

Hellbound Train

Written by
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WGA 2250387

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FADE IN:

EXT. BARREN PLAINS - LATE EVENING

The MOON rises over a barren landscape.

A massive BLACK LOCOMOTIVE races along a track, followed by a coal car, six passenger cars, a freight car and a caboose.

In the distance, a bridge spans a deep, dark canyon.

As the train rushes by, the PASSENGERS are at the windows screaming and crying in fear and terror.

The CONDUCTOR stands in the engine, grinning maniacally. His uniform neat, nothing out of place. A large Rottweiler - DEACON - sits obediently at his side, snarling.

CONDUCTOR

Soon, Deacon, we'll be there soon.

The train whistle SHRIEKS like a banshee, mixed with the CRIES OF THE PASSENGERS in the cars.

It rushes toward the bridge, iron and evil moving fast toward its destiny.

Half way across and the bridge collapses. METAL SCRAPING ON METAL. WOOD SPLINTERING. PASSENGERS SCREAMING. A MANIACAL LAUGH.

The train engine nose dives into the canyon as the cars fold on to each other like an accordion and crash at the bottom of the canyon.

The SMOKE clears and bodies from the train start melding into the ground. SCREAMING in pain.

The Conductor and Deacon walk out of the smoke unharmed, untouched, as if nothing happened.

The Conductor pulls out his pocket watch. Gives it a quick look. Snaps it shut.

And the train reconstitutes itself, rising up to the bridge as it becomes whole again.

ON THE TRAIN, zombie like undead make their way to the freight car, find a coffin and crawl in.

Injured passengers - wounds and broken bones healing as they walk and stumble - make their way to their seats and berths through the different cars.

The Conductor stands on the train track, Deacon at his side.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
All aboard!

He looks down at Deacon who morphs into a short, plug of a man.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
(sneering)
Let's see who's going to join us this run, Deacon. We could use some new blood.

He pulls himself up into the train engine. Deacon follows then changes back into a dog.

As the train starts to pull away from the bridge, we PUSH IN CLOSER to see the side of the TRAIN ENGINE -- S&H 663 in glossy, blood red letters.

LIGHTS from a small city shine in the distance.

OFF THE TRAIN WHISTLE

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON MERLIS BELL'S MOUTH OPEN in a big loud laugh

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

INT. TRAIN STATION -- MIDWEST -- EARLY EVENING -- LATE FALL

A SMALL GROUP of PEOPLE are gathered inside.

MERLIS BELL, a ponderous Black woman in her mid-50s, follows the big laugh with another.

MERLIS
I swear, Hal. You are the nicest. I told my daughter she better marry someone nice. Just too many no good nicks out there today.

HAL LAFLEUR, the twenty something white bridegroom, speaks with an ever present stutter. Everything about him conveys average.

Merlis is hanging on to his arm too close and too tight. Hal is trapped.

HAL
(stutters)
Mrs. Bell, I - I...

MERLIS
Mrs. Bell? Come on now, Hal. You just married my daughter. You're family now. You call me Mama. And we haven't gotten a decent selfie together. Come on, let's see your phone. Let's get a good picture!

Hal looks across the group and lands on JESSIE, his new bride. Beautiful in her post-wedding, honeymoon dress. He gives her a pleading look. One look at her and you'd wonder what she sees in Hal.

HAL
(mouthing)
Help me.

She grins and shrugs her shoulders like she can't understand him.

JESSIE
(mouthing)
Good luck!

Hal takes out his phone. Merlis gets in close.

MERLIS
Say cream cheese!

Hal feigns a smile, holds up his phone for the selfie and together...

MERLIS AND HAL
Cream cheese!

Hal starts to put his phone away but Merlis interrupts him.

MERLIS
Let's take a look.

Hal shows her the picture.

CLOSE ON the picture - Merlis and Hal smiling, nothing odd about it. Just awkward.

MERLIS (cont'd)
Beautiful!
(MORE)

MERLIS (cont'd)

(beat)

Now there was so much going on at the wedding that you didn't get to meet some of the family. Since you are so bound and determined to take my daughter on this newlywed train ride, you've got to meet cousin Lloyd.

(motioning to Lloyd)

Lloyd! Lloyd! Come on over here.

LLOYD, a 70+ year old, rail of a Black man stands in the corner furthest from everyone, forcing Merlis and Hal to come to him.

MERLIS (CONT'D)

(to Hal)

Cousin Lloyd's not much of a talker.

Merlis has Hal by the arm, leaving him no choice but to meet Lloyd where he stands.

MERLIS

Hal, this is cousin Lloyd. He used to work on the rails. I think you two could have a nice chat while we wait for your train.

Merlis leaves Hal with Lloyd before Hal can say or do anything.

Hal reaches out a hand to shake Lloyd's. When he looks down, he sees Lloyd's right one is missing.

LLOYD

Lost it. American River bridge wreck.

(pause)

I was one of the lucky ones.

He sticks out his left hand, and Hal takes it hesitantly.

HAL

That--that wreck was over six--sixty years ago.

LLOYD

You nervous son or you always had that stutter?

HAL

M-maybe l-little a b-both.

LLOYD

Hmm. How da you know 'bout that bridge wreck?

HAL
I l-like tr-trains. Al-always have.
(beat)
H-how old were y-you, on th-that
train?

LLOYD
Old enough to know better. Parents...
scared shitless.
(pause)
Ended up makin' trains my life
anyway.
(pause)
Give you a piece of advice?

HAL
Sure.

LLOYD
Stay away from the six-sixty-three.

HAL
Wh-why that one?

LLOYD
You get on, you don't get off.
(pause)
You have a nice life.

Lloyd abruptly walks toward the exit.

HAL
W-wait...

As Lloyd disappears into the small wedding party...

JESSIE (O.C)
Hi.

Hal jumps. Turns and sees Jessie behind him.

HAL
Je-Jesus, you sc-scared me.

JESSIE
Lloyd give you the creeps?

HAL
No. Well. Yeah, may--maybe a b-bit.

JESSIE
Before you know it we'll be on that
train and you won't have to think
about anything but me.

A TRAIN WHISTLE blows in the distance.

JESSIE (cont'd)
And I get to give your train whistle
a blow.

She leans in to give him a kiss, but before she can finish it...

Merlis joins the two of them.

MERLIS
(starts to cry)
God, look at you two. A married couple now.

JESSIE
Mom, you've got to stop crying.

Merlis wipes her eyes and gets serious.

MERLIS
You two just remember one thing.
Don't let nothin', I mean nothin'
get you down. No matter how bad,
no matter how awful. No matter
if the devil himself is spittin'
in your mouth, don't you ever
give up. Spit right back and tell
him to go fuck himself.

HAL
Th-thanks M-Mer -- Mom, we'll
remember that.
(to Jessie)
Speaking of...we still ne--need to
ch-check on our t-tickets.

MERLIS
(to the family
members in the
station)
Okay, everyone, let's let the
honeymooners get on their way.

Merlis gives her daughter one more hug.

MERLIS (cont'd)
A married woman. Bye, baby. See 'ya
in two weeks.

JESSIE
Bye, Mom. Love you!

Merlis joins the small wedding party as they filter out of the train station.

Hal and Jessie grab their bags and go to the Ticket counter.

ON LLOYD standing by himself watching the couple then walks away.

CUT TO:

TICKET COUNTER

The TICKET AGENT is a middle-aged man, head down, attending to the train schedule in front of him.

Hal and Jessie interrupt.

HAL

We-we have reservations for the, the train to San-San Francisco?

The Ticket Agent barely looks up.

TICKET AGENT

San Francisco? Train is held up in the Rockies. Won't be here 'til tomorrow. Maybe Monday.

HAL

(exasperated)

T-tomorrow. Why-why didn't we get a notice or anything?

TICKET AGENT

Network's down. Name?

HAL

La-Lafleur.

The Ticket Agent looks down a list.

TICKET AGENT

No one by that name. Hold on.

He pulls out another list. Looks at it carefully. Stops. Then finally gives them his attention

TICKET AGENT (cont'd)

Looks like you're in luck. You've been moved to the next train.

A TRAIN WHISTLE sounds in the distance, but closer.

TICKET AGENT (cont'd)
That one, in fact. It will board
fast. It's on a tight schedule.

HAL
We'll - we'll take it.

JESSIE
Wait a minute, Hal.
(to Agent)
That's really the only one?

TICKET AGENT
Two tickets left. Just for you.

HAL
(to Jessie, taking a
deep breath)
It's-it's our honeymoon. It could
take us to Timbuktu for all I- I
care. I- I just want to b-be with
you.

JESSIE
But we don't know what it looks
like. Where it's going...

TICKET AGENT
Here's yer tickets.

He slides two tickets through the window. Hal and Jessie
look at the tickets a moment without picking them up. Then
Hal takes them.

JESSIE
But, Hal. We could stay here the
night and catch the train we're
supposed to be on tomorrow.

HAL
Hey, w-we wanted adventure. We-we
wanted to be spon-spontaneous.

JESSIE
We also want to get back here in one
piece.

HAL
A r-romantic night on a tr-train or
sl-sleeping in your h-home with y-
your mom?
(beat)
One s-sounds k-kind of he-hell to
to me.

Jessie gives him a soft slap on the shoulder.

JESSIE

That's my mom you're talking about.

Hal takes her hand, gives her a kiss.

HAL

It'll be fun. Tr-tr-trust me.

JESSIE

All right. Let's be spontaneous.

HAL

Great.

He kisses her again.

As they walk away from the ticket counter, Hal looks at the tickets and stops.

HAL (cont'd)

(to Ticket Agent)

W-wait. The-these are only one way.

TICKET AGENT

Get your return tickets when you're ready to come back.

Now it's Hal's turn to look skeptical. The TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS AGAIN.

JESSIE

Come on, sweetheart. You wanted adventure.

She pulls him away from the counter, tickets in hand.

As they head toward the boarding platform, the Ticket Agent watches them leave. His attention goes to the chart he was looking at.

CLOSE ON CHART as we see 'Hal and Jessie LeFleur. He stamps on top of that. NO RETURN.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - SAME TIME

Hal and Jessie walk outside on the platform.

The TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS LOUDER. A CLOUD OF SMOKE AND STEAM BUILD at one end of the station.

Through the smoke comes the big, black train engine - the 663.

The oversized cowcatcher and the front of the train gives it a malevolent grin.

The engine chugs to a stop -- STEAM and HEAVY METAL grinding on IRON RAILS.

FROM HAL and JESSIE'S POV we see the blood red "S & H Railroad" on the side, but the smoke and steam hide the No. 663 from them.

Hal gives a long low whistle.

HAL

L-look at that. What a beauty. It's, it's an old steam engine. Th-those haven't run on commercial lines for, for decades. This might not be so bad after all. Look at her, Jessie. She's b-beautiful.

JESSIE

Should I be jealous?

HAL

What? No, no. Funny. It's just, just I-I always dreamed of being able to be on a train like this wh-when I was a k-kid.

JESSIE

Well, you get your wish and you get to have it with me.

The CONDUCTOR stands in a door of the first passenger car of the train ready to greet them.

CONDUCTOR

All aboard!

As Hal and Jessie step up with their bags and move past him, the Conductor looks at Jessie and gives her a leering smile, and tips his hat to her.

Jessie notices but quickly looks away. Hal doesn't notice it, the train has him mesmerized.

INT. TRAIN - SAME TIME

Hal and Jessie move down a narrow ornate hall. Red velvet wall paper. Mahogany doors and trim. Lantern style lights outside each sleeper compartment.

Hal checks their tickets.

HAL

We, we sh-should be in here.

They stand in front of a door with the number 1 on it.

HAL (cont'd)

This is s-so cool.

From the end of their car...

CARL (O.S.)

I want off the train.

Hal and Jessie turn around and see CARL, an old man, late 70s, dressed in suit and tie. His wife, ELIZABETH, is right behind him, wearing a nice blue dress and pearls.

ELIZABETH

Come on, Carl. You should be used to this by now.

CARL

Too used to it.

CONDUCTOR

Come along. You know the rules.

The Conductor gives Carl a withering look. Carl backs down.

CARL

Sure, I know the rules.

The Conductor notices Hal and Jessie watching.

CONDUCTOR

It's okay, folks. Nothing to worry about.

Hal and Jessie watch as the Conductor leads Carl and his wife down the corridor through the door to the next car.

JESSIE

What do you think that was all about?

HAL

Who-who knows? Maybe the se-senior
discount wasn't wh-what they
expected.

He opens the door to their berth.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN CAR BERTH - SAME TIME

As Jessie steps inside the room...she SCREAMS.

Deacon as a man is in the middle of the room making up the bed.

HAL

J-jesus. Wh-what the hell?

Deacon just stares at them. Bows and leaves.

JESSIE

Who was that?

HAL

Va-valet maybe.

He reaches to Jessie and puts his arms around her.

JESSIE

That was creepy.

HAL

Yeah, w-well, he-he's gone now. Y-you
okay?

Jessie nods and Hal lets go of her. He notices the room and takes it in. It's opulent by any standards of modern public train travel. Gold filigree. Plush bedding. Carved head and foot boards.

HAL (cont'd)

This-this is not what I expected. I-I
thought we'd be lucky to have enough
room to si-sit and lay d-down.

JESSIE

Looks like we've got room to do a lot
more than that.

Jessie is on the bed.

HAL
H-hold on Mrs. LeFleur. W-we need to
do th-this right.

He takes her hand and leads her back out the door.

JESSIE
Hal...

He sweeps her up and carries her back into the room.

HAL
Now w-we can ch-check out the b-bed.

He kisses Jessie, long and hard. As things start to get more heated between them...

The TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS followed by a lurch of the train. Hal and Jessie fall into the room and onto the floor. The lights suddenly go out.

Behind them, in the open door of their compartment, TWO YELLOW EYES, dog height, stop and watch from the darkened hall.

HAL (CONT'D)
Oww!

JESSIE
Are you okay?

HAL
Yeah, yeah, I th-think so.

The lights come back on and Hal has a cut on his forehead.

There's nothing in the doorway behind them where the two yellow eyes were.

JESSIE
You're bleeding.

HAL
I-I'll be fine.

JESSIE
Why're we m-moving already?

HAL
T-ticket agent said w-we'd b-be
leaving s-soon.

JESSIE

Let me see if I can't find the Conductor and get you something for that cut.

HAL

I-it's just a scratch, r-really.

JESSIE

I want to make sure. You don't have to be all macho-I-can-take-care-of-yourself now. I'll be right back.

EXT. TRAIN YARD -- SAME TIME

The train moves out of the train station.

The Conductor stands on the stair entry to the first passenger car. He touches the tip of his visored hat as they go past the Ticket Agent.

The Ticket Agent watches as the train disappears into the night and a deep cloud of smoke. The train gives one more LONG WHISTLE.

The Ticker Agent disappears as the smoke clears.

INT. TRAIN - MINUTES LATER

Jessie moves through the train from car to car. As she does, she passes other passengers who stand in the doorways of their berths staring at her...

Past an OLD LADY who gives her a toothless smile, holding a jar with some indeterminate contents.

Past TWO BIKERS WHO GRIN LECHEROUSLY AT HER.

Past a TALL MAN WHO STANDS RAMROD STRAIGHT WITHOUT MOVING.

Past THREE BUSINESSMEN WHO STAND IN THEIR DOORWAY, ONE OF THEM TALKING ON THEIR PHONE.

No one says anything to her, they just stare.

Then past a MAN with holding what seems like a BABY, crying like hell. As Jessie passes him, it's not a baby at all. IT'S A DOLL.

Then the Old Couple - Carl and Elizabeth. Carl's mumbling.

CARL

(To himself)

Got to get off before it's too late.
Got to get off before it's too late.

Jessie moves past him, looks behind her to try to catch what he's saying, not watching where she's going. Before she can turn back around, she bumps into the Conductor.

CONDUCTOR

(charming)

Looking for something?

JESSIE

(flustered)

Yes. Um... It's my husband. He cut himself. Not bad. I just need some bandages, that kind of thing.

CONDUCTOR

Let's see what we can do, Mrs. LaFleur.

He purposefully brushes up against her as he walks past.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

Follow me.

INT. HAL AND JESSIE'S CAR -- SAME TIME

Hal is at the sink checking the cut on his forehead.

HAL

Not, not that b-bad.

He wipes it one more time. No blood.

He steps out of the bathroom, finds a piece of paper and writes...

HAL (V.O.)

Jessie, went l-looking for you. Wait here if I-I'm n-not back when you are.

INT. DINING CAR - TRAIN

Hal enters the dining car and stops, too enamored with the way it's designed to notice the passengers in here giving him the same wordless, expressionless stare the others gave Jessie.

He walks past an empty table. A SIGN that says reserved for LaFleur.

As Hal walks past the small bar, FRANK, a middle-aged man, gets up to leave and spills a drink on him.

FRANK

(drunk)

Oh, Jesus, I'm sorry. I'm
really sorry.

Frank tries to wipe it off.

HAL

It's-it's all right, r-really.

FRANK

Hey, nothin' another drink wouldn't
fix. Huh, how 'bout it?

He waves his glass at the somber group looking at them.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You look like the kinda guy can liven
this place up.

HAL

No r-really, I don't drink.

FRANK

Don't drink. Jesus. That's a first. I
thought everyone on this train
drank...eventually. Only way I can
get through this trip.

HAL

Wh-what's wrong with th-this trip?

FRANK

My brother did that.

HAL

Wh-what?

FRANK

Stuttered. All the kids made fun of
him. 'Til I made them stop.

He goes blank as if seeing a ghost behind Hal.

Hal turns and sees Deacon as a dog staring right at Frank.

HAL

Wh-what did you do?

The Man thinks for a moment, then blurts out...

FRANK
(laughs)
Cut out their tongues and fed them to
my dog!

No one else in the dining car laughs.

Deacon stares him down and gives a low growl.

Hal stares at Frank, not sure what to do.

FRANK (cont'd)
I'm kidding! Jesus, what sicko would
do that!
(beat)
What about that drink?

ON Deacon who trots back to the furthest corner of the dining car where he can see everyone and everything.

HAL
I sh-should go f-find my w-wife.

FRANK
Married, huh. Trust me. They always
find you. Like they got a radar on in
their vagina 24/7.
(beat)
Relax. She can't go far. She's on the
train, and we're all headed the same
place.
(beat)
Come on.

Hal thinks about this then relents.

HAL
Wh-what the hell.

FRANK
Ha! Exactly!

Frank waves the BARTENDER over, a somber looking man with a bad complexion.

FRANK (cont'd)
(to bartender)
Give him the house specialty.

The Bartender nods and starts making the drink.

FRANK (cont'd)
So...what's your name?

HAL
Hal.

Frank starts to laugh.

HAL (cont'd)
Wh-what's so funny?

FRANK
Funny. Guess being new on the train
you wouldn't know.

HAL
Kn-know what?

A DROP OF BLOOD from Hal's cut falls on the counter. Frank and the Bartender both stop and stare as it falls in SLOW MOTION to the bar top.

FRANK
You're bleedin'.

HAL
Excuse me?

FRANK
There. On the bar.

He reaches out with his finger, but before he can touch it, the Bartender wipes it up with a towel. Stares at it for a moment. Then puts the towel in a bin behind the bar.

Hal grabs a napkin on the bar counter and presses it to the cut.

Frank goes blank, mesmerized by it. Then he snaps out of it.

FRANK (cont'd)
Maybe you should get that looked at.

HAL
My wife went to go find some bandaids
or something.

CARL (O.C.)
Hey Frank, time you took a break from
the booze, don't you think.

Frank turns and sees Carl behind him.

FRANK

Mind your own business, you old fart.
Not like you didn't do anything to
get on this train.

Everyone in this car stops what they're doing and stares at Frank.

FRANK (cont'd)

(laughs a bit
insanely)

What? You're all going to get
righteous on me? We're all headed the
same place. All you murderers,
thieves, child molesters, even you
Terence.

He points at TERENCE, a sullen man sitting at a dining booth
near the back.

FRANK (cont'd)

Fucking cannibal. Went all Hannibal
Lecter on his entire family!

CARL

That's enough, Frank.

Hal gets up to leave.

HAL

I sh-should find my wi-wife.

FRANK

(mimicking Hal)

Wh-where you going, b-boy? Can't get
off, H-Hal. Cu-cuz, that's where
we're headed. To Hell!

Frank laughs even more hysterically.

The Bartender puts a drink down in front of Hal.

FRANK (cont'd)

Speaking of, there's your drink. A
hellraiser. Get it. We're on a train
bound for hell and you just got
served a hellraiser!

Frank turns and downs his in one long swallow. He looks at
Hal still looking at the drink.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Drink up, boy-o. You're going to need
it.

He laughs even more hysterically as Hal heads for the door of the dining car. All eyes on him.

Before he gets to the door, Carl steps in front of him.

CARL
(under his breath)
You have to find a way off.

HAL
Wh-what do you mean?

CARL
He might be drunk, but he's right.
This is the Hellbound train, boy. You
have to get off before we reach the
bridge.

HAL
Wh-what?

Before Carl can say more, Deacon is at his side, baring his teeth and snarling.

FRANK
Oh, now you've gone and done it! And
I thought I was in trouble.

HAL
Wh-what's going on?

FRANK
Better get back to your missus, boy-
o.

Hal looks around the dining car.

All of the passengers in the car cower in their seats, staring down or out the windows.

Hal rushes to the door.

INT. TRAIN - STORAGE AREA - SAME TIME

It's a small storage area full of miscellaneous old tools, used and broken furniture. Everything is covered in dust and cobwebs.

The NOISE OF THE ENGINE IS OVERPOWERING.

Jessie is here with the Conductor.

He opens a small first aid closet. The inside is covered in dust and cobwebs. A BOX OF BANDAGES and a BOTTLE OF RUBBING ALCOHOL is the only contents.

A PISTOL is on a shelf in the closet.

CONDUCTOR

We don't get many injuries on this train. In fact your husband's is one of the first in a very long time.

JESSIE

Always a first for everything.

CONDUCTOR

Yes, there is.

JESSIE

What about that?

The Conductor follows her gaze to the PISTOL.

JESSIE (cont'd)

Get many people trying to rob the train.

CONDUCTOR

Not since I've been here. Some of the passengers like to use it for target practice.

JESSIE

Target practice? What would you be shooting at from a moving train?

CONDUCTOR

It's only if we stop. Coyotes, ground hogs mostly.

He takes out a handkerchief, wipes off the box of bandages and alcohol and hands them to her.

She reaches for them and the Conductor holds them a moment too long, his fingers touching hers.

On his eyes as they narrow and his mouth as it opens a bit. CLOSE ON HIS TONGUE just long enough to see that it's forked, like a snake.

Jessie has her eye on the bandages and alcohol and doesn't notice.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

Keep them...just in case.

As Jessie looks up, the Conductor closes his mouth.

JESSIE
What if someone else gets hurt?

CONDUCTOR
I know where to find you.

She walks quickly out of the car, unnerved.

The Conductor watches her and when she's gone, Deacon as a man steps out from the shadows.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Been a long time since I've had
a virgin traveling with us. A
very long time. Make sure they're
taken care of.

Deacon bows and heads out of the car.

INT. HAL AND JESSIE'S CAR - MINUTES LATER

Jessie opens the door into an empty room.

JESSIE
Hal?
(beat)
Hal. Don't do this to me.
I'm not in the mood.

Jessie looks around the suite. She finds Hal's note, reads it.

She HEARS A SCRAPING NOISE BEHIND HER as the door starts to close.

She whips around ready to hit at whoever is there.

Hal grabs her arm before she swings.

HAL
Hey, m-my head's already s-sore.

JESSIE
(relieved)
Thank, God it's you.

HAL
I was gone three minutes.

JESSIE
That Conductor.

HAL

Yeah?

JESSIE

Gives me the creeps. Like he's got something dirty on his mind when he looks at me.

HAL

St-stay away fr-from him. I-I'll talk to him.

JESSIE

No, maybe it's nothing. We've got a long way to go.

She realizes she still has the bandages and alcohol for Hal's head wound.

JESSIE (cont'd)

Oh, I did get you something for that cut.

Hal takes them into the bathroom and starts cleaning and bandaging his wound.

HAL

Th-thanks.

(beat)

Yeah, I had a w-weird con-conversation with the train dr-drunk.

JESSIE

The train has it's own drunk?

HAL

Yeah, th-this g-guy was lit. Kept talking about this b-being a train bound for h-hell. And and that old guy we s-saw. The, the one didn't want to get on, get on this this train? He-he told me...he told...

JESSIE

It's okay, honey. Take a break. Slow down.

Hal stops, breathes in. Waits a beat.

HAL

Carl told me we had to get off before - before the tr-train got to the br-bridge.

JESSIE

What bridge?

HAL

M-maybe the-the one that Ll-Lloyd
told me about. The 663 went over a
bridge. Nearly everyone was k-killed.

JESSIE

That's crazy.

(beat)

What're we going to do?

Hal puts his arms around her.

HAL

Pro-probably n-nothing... But I-I ha-
have a couple ideas.

He kisses her passionately, but before it can go anywhere
they are interrupted by a KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

HAL (cont'd)

F-for, god-godssake

Another knock. He opens the door.

CONDUCTOR

Hope I'm not interrupting.
(without waiting for
a response)

Dinner will be served shortly in the
dining car. You will be joining us?

Hal looks at Jessie.

HAL

Hadn't th-thought about it?

CONDUCTOR

Wish you would. The chef has outdone
himself. Besides as the newlyweds
you're the guests of honor.

Hal and Jessie exchange looks again.

HAL

Guess we can't let the chef down.

CONDUCTOR

Fifteen minutes then.

He gives a brief bow catching Jessie's eye as he raises his
head before bringing himself upright again.

He turns away, then stops.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Oh, and Frank, the drunk in the
dining car earlier? You won't have to
worry about him interfering.

HAL
What d-did you do with him?

CONDUCTOR
Took him to his berth and let him
sleep it off. Could take awhile.

He turns abruptly and leaves as quietly as he came, humming
"This Train is Bound for Glory."

HAL
L-looks like we're d-dining tonight.

JESSIE
How'd he know we were newlyweds?

HAL
I do-don't know...tick-ticket agent
told him.

He comes up to her close again...

HAL (cont'd)
L-let's g-go eat, see if, if any-
anyone else is-is crazy, then get
back here without d-dessert. We've
got a marriage to consummate.

JESSIE
Yes, we do.

She kisses him long and hard.

EXT. TRAIN - SAME TIME

The train shoots along a track, past a group of faceless
beings, reaching up from the ground. They SCREAM in pain.

The TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS and drowns them out.

INT. DINING CAR - LATER

Passengers are seated at finely set tables on either side of
the aisle. They talk quietly among themselves.

Deacon as a man stands at one door.

Carl and Elizabeth sit at a table by themselves.

A Young Punk in a mohawk and the Two Bikers sit together at a table.

The Three Businessmen Jessie saw earlier sit at another table.

The Tall Man stands by himself by a table.

Hal and Jessie enter and the car becomes quiet.

From behind them...

CONDUCTOR (O.C.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to introduce our honored guests...and newlywed couple -- Mr. and Mrs. Hal LaFleur.

A polite but enthusiastic APPLAUSE MINGLED WITH A FEW SUBDUED CHEERS FOLLOWS.

The Conductor steps between Hal and Jessie and leads them to the only empty table. Right across from Carl and Elizabeth

CONDUCTOR

I have the perfect table for you.

The Conductor pulls out the chair for Jessie. She sits down hesitantly.

Hal pulls out his own chair, perturbed.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

Enjoy your dinner.

He looks around as everyone is still silent, waiting on his signal.

With a nod of his head, the conversation at the different tables begins again.

HAL

W-well this is b-better than wh-what happened earlier.

JESSIE

Do you see your train drunk anywhere?

Hal gives the train a once over.

HAL

N-no.

(leaning in and
whispering)

B-but the Old Couple is r-right
across f-from us.

JESSIE

That old man? That's the one we saw
get on earlier. He told you we had to
get off?

Hal turns to look at Carl, gives him a smile. Carl grimaces
and starts rearranging his silverware.

HAL

Yeah, l-looks like they g-got him
calmed d-down.

JESSIE

He looks different, older or
something...so does she.

HAL

Pr-probably the li-light.

Carl looks around to see if anyone's listening, then leans
over to talk to them.

CARL

(to Hal)

Wait 'til you see me at the end of
the trip.

Elizabeth shoots him a disapproving stare.

HAL

(embarrassed)

S-sorry, I d-didn't think you
h-heard us.

Carl looks back at Elizabeth...then back to Hal. She gets up
to talk to the businessmen.

CARL

Did you tell your wife what I said?

HAL

Yeah, b-but it didn't m-make sense.

CARL

Why would it?

JESSIE

I want to hear it. This time from
you.

CARL

You two seem like a nice couple.
Don't know what you did to get on
this train. None of my business. Find
a way off...before it's too late.

HAL

What do you mean?

Carl is about to say more when Deacon shows up and pours
wine for Hal and Jessie.

Carl backs away and sits back at this table.

CONDUCTOR (O.C.)

I think it's time we toasted the
newlyweds.

Hal and Jessie pick up their now full wine glasses and raise
them hesitantly.

All attention goes to the Conductor standing in the middle
of the car.

CONDUCTOR

To the newlyweds.

The rest of the people in the train car REPEAT the toast in
unison.

Hal and Jessie both drink staring at each other over the rim
of their glass.

One of the Bikers stands up with a beer in hand.

BIKER

It's party time on the party train.
To the newlyweds.

He raises his beer glass and waits for Hal and Jessie to do
the same.

Hal and Jessie trade a "do we dare" look then hesitantly do
raise their glasses.

Everyone down there drinks and stares at Hal and Jessie,
waiting for them to do the same.

BIKER (cont'd)

Come on, man. It's your honeymoon.

Hal and Jessie trade a look, then reluctantly take a drink.

BIKER (cont'd)

All right! This train is bound for
glory, bitches. Another round!

TIME LAPSE

Everyone's gathered together singing a rousing version of
"This Train."

Jessie and Hal are at the back of the crowd.

Deacon and the Conductor watch from a corner.

TIME LAPSE

Another round of "This Train," Hal and Jessie leading
everyone in singing. Taking selfies with different
passengers.

All but the Conductor. Deacon accidentally photo bombs a
couple of them.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINING CAR -- TRAIN

It's the same car but it looks bigger now, even more people
are here.

Hal and Jessie dance together around the room. A WALTZ PLAYS
IN THE BACKGROUND.

Hal and Jessie keep dancing...around and around. Each time
they go around all of the passengers appear older.

Then they become walking and dancing wounded and dying --
oozing wounds, severed limbs, pieces of metal sticking from
bodies.

In the background, the waltz changes to "This Train..."

Then the passengers move toward Hal and Jessie -
threatening.

Hal and Jessie stop dancing.

They run through the train, but every car they go through...

DEAD BODIES come out of berths...

OUT OF DOORS...

IN THROUGH WINDOWS...

UP THROUGH THE FLOOR.

Until Hal and Jessie stop. Trapped between the last passenger car and the freight car.

They turn abruptly and face the Conductor coming at them, repeating the words...

CONDUCTOR

(singing)

This train is bound for glory. This train. Don't carry nothin' but the wretched and the unholy, this train.

Hal and Jessie freeze in terror.

HAL

Th-this way!

Hal grabs Jessie's hand. They leave the passenger car and are at the door of the freight car.

They look behind them.

The Conductor is still coming toward them. Taking his time. Deacon as a dog by his side, snarling, frothing at the mouth

Hal and Jessie open the door to the freight car.

INT. FREIGHT CAR - SAME TIME

It's row after row of caskets.

JESSIE

What is this?

HAL

C-coffins. It's n-nothing b-but coffins.

With that, each coffin starts to open.

Hal slams the door to the car, leaving them standing on the small platform between the freight car and the last passenger car.

Hal opens the door of the freight car.

HAL (cont'd)

C-come on. We ha-have to ju-jump!

Without giving Jessie time, he jumps from the train taking Jessie with him.

They fall on to the ground by the tracks.

HAL (cont'd)
Come on. This way.

They keep running to get as far away from the train as they can.

Then the train starts to move toward them.

Hal and Jessie run one direction and the train moves the same way.

They run another direction and the train follows. The track keeps changing as they run a different direction.

The train moves faster, bearing down on them.

The TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS, and keeps blowing. Not a warning sound to move, but a sound from hell telling them it's on its way.

The cowcatcher is at their tail.

Hal and Jessie fall in the middle of the tracks. Their SCREAMS overcome by the TRAIN WHISTLE.

The train rockets over their heads, one car after another.

Then a hand comes down from one of the cars and pulls them up into the car.

BACK IN THE DINING CAR

The Conductor has Hal and Jessie by the back of their necks like a couple of kittens.

CONDUCTOR
This train is bound for glory. And
you two are going with it. Whether
you like it or not!
(to Jessie)
And you, my dear, will find me way
more appealing than this stuttering
twit you mistakenly call a husband!

He laughs as he holds them both over the side of the train - past mile after mile of purgatory.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HAL AND JESSIE'S SLEEPER CAR - NEXT DAY

A MALE VOICE SINGS "This Train..." muffled. A sliver of light barely shines through a side of the drawn blind.

Hal and Jessie lie in bed fully clothed, wearing what they had on at dinner.

The sound of the male voice singing rouses Jessie. She rolls over too suddenly, and that brings her fully awake.

JESSIE
Oh, God. M-my head.

She nudges Hal.

JESSIE (cont'd)
Sweetheart, you awake.

From Jessie, muffled groan.

She crawls out of bed and goes to the window and draws the blind. It flies up out of her hand letting a blinding sunlight fill the room.

She looks outside and the brightness of the sun forces her away from the window...and wakes up Hal.

HAL
J-jesus.

FROM JESSIE'S POV WE SEE AN OPEN, BLANK PRAIRIE landscape lit by a midday sun. Not a sign of civilization anywhere.

Hal checks his phone.

HAL (cont'd)
Three o'clock. D-damn. G-god what a dream..or nightmare.

JESSIE
I had the worst dream...more like a nightmare?

HAL
Wh-what w-was it?

JESSIE
I dreamt all of the passengers were dead but alive. We were all dancing and singing, then they all became like the walking dead. Coming at us, the Conductor leading them.

HAL
D-did we end up in the f-freight c-
car?

JESSIE
Yeah?

HAL
Th-then we j-jumped and the t-train
st-started ch-chasing us?

JESSIE
Yes! Oh my God. It wasn't a dream!
(beat)
Hand me your phone!

Hal starts to hand it to her, but she grabs it from him.

JESSIE (cont'd)
I remember we took pictures.

She hurries through the photos.

FROM HER POV we see their wedding. Shots taken with her mother and relatives at the train station. Then...

Jessie freezes. TERROR ON HER FACE.

HAL
Wh-what is it?

She turns the phone to Hal.

FROM HIS POV as he goes through the photos.

PASSENGERS changing from human to maimed and alive.

DEACON behind some of them as a dog, then as a man.

Hal looks up from his phone.

HAL (cont'd)
Sh-shit! That wasn't a d-dream.

JESSIE
We need to get off this train!

HAL
Y-you're right. The o-old m-man was
r-right!

JESSIE
OK, how? Isn't there a cord or
something you pull to stop the train?
(MORE)

JESSIE (cont'd)
We get out and call for a ride to the
nearest town.

HAL
N-nearest place could be an hour or
m-more fr-from he-here.

JESSIE
I don't care. We need to get off!

HAL
Y-you sure you want to do this?

JESSIE
The last time I was this sure about
anything, I said I do.

The train lurches, throwing Hal and Jessie off balance.

JESSIE (cont'd)
Hal, why's the train moving so much
faster?

Hal looks out the window. FROM HIS POV, we see the bridge in
the distance.

He stumbles out the door of their compartment, grabbing hold
of a rail as the train rocks hard around a corner.

Carl and Elizabeth are outside their berth

CARL
I told you. Now there's no turning
back. It's gonna crash!

Jessie stumbles out of the doorway and grabs hold of Hal.

JESSIE
Hal, what's happening?

Hal takes her by the shoulders.

HAL
Come on. We need to get off before
the train reaches that bridge.

JESSIE
How?

HAL
I d-don't k-know, but if w-we st-stay
on, we'll d-die. Come on!

He takes her hand as they run to the end of their car.

They open the door to go to the next. A blast of wind blows them back.

The door to their car bangs open and shut. The train tracks rush below them. The bridge is coming up fast.

Above the noise of the wind and iron wheels on iron tracks...

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)
(sings)
"This Train is bound for glory..."

JESSIE
Hal, I don't want to die. We can't jump.

HAL
Come on. Let's get to the back of the train.

They rush through one car.

They pass two of the Bikers.

BIKER #1
Buckle up, Buttercup. It's gonna get rough.

BIKER #2
Want to hang on to something a bit bigger, sweetheart. It's gonna hurt when we hit the bottom.

They open another door...

PASSENGERS WANDER through the car behind and around them. Some silent. Some crying. Some laughing maniacally.

Hal and Jessie try to keep moving, but the train lurches to the side, throwing them against the car doorway.

Jessie points out the window. The bridge is CLOSER.

JESSIE
Hal!

HAL
Let's keep moving. The freight car might hold.

They exit the last passenger car and stand on the outside. The wind and noise deafening. Metal on metal like the cry of banshees.

The freight car door in front of them.

JESSIE

Hal, remember what's in here.

HAL

We don't have choice.

They open the door. It slams shut behind them. Leaving them in the dark.

Jessie SCREAMS.

JESSIE

Hal!

She turns to where she thinks Hal is and it's a live corpse reaching to her. She SCREAMS again.

HAL

He-here, my ph-hone. The fl-flashlight.

She takes his phone, turns the flashlight into the dark.

A BODY REACHING FOR HER.

She SCREAMS and nearly drops the phone but catches it in time.

JESSIE

Hal? What is this?

Before Hal can answer, from behind her.

CONDUCTOR (O.C.)

It's the Hellbound Train, dearie, and now you're our newest passengers.

They both turn to see the Conductor waiting at the door to the freight car. Lit only by the flashlight on Jessie's phone.

HAL

We-we shouldn't be on h-here!

CONDUCTOR

That's for me to decide.

JESSIE
Y-you're wrong!

CONDUCTOR
I make the rules. I don't make
mistakes.

The train lurches. There's the SOUND OF THE BRIDGE STARTING TO GIVE.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
First one's going to hurt like hell.

He laughs and disappears into the shadows.

Hal and Jessie back away into a corner of the freight car.

JESSIE
Hold me.

Hal puts his arm around her, holding her tight.

HAL
I love you, Jessie.

JESSIE
I love you, too.

OUTSIDE - the bridge collapses and the train falls into the canyon.

INSIDE - Hal holds tight to Jessie as they bang around the inside of the freight car. They fall into a wall and are knocked out.

OUTSIDE - The train is at the bottom of the canyon - steam coming up.

The Conductor stands over the unconscious bodies of Hal and Jessie. Deacon as a dog by his side.

He bends down and takes Jessie's face in his hands. Deacon as a dog by his side.

CONDUCTOR
Well, Deacon. Looks like they're on for good. Let's get the train back where it belongs.

JESSIE starts to come to. Sees the Conductor standing over her, then she passes out.

CLOSE ON HAL'S PHONE with a picture of the undead in the freight car.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - LATER

The 663 is in the station. Just like it was earlier.

The Conductor stands at the first passenger car.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

All aboard.

Jessie and Hal have their bags and move past him. The Conductor nods at Jessie, gives her the same uncomfortable look.

As they make their way down the passenger car...

CARL

(yelling at them)

I told ya to get off the train.

Hal and Jessie turn and see Carl coming toward them quickly. Elizabeth standing by the Conductor, unmoving.

CARL (cont'd)

Get off now! While you can?

The Conductor is at Carl's side.

CONDUCTOR

My apologies.

(to Carl)

Come along, Carl. Let me get you and your wife settled.

Carl tries to fight him off. The Conductor gives him a hard stare and Carl abruptly goes quiet.

As Hal and Jessie watch the Conductor lead Carl away, Elizabeth stops them before they unlock their door.

ELIZABETH

(whispering)

My husband...listen to him.

She hurries off.

HAL

W-well this is off t-to an interesting start.

JESSIE

Come on, let's get into our room. I bet I can make it more interesting.

Hal unlocks the room.

INT. TRAIN CAR

As the door opens...

Jessie SCREAMS.

Deacon as a man is inside the room (just like before). He gives them a vacant stare then scurries out.

JESSIE

Who was that?

HAL

Va-valet maybe.

He reaches to Jessie and puts his arms around her.

JESSIE

That was creepy.

HAL

Yeah, w-well, he-he's gone now. Y-you okay?

Jessie nods and Hal lets go of her. His phone drops out of his pants pocket

He picks it up and is about to hand it to her, but stops.

HAL (cont'd)

Jessie?

JESSIE

Yeah?

HAL

L-look!

He hands her the phone and a picture of the undead in the freight car is on the screen.

Jessie takes the phone and starts scrolling through the pictures.

The dinner party with the different passengers around Jessie and Hal.

Same passengers in states of decay and wounds.

The Conductor his arm around Jessie's shoulder.

JESSIE
(shaking)
Hal, what is this?

He takes her phone and goes through more pictures.

HAL
Oh, m-my G-god. The o-old m-man is r-right. We have to g-get off n-now. Come on!

JESSIE
Our bags!

HAL
Leave them!

The train lurches away from the train station.

Hal falls, but saves himself this time. The lights go out again, but Hal and Jessie are already out the door.

HAL (cont'd)
There's st-still time to j-jump if we can get to a door.

He takes her hand and they try the door at the furthest end of their car. It's locked from the outside!

They head back the other direction to the other door and just make it before it locks by itself behind them. They're standing on the platform. The train is picking up speed.

They look back and Carl is at the window of the door. He mouths JUMP.

HAL (cont'd)
(to Jessie)
G-give m-me y-your ph-phone.

JESSIE
My phone?

HAL
Tr-trust me.

She hands it to him. He turns on the video record button and turns it to him to take a selfie.

HAL (cont'd)
What-ever y-you d-do. Don't st-stay on the tr-train!

They look behind them and the Conductor now stares at them from where Carl was. As he opens the door to come for them...

Hal takes Jessie's hand. He looks at her and gives her a nod. They jump.

EXT. TRAIN - FEW MINUTES LATER

The sky is dark. The landscape is ominous.

THUNDER nearby followed by LIGHTNING.

Shadowy figures move about, lit by the nearby lightning strikes.

Hal and Jessie are picking themselves up off the ground.

JESSIE

Where are we?

HAL

N-not sure. Anywhere b-but that train!

He points to some lights in the distance.

HAL (cont'd)

Th-there. Maybe that's a t-town.

The pitch blackness is broken only by more lightning and the few lights nearby.

Jessie takes Hal's hand.

JESSIE

Let's go.

Hal and Jessie look around, straining to see in the night and the occasional flash of lightning.

He takes out Jessie's phone and clicks on the flashlight.

They continue walking, the wind starts blowing all around them.

They poke their way through the dark. Unable to see more than a few feet in front of them.

Their feet make a CRUNCHING NOISE ON THE GROUND.

From behind them they hear the SOUND of HORSES HOOVES.

HAL
Wh-what the h-hell is th-that?

JESSIE
Wild horses maybe.

HAL
Let's s-see.

He shines the flashlight in front of them. The light bounces off something white.

Hal stops and shines the light closer around their feet. The lightning briefly lights up around them.

CLOSE ON their feet as another flash of lightning illuminates human bones scattered across the ground.

JESSIE
Hal, those bones...

She leans down, reaches into the dark and picks one up and holds it up to the flashlight.

JESSIE (cont'd)
Ahhh!

Hal shines a light on it. It's a human jawbone!

Jessie drops it.

JESSIE (cont'd)
That was human.

HAL
Where the h-hell are w-we?

JESSIE
Get the phone. Call 9-1-1 anything to get us out of here.

Hal grabs his phone, punches at it.

HAL
N-no s-service!

The HORSES HOOVES again, followed by a LONG HIGH WAR-LIKE CRY in the dark. Then more of them move in closer.

Jessie grabs Hal, clings to him.

JESSIE
Oh shit, oh shit. What is this?

CLOSING IN -- HORSES BREATHING HARD, THEIR HOOVES SCRAPING AGAINST THE BONES ON THE GROUND.

FOLLOWED BY A FEW DOG GROWLS.

Hal shines his phone flashlight but all we see is the glint of black and shadows moving in.

JESSIE (cont'd)
Oh, God, Hal. What're we gonna do?

The SOUNDS around them grow louder, closer.

HAL
Run!!

They turn to run the other direction and a DOZEN LANTERNS LIGHT UP.

HIDEOUS CREATURES WITH FACES like worm-turned dirt ride black horses, dark as night.

GIANT BLACK DOGS PACE AND SNARL at the feet of each horse.

Without hesitation, Hal reaches to the ground, finds a long leg bone and knocks the nearest rider from his horse. Hal grabs Jessie's hand, and they run like hell.

A mixture of GRUNTS and HIGH-PITCHED SHRIEKS come from behind them.

JESSIE
(breathing hard)
God, what are they?

HAL
I d-don't kn-know.

A RIDER comes up from the side, makes a flying grab and Hal swings the leg bone into it. A heavy grunt and the creature goes down.

They keep running. CREATURES even more grotesque than the ones following them ooze up from the ground.

Hal picks up a human skull and heaves it at an oncoming creature. It goes down hard.

Jessie does the same with another bone and takes another one down.

CLOSE ON A light moving in the distance.

HAL (cont'd)
C-come on, that m-might be help.

Jessie cries and breathes hard.

Hal is nearly out of breath as they run for their lives.

A creature makes a grab. Hal stops and knocks him out.

They reach the light. It's nothing but a LANTERN hanging on a rail road crossing.

JESSIE
(panicked)
Hal, what is this place?

HAL
I d-don't know. M-maybe we are in hell!

They look around not sure where to go or what to do next.

Creatures catch up to them and slowly move in. Those on horseback and the dogs join them.

HAL (cont'd)
Run, Jessie! Go on!

Hal tries to throw them off but there's too many of them. Soon they are surrounded, hoisted up and carried around.

The horrible creatures beat their chests, chomp their teeth and howl like demons.

Hal and Jessie FIGHT and SCREAM.

A HOWL turns into a TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWING.

The demons stop and turn in the direction of the sound. Some still clamor at Hal and Jessie.

THE TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS AGAIN AND SUDDENLY IT THUNDERS PAST.

THE DEMONS START TO SCATTER, DROPPING HAL AND JESSIE AS THEY DO.

The train slows down, and the creatures start running beside it.

Hal and Jessie run along side it. Stumble and fall to the ground.

The train slows to a crawl.

The Conductor stands ready on a platform, his hand out to Hal and Jessie.

CONDUCTOR
Give me your hand. Now!

Hal and Jessie pick themselves up and start to run with the train.

The demons move with them, half afraid, half ready to lunge.

Deacon as a dog jumps from the train to the ground. He tears into the creatures, scattering them everywhere.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
(to Hal and Jessie)
Come on!

Hal and Jessie look back, see the creatures moving in. Both jump for the train.

The Conductor takes Jessie's hand and pulls her aboard.

Hal runs behind. Struggling.

The Conductor watches him, hesitating. Will he or won't he give Hal a hand?

JESSIE
For godssake give him a hand!

Hal leaps toward the train.

CLOSE ON HAND grasping his. Helping him up. Hal barely escapes the clutches of the creatures leaping for him .

The DEMONS surge forward and around the train. Hundreds of them.

The train starts to pick up speed. Hal and Jessie watch as the demons fall beneath the wheels.

Deacon jumps back aboard the train and turns back into a human who throws the creatures who manage to get on board over the side.

As the last one is tossed away...

Hal looks at Jessie and the two of them collapse from exhaustion and fear.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - LATER

The 663 is in the station. Just like it was earlier.

The Conductor stands at the first passenger car.

CONDUCTOR

All aboard!

Jessie and Hal have their bags and move past him. The Conductor nods at Jessie, gives her the same uncomfortable look.

As they make their way down the passenger car...

Carl and Elizabeth are boarding.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

(to Carl)

No issues this trip, Carl.

CARL

None. Thanks.

Carl looks at Hal and Jessie standing in front of their compartment door. He doesn't say a word, just nods at them.

Hal opens the door to their compartment.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT - SAME TIME

As Jessie steps inside the room...she SCREAMS.

Deacon as a dog this time is in the middle of the room staring at them.

HAL

J-jesus. Wh-what the hell?

Deacon just looks at them, growls. Then trots out.

JESSIE

What was that dog doing in here?

HAL

M-maybe s-someone's g-got l-loose.

He reaches to Jessie and puts his arms around her.

JESSIE

That was creepy.

HAL
 Yeah, w-well, he-he's gone now. Y-you okay?

Jessie nods and Hal lets go of her.

HAL
 H-hold on Mrs. LeFleur. W-we need to do th-this right.

He takes her hand and leads her back out the door.

JESSIE
 Hal...

He sweeps her up and carries her back into the room.

HAL
 Now w-we can ch-check out the b-bed.

He kisses Jessie, long and hard. The TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS followed by a lurch of the train. Hal and Jessie fall into the bed. The lights go out. There's a KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

HAL (cont'd)
 Wh-what the?

The lights come back on.

ANOTHER KNOCK

Hal picks himself awkwardly from the bed and goes to the door.

He opens the door and it's Carl. Without waiting to be let in, Carl is through the door and in their compartment.

CARL
 We need to talk.

He closes the door behind him.

HAL
 We're on our h-honey m-moon! You c-can't...

CARL
 Listen to me, boy-o. You two need to get off this train.

JESSIE
 Off the train.

CARL
You don't remember a thing, do you?

He takes a look in the closet. Nothing.

HAL
Wh-what are y-you d-doing?

CARL
Making sure no one else is in here.

He looks in the bathroom. Empty.

CARL (cont'd)
Your phone. Take a look at the
pictures.

JESSIE
Our phone?

CARL
Yes, your phone! There's not much
time. He could come back.

Jessie starts looking through her phone.

On their wedding.

At the train station with her mother.

Then the train...the dinner party. The guests changing to
half dead and maimed.

JESSIE
Hal. Look.

Hal joins her.

HAL
Wh-what is th-this? So-someone's
playing a j-joke.

CARL
No joke. Keep looking?

He pokes his head out the door to see if any one is coming.

Jessie scrolls to the next frame of Hal on camera. She plays
it back.

HAL
(on the phone)
What-ever y-you d-do. Don't st-stay
on the tr-train!

Hal grabs the phone. Plays it back again.

HAL (cont'd)
(on the phone)
What-ever y-you d-do. Don't st-stay
on the tr-train?

He drops the phone like a hot potato.

HAL (cont'd)
I- I d-don't g-get it.

CARL
The train crashes over and over
again. You're on it when it does. So
far you've been on it twice. You
don't find a way off, you'll be on
here for good.

JESSIE
How?

CARL
How did you get on...or how do you
get off?

JESSIE
Both.

Carl takes a moment to take both in. They're scared,
deflated.

CARL
This is a train full of sinners,
sweetheart. Everyone on here did
something bad to get the golden
ticket to hell. The question is what
did you two do?

Jessie doesn't wait for Hal to answer.

JESSIE
We didn't do anything. This is a
mistake. We're not supposed to be
here!

CARL
(to Hal)
What about you? That stutter. Trauma
maybe, something you did, that keeps
a clear sentence off your tongue.

JESSIE
Stop it!

HAL

N-no. Je-jessie. Let - let him ask.

JESSIE

Hal. You don't have to.

CARL

One of you deserves to be on here.
The Conductor doesn't make
mistakes...neither does death.
Everybody gets what's comin'...
eventually.

BIG LONG BEAT.

HAL

N-nothing. I've h-had this my-my
whole life. W-worse with st-stress.

JESSIE

People get accused of stuff all the
time, now. Doesn't make it right.
What did you do? Or your wife?

CARL

(beat)

Ponzi scheme. Made all the others
look like lunch money. Twenty-two
people killed themselves. Elizabeth
and I have been riding this train
longer than either of us can
remember.

HAL

How c-come you re-remember you've cr-
crashed?

CARL

Part of the penance, boy-o. We die.
We bleed. We remember. Again and
again, and again.

JESSIE

We don't deserve this. How do we get
off?

CARL

Not sure. No one's ever done it, but
if you two don't deserve to be on
here, then you're going to need some
help figuring it out.

JESSIE

Why are you helping this?

CARL

Redemption. And I want to poke the fucking Conductor in the eye and his shape-shifting dog, too.

HAL

Wh-what do we do?

CARL

The Conductor keeps this thing on a tight schedule. Not a minute late to the Bridge. Or to the train station. Maybe if you can stop this thing or slow it down that will do it.

JESSIE

How do we do that?

CARL

Get to the engine and shut it down.

He looks at his watch.

CARL (cont'd)

We've got about two hours before we hit the bridge.

(to Jessie)

Your phone. Do whatever you do with that thing to record me.

Jessie holds the phone up so Carl is framed in the screen with Hal beside him. The video record light blinks steadily as Carl faces the camera.

CARL (cont'd)

We're going to try to stop the train so these two can get off. Hal and Jessie, if you see this and you're on the train it didn't work.

Jessie stops the recording.

JESSIE

Now what?

CARL

Follow me and let's see how far we get.

INT. TRAIN CARS

Carl, Hal and Jessie make their way from their car to the next one.

When they step out onto the front platform of the car, the wind hits them hard. The train wheels moving fast along the rails. Metal grinding hard on metal.

The landscape is barren - not a living thing in sight.

CARL

Purgatory. It's where you found yourself earlier. The Conductor pulled you up from it to get you back on the train. Must really want you on here!

They enter the next car. The Business Men look up from a card game they're playing with the Bikers.

BIKER #1

Hey sweetheart, want to join us?
Least w-we d-don't st-stutter!

This gets a laugh from the guys at the table.

Hal makes a move toward them, but Carl holds him back.

CARL

(to Hal and Jessie)

Keep moving.

They make it through the dining car. It's empty except for the bar tender at the bar wiping down the bar top, then grabbing glasses to wipe clean.

Carl nods at him as they go by. The bar tender gives him a half-assed nod back and keeps cleaning the glasses.

They find themselves on the platform outside the next car and stops.

HAL

Wh-why d-did we st-stop?

CARL

Conductor's car.

JESSIE

How are we supposed to get through that?

CARL

We don't. We go up top. Over it.
Engine is the next car.

HAL

Are you cr-crazy?

CARL
Yeah, probably, but it's the only
way.

Jessie looks at Hal, scared. She takes a deep breath.

JESSIE
All right, let's go.

She starts up the ladder, but Hal stops her.

HAL
No, I'll g-go. Y-you st-stay h-here.
K-keep the Con-Conductor dis-
distracted if he c-comes l-looking.

JESSIE
We should do it together.

HAL
We w-will b-be.

He kisses her, gives Carl a nod, then heads up the ladder of the car.

As he pokes his head over the top, he's hit with a blast and is nearly knocked off, but he keeps going.

CARL (O.C.)
Keep down!

Hal does and fights the winds and buffeting caused by the train speeding along the track.

He's nearly knocked off but manages to grab hold of a rail on the top side along the roof of the car.

He finally gets to the other end of the car and lowers himself down the ladder. Turns and there's the engine.

He takes a breath, opens the door.

INSIDE THE TRAIN ENGINE

Hal looks around, settles himself.

HAL
Th-think. Y-you've seen th-these con-
trols before.

He takes in the various levers, zeroes in on the one painted a bright red.

HAL (cont'd)
Here goes nothing.

He grabs and just as he is about to pull it back..

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)
You're playing with fire, boy. It
won't be pretty.

The Conductor steps out of the shadows. Jessie in one hand,
Carl in the other.

HAL
L-let her g-go!

Hal moves to toward the Conductor.

Deacon the Dog stops Hal in his tracks. Teeth bared.
Snarling.

CONDUCTOR
(to Hal)
Easy boy. Deacon hasn't been fed yet.

Hal backs off.

CARL
Give it up. You made a mistake this
time.

CONDUCTOR
Only mistake I made is letting you
have a say this long.

He puts his mouth over Carl's and when eh pulls it away,
Carl has NO MOUTH. He falls to the floor of the train engine
and backs into a corner.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Not what you expected is it? I've
never had anyone try so damn hard to
get off. Guess this is a new
experience for all of us.
(to Jessie)
And you, my dear, still a virgin with
an unconsummated marriage. Almost a
horror in itself.

He pats Deacon's head and he immediately turns into Deacon
the man.

JESSIE
God, Hal, the dog just...just...

CONDUCTOR
He's not the only one who can do
that.

The Conductor morphs into a satyr. His head extends beyond his body, his face inches away from Jessie's.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
I like this one personally.

He prances around them as they back away.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Whatever I want to be I can be.

He morphs back into himself. Now his human face inches from Jessie's. He reaches out a hand and strokes Jessie's cheek.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
And whatever I want...I get.

HAL
You sonuva...

The Conductor raises a hand toward Hal. Hal's mouth freezes open, no sound comes out.

CONDUCTOR
Close your mouth boy, or a fly'll
get in.

Suddenly, HAL'S MOUTH IS ENCASED IN FLIES.

His mouth unfreezes and he coughs and gags.

Jessie SCREAMS.

The flies disappear.

HAL
(choking)
G-god, wh-what the h-hell?

The Conductor changes back to a human.

CONDUCTOR
(mimicking Hal)
You st-stuttering idiot!
(beat)
This is the Hellbound Train, boy-o.
Didn't you hear me the first time.
You deserve to be on here.
(MORE)

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

The train crashes at the bridge and everyone on it dies...again, and again, and again!

(laughs maniacally)

You try to get off, you stay in purgatory...forever...with those things that tried to chase you down out there.

JESSIE

(hysterical)

No! No! This isn't right.

The Conductor puts his hand over her mouth to shut her up.

CONDUCTOR

What, you think this is the Polar Express or Magic Mountain? Munchkins and elves are going to appear dancing and serving hot chocolate?

(in Jessie's face)

We're goin' to hell, dearie, and at some point you'll be mine when you realize that's a far better ride than stayin' with this stuttering fool you call a husband.

The Conductor gives Hal then Jessie a smile. Then he looks at them like he's seeing two little school age children.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

In case you decide you want off the train again, let me give you one more thing to get through your thick, young skulls.

They suddenly find themselves...

EXT. PARK - SAME TIME

...standing in the middle of a grassy park. A sidewalk runs down the middle of the grass. But the sidewalk is moving through the grass, like a big long snake.

The Conductor stands with them.

CONDUCTOR

I like to come here sometimes when the train gets a little too ...claustrophobic. I watch things.

(beat)

You ever seen a worm on a hot sidewalk?

Hal and Jessie are too scared to answer. They look down at the side walk, and a WORM APPEARS at the edge of the grass and the sidewalk.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
 It crawls out from the grass. Who
 knows why.
 (beat)
 And the minute it gets its moist
 little body on that hot concrete, it
 sticks.

Sure enough, the WORM IS STUCK to the sidewalk.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
 You know why?

He doesn't wait for an answer. We stay on the worm
 struggling on the side walk.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
 Because his stomach has fried. That
 soft, moist underbelly has cooked
 right where it stands.
 (beat)
 That worm struggles, wiggles trying
 to pry its cooked underside loose.
 And you know what happens? The more
 it fights, the longer it stays on the
 pavement, the more the rest of it
 fries.

The Conductor reaches down and picks up the DEAD WORM.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
 Pretty soon, all that's left is a
 sun dried, shriveled up piece of
 protein.

He pops it in his mouth.

Suddenly the park and sidewalk change to...

EXT. TRAIN - PASSENGER CAR ROOF

The Conductor holds Hal and Jessie by the back of the neck over the side of the train. Flames flare up alongside the train, licking at their heels.

CONDUCTOR
 Way I see it, you've got two choices.
 You stay in the grass or you try to
 cross the concrete.
 (MORE)

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
And this train is nothin' but one
long, piece of grass with sidewalk on
either side -- and
you're both worms. Try to cross and
you'll end up out there.

GHOULS, DEAD PEOPLE reach up from the flames, grabbing at
Hal and Jessie. THEY SCREAM AND YELL, struggling against the
Conductor's grip.

The Conductor gives them one last grin for affect, then
tosses them back on to the top of the train car.

The top opens up and Hal and Jessie disappear inside.

FROM ON TOP OF THE TRAIN CAR

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Back to your rooms boys and girls...
This train is bound for hell and I've
got a schedule to keep.

INT. HAL AND JESSIE'S TRAIN CAR

Hal and Jessie land in their car in a heap. Unconscious. The
roof of their train car closes.

OUTSIDE THE TRAIN

It races to the bridge. Carl stands and looks out the window
of his car, resigned, mouthless. Elizabeth weeps behind him.

Through another car window, we see the Bikers and the
Businessmen playing cards. Laughing.

The train makes it's inevitable plunge over the collapsed
bridge.

Hal and Jessie are in their wrecked car. Out cold. Jessie's
holding the phone in her hand. An image of the Conductor on
the screen.

A hand takes the phone out of hers.

INT. TRAIN YARD -- MIDWEST -- EARLY EVENING -- LATE EVENING

Hal and Jessie are once again on the train.

CONDUCTOR
All aboard.

They brush past the Conductor. As he is about to say something to Jessie...

Carl and Elizabeth come on the train right after them.

CARL
You two must be newlyweds.

CONDUCTOR
(warning)
Carl?

CARL
Just being friendly.

HAL
Th-thank y-you.

Hal and Jessie move down the train and stop at the door to their compartment.

HAL (cont'd)
Th-this is i-it, Mrs. Lafleur.

Hal and Jessie open the door to their compartment. They go in and this time there is no Deacon as a man or dog.

They shut the door behind them.

HAL (cont'd)
Look at this room, Jessie. This is incredible.

There's a knock on their door.

HAL (cont'd)
Wh-what could that b-be?

He opens it.

CLOSE ON A HAND holding Hal's phone.

CARL
I believe you lost this. May I come in.

He doesn't wait for an answer as he hands Hal his phone.

HAL
Wa-wait a min-minute!

Carl's in their compartment.

CARL
There isn't time. Look at the phone.

Hal and Jessie look at each other, confused.

CARL (cont'd)
Please do it now.

Jessie takes it.

JESSIE
How did you...?

CARL
Doesn't matter. Just look.

Hal gets in close to Jessie so he can see.

Jessie quickly pages through the dinner party picture.

JESSIE
(to Carl)
Where...?

CARL
Keep going. There's no time!

She lands on the video of Hal talking to the camera.

HAL
Th-this is-isn't right.

CARL
There's more.

They come to the video of Carl, talking.

CARL
(on the phone video)
We're going to try to stop the train
so these two can get off. Hal and
Jessie, if you see this and you're on
the train it didn't work.

Jessie is looking at her camera. Her mouth opens wide.

JESSIE
Hal!

She's looking at video of the Conductor, turning into a satyr.

She drops the phone. Hal picks it up

JESSIE (cont'd)

(to Carl)

How did you get this?

CARL

After the crash, I wanted to be sure
I got to it before he did. He's on to
us now.

HAL

Je-jesus.

CARL

Jesus doesn't exist here. Never did.

JESSIE

We don't deserve this.

CARL

Deserves got nothin' to do with it.
Maybe the Conductor was bored. Needed
new blood.

HAL

Why us? Why make this up?

CARL

Times you live in. Truth doesn't
matter. Especially to those in
charge - like him.

Hal pulls Jessie close to him.

HAL

We have to get off.

CARL

Ain't nobody ever got off this
train, boy. 'Cept if the Conductor
wants him off. Nobody.

HAL

I don't buy that.

(to Jessie)

J-Jessie -- you're cousin L-Loyd. He
was on this train. He must've f-found
a way o-off.

CARL

Lloyd? I remember a kid jumping
before we crashed the first time.
None of us on board then knew what
was going to happen. He survived?

JESSIE

Yes, but sounds like he made it
before it was too late.

CARL

(hesitate)

Stopping the engine didn't work.
Maybe you can stop the Conductor.

HAL

H-how?

JESSIE

I think I know. There's a gun up near
the engine. He said it rarely gets
used. Maybe, maybe we use it to stop
him.

HAL

Y-you're ta-talking about k-killing
hi-him?

Jessie looks at Hal, resigned to that as the truth.

HAL (cont'd)

Ok, then.

CARL

Worth a try. Come on. But we may need
some help.

INT. TALL MAN'S TRAIN CAR - MINUTES LATER

It's sparse. Nothing but a series of straps on the wall and
hanging over the bed.

The Tall Man is lying in bed. Carl talks to him while Hal
and Jessie listen.

TALL MAN

I don't know.

CARL

Come on. What's the worst can happen?
We die.

No response.

CARL (cont'd)

That was a joke.

The Tall Man grabs the straps over the bed and pulls himself up, his back not bending at all. Once he's up, he swings his feet over the side of the bed and stands upright.

TALL MAN

Worse things than dying. You. Me.
We've seen it. Besides. The Biker
Boys like it here. Same with the
suits.

CARL

They were born to hell. These two
weren't.

TALL MAN

I don't know. Last time someone stood
up to him look what happened.

CARL

Time someone tried again.

JESSIE

Wait. What happened?

Carl and Tall Man exchange a look.

CARL

Deacon happened.

HAL

The d-dog. W-we s-saw him ch-
change...

JESSIE

Into a man.

CARL

Yep. The Conductor did that.

JESSIE

Jesus...

TALL MAN

Exactly.

CARL

That back of yours can't bend a lick,
right?

TALL MAN

You know it can't. He made sure of
it.

CARL

Good 'cuz to get past the car. We're gonna need that back of yours to do it.

EXT. TRAIN - MINUTES LATER

Hal, Jessie, Carl and the Tall Man stand at a platform between cars. The wind whips and buffets around them, forcing them to fight to stay standing.

The sun sets in the dark, black clouds casting a red, fiery orange glow across the barren landscape. The flat high desert has given way to badlands. Odd formations coming up from the ground.

SHRIEKS of the damned heard in the distance.

CARL

(shouting)

Last time, Hal went on his own. This time we're all going up!

HAL

Th-this wind! We'll g-et b-blown off..!

CARL

Lean into it, stay low and you'll be fine.

He turns away and goes up a ladder, the wind buffets all around him.

When he's at the top of the ladder he stops and faces them.

CARL (cont'd)

Just don't slip.

He takes a coin from his pocket and throws it over the side.

A flame leaps up from nowhere and turns it into ash.

Carl turns back and disappears onto the roof of the train car.

The Tall man hesitates then follows.

Hal looks at Jessie.

HAL

Y-you g-go n-next.

JESSIE
I can't do it, Hal!

HAL
Y-yes y-you can! Y-you have to!

He takes her hand, gives it a squeeze and up she goes. Hal follows.

ON TOP OF THE TRAIN

The four of them stand and try to brace themselves against the roaring impact of the wind as the train speeds along the track.

CARL
(yelling)
Come on, we'll have to go
across at the next car.

A HORRIBLE MALE SCREAM comes from somewhere down the track.

JESSIE
What the hell was that?

CARL
The father with the baby?
(beat)
He just threw the baby off the train.
Same as he did when he was living.
(beat)
We're getting closer to the bridge.

He leaves them with this and keeps moving up the train car.

They reach the end of the car crawling on all fours.

The Tall Man struggles on his feet like Frankenstein's monster, bracing himself against the wind.

Hal is near Carl. He looks back at the Tall Man. They each have to shout to be heard over the wind.

HAL
How'd he get like that?

CARL
Tried getting off this train once.
Conductor found him and broke his
back. Gave him a choice--have it
fused so he could never sit or make
it so he could never stand. Which
would you choose?

Carl keeps crawling then stops at the edge of the car. Ahead lies one car and the engine just after that.

Hal, Jessie then the Tall Man join him.

CARL (cont'd)
We go across here.
(to Tall man)
You all right?

TALL MAN
Yes. I can do this.

A grin breaks across his taciturn face then disappears.

He stands at the edge of the train car and allows himself to fall forward catching himself on the edge of the next car, creating a human bridge spanning the connection between the two cars.

His body is shaken and rocked back and forth as he struggles to hold on to the train cars.

HAL
We-we're crawling across him?

CARL
Why not? His back's stiff as a board,
and he's strong as an ox.

HAL
Why not use the ladder for each car?

CARL
Too risky. The Conductor steps out
from a car and it's over.
(beat)
You saw what he did when he surprised
you last time.

FROM THEIR POV the Tall Man holds tight to the two cars.

JESSIE
How can he hold on?

CARL
He'll do it. Just go.

Carl leads Jessie forward. The Tall Man tightens his grip.

Jessie looks down at the track rocketing beneath her feet. The flash of rails beneath her is almost hypnotic.

JESSIE
I...I can't.
(to Hal)
You go first. Please!

Hal looks down. From his POV we see nothing on either side of the train. A pool of black that could contain anything. An occasional flame shoots up on either side.

He gives Jessie a nod then starts crawling across the Tall Man's back. The Tall Man grimaces, holding on tight. Hal finally makes it to the other side.

HAL
C-come on J-Jessie. Y-your t-turn.

Jessie looks at him, then behind her. She takes one halting step, then begins to crawl across the Tall Man's back.

The train SUDDENLY LURCHES and JESSIE SLIPS.

She grabs the Tall Man's coat but it tears away leaving her hanging between the two cars, by a strip of his coat.

Jessie SCREAMS. Hal hangs over the side trying to grab her.

HAL (cont'd)
Jessie! Hang on!

Suddenly the connection between the two cars begins to open up below them. The train cars spread wider apart.

The Tall Man struggles to hang on as Jessie swings wildly out over the chasm on the side from what remains of his jacket.

Hands reach out from the black, grab at Jessie.

CONDUCTOR (O.C.)
Bit of a stretch isn't it, Mr.
Anderson.

The Conductor stands beside Hal looking down at Jessie. She is so startled she nearly loses her grip.

The Conductor reaches down and grabs her. He holds her for a moment over the opening.

CONDUCTOR
Like a worm on the sidewalk, my dear.
(beat)
Not today anyway. You're much too
pretty to throw away.

He quickly pulls her up and sets her beside Hal, who sits frozen in surprise and fear.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
We don't want you dying prematurely
on us now. Ruins everything.
(beat)
Be good or Deacon'll have to teach
you a lesson.

Deacon stands beside Hal and Jessie on guard, snarling and all teeth and slobber.

The Conductor's attention goes to Carl standing defiantly on the train car.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
I'm surprised at you, Old Man.

The train slows.

The Conductor steps out and walks across the Tall Man like he's not really there.

The Tall Man grimaces in pain, unable to loosen his grip or move.

The Conductor is now face to face with Carl.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
(to Carl)
So many years of traveling together.
And this is how you repay me?

CARL
Never asked to be on this train.

CONDUCTOR
None of you did, but you make the most of what you're given. You're wife never forgets that.

CARL
Whatever you do to me, it don't matter anymore. I've died too many times to care.

CONDUCTOR
Hmmm, I doubt that. Let's see how this feels.

Carl's finger catches fire.

He winces a little, but that's it. He tries to move but his feet are locked on to the train roof.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

(to Hal and Jessie)

You know what your little saving angel here did to earn an eternal trip on this train?

HAL

H-he already t-told us!

CONDUCTOR

I'm sure he left a few things out.

(beat)

He and his wife, what a pair they were. Used to run a daycare taking care of other people's children. Then one day they get the bright idea to set the whole place on fire. Twelve children burned to death... And Carl here said the devil made them do it. Pretty disgusting, isn't it?

JESSIE

That's not true! He said they ran a Ponzi scheme. Some people killed themselves!

CONDUCTOR

Baby killer and pathological liar.

(to Carl)

And you probably thought helping our newlyweds here would redeem you.

Hal and Jessie stare in horror as Carl's arm continues to burn. Carl winces but doesn't cry out.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

(to Carl)

Let's see if we can't add some feeling to those old bones.

Suddenly...Carl's arms are engulfed in flames.

He cries out and tries to run, but the Conductor has him frozen where he is.

The wind picks up around Carl, fanning the flames.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

That's more like it. Now all you have to do is say you're sorry for helping the newlyweds and, whoosh, the fire's out. And you're good as new. Well, mostly.

Carl stands gritting his teeth against the pain.

CARL

(struggles to say
this threatening)

Go fuck yourself.

Jessie looks away. Hal stares in disbelief.

The Conductor smirks.

CONDUCTOR

Didn't think you had it in you...
Carl.

With that Carl's whole body goes up in flames. Carl screams and with one mad rush against the forces holding him he throws himself off the train.

Jessie turns away, but Hal and the Conductor watch as Carl's burning body falls into the dark chasm until it can't be seen.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)

Idiot. Well, we've got a schedule to keep.

The Conductor looks down at the Tall Man as if he's just remembered him. He places one foot on the base of the Tall Man's head, then leans down to get a better look at the man's grimacing face.

The Tall Man winces in pain as the Conductor steps on his hands, scalding them with the soles of his shoes.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)

Come on, don't tell me you're going to be a hero, too.

TALL MAN

No. Let me up.

CONDUCTOR

Thought so.

The Conductor reaches down to help the Tall Man up. As he does...

ON HAL as he charges from behind as the Tall Man slides his feet off the other train car and grabs the Conductor's leg.

Hal hits the Conductor from behind, sending him over the side, falling somewhere over the train without a sound.

The Tall Man hangs on to the car with one hand, his feet hanging below.

Hal and Jessie are frozen for a moment not quite sure what to do.

TALL MAN
To the engine! Before he comes back!

Hal and Jessie turn and face Deacon as a man. He looks over the side of the car for any sign of the Conductor.

HAL
Not so tough now that he's gone are
you?

Hal moves toward Deacon who instantly changes into the Dog from hell.

HAL (cont'd)
Jessie, I'll distract him, you
go. Get to the engine!

She hesitates.

JESSIE
Hal...you didn't...

HAL
Stutter?
(beat)
Now!!

Hal YELLS at Deacon the Dog and momentarily gets his attention.

Jessie moves past him, trying to keep her balance as the train engine picks up speed.

Hal tries to get around Deacon, but he blocks Hal's way.

Hal takes off his jacket and waves it at him. Deacon grabs it between his teeth, wrestling with it, trying to get it out of Hal's hands.

Hal pulls Deacon closer and closer to the side of the train. Using all of his strength to fight him.

Deacon changes back and forth between a violent man and a vicious dog.

Hal holds his own.

The train picks up speed.

ON a SIGNAL POLE up ahead.

Hal notices and pulls Deacon harder.

Finally with a HUGE YELL and a heave he swings the dog out away from the train still hanging on to the jacket...

...and smack into the signal pole.

...Deacon's battered dog body lands back on the roof of the train car.

The dead Deacon the dog transforms into a dead Deacon the man.

ON THE TALL MAN

The Tall Man struggles to pull his stiff body back up on to the other train car. Hal comes up to help him.

TALL MAN

No time to be a Samaritan. Leave me be.

Hal looks back at Jessie still struggling to move toward the engine.

TALL MAN (cont'd)

Really, let me go.

Hal hesitates again then leaves him to join Jessie.

Tall Man struggles more and nearly falls.

A HAND reaches down and grabs his.

The Tall Man grabs it without looking up.

TALL MAN

You shouldn't 'a come back.

The Tall Man looks up.

CONDUCTOR

It's my job.

The Tall Man is terrified!

TALL MAN

No! No!

The Conductor is a bloody mess. But his wounds quickly disappear.

CONDUCTOR

You want off the train, be my guest.

He pulls up the Tall Man with one hand and tosses him through the air.

TALL MAN

Ahhhhh!

ON HAL AND JESSIE

She looks past Hal. Then points.

JESSIE

Hal!

He turns and sees the Tall Man flying through the air terrified ...past the front of the train.

The Tall Man lands face up on the tracks, permanently becoming a living part of the rails.

As the train passes over him, the ROAR OF IT DROWNS OUT HIS SCREAMS.

ON HAL AND JESSIE

Hal and Jessie are too shocked to move.

CONDUCTOR (O.C.)

A spine is a terrible thing to waste.

The Conductor is behind them, leering.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)

Where's Deacon?

HAL

Where he belongs.

The Conductor looks around. Then sees Deacon's crumpled body.

CONDUCTOR

Deacon.

His arms stretch out and pull the little man's dead body to him.

He looks down and strokes the little man's head like a person stroking a dog.

He stops and looks up at Hal and Jessie - malevolence, anger and evil.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

I told you not to mess with me. I told you there was no escape. I told you to be a worm and enjoy the ride. But you couldn't do that could you? Two passengers gone because of you. Deacon gone because of you!

Suddenly a hole appears in the roof of the train car and Hal and Jessie disappear...leaving the Conductor with Deacon.

The Conductor gives Deacon one more stroke then casually tosses him over the side of the train.

A TERRIFYING SCREAM follows.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

I can always get another.

INT. ROOM - SAME TIME

Hal is by himself standing in the middle of a red dimly lit room. He gropes to find his way.

HAL

Jessie. Where are you?

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)

Preparing her for her wedding night. You haven't consummated your marriage yet...might as well let a real man do it.

The Conductor's LAUGH fades out.

HAL

Sonuvabitch!

Hal drops on all fours searching for an opening. He finds a ring in the floor and pulls up on it.

The tracks speed along below.

With no other way out he drops through the opening and grabs at the frame.

ON HAL as he goes hand over hand under the speeding train.

INT. HAL AND JESSIE'S TRAIN CAR - SAME TIME

Jessie walks around the room looking around the furniture. In closets. In the bathroom.

JESSIE

Hal? Hal, are you in here?

She sits down on the bed, uneasily. Not letting her guard down.

HAL

Jessie!

Jessie turns and Hal is there behind her standing at the side of the bed, breathing hard.

JESSIE

Hal!

She goes to him. They embrace.

JESSIE (cont'd)

What do we do now? He's still out there. We're still on the train!

HAL

The only thing we can do. Finish what we haven't been able to since we got on this train.

He gestures toward the bed. He takes her in his arms and tries to kiss her passionately. Jessie breaks the embrace.

JESSIE

We have to get off the train!

HAL

We can't, Jessie. Look what's out there. We might as well enjoy what life we have left.

JESSIE

We need to get off of here, Hal!

She goes to the door. Hal stops her.

HAL

It's no use, Jessie. Face it.

He tries to kiss her on the neck.

JESSIE

Hal, stop! Come on! We can't give up.

HAL

It's not giving up. It's facing reality. Who knows if we go down with this train what we'll be able to do, if we'll remember anything.

JESSIE

You're serious. Now!

HAL

There's no other way, Jessie.

He takes her in his arms again and kisses her. Jessie bites his lip. Hal breaks it suddenly.

HAL (cont'd)

You bit me.

JESSIE

See if you bled.

Hal changes into the Conductor.

CONDUCTOR

Stupid little bitch. I would've preferred this nice and easy.

He changes into a huge, muscle bound man.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

But we can do it the hard way, too.

He turns into an old man.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

Anyway you want it.

Then Hal.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

Anyway at all.

INT. TRAIN CAR - SAME TIME

Hal comes up through a door in a car filled with old tools, torture devices, jars of heads and body parts. He hauls himself up breathing heavily.

He looks around for a weapon, anything he can use.

He SEES A METAL ROD, grabs it, and heads for a door.

INT. HAL AND JESSIE'S COMPARTMENT - SAME TIME

Jessie tries every window and door in the car. All of them lead to nowhere but the screaming, cold air blasting past the speeding train.

The Conductor is right behind her.

CONDUCTOR

Don't fight it sweetheart. I saw the way you looked at me when you got on the train. You know how long it's been since I've been with a real live woman. You've seen what's on this train.

JESSIE

I'd die first.

CONDUCTOR

You will anyway. I can just make it more fun while you're with me.

The Conductor comes closer, backing Jessie against the bed. Closer and closer.

Jessie struggles against him, but it's no use.

As the Conductor is nearly on top of her, Hal bursts through the door carrying the long metal rod.

The Conductor looks up just in time to get hit with the rod, sending him hard against the wall.

JESSIE

Hal!!

Hal hits the Conductor again and again, venting his anger and frustration. Then realizes he's hitting nothing but the wall.

His hands are a bloody mess.

The Conductor is behind him.

CONDUCTOR

You should've stayed in your own little nightmare, boy.

The Conductor now has four arms. Two of them shoot out and pin Hal against the wall.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
You could've had anything you wanted.
All your life spent riding the rails.

He morphs into Hal's face...

CONDUCTOR AS HAL
I've al-always w-wanted to r-ride tr-trains.

He changes back to the Conductor...

CONDUCTOR
I would have let you ride this one
forever. No one but me to make fun of
the way you talk.

HAL
Sonuvabitch, I'd rather rot in hell.

CONDUCTOR
That's already been arranged.

JESSIE
Let him go! You're killing him!

CONDUCTOR
That's the idea, dearie!

He looks back at her then malevolently at Hal.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Not much longer to the big bridge.
I could hold him like this until
then if I wanted. Send him over the
edge so you're all mine for eternity.
And let you watch the breath leave
him like a balloon with a slow leak.
But that would ruin everything.

Jessie moves in behind him. She grabs the metal rod Hal dropped on the floor, and comes in behind the Conductor.

She raises the metal rod, ready to strike.

Hal's eyes go wide.

The Conductor notices and SEES JESSIE'S REFLECTION IN HAL'S EYES.

He turns, but too late.

Jessie YELLS and with all her strength drives the rod through the Conductor's foot, nailing it to the floor. The arms let go of Hal.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Ahh! You little bitch!

Hal wastes no time. He grabs Jessie's hand and runs for the opposite door.

HAL
Come on.

CONDUCTOR
No-o-o-o!

Hal and Jessie make it through the door as the Conductor struggles to pull the rod out of his foot. He tries to extend one arm to stop Hal and Jessie but can't reach them.

INT. TRAIN CAR CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

It's filled with the passengers now showing the physical wounds inflicted from their initial train crash, milling about in confusion and delirium. MOANING in pain and horror.

Hal and Jessie run into this ghoulish mess, push their way past one of the Bikers who stares into oblivion, his head a shattered mess.

Past Carl's wife, holding her severed arm.

Past the mangled Businessmen.

Past the Father who had the baby. His chest now a gaping gunshot wound.

Hal and Jessie struggle for the door then leave this train car.

Just as they do, the Conductor comes out of the room, holding the metal rod. He tries to stretch his arm after them again, but they slam it in the door.

He's really pissed now. The dead stare at him.

CONDUCTOR
(to the dead)
Make yourselves useful and stop them!

INT. ANOTHER TRAIN CAR - SAME TIME

Hal and Jessie run through this train car barely avoiding the dead reaching for them from their rooms.

EXT. TRAIN - SAME TIME

The train is going through the mountains. The wind blows the snow creating a white out around the train as it screams ahead.

A few miles up ahead, the BRIDGE APPEARS in between the snow swirls.

INT. FREIGHT CAR - SAME TIME

The caskets shake and begin to open. Decayed bodies start to climb out.

The freight car door opens and the Conductor stands ready. His foot a bloody mess, his face and body the same from the fall he took earlier from the train.

CONDUCTOR

It's dyin' time again, boys and girls. And I've got a job for you. Seems we have some reluctant passengers.

EXT. CONDUCTOR'S CAR - FEW MINUTES LATER

Hal and Jessica are back at the entrance to the Conductor's car. Wind mixed with snow blows around them.

Through the window of the door to the car they just left we SEE more dead come toward them. The only way out is to keep moving.

Hal and Jessie PUNCH, KICK and SHOVE their way through the car.

They open the door and a blast of wind and snow nearly knocks them back into the Conductor's car.

From their POV, we see the ground rushing below them.

More dead come up over the side of the car. Hal and Jessie fight for their lives to get past them. SHOVING. PUSHING. CHARGING THEIR WAY FORWARD.

INT. TRAIN ENGINE - MINUTES LATER

Hal and Jessie, breathing hard, force open the door to the engine.

An ENGINEER sits at the controls, his back to Hal and Jessie. He's humming "This Train Is Bound for Glory" to himself.

The wind and the engine noise drown out any sound Hal and Jessie make.

Hal signals Jessie to not move. He grabs an old coal shovel and comes up behind the Engineer at the controls.

HAL

Hey!

The Engineer spins around as they barrel around a corner. Hal connects with the head...and it comes off.

Hal and Jessie fall down from the force of the turn. The body at the controls, now minus a head, falls on top of them.

Hal and Jessie struggle out from underneath it.

They get on their feet.

CLOSE ON THE HEAD. It belongs to Frank, the drunk that bought Hal a drink. His eyes crawl with maggots.

JESSIE

Oh, God. Hal, we're getting closer.

He looks out the window.

FROM THEIR POV, THE BRIDGE in the distance under the waning light in the sky.

Hal frantically searches for the brakes. Finds them, and pulls back hard.

EXT. TRAIN - SAME TIME

CLOSE ON the train wheels. Sparks fly as the brakes are applied. But the train is going too fast to stop.

INT. TRAIN ENGINE - SAME TIME

The train barrels along.

Hal tries other controls and valves...nothing.

They look out the window. From their POV, the dead keep coming, but they're moving slower.

A DEAD MAN reaches an arm through the door.

Jessie SCREAMS, and Hal uses the door to shove him out and away from the train.

Hal stands at the controls, breathes heavily.

JESSIE

That's it, isn't it. We die with the train.

HAL

We can't, Jessie. We can't. There has to be another way.

He backs away, paces in the confined space. Jessie slides to the metal floor.

HAL (CONT'D)

He said no one gets off unless he lets them off. Everyone else on this train is dead for good except us. What if we die before the train crashes?

He looks at her. Letting her take this in.

JESSIE

(shaking her head)

Hal...that's murder...suicide.

HAL

Jessie, it's the only way. We kill each other before the train crashes. We don't die with the train.

JESSIE

But then what happens to us? Where do we end up? It's wrong.

HAL

I know, but it's our only choice. Being on this train is wrong.

He looks around.

HAL (cont'd)

There has to be something, anything, we can use.

He's tearing up the train engine while Jessie sits, catatonic.

Hal takes her firmly by the shoulders.

HAL (cont'd)
Come on, Jessie, you've got to help
me. I love you.

She snaps out of it. SEES the medicine cabinet the Conductor showed her earlier.

JESSIE
In there, there should be a gun.
(beat)
I saw it when he gave me the
bandages for your head.

Hal goes to the medicine cabinet.

HAL
Bingo.

He holds up the pistol. Jessie stares at it fearfully. Hal checks it.

HAL (CONT'D)
Five bullets.

JESSIE
Who shoots first?

Hal looks at the gun. Then hands it to her. Jessie just looks at it, slowly shaking her head.

HAL
You've got to, Jessie.

JESSIE
No, you do it. I'm not strong
enough, Hal.

He looks at her and then at the gun. He leans forward and kisses her

HAL
I love you.

He looks hard at her, points the gun, then closes his eyes. As he starts to pull the trigger....

The door to the engine flies open. The Conductor stands in the door way.

CONDUCTOR
Anyone ever tell you murder's a sin,
boy!

Hal turns quickly and fires at the Conductor. A big ugly hole rips through his body.

The Conductor grins.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Seen that before. You've got to do better!

The Conductor comes at him again as the hole heals. Hal fires once more. Another hole.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Save it boy, you can't stop me.

JESSIE
Maybe this will.

Jessie's behind him. She grabs the coal shovel and swings it as hard as she can.

The shovel cuts deep into the Conductor's neck and stays there.

Jessie backs away as the Conductor turns. The shovel still clinging into his neck.

CONDUCTOR
What the hell?

He reaches up and wrestles with it as Hal and Jessie watch in horror.

Hal charges at the Conductor and propels his body backward into the fire burning in the train engine.

The shovel stops the Conductor's body from going further, wedging itself into place in the door frame where the fire burns. Flames licking up behind him.

The Conductor struggles to free himself.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Ahhh!!

Hal picks up the gun and raises it at Jessie.

HAL
Jessie, there isn't anymore time.
We have to do it!

She looks down the track.

FROM HER POV WE SEE THE BRIDGE COMING UP QUICKLY.

On the car behind them, the rest of the dead are frozen where they stand, mesmerized at the sight of the oncoming bridge.

The Conductor gives one final yank of his head and he's free of the shovel blade. His head hangs at an awkward angle on his body as he comes toward Jessie.

Hal turns in time to put another bullet in him.

The force of the impact blows the Conductor out the open door of the train engine.

He reaches out an elongated arm to stop himself, but his body gets caught beneath a train wheel and is severed from his arm.

The Conductor's body disappears beneath the train, leaving his hand holding the edge of the doorway.

Hal and Jessie stare at the twitching arm. Hal gives Jessie the gun.

HAL (cont'd)

Do it! Now!

JESSIE

I can't. I can't. Please, I can't!

HAL

You've got to. If you don't we'll be with him and this train for the rest of our lives...forever.

She looks down at the still-twitching hand.

JESSIE

But he's dead, Hal. He can't do anything now. Maybe that's all that needed to happen.

HAL

He's not dead. He'll come back again and again and again. If we don't do this we'll come back with him. He'll take you from me. Forever!

She looks back and hesitates. He hands her the gun.

HAL (cont'd)
You've got to do it. There are
only two bullets left.

ON THE CONDUCTOR'S SEVERED HAND AND ARM

It twitches and hangs on.

Another hand reaches in from outside the train and grabs it.

ON HAL AND JESSIE

Jessie looks at the gun then at Hal.

JESSIE
How do I know?

HAL
I love you, Jessie. Trust me.

She points the gun at Hal's heart.

A YELL breaks through the wind.

The Conductor springs up into the engine.

CONDUCTOR
No-o-o-o!

Jessie turns and points the gun at him.

SLOW MOTION

Hal jumps in front of the gun as Jessie pulls the trigger
aiming the gun at the Conductor.

Hal goes down, blood coming out his back and he falls out
the door. His own hand stops himself from falling.

Jessie rushes to him. The Conductor beside her.

Hal is still alive.

The Conductor reaches out his one good hand.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)
Take it boy. I can save you.

Hal looks at him, blood bubbling up on his lips.

HAL
I don't think so.
(to Jessie)
See you on the other side.

With that he lets go and falls away from the train. His body tumbles down into the canyon, disappearing somewhere far below.

Jessie SCREAMS, her cries echoing after him.

CONDUCTOR

Stupid fool. He could've lived forever.

Jessie stays huddled near the edge of the door.

They are nearly at the bridge.

CONDUCTOR (cont'd)

Only a matter of seconds before we get to our destination and immortality. Just give me the gun.

She rises and with her back still to him she exposes the gun still held in her hand.

JESSIE

I don't think so.

ON THE CONDUCTOR'S FACE

A GUN goes off.

The explosion mingles with the TRAIN WHISTLE blowing.

EXT. TRAIN/BRIDGE

The train reaches the bridge. The bridge collapses and the train plunges into the river below in an angry mix of metal and wood, screaming for its life once again.

The bodies of the dead fall away from the train like so many used dolls.

They bob in the water, rotten corpses caught in the metal of the twisted wreckage.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

A TRAIN WHISTLE blows somewhere in the distance.

Hal stumbles out of the shadows onto the platform. He looks around, dazed, disoriented.

HAL
(panicked)
Jessie?

He looks around. No Jessie.

He sees the back of a woman who could be Jessie - same hair, same build. He comes up behind her.

HAL (cont'd)
Jessie? Thank, God!

The WOMAN turns. She's a buck-toothed hag with an evil grin.

Hal backs away, scared.

Then from behind him...

JESSIE (O.C.)
(unsure)
Hal?

He turns and sees Jessie standing near the train station boarding platform.

They move toward each other slowly. Then rush into each others arms.

Hal takes her, twirling her around on the platform while a few waiting passengers look on.

HAL
We're alive, Jessie. We're really
alive.

JESSIE
I know.
(beat)
It's over, right? It's over.

HAL
Yeah, it's over.

Their celebration is interrupted by a TRAIN WHISTLE as a train pulls up through the fog and steam.

The fog clears and the 663 appears.

The train stops in a mix of steam and grinding metal.

As the steam clears...

Elizabeth stands on the platform of the train car she shared with Carl.

For a moment, she stares at them expressionless. Then she smiles a thin smile. She nods then turns away and disappears inside the car.

The Ticket Agent comes up behind them.

TICKET AGENT
You better get on. It's going to leave soon.

Hal looks at him.

HAL
I don't think so.

A familiar voice calls out from the train.

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)
All aboard!

The Conductor stares at them, taunting.

CONDUCTOR
You're missing a helluva ride!

HAL
Not in this lifetime.

CONDUCTOR
Don't be so sure, boy-o. You're just getting started.

He tips his hat at Jessie. A BLACK CAT jumps up beside him.

The Conductor lets it rub against his leg and starts whistling 'This Train is Bound for Glory.'

Hal and Jessie watch as the train pulls away. The Conductor doesn't take his eyes off of them.

He gives Hal and Jessie one last look then closes the door to the train car.

The train disappears into a cloud of fog and steam.

HAL
Now what?

JESSIE
We go home?

HAL
Yeah, Mrs LeFleur we go home.

As they start to walk away...

JESSIE
Hal, your phone.

HAL
It's where it needs to be. At the
bottom of the bridge.

He takes her hand and they walk away from the station, down
the street...into the dark night.

As the TRAIN WHISTLE blows once more in the distance.

THE END