

An old porter had been working for the railway for a very long time. He was standing in one of the big railway stations in London one morning, waiting for travellers to ask him to help them with their luggage, when he saw a small man running towards the trains, carrying a bag.

The porter watched the man for a few seconds, and then the man saw the porter. At once he ran up to him and said, 'Can I catch the 10:35 train to Newcastle-on-Tyne, porter?' He was breathing very fast, and he sounded worried.

The old porter looked at him for a moment and then said politely, 'Well, sir, I'd like to help you, but I can't answer your question, because I don't know how fast you can run along rails. You see,' he explained, 'the 10:35 train to Newcastle-on-Tyne left five minutes ago.'