

PENGUIN READERS



Dino's Day in London

Stephen Rabley



Tommy Grant is a taxi driver in London. He works for TOP TAXIS.

One day Tommy's boss, Sam, telephones him. It is very early in the morning.

"Tommy," says Sam. "Can you be at The Ritz hotel at 9.00 o'clock?"

"Yes," says Tommy, "but why?"



Sam and his wife are having breakfast with their children, Billy and Katy. "Gloria Brash is in London," says Sam.

"Gloria Brash!" says Tommy. "The film star! Where do you want me to drive her?"

"Not *her*," says Sam. "*Him*. Her 12 year-old son Dino wants to see London today. His mother's working."



"There's a letter for you at The Ritz. There's £50, too. That's for Dino."

"£50 for one day in London!" says Tommy. "That's a lot of money."

"I know," says Sam. "Be *very nice* to the boy, Tommy, and don't be late."

"You know me," says Tommy. "I'm always early."



It is 8.45. Tommy is at The Ritz fifteen minutes early.
He goes to the desk.

"I'm from TOP TAXIS," he says. The woman behind the desk gives him the letter and the money. The letter says, 'It's Dino's first time in London. Please take him to *all* these places (1) Buckingham Palace (2) Harrods (3) the British Museum.'



"OK," thinks Tommy. "Now, is Dino here? I know I'm early, but . . ." He sees a boy in a chair.

"Hello," he says. "Are you Dino?"

"That's me," says the boy. "Are you the driver from TOP TAXIS?"

"Yes," answers Tommy. The boy stands up.

"OK," he says. "Let's go."

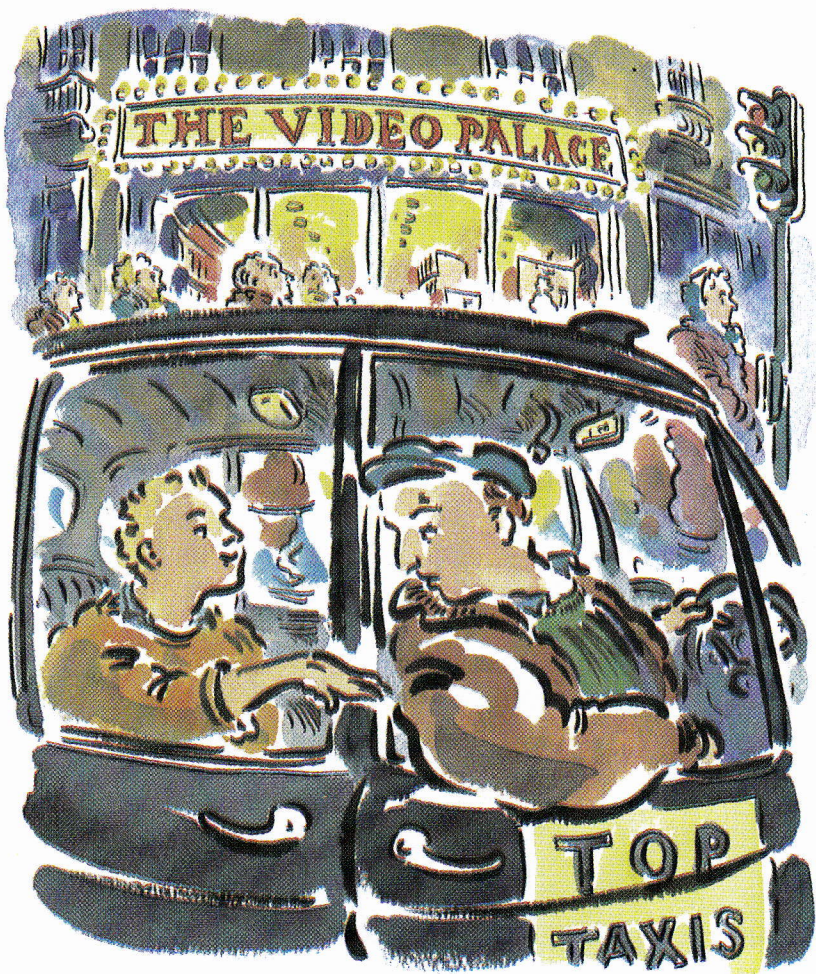


First, Tommy drives to Buckingham Palace – the home of the Queen. He stops the taxi.

“What are you doing?” asks Dino. “I don’t want to see this old place.”

Tommy looks at him. “But I . . .” Then he remembers Sam’s words: ‘Be *very nice* to the boy.’

“OK, Dino,” he says. “Where *do* you want to go?”



Five minutes later Tommy stops the taxi again. "Is this the place?" he asks. "That's right," answers Dino. "Can I have £20, please."

"But I don't think your mother..."

"I want £20. *Now!*"

Tommy gives Dino the money. Then he sits in the car and waits. Three hours later, Dino comes back.



"Now, are you hungry?" asks Tommy.

"Yes, I am," answers Dino. "Very hungry."

Tommy drives to Harrods. "There's a very good restaurant in this shop," he says.

"I don't want to eat here!" says Dino. "I want to have lunch *there*."

"Where?" asks Tommy. He looks across the road.



Dino goes into the Big Burger Bar with another £20. He eats a mountain of food and drinks four milkshakes. Tommy eats his lunch in the taxi. "£20 for lunch!" he thinks. "I can buy a week's food with £20." He looks out of the window and eats another sandwich.

An hour later Dino comes out of the restaurant.



“Be *very nice* to the boy,” thinks Tommy. “Do you want to go to the British Museum now?” he asks.

“OK,” answers Dino.

Tommy looks at him. “Yes?!” Tommy is very happy. He drives to the British Museum and gives Dino £10.

“Thanks,” says Dino. “Wait here.” Then he goes into a cinema across the road from the museum.



At 4.15 Dino comes out of the cinema. Tommy is sitting in the cab. He is very angry.

“Where – do – you – want – to – go – now?” he asks.

“Oh, back to The Ritz, I think,” says Dino. “I’m tired and I want to have a bath before dinner.”

“Good,” thinks Tommy.

Tommy starts the car again.



At 4.30 Tommy stops in front of the hotel. "Here we are," he says. He opens the door for Dino. Then he sees a beautiful woman in a very expensive coat. She is walking out of The Ritz and she is looking at him.

"I know that woman," thinks Tommy. Then he remembers. "Of course, it's Gloria Brash!"



"Are you the man from TOP TAXIS?" asks Gloria. "Yes," says Tommy. "Come with me," says the film star. She walks back into the hotel. There, Tommy sees a boy sitting in a chair. He looks very sad.

"This is Dino," she says.

"But, but . . ." Tommy can't speak.

"I am *very* angry," says Gloria.



Tommy looks at the boy, at the film star, and at the young boy again.

"But this *can't* be Dino!" he says.

"Young man, I know my son!" answers Gloria. "Now, where is my £50?"

Tommy's face goes white. He looks out of the window. His taxi is there, but 'Dino' is not.



It is 5.00 o'clock in the afternoon. Tommy's boss, Sam, is at home. He and his wife are having a cup of tea. The door opens and their son, Billy, walks in.

"Hello, Billy," says Sam. "Good day at school?"

Billy looks very happy.

"Yes, thanks," he says. "*Very* good."