

THE TRAIN

by Hank Schachte

(An excerpt)

PART 1

INT. TRAIN- DAY

A young-looking man in his thirties- the SON- is seated in the observation deck of the DOME CAR of a Canadian TRAIN. There is a yellow lined pad in his lap on which he is writing alternating with gazing out the window at the passing snowy landscape (white only).

A large black man- The PORTER- works his way down the aisle toward the SON. He bends to chat briefly with the OLD WOMAN and makes an entry in his little notebook along the way.

As the PORTER ARRIVES the SON turns from the glare of the window glancing up at the porter in the relative darkness of the car. The PORTER still holding the notebook smiles.

PORTER

Would you like first or second  
call for dinner?

SON

Which is better?

PORTER

(leaning in and speaking  
confidentially)  
Well I'd have to recommend the  
first. Sometimes they run out  
of things for the second.

SON

Okay- thanks.

PORTER

(standing back and making a tally in  
the notebook)  
Fine. You'll hear the bell.

The PORTER walks on.

At the end of the car the PORTER turns in time to see the SON get up with his pad and walk the other way going down the aisle alone— watches him turn and say casually over his shoulder to no-one:

SON

Remember going to Columbus with mother on the sleeper?

INT. DINING CAR— DAY

The MAITRE D' (an older white man) and the WAITER (black and somewhat younger and more severe than the porter) are talking with the PORTER near the vestibule.

WAITER

At first he didn't do it but now he's talking to himself all the time.

(shaking his head with anger or apprehension)

Talking to no-one.

PORTER

But he's not bothering anybody.

MAITRE D'

The other diners are beginning to stare. It is unnerving.

WAITER

Ya— well (BEAT) what can you do eh?

PORTER

Just make sure he isn't annoying the other passengers I guess.

WAITER

Or doesn't do anything worse.

The PORTER EXITS the dining car. When the door has shut behind him the WAITER turns confidentially to the MAITRE D'.

WAITER (CONTINUED)  
Guys like that give me the  
creeps. They're unpredictable.

MAITRE D'  
I'll tell them he's a famous  
actor rehearsing his lines.

At that the WAITER laughs.

INT. ROOMETTE— DAY

The SON is looking at the FATHER as he puts on  
his suit jacket. There is something wrong with  
his mouth.

FATHER  
Where?

SON  
(pointing)  
In the corner there. It's torn  
a little— little red line.

The FATHER rubs it thoughtfully with a finger.

FATHER  
Doesn't hurt.

SON  
You'd think it would sting.

The FATHER shrugs his shoulders.

SON (CONTINUED)  
Are you hungry pop?

FATHER  
No.

SON  
That's funny— you always used to  
be.

FATHER  
I still want lunch.

SON  
Okay but (BEAT) the food  
might....

(looking closely at his mouth)  
Well you better be careful  
eating.

The FATHER shrugs it off then picks up his  
camel's hair coat and they EXIT together.