

EXT. PIMLICO, LONDON - DAY
 Posh million-dollar apartments in the city of Westminster.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY
 JAZZ MUSIC plays in this immaculate upscale abode. Straightening his tie in a mirror is well-attired actor BILL NIGHY. He takes his suit jacket off the hanger and checks his watch on the way down the hall.

HOUSEKEEPER
 Will you be home for tea, Mr. Nighy?

BILL *rather*
 It's going to be a short meeting. Very short.

INT./EXT. BLACK CAB - Day
 Bill rides in ~~the~~ back of ~~the~~ taxi. He stares off in deep thought, unaware his star-struck cabbie is watching him in the rearview mirror.

CABBIE
 Pardon me, sir, but I'd be remiss if I didn't say how much I enjoy your performances.

BILL
 Most kind. Thank you.

CABBIE
 Forgive my forwardness, sir, but when's your next film due out. It's been a while since your last picture. *Innit.*

nearly
 BILL
 Not long enough.

CABBIE
 How's that, *sir? Guv?*

BILL
 Do you enjoy your work?

CABBIE
 Enjoy? It has its highs and lows. I mean, it's driving. Waiting. Driving some more. I don't know there's all that much to like or dislike.

BILL
 Is this what you wanted to do? As a lad?

CABBIE
 My heart would break in two if I met a child what wanted to be a cabbie when he was grown.

BILL
 You may have missed your calling as a poet.

** You should recognize Bill, since he was playing the character Talbot.*

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE * DAY

Bill follows a waitress across the terrace to a table occupied by a middle-aged woman arguing with someone on her phone. This is Bill's agent PENELOPE WILSON.

PENELOPE

I don't care if he won the bloody Oscar. The only way he's passing for thirty is with a lethal dose of botox or a time machine. Pip? Pip. My eleven-thirty's arrived. Give him all my love. Keep pushing the King Lear script. Ta!

WAITRESS 3

Beverage to get you started?

Bill waives the waitress away and sits.

PENELOPE

Nonsense, he'll have champagne.

BILL

Tea will suffice.

PENELOPE

Bill!

BILL

Penelope.

PENELOPE

You're looking dapper as usual.

BILL

Fresh enough to play Lear?

PENELOPE

Pish-tosh. You're far too young to play such an old geezer. Look at those cheekbones. What I wouldn't give**

BILL

Really you needn't--

PENELOPE

Have I got the project for you, Billy Boy.

BILL

Promised myself I would keep this brief.

PENELOPE

Hold that thought.

Penelope digs through her messenger bag and comes up with a script on heavy cotton paper that looks to have been typed on an old manual typewriter. The margins are filled with hand-scrawled notes in pencil and several shades of ink.

When Penelope glances up to hand Bill the script, he's compulsively scratching his forehead.

PENELOPE

Uh-oh. What's wrong?

Bill realizes his tell and stops scratching.

BILL

What on Earth is that?

PENELOPE

Your next script.

BILL

Did they deliver it via Pony Express?

PENELOPE

Unconventional, perhaps. But wait'll you read it.

BILL

That's what I'm trying to tell you. I don't think I will be ... that is, I'd rather not--

PENELOPE

Two words: Sunset. Boulevard.

BILL

Believe that's already in production.

PENELOPE

Gloria Swanson's swan song. And one of the greatest movies of all time.

BILL

I'm very happy for her and wish her all the best.

PENELOPE

I know. I know. We've been here before. Remember what you said to me before "Living" ...

BILL

I don't know--why am I paying you fifteen percent?

PENELOPE

Hilarious, William. Look, give it a read. If you don't love it in the first five pages, I'll write your retirement letter myself. Patrick Stewart's been dying for a role like this.

BILL

Patrick?

→
oh, she knows how to push his buttons.