

The Last Train

by Daniel J Williams

1 INT. CHARLIE'S CONDO -- EVENING 1

F/X: Theme music. Sound of a trains coming and going.

V/O: The Last Train, by Daniel J Williams.

F/X: Train fading out. Footsteps up a stair well, struggle with a door.

JOHN: (from outside the door-
slightly short of breath)
Come on Dad, open up, my hands are full!

F/X: Door opening.

CHARLIE: You're late-

JOHN : (Walking and carrying
bags-imitating his
father)
"Thanks for stopping and getting my shopping Son, after your hard day at work and all-I really appreciate-"

CHARLIE: -Stop complaining-and-thank you-I'll put it away.

JOHN: (From other room)I've already started!

F/X: Unpacking while talking. Footsteps. Charlie fading in.

CHARLIE: That goes under the sink, and these-
above your head.

F/X: Cupboards opening.

JOHN: You've already got eight tins of garbanzo beans-

CHARLIE: If it's on my list-that's what I get.

JOHN: So much stuff you already have. I can do this again next week if you need me to-at least I'll know what not to get-

CHARLIE: No-it's just this week I needed you-I haven't...I haven't felt like going out, that's all.

JOHN: I know-This time of year isn't easy for me either.

1 CONTINUED:

1

CHARLIE: Five years. I can't believe it's coming up to five years.

F/X: Loud train.

JOHN: I don't know how you put up with those trains. It's not as if you can't move

CHARLIE: Move? Are you serious?

JOHN: I just think you could do with, somewhere maybe a little smaller, somewhere on the ground floor-

CHARLIE: -I can make it up the stairs without being out of breath, unlike you! Anyway, I like the sound of the trains. Me and your mother would listen to them, make up stories about who was on the trains, talk about the journeys... that we, wanted to take.

JOHN: Mom hated the trains-said they kept her awake.

CHARLIE: What? That's nonsense-she liked them-

JOHN: No she didn't-We did talk you know-and especially-especially when she was ill.

CHARLIE: Huh. Those, those go in the cupboard with the coffee. Did you get the lemons I asked for?-

JOHN: No, they ran out, but I hate how you just change the subject-

CHARLIE: -Ran out? They can't run out of lemons-

JOHN: Well they have-and there you go-I'm trying to tell you something about Mom, and you won't hear me.

CHARLIE: (pause)

Your mother loved the trains.

JOHN: She only said she liked them to keep you happy-

CHARLIE: -Did you get any limes instead?

JOHNE: -To prevent you getting upset if she disagreed with you.

CHARLIE: Now you stop that-I won't have you disrespecting me, or her, like that-

JOHN: She did it to keep the peace, for her just as much for you.

1 CONTINUED: (2)

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CHARLIE: That's not true.

JOHN: She was always the peace maker,
making sure everyone was feeling
happy, regardless of what she wanted.

CHARLIE: So why bring this up now, hey? I
thought you'd bring me my shopping,
we'd chat a little, and now you want
to say, what?- Your mother hated the
trains? when I know that she didn't?

JOHN: God Dad! It's so hard to talk about
anything with you, that's why no-one
tries-but after five years, well, I
can't keep pretending there aren't
things that need to be said, even if
you'd rather keep your head buried-

CHARLIE: Buried? My head is fine thank you!
I think I'm doing ok considering! I
keep myself active, I have my routine-

JOHN: I'm not just talking about what you
want!-and anyway, it's more like a
rut than a routine-

CHARLIE: It's not easy to break habits-

JOHN: Fine. I'm-

CHARLIE: -And then you come in and decide to
tell me unannounced that your mother
hated trains.

JOHN: We will talk, just not now.

CHARLIE: There's nothing to talk about. She's
gone, and all I have are those
memories, including those of us
talking about imaginary people on
trains!

JOHN: Ok-I'm sorry.(Pause) There, that's
the last of the shopping. And I got
the brochures from the realtor you
asked for, though I don't know why.
You don't look at the properties I
suggest. These are for places you'll
never afford-lake houses up north?

CHARLIE: There's no harm in looking! Your
mother and I often spoke of getting
one, but-

JOHN: Up north? She wanted somewhere warm,
like Florida or California.

CHARLIE: (perfunctorily dismissive
after a short sigh)
Thanks for the shopping John. Say
hello to Ellen and the kids for me.

1 CONTINUED: (3)

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F/X: Fade out, fade in. Train noises. Outside traffic noises. Quieten down when window is shut.

CHARLIE: Stuck in a rut? What was he talking about? What am I supposed to do, become a man about town, start playing golf, move to a poky condo without all these memories? Nonsense. I'm sure his mother would be happy I stayed here, keeping some things the way they were. He's a good kid though, our John-always was. We did a fine job Amy, a fine job with him, and Stephen. But he doesn't know what it's like, not for me.

F/X: Train in distance

CHARLIE: (Deep slow sigh) Anyway, I can keep up the stories about people on trains- not everything is gone. Good night...My love. (Deep sleep breathing)

F/X: Night sounds with distant train.

2 EXT. COUNTRY TRAIN STATION -- MORNING

2

F/X: Train sounds, changing to different train sounds, then chatter of young people at train station.

AMY1: (Fading in) Charlie?... Charlie? It is you!-why, you came to see me off!

CHARLIE: (arousing from sleep) Wha...what? Amy?

AMY1: I'm so surprised, I mean- I didn't...I didn't think you would come. Not after what you said last night.

CHARLIE: Last night, what-what did I say last night?

AMY1: Stop playing games, Charlie.

CHARLIE: What did I say?

AMY1: That you wouldn't come and see me off- and that I could leave for the rest of the year and never return as far as you were concerned.

CHARLIE: Did I say that?

AMY1: But I knew you understood, about my grandmother being sick and needing me
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

AMY1: and all. I'm gonna miss not spending the summer with you! But I'll be back for our senior year together.

CHARLIE: I, I think I remember saying something-

AMY1: -And other things I won't repeat now- it will take too much time- (pause train whistle) And there's only a few minutes before I go. Oh Charlie, thanks for coming-but-you look...surprised to be here-

CHARLIE: What-is this? Am I dreaming?

AMY1: You do look a bit strange.

CHARLIE: (Sigh) It must be, it must be a dream, I mean, I can remember John, coming this evening-

AMY1: John? Who's...John?

CHARLIE: He's...our son, one of two sons. We have Stephen as well-

AMY1: (Laughs) We've only been dating six months and you're naming our children already! How do you know we won't have girls? Or that I'll marry you anyway?!

CHARLIE: No-this is a dream-wait! (goes to look at reflection in window) In the train window, my reflection-I'm, I'm young-

AMY1: You're so silly-

CHARLIE: Ok-I'm going to count to ten and then wake up- 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

AMY1: (as Charlie is counting) Charlie, what's going on? What are you doing?

CHARLIE: Amy, if this is a dream, why can't I wake-

AMY1: Oh stop it now-

CHARLIE: Maybe I am awake-a daydream.

AMY1: Are you doing this to try and stop me leaving?

CHARLIE: Amy, I didn't come to see you goodbye, after that argument. I remember-I stayed away-it was too difficult to see you off.

CONTINUED: (2)

AMY1: You made such a fuss last night-you know I'll come back! I'll only be gone four weeks!

CHARLIE: Four Weeks is a long time when you're 17. And I missed you-

AMY1: Not enough to keep you from the other girls though, was it?

CHARLIE: How-how did you know? You...you never said-but-you know they never meant anything-

AMY1: I didn't want to think of it-but I knew-

CHARLIE: I never knew you knew-oh dear. But-but Amy! You're speaking about things that happened in the future, you're speaking about them as if you know they happened!

AMY1: Charlie, stop it now-what are you saying? You're making me nervous! (Fading out) I- I can't stay here. I have to get on my train.

F/X: Footsteps running off.

CHARLIE: Amy-come back, wait.

F/X: Footsteps following fast. Music tone change

CHARLIE: Amy-don't go in the train yet-

F/X: Door opening and closing

CHARLIE: (Loud) Open the window!

AMY1: (Anxious) I had to get on-

CHARLIE: -(Quiet under breath) oh..no-

AMY1: And I do remember the name, John--and Stephen-

CHARLIE: Yes Stephen, after your grandfath-

AMY1: -Grandfather, yes. And it would have been Stephanie if he had been a girl-

CHARLIE: You're not a dream-

AMY1: How can I remember something that's not happened?

CHARLIE: It has happened-it did happen.

AMY1: What is this Charlie?

F/X: Train whistle. Train pulling away.

2 CONTINUED: (3)

2

AMY1: This isn't a dream-I'll come back,
I'll come back to you-

F/X: Train pulling off

CHARLIE: Wait-Amy, please-come back!

F/X: Train traveling off into distance.

CHARLIE: Amy!

3 INT. CHARLIE'S CONDO - NIGHT

3

F/X: Loud modern train

CHARLIE: Oh my word! (Quick breathing).

VOICE: Shut up that noise!

CHARLIE: -Sorry!

F/X: Window closing.

CHARLIE: I must...I must have been
sleepwalking,(while sighing)- Huh.

F/X: Footsteps, fixing a glass of water.

CHARLIE: Did Amy really know about what I did
while she was away? (Short sharp
sigh) It didn't mean anything, I
mean, we'd only just started dating a
few months before. I was hardly the
school Casanova. Anyway, I was
young-and I didn't do anything
untoward when you were back and we
were together. Ahh-What am I talking
about-it was just a dream. (Pause)
And no one else ever stopped me
wanting you, Amy.

F/X: Page turning of brochures.

CHARLIE: And you did want a lake house up
north, didn't you? (deeper breaths)
I thought you...hated the heat.
(Deeper breaths into sleep.)

F/X: Train noise in distance.

4 INT. CENTRAL TRAIN STATION - MORNING

4

F/X: Changing into sound of busy station.

CHARLIE: What-where am...oof (Charlie being
buffeted by a crowd) Another dream-
central station-But why central
station?

F/X: Train whistle "all aboard" -Running
through crowd.

CHARLIE: Amy, it's Amy! Amy- wait!

4 CONTINUED:

4

F/X: Footsteps

AMY2: Charlie? Why have you come? I thought we had this over and done with last night?

CHARLIE: We did-you look, so...pale. Oh my god-are you a ghost?

AMY2: What are you talking about Charlie? Is this some attempt to stop me going?

CHARLIE: No-I don't stop you-you go, I remember clearly, you go-

AMY2: Why are you talking in riddles?.

CHARLIE: This has happened, hasn't it. This, this now, this isn't real-

AMY2: Oh come on!- you are trying to delay me!

CHARLIE: I did try to stop you taking this job-

AMY2: I needed this job-I had to find something to fill my time-

CHARLIE: -Yes- you were tired, of waiting for me to change my mind, waiting to start a family-

AMY2: I was getting older Charlie-I had to do something, not just wait around for you to decide-and this job was such an opportunity (pause) -And you did stop me, in the end-didn't you?

CHARLIE: No-not as such...you left your job because your were-

AMY2: -Pregnant. I fell pregnant after barely one month into that job-

CHARLIE: We had started trying again-at the weekends-

AMY2: You mean you started trying again-but that's why you did this, wasn't it-to keep me home, back with you-

CHARLIE: You did want children-

AMY2: I knew at the time it wasn't a coincidence-you did something, didn't you, to the protection you used-

CHARLIE: -but, how did you-

AMY2: I found the evidence-in the trash can-evidence of your deceit.

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

CHARLIE: -Amy, I thought you wanted children-

AMY2: I was confused! Yes, I wanted children!- But not like this, not as some ploy to keep me home-

CHARLIE: You never-you never told me you knew-

AMY2: What was I supposed to say?!

CHARLIE: But we had John, we had-

AMY2: Stephen,-Stephen and John. I know their names-How do I know their names?! I haven't had children yet-not now, but this station, it's not real.

CHARLIE: It's.. It's your spirit, come to find me-!

AMY2: I...uh...this isn't right-

CHARLIE: Are...you a ghost?

AMY2: No-I can't be!-Can a ghost do this?!

F/X: Shock noise

CHARLIE: Your hand-I can feel you!

AMY2: And I can feel you. Charlie-what-is-happening?

CHARLIE: Oh this is just a dream, a horrible horrible dream-

AMY2: No-it's not a dream either! We talked, earlier, I mean, like this, except I was younger, and this is the same thing, you showing up on an occasion that you avoided in real life-

CHARLIE: Yes-that is true-

AMY2: And I knew you'd stay away.

CHARLIE: But I'm here now!

Pause

AMY2: Charlie-I'm dead, aren't I.

CHARLIE: (Hard swallow) Yes-you died- five years ago.

AMY2: But what am I now? I mean, I'm here-I'm still...something-I'm not a ghost, I'm not one of your dreams-

CHARLIE: I...I don't know-

AMY2: I'm nothing to do with you anymore-

4 CONTINUED: (3)

4

CHARLIE: Whatever damn tricks my cruel mind is playing-stop! I want to wake up!

AMY2: But I don't want to be here, I want to be gone-

F/X: Footsteps-

CHARLIE: Amy-don't go-don't get on-

AMY2: I get on this train Charlie, just as I got on this train for real, to get on with my life before...before-

CHARLIE: We had the family you wanted!

AMY2: And I loved those boys! But how it happened was nothing to do with my plans, or even *our* plans-

F/X: Train Whistle-

CHARLIE: Amy-don't get on!

F/X: Door opening and closing.

CHARLIE: Please-get off the train

AMY2: I'll come back-I need to find out what I am, why Im here...but wasn't that always the case-that I always came back? I always came back to you, Charlie.

F/X: Train whistle-train pulling away.

CHARLIE: Amy-! Amy no!

F/X: Train pulling away, fading out.

5 INT. CHARLIE'S CONDO - NIGHT

5

F/X: Modern train noise as before.
Banging noise.

CHARLIE: Ah my knee!- what am I doing here, in the bathroom. Dear god-why is this happening? (Sigh) That's the last time I ask John to do the shopping! It was his talk of trains that started all this off-and look where it's getting me. (Pause) But why the train stations, stations that I was never at? Amy-am I hallucinating?

F/X: Footsteps

CHARLIE: I was in bed, so they must be dreams, hey? (Pause) But Amy-if that was your spirit, that you'r a ghost now, you can come to me. (Pause) Any noise, any sound or touch, anything