
Ticket to Birmingham

Scene: A railway station in England

Characters: Traveller
Rail employee

The traveller enters, clearly in a hurry

Traveller: Excuse me.

Rail employee: Can I help you?

Traveller: Yes. I want a ticket.

Rail employee: You want a ticket.

Traveller: Yes. I want a ticket to Birmingham.

Rail employee: You want a ticket to Birmingham.

Traveller: Yes.

Rail employee: Why?

Traveller: Pardon?

Rail employee: Why do you want a ticket to Birmingham?
Birmingham's a terrible place. If I were you, I
wouldn't go to Birmingham.

Traveller: I live there.

Rail employee: Now, Oxford's a really nice place.

Traveller: I live there.

Rail employee: Why don't you go to Oxford?

Traveller: I live there!

Rail employee: What? In Oxford?

Traveller: No! In Birmingham! I live in Birmingham, I was
born in Birmingham —

Rail employee: — and you'll probably die in Birmingham.

Traveller: Yes. No! And I want to go to Birmingham. Today.

Rail employee: Impossible.

Traveller: What?

Rail employee: It's impossible. It'll take you at least three days.

Traveller: Three days?!?

Rail employee: Yes, it'll take you at least three days — walking.

Traveller: Walking?!? I don't want to *walk* to Birmingham!

Rail employee: You don't want to walk?

Traveller: No!

Rail employee: Oh! I understand!

Traveller: Good.

Rail employee: You want to run.

Traveller: Run?!?

Rail employee: You'll get very tired if you run.

Traveller: Listen!

Rail employee: If I were you, I'd walk.

Traveller: I don't want to walk, and I don't want to run. I want to take the train.

Rail employee: The train?

Traveller: Yes.

Rail employee: You'll get there faster if you walk.

Traveller: Don't be ridiculous! I want a ticket for the next train to Birmingham.

Rail employee: The next train to Birmingham...

Traveller: Yes. When is it?

Rail employee: Pardon?

Traveller: What time is it?

Rail employee: **(Looks at watch)** It's half past three.

Traveller: No! I mean: what time is the train? What time does the train leave?

Rail employee: I don't know. I'll check. (**Picks up phone**) Hello?
Bert? Who? Oh, hello, Dave! It's Syd. I'm very
well, thank you and you? Yes. And your wife?

Traveller: Excuse me!

Rail employee: Yes?

Traveller: The next train to Birmingham!

Rail employee: Oh yes, Bert. Now, the next train to Birmingham.
When is it? Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.
Thank you, Bert.

Puts the phone down

Traveller: Well?

Rail employee: He doesn't know.

Traveller: He doesn't know?!?

Rail employee: No.

Traveller: Why not?

Rail employee: Because Dave doesn't work at the railway
station.

Traveller: He doesn't work at the railway station?!?

Rail employee: No. Dave works at the café across the road.

Traveller: The café across the road?!?

Rail employee: Yes. You should never ask Dave about trains.

Traveller: I didn't ask him! *You* asked him!

Rail employee: Bert is the one who knows about trains.

Traveller: Well – ask Bert then!

Rail employee picks up phone

Rail employee: Hello, Bert? Ah! Bert. There's something I must
ask you.

Traveller: Finally.

Rail employee: How's your wife?

Traveller: The next train to Birmingham!

Rail employee: Oh yes. Bert – the next train to Birmingham.

When is it? (**Makes notes**) Good, super, wonderful, fantastic, wonderful, super, good.

Thanks, Bert.

Puts phone down

Traveller: Well? When is the train?

Rail employee: The train, yes, well, there's a small problem.

Traveller: What's that?

Rail employee: They can't find it.

Traveller: They can't find what?

Rail employee: They can't find the train. It's lost.

Traveller: Lost?!?

Rail employee: Well, it's not exactly *lost*. They know where it is.

Traveller: Well, where is it?

Rail employee: It's somewhere between here and Birmingham.

Traveller: This is terrible!

Rail employee: Well, it happens every day. If I were you, I'd start walking.

Traveller: I don't want to walk.

Rail employee: Well, take a taxi.

Traveller: I don't want to take a taxi!

The phone rings

Rail employee: Hello? Oh hello, Bert! What? You've found it!

Wonderful? Where was it? At Platform 2.

Marvellous. OK. Bye!

Rail employee puts the phone down

Traveller: Well?

Rail employee: There is a train.

Traveller: Marvellous.

Rail employee: It's at Platform 2.

Traveller: Wonderful.

Rail employee: And it's leaving any minute now.

Traveller: Good. A second-class ticket to Birmingham, please.

Rail employee: Pardon?

Traveller: Can you give me a second-class ticket to Birmingham, please?

Rail employee: No, I can't.

Traveller: Why not?

Rail employee: This isn't the ticket office.

Traveller: What?!?

Rail employee: The ticket office is next door.

Traveller: Oh no!

Rail employee: What's the matter?

Traveller: I'm going to miss my train!

Rail employee: Don't worry. You've got plenty of time.

Traveller: Plenty of time?!? You said the train was leaving any minute now!

Rail employee: Yes, but there's no hurry.

Traveller: Why not?

Rail employee: Because I'm the driver.

Traveller: You're the driver?!?

Rail employee: Yes. The train can't leave without me, can it?

Traveller: No.

Rail employee: So ... you come with me.

Traveller: Platform 2?

Rail employee: No. Dave's café.

Traveller: Oh, right.

Rail employee: We'll have a nice cup of tea and a sandwich
before we go.

Traveller: Oh. OK

Rail employee: And I'll introduce you to Dave and his wife. I think
you'll like them.

They exit together