

DRIVING WITH TIM

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January 2022

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INT. CAR - DAY

This cramped, little car has known better days. Right now, it's at a stop in an ALLEYWAY. In the driver's seat is CARRIE (20s) - a fresh-faced young woman with the frantic look of someone about to take an exam they're ill-prepared for.

Carrie is struggling with something under the wheel, which is making loud plasticky noises. UNTIL--

It FLIES out of the small plastic wrap and she catches it in the air. In her hands, we discover an AIR FRESHENER. It's a multicolor palm tree - think *Claire's* levels of tacky.

Carrie hangs it onto the rear-view mirror. She looks at the trinket, a childish look of satisfaction in her eyes. Then she catches a glimpse of her face. She takes a deep breath.

Carrie starts nervously putting her hair in place, patting it down. Suddenly, she feels a clump in the back.

CARRIE

Oh for goodness's sake.

She LUNGES for the glove box, takes out a travel HAIRBRUSH and, with a few strokes, takes the knots out. Once she's done, she settles back in her seat with a sigh.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Come on, calm down.

She glances at the brush and seems to have an idea. She takes it up to her mouth, holding it like a microphone. She clears her throat and starts talking to someone who isn't here.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

So, Mr--Sir Timothy, I.. erm.. how..

(a Eureka moment:)

How was working with Laurence Olivier?

She hands the "microphone" to the invisible interviewee. She nods, as if listening to an answer.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Fascinating. So would you say you did a better Hamlet than he did?

(an awkward laugh)

Kidding, just kidding!

She clears her throat again, and seems to think for a small moment. Carrie sits up, a more determined look in her eye, a sense of something lurking behind the juvenile awkwardness.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Really, though, it's just you seem to have a very fixed idea of what you like don't you? 'Cause in all the interviews I've seen, I--

SWISH - the passenger door OPENS. Carrie finds herself facing the intruder, frozen in her interviewer position. A seventy-something man, elegantly draped in a big coat is staring at her, uncertain. Carrie's eyes widen.

She's facing SIR TIMOTHY - award-winning actor and her passenger. Before she can utter a single word:

SIR TIMOTHY

(with the poshest nonchalance)

Are you the PA?

Still stunned, Carrie just frantically nods. Sir Timothy couldn't be less impressed.

SIR TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

My bags are by the boot.

He closes the door and heads towards the back seat. Shaking out of her shock, Carrie lunges for the door, awkwardly leaning across the passenger seat.

CARRIE

I'm sorry, but you can't really get to the back seat! See, you'd need to lower the passenger seat here but it's broken right now, 'cause..well, funny story really, my mum was driving the car the other day and..

Carrie realizes she's rambling and stops under Sir Timothy's unchanged, intimidating gaze. She notices the brush still in her hand and hastily throws it in the back.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

I'll get the bags.

Sir Timothy just stares on.

INT. CAR - DAY - LATER

Sir Timothy is settled in the passenger's seat as Carrie drives. He gives an intrigued WHIFF. Then his eyes come across the air freshener. He raises a phlegmatic eyebrow.

But his contemplation is soon interrupted.

CARRIE

(failing to fake cool-headedness)

Shouldn't be more than three hours to get to the hotel! And it's really close to the set so that's convenient! Oh and I think there's a pool--

SIR TIMOTHY

My agent's sent all the details.

Carrie nods frantically. They STOP at a red light. She looks for words.

CARRIE

My name's Carrie by the way.

Sir Timothy is looking out the window; he gives the shadow of a nod typical of the older gentleman who doesn't have to care anymore. An embarrassed silence from Carrie - saved by the light turning GREEN again. She drives on.

INT. CAR - DAY - LATER

Sir Timothy has fallen asleep. Carrie awkwardly glances at him. Sounds of TRAFFIC surround the car as Carrie nervously strums the wheel. Suddenly, she BOLTS and HONKS at something.

CARRIE

HEY! What d'you think you're doing you wanker?!

Sir Timothy JOLTS AWAKE. Realizing her blunder, Carrie turns to him:

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Oh my god, I'm so sorry! It's just, the traffic, I didn't expect--  
(surprised again and honking:)

HEY!!

(to Sir Timothy:)

Sorry, sorry!

SIR TIMOTHY

(drowsily)

Those mopeds, they think they own the road, don't they?

CARRIE  
Exactly! It's like the rules don't  
apply to them!

Sir Timothy looks outside the window.

SIR TIMOTHY  
Why are we stuck in the West End  
exactly?

CARRIE  
Well, the sat-nav said--

SIR TIMOTHY  
Ah, but you can't expect a mere  
machine to understand the ineffable  
chaos of London traffic now, can  
you?

CARRIE  
Guess not.

SIR TIMOTHY  
You'll want to take a right here.  
(off Carrie's uncertain  
look, annoyed:)  
Trust me, I know my way around  
Soho.

CARRIE  
Right, of course.

Carrie turns the wheel and engages into the street. But she's  
welcomed by a HONK - braking, she sees too late that it's a  
one way road, and they're going in the wrong direction.

CARRIE (CONT'D)  
Oh no, they must have changed the  
system.

The other driver HONKS again.

CARRIE (CONT'D)  
Alright, alright, keep you hair on.

Carrie struggles to manoeuvre out the way.

SIR TIMOTHY  
Go into that entrance way there,  
you can reverse out.

CARRIE  
Are you sure?

SIR ANTHONY  
 (impatiently)  
 Yes, yes.

She turns in.

CARRIE  
 Where are we?

SIR TIMOTHY  
 Bolton Theatre. What's left of the  
 old stage door, anyway.

The place does look somewhat in disarray. Carrie notices Sir Timothy's lingering eyes.

CARRIE  
 Did you perform here?

SIR TIMOTHY  
 A few lifetimes ago. *Macbeth*.  
 Princess Margaret was in attendance  
 for the premiere. A sold out run.

CARRIE  
 That must have been amazing.

SIR TIMOTHY  
 It was.  
 (pause)  
 We better move on.

CARRIE  
 Right, yes.

Carrie reverses out of the entrance way and goes down the road in the correct direction. A few moments silence.

SIR TIMOTHY  
 My apologies. For the misdirection.

CARRIE  
 (surprised)  
 That's okay. I bet you were right  
 about the road, they've just  
 changed the direction.

She smiles positively at him. He almost smiles in return.

CARRIE (CONT'D)  
 It must have been incredible,  
 performing for all those people.

SIR TIMOTHY

Of course, I didn't do it for the acclaim.

CARRIE

No, no, that's not what I meant-- I'm sorry. It's just.. Reciting all those powerful lines every evening, and each time in a slightly different way, I'm sure it's--

SIR TIMOTHY

Quite unique, yes.

CARRIE

Do you miss it?

SIR TIMOTHY

Everyday.

He says this more to himself. Clearly worried she's upset him, Carrie tries to make things more positive.

CARRIE

Well, I guess films are another great challenge. Because in the end, they only keep the one take, so you have to find the perfect way to say what the writers give you, right?

Sir Timothy frowns slightly.

SIR TIMOTHY

(slowly)

Yes, I suppose.

CARRIE

And then you have millions of eyes watching it, even after you're gone. Your words live on in people's minds forever!

Sir Timothy doesn't answer. Something crosses his eyes. A sense of WORRY.

SIR TIMOTHY

We need to pull over.

CARRIE

What? Are you alright?

SIR TIMOTHY  
 (looking at her)  
 Pull over. Now.

CARRIE  
 Er.. okay, okay.

Carrie looks around herself, panicky. Looking out to find a spot, she keeps glancing over to check on the old man. Sir Timothy is looking out his window. She looks back ahead, visibly confused.

INT. CAR - DAY - MINUTES LATER

The car is at stop again in a tiny street. Sir Timothy sifts through a bunch of PAPERS. He looks somewhat older with the TINY READING GLASSES now hanging on the brink of his nose.

Carrie has a similar bundle in her hands. She nervously clears her throat and starts:

CARRIE  
 (stilted)  
 We won't find shelter in this  
 galaxy. Who can we call upon now?

She looks at the actor as the line hangs in the air. Sir Timothy heaves a deep sigh. He is staring at the script.

SIR TIMOTHY  
 (not looking up)  
 What do you think of this script?

Mouth agape, Carrie seems to hesitate for a split second. But not much more.

CARRIE  
 (excitedly)  
 Well.. It's.. You know, it's very  
 creative, inventing a whole bunch  
 of new alien races like that. But..  
 (taking a leap:)  
 But it's more than that, isn't it?  
 Your character, he's asking his  
 people to take responsibility for  
 what they're doing to the galaxy.  
 It's about looking back on history  
 and asking if you've been doing the  
 right thing and, if you think about  
 it, right, it sort of evokes...

Carrie trails off as she crosses the actor's surprised look. But he doesn't ponder this for too long.



SIR TIMOTHY  
Feed me the line again.

After a slight, surprised delay, Carrie goes nervously looking through the pages.

INT. CAR - DUSK

The car is moving again. The decor has changed - we're OUT OF LONDON. But the scripts are still out. Sir Timothy has his neatly in his hands; Carrie's is spread out between her knees and the gearshift.

She massages her exhausted face. They've evidently been at it for a while now.

SIR TIMOTHY  
(reading off the script:)  
...but if the Solar Council will  
not hear us, I'm afraid we are  
doomed.

Sir Timothy sighs, unsatisfied.

CARRIE  
Do you want to go over it again?

SIR TIMOTHY  
No.

CARRIE  
(hopeful)  
Maybe a break--

SIR TIMOTHY  
(quickly sifting through  
the pages)  
I need to do the monologue.

Carrie frantically goes through the pages on her lap, simultaneously trying to keep her eyes on the road. Sir Timothy clears his throat.

As the monologue advances, we progressively ZOOM on the actor's face.

SIR TIMOTHY (CONT'D)  
What now? We've asked everyone.  
Three solar systems, ten planets,  
twenty nations.  
(pause)  
Perhaps..perhaps it is too late for  
Xandor.

(MORE)

SIR TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

We never thought of ourselves as beggars. We took, without asking, at every turn.

(lifting his eyes from the script:)

But now there is nothing left to take, now the world is turning its back on us, all we can do is ask for mercy. Like our enemies used to do. My friends, the truth is, we're not conquerors anymore. I'm not a leader anymore. Only an old fool. Look at me! Crumbling under the weight of mistakes past. Pathetically trying to stop the inevitable.

(a brief pause)

Is it how it ends? Am I too late?

WIDE ANGLE - Carrie is taken aback by the acting she's just witnessed. But Sir Timothy's eyes are still lost in the void.

SIR TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

What am I doing?

CARRIE

(glancing at the script, then at him)

Is everything--

SIR TIMOTHY

(showing the script)

It is how it ends! Some low-budget indie nonsense and a career spanning sixty years is over.

CARRIE

What do you mean?! You were brilliant!

SIR TIMOTHY

Brilliant!? My Hamlet was sold out for six months straight in 1986 and now what?! Now, I'm the leader of the Martians!

CARRIE

They're not just "Martians", there's a whole story behind--

SIR TIMOTHY

And the only jobs I'm offered are the ones where a child picks me up in their mother's run-down car!

CARRIE

We actually share the car, but--

SIR TIMOTHY

(tearing the script in  
two)

I don't CARE!

A shocked SILENCE from Carrie as she looks at the shreds of paper flying around. She doesn't know what to say, still too polite to be rude, but offended by the action.

CARRIE

Someone worked really hard on that script. Just because you've been at this a long time doesn't give you the right to be so...disrespectful.

Carrie can't believe she's just said that - she looks back at the road, evading Sir Timothy's gaze. He looks slightly embarrassed at her words, but won't back down.

SIR TIMOTHY

The only thing I'm disrespecting is the craft of acting.

CARRIE

But those stories work, they're what people want!

SIR TIMOTHY

I'm not here to please "people".

CARRIE

But you'll happily brag about a sold out *Hamlet*.

SIR TIMOTHY

That's incomparable! I'm talking about theatre! Shakespeare!

CARRIE

..Which no one cares about anymore!

SIR TIMOTHY

And look where that leads us!

The actor picks up some of the fallen SHREDS of script around him with emphatic contempt, a bit more ridiculous than he seems to realize. Carrie glances at him.

CARRIE

You're just scared, aren't you? The great Sir Timothy, terrified of the unknown!

SIR TIMOTHY

Ah! Scared?! Such hollow words from a generation who stays burrowed at their parents' well into their thirties.

CARRIE

Excuse me, you don't know anything about me, "Sir". Maybe I do live with my mother but do you have any idea how hard it's become to get a job?!

SIR TIMOTHY

See, that's exactly what I'm talking about! Lazy, no resilience, no--

CARRIE

Don't give me that, I'm sick of it. Day after day applying to shitty and shittier jobs, getting rejection after rejection-- and that's when I'm lucky enough to hear back. You know, I know for a fact that I can do this. But I just keep losing out to that intern who knows the right person or that rich kid who can actually afford the bloody driving test. It's exhausting! I'm exhausted.

Oops. Carrie realizes her mistake too late. She turns to face a dumbfounded Sir Timothy - eyes way off the road.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Wait, I can explain--

A HONK from another car. Carrie turns to face the road and BRAKES in a panic.

INT. CAR - DUSK - MINUTES LATER

Sir Timothy is now driving the car. Carrie sits shamefacedly in the passenger seat. She sweeps a few remainders of script off it then furtively glances at the actor.

CARRIE  
 (small voice)  
 I do have my provisional.

Sir Timothy makes an unimpressed sound. There is silence for a few moments.

CARRIE (CONT'D)  
 I'm sorry for what I said about *Hamlet*. I saw it at the Globe last year. It was really good.

A small pause. Eyes on the road, soberly, the actor answers.

SIR TIMOTHY  
 Yes, it was quite remarkable. I didn't think much of the Claudius though.

CARRIE  
 I thought the same! Too many hand gestures!

She waves her own hands around manically, then laughs to herself. Sir Timothy manages a faint, restrained chuckle.

SIR TIMOTHY  
 I will say, it does take some nerve to lie for a job.

CARRIE  
 I didn't lie! Not really.

SIR TIMOTHY  
 See, that's what I told myself too the first time I tried for *Macbeth*.  
 (off Carrie's frown:)  
 I said I could do a Scottish accent.

CARRIE  
 Could you?

SIR TIMOTHY  
 God, no. I sounded like an Irishman trying to speak Hindi.

Carrie can't refrain a laugh. Sir Timothy smiles.

CARRIE  
 (in an attempt at a Scottish accent)  
 It can't be that hard can it?

SIR TIMOTHY

I think you just answered your own question.

Finally, they laugh together. But eventually, Carrie sobers, still aware of the situation.

CARRIE

I'm sorry. I don't know what I was thinking. It's the only job offer I've had. I panicked a bit.

SIR TIMOTHY

Not as much as you did when you found out you'd be driving me I bet.

CARRIE

I nearly had a heart attack.

SIR TIMOTHY

No need. I'm nothing special. Not any more.

Carrie starts to laugh, a dry but genuine laugh. Sir Timothy glances her way inquisitively.

CARRIE

Pathetic!

SIR TIMOTHY

Excuse me?

CARRIE

Look at us. Pathetic!

Sir Timothy allows the mockery with a small smile.

SIR TIMOTHY

"Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows" - that's *Hamlet*.

CARRIE

I think it's *The Tempest* actually.

SIR TIMOTHY

No it's definitely *Hamlet*.

CARRIE

Right. Of course.

Sir Timothy thinks about it for a second.

SIR TIMOTHY  
 "Alas, the storm is come again".  
 No, it is *The Tempest*.  
 (looks at her)  
 You know your Shakespeare.

Carrie shrugs.

CARRIE  
 He's a great writer.

SIR TIMOTHY  
 Is that what you would like to do?  
 Write?

CARRIE  
 Maybe. I'm not sure. I'm not sure  
 what's possible. It all just seems  
 so... well, impossible.

SIR TIMOTHY  
 You're too young to be so  
 pessimistic.

CARRIE  
 And you're too old to delude  
 yourself with idealism.

Their eyes lock for a brief moment. Sir Timothy chokes on a laugh.

SIR TIMOTHY  
 The bloody cheek.

They whole-heartedly laugh together. When this newfound glee falls down, there's a sense of "what now?" Sir Timothy composes himself but he's open and relaxed now.

Carrie looks outside. WORRY passes her face. She gives Tim a sideways glance. He is impassive.

CARRIE  
 I know...I know you probably have  
 to tell someone. But, do you  
 think...do you think you could do  
 it at the end of the day?  
 (awkward pause)  
 I really don't want to have to tell  
 my mum I got fired before I even  
 stepped on set.

Sir Timothy looks at her, over the rim of his glasses, before looking back ahead. Carrie waits breathlessly. Something unspoken passes between them.

SIR TIMOTHY  
You will get your license?

CARRIE  
As soon as I can.

SIR TIMOTHY  
And you won't drive anyone until  
then?

CARRIE  
(dismissively)  
The car could break down.

SIR TIMOTHY  
Right. Well. Okay then.

Carrie relaxes, entirely relieved.

SIR TIMOTHY (CONT'D)  
As long as...

CARRIE  
Yes?

SIR TIMOTHY  
...you don't let on about me  
either.

Carrie is confused. Always the actor, Sir Timothy knows to let a short silence precede his next line.

SIR TIMOTHY (CONT'D)  
My license was revoked in 1998.

Carrie is gobsmacked. They both stare straight ahead, one in amusement, one in complete befuddlement.

Carrie catches a glance of herself in the rear-view mirror, behind the air freshener. She lets out a disbelieving chuckle. What a day.

**THE END**