Sam and the Queen

Sam and the queen: a play for two.

Student: I was chatting to Sam the other day.

*Tutor: Really?*

He told me a funny story.

*Did he?*

Do you want to hear it?

*Yes. Of course I do.*

It all happened on the Queen’s visit to New York.

*Did Sam go to New York with her?*

He’s one of her official drivers.

*Yes, I know.*

And Sam knows New York well.

*Yes. I know.*

He lived there for years.

*Yes, he did.*

Anyway, Sam was with the Queen in New York.

*As her official driver.*

That’s right.

*So what was so funny?*

Well, it wasn’t at all funny to begin with.

*Oh?*

Not for Sam.

*Oh?*

Not at first, anyway.

*Not at first?*

It looked as if Sam was in real trouble.

*Real trouble?*

For a while.

*Real doo-doo?*

Real doo-doo.

*But Sam is OK now?*

Yes.

*Not in the doo-doo any more?*

No.

*That’s good.*

Mmmm…

*But how did it all start?*

Well, the Queen had a couple of hours free.

*So?*

So she asked Sam to show her New York.

*In her limousine I suppose.*

Exactly. Her big limo.

*She asked Sam to drive her round.*

OK.

*And?*

Well, Sam agreed to do that.

*Right.*

But then, it all went pear shaped.

*Pear shaped?*

Really pear shaped.

*How do you mean?*

Well, the Queen wanted to drive.

*Drive the limo?*

Yes.

*Drive the limo round New York?*

Yes.

*The Queen wanted to drive round New York?*

Yes. She told Sam she was bored.

*Bored?*

Being Queen.

*Bored being Queen?*

She told Sam she never got to do anything for herself.

*I suppose you can see what she means.*

Yes. In a way.

*Just being the Queen might get boring.*

Someone always does the shopping for her.

*Yes, probably.*

And the cooking.

*Yes.*

Mostly.

*Someone does the washing up for her.*

I suppose so.

*Washes all the clothes.*

She has people to clean for her.

*Make her beds.*

Take the corgis to the vet.

*Give them their pills.*

She never even gets to drive a car.

*Suppose not…*

That’s what she told Sam, anyway.

*Wait a minute. I see where this is going!*

Yes. Exactly.

*Oh no!*

She asked Sam to let her drive the limo.

*Let her drive the limo round New York!*

For a laugh.

*A laugh?*

She said it would be a laugh.

*But surely, Sam can’t let the Queen drive the limo.*

Absolutely not.

*That’s out of the question.*

Especially on an official visit.

*If anything went wrong, Sam would be in big trouble.*

Deep doo-doo.

*So what happened?*

Well, the Queen went on and on.

*Asking him to let her drive “just for a little bit”.*

Yes. That sort of thing.

*Begging him to let her have “just one go”.*

That’s it.

*And Sam likes the Queen very much, doesn’t he?*

He does.

*So it was difficult for him to say “no”.*

Well, that’s just it.

*What? You mean he gave in?*

Yes. In the end he gave in.

*Let the Queen drive the limo?*

Yes!

*Around New York?*

Yes.

*Could she do it?*

Oh yes. She knows how to drive.

*What happened?*

Well, Sam says he went to sit in the back.

*And she sat in the driver’s seat.*

Yes.

*Was the Queen OK with that?*

Sam says she was as cool as a cucumber.

*Cool as a cucumber?*

Happy as Larry.

*I bet she was. This was an adventure!*

Sam says she moved the mirror and the seat until they were right.

*Cool as a cucumber!*

Put on her seatbelt.

*Started her up.*

Tried the gears.

*And set off!*

Exactly!

*What happened then?*

Well, at first, Sam says, she’s fine.

*Not too fast.*

No. Not at first.

*Staying cool.*

Nice and careful.

*Just driving along.*

No problem.

*Easy and nice.*

But then, she starts to get excited.

*Excited?*

Yes.

*You mean she starts to speed up?*

Yes.

*Uh oh!*

She’s swinging the limo all over the place.

*She’s going over the speed limit, right?*

Way over.

*What is Sam doing?*

He’s begging her to slow down.

*I bet he is!*

Begging her to stop and let him take over.

*What does the Queen do?*

What does she do?

*Does she listen to Sam?*

Not a chance.

*Poor Sam.*

Yes.

*He can’t do anything about it from the back.*

No. And it gets worse and worse.

*Sam is shouting to her to stop.*

But she doesn’t.

*No way!*

She’s enjoying herself.

*She hasn’t had as much fun as this for years.*

And then, they hear a siren.

*A police siren?*

Right behind them.

*A police car?*

Yes.

*He pulls them over, I suppose.*

You suppose right.

*Oops!*

Yes, exactly. Oops!

*What does the cop do?*

He signals to the Queen to pull over and stop.

*And he parks his car and comes over to talk to her.*

Yes.

*And Sam?*

He’s sitting in the back with his head in his hands.

*He’s in very deep doo-doo now!*

The deepest!

*Poor Sam.*

Anyway, the cop pulls out his notebook and comes to the driver’s window.

*He’s making a note of the car.*

Yes. Its number plate and so on.

*Then he bends down to speak to the driver.*

He does.

*And he sees it’s the Queen of England, I suppose?*

Not at first, says Sam.

*No?*

That’s what Sam says.

*He won’t have been expecting to see the Queen of England, of course.*

Not driving a limo like a bat out of hell, no.

*No.*

He asks her if she knows how fast she was driving?

*And she says something and he recognises her voice?*

I guess so.

*Oops!*

It dawns on him what he’s done.

*Yes.*

He’s pulled the Queen of England over for speeding.

*He must have been gobsmacked.*

Absolutely gobsmacked.

*Now he’s got a real problem!*

So he stops to think for a while.

*Give himself a little time.*

Time to work out what to do.

*Time to think.*

Yes.

*What does a New York cop do when he’s pulled over the Queen of England?*

Not the sort of thing that happens every day.

*No.*

So he looks into the back of the car.

*And he sees Sam sitting there.*

Yes.

*A very unhappy Sam.*

And he doesn’t recognise Sam as anyone famous.

*No. He’s just Sam.*

No help there.

*No. He still has to deal with the Queen of England.*

A big problem, for a New York cop.

*What is he to do?*

Exactly.

*This is a very tricky job.*

Yes. It is.

*So what does he do in the end?*

Well, he asks for some help from his boss.

*Help from his boss?*

Well, a bit of advice.

*His boss is the Chief of Police, I suppose?*

Yes.

*OK.*

He gets him on the phone. Sam heard it all.

*What did he say?*

Well, he started by telling the Chief that he’s pulled a car over.

*And the Chief probably said “Well, if they were speeding, you book them.”*

And the cop says “Yes, Sir”. Not very happy, though.

*The Chief says “If they were speeding, you book them. What’s the problem?”*

And the cop says “Yes, Sir”. But he sounds very unhappy.

*So the Chief says “What’s the problem?”*

I guess so.

*What did the cop say then?*

He said “There’s a guy in the back of the car.”

*And the Chief probably said “So what?”*

So the cop said “Well, Sir, I think this guy may be very important”.

*And the Chief said “How important?”*

And the cop said “Ummmm…”

*So the chief said ”Is it the mayor of New York?”*

And the cop said “No, Sir. More important”.

*So the Chief said “It’s not the President, is it?”*

And the cop said “Well no, Sir, it’s not the President.”

*And the Chief probably said “Thank God for that!”*

Yes. So the cop said “Sir, it could be someone even more important than that”.

*And the Chief must have said “More important than the President?”*

And the cop says “Maybe, Sir.”

*So the Chief says “Who is this guy?”*

And the cop says “I don’t know, Sir”.

*So the Chief says “Well, what makes you think this guy is so important?”*

And the cop says “Well, Sir, he’s in a big limo, and his driver is the Queen of England!”