it turned out they say half their words in French, from "merci" to "adieu". I didn't understand a thing!

MARIO

It was the same for me.

HEIKE

And even for me.

They all look at Randy.

RANDY (*sheepishly*)

I never bothered learning German. I figured I'd get by with English...

HELGA

Victoria, here is your first language question: Present yourself to me in German.

Helga holds out her hand and Victoria looks at it uncertainly.

VICTORIA

Oh, really, that's all? (*She shakes the host's hand vigorously. Heavily accented:~*) Guten Tag. Mein Name ist Victoria. Ich komme von Colombia und spreche sehr gut Deutsch.

HELGA

That was excellent, Victoria! Well done. Your introduction sends you to the next level.

Victoria performs a little dance and sets her dice to two.

HEIKE

Can I have that same question, please? Ich kann das nämlich noch viel besser, ohne Präpositions-Fehler. Soll ich mal zeigen, wie das ganz korrekt geht?

HELGA

I'm afraid you can't have the same question because you already know the answer to it.

HEIKE

You're not serious! What a load of sh...

HELGA (*interrupting Heike*)

Shall we move on? Here is our next language question. *(She pulls a bun out of her box)*. What is this bun called here in Basel? Bonus: If you get it right, you get to keep it!

HEIKE

I'd really rather the passport...

HELGA

So, do you know the answer?

HEIKE

It's called a "Weggli".

HELGA

"Weggli" is... not quite specific enough, sorry.

HEIKE *(sarcastically)*

Oh no. I miss out on a sixty-rappen bun.

HELGA

Randy, do you know the answer? What is this bun called?

RANDY

It's called a "Schwöbli".

HELGA

"Schwöbli" is... correct! Here you go!

She walks over to Randy, who proudly holds the bun in his hands.

HEIKE *(to Randy)*

How did you know that answer?

RANDY *(looking at the bun and grinning)*

Well, I had this Swiss girlfriend who...

HEIKE *(interrupting him)*

Please! I'm sorry I asked!

Randy takes a massive bite out of his bun while grinning at Heike.

HELGA

Mario, you are on level two. The topic of this level is: Everyday life. Have you ever shopped in Lörrach and cheated the Swiss economy out of its business?

MARIO

Of course not!

HELGA

...Because that is seen as common sense in Switzerland.

MARIO

Oh, in that case, yes, every Saturday! I even get the tax back!

HELGA

You picked the right answer, Mario. You advance to level three.

Mario grins to himself as he moves his dice.

HELGA

Next up, Victoria, an everyday life question for you. *(She pulls out a small Beppi Sack from the box at the front of the stage and walks over to her)* As you know, the Swiss are the world leaders at recycling. In this garbage bag, you will find five items. One of them is not recyclable. Can you find it?

VICTORIA *(taking the bag and peering into it carefully. She pulls out the items one by one.)*

I was not expecting a bag of garbage today, but okay, let's see. A piece of paper... I can definitely recycle that. A water bottle. That I can recycle too. A Nespresso capsule... Not sure. An old sock. Also not sure. And an empty can. Definitely recyclable. *(He holds up the sock and the capsule)* Hmm... I can't see any use for an old sock, but I feel this may be a trick question. So I'm going to go for: The Nespresso capsule. Everybody knows they're terrible for the environment.

HELGA

You were right, it was a trick question. Have a look at the piece of paper.

VICTORIA *(reading)*

Certification of work permit in Switzerland.

HELGA *(gleeful)*

You wouldn't want to recycle that.

VICTORIA

Joder! Next round please let us deal with something different than garbage. And by the way, an Colombian would never drink Nespresso! You know what I mean, Mario.

Mario ignores her as usual.

HELGA

Mario, you are on level three, Randy and Victoria on level two, while Heike is still on level one.

HEIKE

This is ridiculous. You realise *I* should be correcting *your* German.

HELGA

Heike, maybe you will change your mind with the next language question: What did the first immigrants to Switzerland say when they were presented with a Fondue?

HEIKE *(after a moment taking in the question; furious)*

This stinks. I swear, I am *this* close to walking out of here!

HELGA

That is... Correct!

HEIKE *(still angry)*

You're kidding. This game is the ultimate in stupidity!

RANDY

Don't complain, you just passed the language level!

HEIKE *(grumpily, as she changes her dice)*

Yes, but I wanted it to be merit-based...

HELGA

Mario, the next question is for you. You have reached level three, which deals with famous people or items in Switzerland. Who won the Schwingen championships last year?

MARIO

Roger Federer?

VICTORIA

Oh no, Mario, he always loses to Rafael Nadal!

HELGA

Roger Federer is... incorrect. You're thinking about tennis, Mario.

MARIO

What championships were you talking about?

HELGA

Schwingen.

MARIO

Oh. I thought that was the name of the town where the tennis championships take place.

RANDY

Swingin'? I thought that was a place you go for...

MARIO

Please don't finish that sentence, Randy.

HELGA

The correct answer is... *(dismissing her cue card)* uh, Holdi Hodler.

HEIKE

You just made that name up. That's not a real name!

HELGA

And what if I did? He didn't know the answer.

HEIKE

This contest is rigged.

HELGA

Feel free to leave at any moment.

HEIKE

...But I really want that passport.

HELGA

And for that, we get to torture you.

VICTORIA

Do you mind my asking: What does the runner-up get?

HELGA *(Pulling out a big M-Budget card from her box)*
This gift voucher.

VICTORIA

An M-Budget gift voucher? Did Denner not have any?

HELGA

Now you know what you're battling for, Victoria.

VICTORIA *(sizing up Mario, who places a hand over his face)*
Yes, I do.

HELGA

Moving on to Victoria and her question on everyday life. For this one, we are going to assume you all live in the same apartment building.

HEIKE

God forbid!

HELGA

The question is: who out of you would get to do their laundry on Sunday?

VICTORIA

Mario and me both.

HEIKE

How do you figure that?

VICTORIA

When you're married, you share everything important. Our bed, our finances, laundry day... Nationalities...

HELGA

I'm afraid that is not the correct answer. Heike, what's your guess?

HEIKE

Obviously I win this round. I have three children, so I get the privilege of doing my laundry on the weekend. Ha!

MARIO

That's not fair, it will take me years to get to three children!

VICTORIA

You know, Mario, twins run in my family. Just saying.

HELGA *(to Heike)*

Three children? That's one more than what is acceptable in Switzerland today. Your answer is incorrect *and* you lose a level for having three children. Please change your dice back to level one.

HEIKE

What?

RANDY *(again acting like Heike is hard of hearing)*

She said, please change your dice back to level one. She was very polite.

HEIKE

I know what she said, I'm just deliberating over where to hit her with this dice. Or you, for that matter.

HELGA

Please change your dice back to level one, Heike.

Heike is crossing her arms and biting her lip. Finally, Randy leans over and gently changes Heike's dice back to one. He smiles compassionately at her and offers her half of his Schwöbli. Heike shakes her head in furious silence.

HELGA

Let's move on. Randy, out of the three of you, who gets to do their laundry on Sunday?

RANDY
Can I call a friend?

HELGA
Absolutely not!

RANDY
Can I call my mummy?

(Helga shoots the audience an exasperated look)

RANDY
That's okay. I'm pretty confident I know the answer anyway. I always do my laundry on Sundays because the schedule is always free on Sundays.

HELGA
That is... definitely incorrect. You may want to have a closer look at that schedule, Randy. The correct answer is: nobody.

MARIO
Come on, guys. Laundry day! It's the most elusive day in Switzerland! My friends refer to it as Swiss National Day. In Switzerland you're not allowed to do any kind of work on Sundays. When I was new here, I once washed my car on a Sunday and the police came to reprimand me.

VICTORIA
That's true! I once hung up my laundry on a Sunday and the police came to complain.

RANDY
I once walked down the street on a Sunday and the police arrested me.

Mario, Heike, Victoria and Helga say versions of "Huh?" and "What?"

RANDY
I had lost my pants at a party the night before, and...

HELGA *(interrupting Randy)*
Mario, you have to face another question on famous Swiss people or items. *(She pulls a Globi doll out of her box)* Who is this?

HEIKE
I know the answer, I have three kids! Mario, I'll tell you if you help me get past the German language test.

HELGA
Alliances are not permitted, Heike.

HEIKE
Ugh, Switzerland. Unquestioned neutrality on all fronts.

HELGA
Your answer, Mario?

MARIO
Can I?

Mario reaches out and takes the Globi doll from Helga. He twists it around in the air and looks over at Heike, who is mouthing the word. Helga is right there but doesn't intervene.

MARIO
Robi, Dogi, Clobi, Globi... Globi!

HELGA
Globi is correct! Mario, you move on to level four.

Mario happily shifts his dice.

RANDY
Mario, who do you think you are, racing through levels like this?

MARIO
Super Mario!

HELGA
Victoria, on to you and your question on everyday life in Switzerland: How do you think the Swiss show that they have had enough to eat?

VICTORIA
That they have eaten enough? The concept is very foreign to Colombians, ha! But I actually know this one. Instead of saying that they have eaten enough, they show it discretely by leaving their fork and knife crossed on their plate.

RANDY
That's not discreet! That's passive-aggressive!

HELGA
Passive-aggressive is the way we like it in Switzerland. Victoria, you have reached level three.

Victoria happily moves her dice.

HELGA
Heike, meanwhile you're back on level one.

Heike ignores the bait. She is still crossing her arms in anger.

HELGA
I think you will be happy with this question because you have a 50% chance of getting it right. Which out of these two words means cat in Swiss German: Büsi or Buschi? The other word means baby.

HEIKE
They sound like the same word!

HELGA
That is the challenge.

HEIKE
Büsi and Buschi you say? Cat and baby. Mario, any ideas? You owe me one for the doll.

MARIO
I uh... I think cat is Büsi.

RANDY
Büsi? It's got to be Buschi. Babies are very rarely bushy...

VICTORIA
That makes sense.

MARIO

I wouldn't trust Randy. It's Büsi for sure.

RANDY

Don't listen to him! Look at his outfit and look at mine. Buschi cannot mean baby!

HEIKE

Alright then... I can't believe I'm doing this but I will take your advice, Randy. Buschi is the word for cat.

HELGA

Heike says Buschi – but I'm afraid it's the other way around. We use the word Büsi for kitty-cat.

RANDY

Aww. Büsi. What a cute word for a cat.

HEIKE

Oh my god.

HELGA

On to Randy with your next everyday life question. (*Helga pulls out a bottle of Swiss wine from her box. It is visibly labelled "Preishit".*) What does this mean? If you get the answer right, the wine is yours.

RANDY

Price-shit? Sounds delicious.

MARIO

Those labels, I see them all over town! Price-shit! Even on lunch menus. So appetising!

VICTORIA

I love price-shits. I buy them whenever possible.

HEIKE (*flaring up*)

It's pronounced PREIS HIT!

HELGA

Yes, very good, Heike. Randy, what does Price-shit mean?

RANDY

Thank you, Heike, for helping me out. It sounds like toilet juice but I guess Price shit means you get a great price, right?

HELGA

Randy, your answer is... correct! You get to set your dice to the next level.

Randy happily turns his dice to level three. Helga walks over to give him the wine.

RANDY

Would you happen to have some cups?

Helga walks over to the box, pulls out plastic cups with the Swiss flag printed on them and gives them to Randy. Randy pours out five cups and hands them around. Everyone accepts graciously except for Heike, who is angrily crossing her arms.

RANDY

No matter... More for me. Cheers!

Everyone lifts their cups and takes a sip of the wine.

MARIO

Ugh... This price-shit is disgusting. I should have brought you a nice Barolo.

VICTORIA

I agree with Mario. You're so sophisticated. *(In spite of this she immediately takes another sip of her wine and is visibly enjoying it)*

HELGA

Ahhh, so good, Swiss wine! Mario, you are the first competitor to reach level four. The topic of level four is: Relationships in Switzerland.

MARIO

Uh-oh.

HELGA

Not your favourite topic?

MARIO

I'm a pharmacologist...

HELGA

Yes, and we all remember your Aspirin story.

MARIO *(gloomily)*

Exactly.

RANDY

Victoria seems to fancy you in spite of the fact that you're a pharmacologist.

MARIO

I could be a convicted felon and she would fancy me so long as I have an Italian passport. Right?

VICTORIA

A convicted felon? Probably not. Maybe if he were convicted of something lesser, like vandalism, public intoxication or reckless driving. Indecent exposure would also be acceptable.

HELGA

Mario, here is your question: In a relationship in Switzerland at some point you get to first-name basis. Mario: who in the relationship gets to decide when this happens.

MARIO

I grew up with this one: Either the older person or the more senior person professionally.

HELGA

Your answer is... correct. Mario, well done.

Mario moves his dice to level five, but does so without celebrating

HEIKE

What do you mean, you grew up with this one?

MARIO *(after a moment's hesitation)*

In Italy we have the same rules.

HELGA

Mario, you are now on level five. You know what this means?

MARIO

I only need to answer one more question correctly before I become a Swiss citizen!

HELGA

True. But more importantly, you are now so Swiss that we shift to first-name basis. (*Walking over to shake his hand*) You can call me Helga!

MARIO (*shaking her hand*)

Your first name is Helga? You're called Helga Häfeli?

HELGA

So?

MARIO

How is life in Hogwarts?

RANDY

What a geek.

VICTORIA

I think he's adorkable.

HELGA

Moving on to you, Victoria, we have a first question for you in the category famous Swiss people or items. (*She pulls a Swiss army knife out of her box*) Who is the most famous manufacturer of the Swiss army knife?

VICTORIA

This one is easy for me, because it is similar to my name! They are called "Victorinox"!

HELGA

Victorinox is... correct! Well done, Victoria, you may move on to level four.

Victoria shifts her dice.

HEIKE

That's not fair. My name doesn't mean anything in Swiss-German.

HELGA

Actually it does. "Heike" means "Loser".

HEIKE

It does not.

HELGA

It does tonight. But don't feel too down, we are going to give you a slightly different language question this round to offer you a chance to progress to the next level. This is a creative question for you. Give us one name of a Swiss person or place that sounds funny.

HEIKE

A funny-sounding Swiss name? Ummm... I think the Bundesrat with the name that sounds like a cheese dish is pretty funny. Mister Parmelin?

HELGA

Yeah, that's not so funny.

HEIKE (*angrily*)
It makes *me* laugh.

HELGA
I don't even see you smiling. I'm afraid I can't give you that one.

HEIKE
What was I thinking? Why would a TV competition ever reward the smartest? Randy, give me that wine!

Randy holds up the cup he had poured out for Heike, but Heike grabs the whole bottle from his table and takes a large swig.

RANDY
How could you get that question wrong, Heike? It's so easy: My neighbours are called Frau Gass and Mister Boner. You can get a Big Mac on Barfi. And don't even get me started on Frick im Fricktal! See?

Heike glares at Randy and takes another swig.

HELGA
Randy, your first question about famous Swiss people or items is: Who is Heidi?

RANDY
She must be the most famous female Swiss.

HELGA
That would be correct.

RANDY
She's very big in the US. The president once tweeted about her.

HELGA
Uh... Are you sure?

RANDY
Yes, he said she was no longer a ten!

HELGA
This Heidi you're talking about, she wouldn't happen to be a judge on "America's got Talent", would she?

RANDY
That's the one. It's very unusual for Swiss people to make it on American TV.

HEIKE
Heidi Klum is German.

RANDY
Oh.

HEIKE
We were looking for Heidi from the 19th century book.

RANDY
A *book*? Never heard of her.

HELGA

Moving swiftly on... Mario, you are the first contestant to reach level five. The topic of level five is: Swiss cuisine.

MARIO

Great. I love good food.

HELGA

We shift our attention to a Swiss recipe called Älplermakronen. It is pasta with potatoes, cream, cheese, onions and stewed apples.

She pulls out a plate with this dish from her box and places it onto Mario's table. Mario recoils.

MARIO

Pasta and stewed apples? And even worse: pasta and potatoes? You call this cuisine?

HELGA

We sure do. The challenge for you: You need to eat it.

MARIO

How much?

HELGA

The entire plate.

MARIO

No: How much will you pay me to do this? No way am I eating any of this.

HELGA *(dangling the Swiss passport before his eyes)*

We will pay you with this.

RANDY

Come on, Mario, it's free food! Free food is always delicious, even when it's Swiss!

MARIO

And there is so much cheese on it. Why is melted cheese the ne plus ultra in Switzerland?

VICTORIA

Cheese equals God in this country.

RANDY

Yes, it's holier than Cheesus.

Mario picks up the fork and pokes around the dish with it. He picks up a solitary piece of pasta, peering at it carefully.

MARIO

This pasta looks overcooked too. *(He places the fork back down on the dish.)* As a proud Italian who appreciates *good* food, I cannot do it. My Nonna would never forgive me.

HELGA

In that case I'm afraid your answer is incorrect, Mario. You remain on level five.

She takes the pasta away from Mario.

RANDY

Can I have that?

HELGA
Sure.

Helga places the dish on Randy's table. He starts eating it happily.

HEIKE
Your table looks like da Vinci's Last Supper.

RANDY
I don't think there were any Schwöbli on da Vinci's Last Supper.

HELGA
Let us move from da Vinci to Victoria. Here is your first question on Swiss relationships.

VICOTIRA
I'm ready. I know a lot about Swiss relationships. I've had a lot of experience on the topic.

HELGA
How do you as a woman greet a man you already know quite well?

VICTORIA
Can I show in person?

HELGA
Please do.

Victoria walks up to Mario and beckons him.

MARIO
Show it with Randy, would you?

RANDY *(with a full mouth)*
I can't, I'm eating.

HELGA
Why don't you both come to the front of the stage and approach each other as good friends?

Mario and Victoria take to the front of the stage, a few meters apart. Mario walks awkwardly towards Victoria. Victoria decides that he is too slow and throws herself at him, placing her hands on his cheeks, pulling him towards herself and kissing him right on the lips. Mario struggles to get free and turns away from Victoria. Victoria smiles triumphantly.

HELGA
That was certainly entertaining, Victoria, but I'm afraid that is not an appropriate way to greet a Swiss man you know relatively well.

VICTORIA
It is in my mind!

MARIO
Get a new mind! *(He walks angrily back to his table, picks up his cup of wine and downs it in a few gulps)*

HELGA
I thought you disliked our wine.

MARIO
This price shit is how I feel about this stupid show. Anyone agree?

HEIKE

I do.

VICTORIA (*taking her place at her table again, still grinning*)

I think this show is great.

HELGA

Back to you, Heike. Are you ready?

HEIKE

If only I ever were.

HELGA

I have good news for you all. We are now entering a bonus round! This time, you may all pick your own category, any one you like, and if you get the right answer, you advance your dice by one number. Heike, I assume that since you are German, you will pick category one: language.

HEIKE

No! Definitely not! I want... Mario's category. I want some food. Whatever you pull out of that box, I will eat it. You can pull back out that Globi doll and I will eat it. Anything to get me out of level one.

HELGA

Okay, you shall have your wish granted, Heike. I am about to pull out something from this box, and it is yours to eat... (*She places a hand into her box*)

HEIKE

Yes!

HELGA

If you can tell me what it is. In Swiss German, we call it a Däfelì.

HEIKE

No!

HELGA

Yes? No?

HEIKE

That's a language question, not a food question!

HELGA

I am holding the Däfelì in my hand and it looks a lot like food to me.

VICTORIA

Hey, you're giving her hints about its size, Frau Häfelì!

RANDY

Relax, she obviously won't know the answer. She never does.

HEIKE

Thanks so much for making me feel better, Randy. Frau Häfelì, a Däfelì... Häfelì Däfelì. I'm feeling dizzy. What was the question?

HELGA

What is a Däfelì?

HEIKE

Däfel. Täfelein? You're holding it in your hand? Probably a small chocolate?

HELGA

Chocolate is... incorrect, I'm afraid. *(Helga pulls out a Ricola sweet and holds it up for all to see.)*

HEIKE

I call that chocolate. If Holdi Holdener won the Schwingen competition, then I call this chocolate. I demand justice, let me see your card!

HELGA

You will not be seeing my cue cards, Heike. Randy, I assume you want this sweet for your last supper?

Helga walks over to hand Randy the Ricola. As he takes it, he manages to swipe a cue card from Helga, which he hands wordlessly to Heike before popping the sweet into his mouth.

HELGA

Hey! Give that back to me, right now!

HEIKE

What is this? Ricola to rodzaj slo... Huh? What language is this?

HELGA *(trying to swipe back her card)*
Swiss-German.

HEIKE

No it isn't! Look, Randy.

RANDY

I don't know.

MARIO

He wouldn't know Swiss-German from hieroglyphs.

HEIKE

Mario, you have a look.

HELGA *(blocking Heike)*

Please relax. It's Polish, okay?

VICTORIA

Why do you have things written on your cards in Polish?

HELGA

Uh...

MARIO

She's obviously bilingual!

HELGA

Yes, thank you, Mario. I am bilingual. My father is Polish.

MARIO

Your *mother*.

HELGA

My mother, yes, that's what I meant. God bless her soul...

RANDY

Aww, your ma already died?

HELGA

Yes, when I was just a baby. It's very sad.

VICTORIA

Then how come you still speak Polish?

Helga doesn't answer, but shifts around rather uncomfortably.

MARIO

Obviously she had Polish grandparents who taught it to her.

HELGA

That's right.

VICTORIA

I guess that makes sense.

HEIKE

Wait a moment, none of this makes any sense. Helga, are you even Swiss?

HELGA

Am I Swiss? What a question! Of course I'm Swiss. Look at my pin!

HEIKE

Prove it! Say that Swiss word nobody can pronounce. Küche-something

RANDY

Cooky-Cashtly!

VICTORIA

Googhi-googli.

MARIO

Chuchi-Chäschtli.

HELGA

I am the gameshow hostess, I ask the questions!

HEIKE

Verstehst du denn überhaupt Deutsch? Heisst du überhaupt Helga? Antworte mir!

Helga looks over at Mario uncomfortably.

MARIO

Leave off her.

HEIKE

What's going on here? Mario, how come you know so much about Helga? Are you two together or something?

VICTORIA

Cariño?

MARIO

I don't know anything about Helga. I only met her yesterday!

HELGA

Shush!

HEIKE

You two met yesterday? To do what? Share the answers with him? Is that why you're Super Mario at this game?

VICTORIA

Mario!

HEIKE

You will hear from my lawyer about this! (*Heike walks up to Helga and pulls the passport out of her hand.*) In the meantime, I will take this with me, because I obviously deserve it more than these three idiots. (*She opens it*) Wait, why is there a picture of Mario already in here?

Mario looks down at his shoes. Heike walks over to Randy and shows him the passport.

RANDY

Date of issue... 2012? Huh?

HEIKE

I think Mario has some explaining to do before we decide how many lawyers to set on him. And on Helga... If that is even her real name.

HELGA

It's not my fault. I am in the same boat as all of you. I want a Swiss passport just as much!

VICTORIA

You're not Swiss?

HELGA

No, and my name is not Helga. I'm called Magosia. Magosia Kowalczyk, okay? The Swiss don't even know how to pronounce my name.

RANDY

What are you doing hosting a gameshow for expats then?

HELGA

It's a job. It pays well. And if I'm honest, it's fun being sadistic. Also, it makes me look good in the eyes of the Swiss people. It's really difficult being an expat in this country!

VICTORIA

You don't say!

HEIKE

So the only real Swiss here is Mario. And he was always going to win this competition, as this passport proves. None of us ever had a chance. (*Reading his passport*) Mario Bellini, born in Mendrisio, Ticino.

VICTORIA

So you're not European, Mario? You're actually Swiss?

Mario nods his head uncomfortably.

VICTORIA

Marry me!

HELGA
No, me!

RANDY
No, me!

MARIO
One minute you want to set lawyers on me, the next you all want to marry me?

VICTORIA
Not out of love!

HEIKE (*sticking up her hand as if in class*)
I don't want to marry you.

MARIO
I'm not marrying anyone.

HEIKE
Who's joining me in suing the network?

Victoria looks at Mario uncertainly, then shrugs her shoulders at Heike.

HEIKE
Frau Häfeli? I mean Mag... What was it?

HELGA
Magosia.

HEIKE
Magosia, you'll help us sue this network, right?

RANDY
You're one of us now.

HELGA
Great. Well, I can hardly sue my employer. I want to keep my job.

MARIO
Can't we find a peaceful solution and make a lawsuit go away?

VICTORIA
I'll keep this a secret if you go on a date with me. I'm very good at secrets.

HELGA
It'll be Victoria's secret.

MARIO
You're blackmailing me with a date?

RANDY
I'm up for that! Take her on a date!

HELGA
Yeah... This could be fun. Can we all come along and watch?

HEIKE

I don't want to watch. (To the audience) What is wrong with these people?

MARIO

Isn't there something else we can arrange? I could bring you all some Italian wine and invite you over for my Nonna's recipe for authentic Spaghetti Bolognese.

HELGA

You're not Italian, Mario!

MARIO

Ah yes, I keep forgetting.

RANDY

Well I'm happy to drop a lawsuit if I get some of Nonna's authentic Spaghetti Bolognese.

MARIO

You are? Perfetto!

HEIKE

Randy, pasta isn't a good replacement for the passport you were promised!

RANDY

Like I was going to win anyway... Although, I did better than you.

VICTORIA

And I'm happy to drop the lawsuit if I get that date... *(breathlessly:)* Mario.

MARIO

Magosia, please help me.

HELGA

Obviously you don't have any choice, Mario. Food for Randy, a date for Victoria. I get to keep my job. Heike, what can we offer for you to make this go away?

HEIKE

You're all idiots. And I want none of this! In fact, why do I even want to be Swiss? I've been considering this for years, and this experience just helped me make up my mind: I am moving back to Germany!

VICTORIA

Oh, you're going back to Mönchengladbach?

HEIKE

No... Grenzach.

HELGA

Okay then, we are all satisfied! With this, I want to thank our four contestants for being as Swiss as they possibly could: by being flexible, finding a compromise and complaining about the experience. As for the audience, I would like to ask you to sign our non-disclosure agreements on your way out. This has never happened before on Swissify, and we plan on keeping it that way. Thank you very much.

GAMESHOW MUSIC - BLACK OUT - END OF PLAY

Note to the Semi Circle board: Helga's actual nationality can be adjusted to the actress