

75 MINUTES TO EMORY

By

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SCENE 1: LEAVING FARNAN TRAIN STATION

FADE IN:

INT. FARNAN TRAIN STATION - NIGHT, 10:00 PM

The nation of Nездren is at war - and though the battle has not quite entered its borders, there is tension amongst its people. They live knowing that, any minute, the tide may change, and their country could fall.

Out in the countryside, a local train station quietly prepares for the next train. It is quite empty, save a few passengers awaiting their ride.

ATTENDANT

(over speaker) Attention, the 10:15 train for Emory will be entering the station shortly. Please do not leave your luggage unattended and prepare to board promptly.

LORD FELLWORTH sits on a bench, reading a newspaper. The headline reads "War Continues to Rage: Neutral Territory Occupied by Confederation Forces." He looks over the edge of the paper as he hears a man talking to the station attendant, accompanied by his family.

FATHER

It's no longer safe, living this close to the neutral zone. My family and I are leaving for Emory tonight.

ATTENDANT

Everyone's been moving away from the borders.

FATHER

Then again, if the Confederation pushes to the capital ...

Lord Fellworth catches the end of another conversation between two men.

MAN 1

The market's not as lucrative as it used to be, not since the war begin.

MAN 2

It's only going to get worse the longer
the Confederation carries this out ...

MAN 1

I've got a friend who tells me to invest
in oil right now. He's my inside man, so
to speak ...

Finally, before returning to his paper, Lord Fellworth sees a man with a coat, a fedora, and a suitcase at his side, sitting across from the train tracks in a darker section of the station. He mysteriously sits and watches the people about the platform - walking and talking back and forth. Lord Fellworth marks him in his mind as the SUITCASE MAN, wondering about his disposition.

Finally, the train comes into the station, coming to a halt and obscuring Lord Fellworth's view of the Suitcase Man. The Attendant announces its arrival over the speaker system.

ATTENDANT

10:15 to Emory, now boarding.

Lord Fellworth hands his ticket to the Attendant, receives the stub, and enters the train. Amidst the handful of people in his car, he finds a seat and places his suitcase at his feet.

A whistle pierces the air as the train leaves the station - slowly gaining speed, then soldiering across the tracks and into the dark, nighttime countryside.

FADE OUT.

SCENE 2: THE TRAIN

INT. PASSENGER CAR, TRAIN 2124 - NIGHT, 10:30 PM

LORD FELLWORTH looks out the window at the pitch-black landscape, eventually losing interest in the dark monotony and turning to observe his fellow passengers.

A BUSINESSMAN with a briefcase sits several rows ahead and a SOLDIER sits near the door. A MOTHER and DAUGHTER, sitting across the aisle in his row, stare out of the window as he had done moments prior. A lone woman sits in front of the mother and daughter, wearing a dark dress and hat and causing Lord Fellworth to mark her as the BLACK-DRESS WOMAN.

Finally, Lord Fellworth looks behind him, seeing the Suitcase Man sitting in a back row, near the window. He sits the farthest from all the passengers, just far enough to avoid conversation or the occasional glance.

BUSINESSMAN

Evening, sir. You wouldn't happen to have a match, would you?

Lord Fellworth is interrupted by the Businessman, who stands next to him with an unlit cigarette in his hand.

LORD FELLWORTH

I believe I do. Here.

Lord Fellworth hands the Businessman a match as he lights the cigarette. He takes the gesture as an invitation to sit next to Fellworth, taking a puff of his smoke and starting up a conversation.

BUSINESSMAN

Quiet night, ain't it?

LORD FELLWORTH

Quite so.

BUSINESSMAN

So, what's your business in Emory?

LORD FELLWORTH

I'm meeting an old friend.

BUSINESSMAN

I see. Mine's in stocks, you know. The market's ripe for the picking if you know where to look, even in a war ...

Lord Fellworth is only partially listening, glancing behind at the Suitcase Man. The Businessman, realizing that Lord Fellworth is distracted, likewise turns his head and sees the mysterious passenger.

BUSINESSMAN

Strange one, ain't he?

LORD FELLWORTH

He's peculiar ...

BUSINESSMAN

Hmph. Holding that suitcase as if it were his mother's ashes.

LORD FELLWORTH

That's quite ... grotesque

BUSINESSMAN

Just sayin' here. May be a lot of money in that thing. Gold, silver, cash. Bonds possibly ...

LORD FELLWORTH

All things considered, it's his business, not mine.

BUSINESSMAN

Or maybe it's something worse. Have you heard about those train bombings by the Confederation? I'd say that case is about the perfect size for an explosive.

Lord Fellworth, taken aback, turns away from the Suitcase Man and towards the Businessman, who begins to entertain a

myriad of other theories. Out of the corner of his eye, he notices the Soldier towards the front of the car - and how he too has begun to glance at the Suitcase Man.

BUSINESSMAN

Or perhaps ...

LORD FELLWORTH

Excuse me, but I need some fresh air.

BUSINESSMAN

Oh. Of course. Do you need ...

LORD FELLWORTH

(abruptly) I'm quite fine, thank you.

As Lord Fellworth goes to the front of the train car, he passes the Black-Dress Woman, who has also just noticed the Suitcase Man. He opens the door and steps outside of the car, onto the deck and into the night air.

LORD FELLWORTH

Come now, let's ... let's keep our wits about us. (sighs) He's just a passenger, like me. I'm sure of it. An ordinary man, and an ordinary suitcase ...

He inhales deeply, then gently exhales and calms himself. As he returns indoors, however, he notes the Soldier in his seat - and how his hand gently hovers about the gun at his side. His eyes discreetly gaze upon the Suitcase Man.

Lord Fellworth returns to his seat somewhat hastily, sensing the tension in the train car. Adding to the ominous feeling of the car, the night wind from outside his windows begins to howl. Trying to calm his nerves, Lord Fellworth closes his eyes and presses his head against the cool glass of the window. He cannot escape the presence of the Suitcase Man, however, as the little girl to his left speaks with her mother

DAUGHTER

(softly) Mother, why is that man sitting alone?

MOTHER

(whispers) Hush now darling, that's none of your business.

DAUGHTER

I'm sorry.

Frustrated, Lord Fellworth opens his eyes. Slowly, he begins to realize just how conspicuous this man truly is. His attention is subverted as the speaker system within the car crackles. The TRAIN ENGINEER'S voice greets the passengers.

TRAIN ENGINEER

Ladies and gentlemen, we will be arriving at Emory Station within half an hour. Please take the time to secure your luggage.

The word "luggage" echoes in Lord Fellworth's mind. The seeds of suspicion that were planted at the station have taken root - and a weed has begun to grow. Something is amiss about this train, and his concern will not allow for further inaction.

Diplomatically, Lord Fellworth rises from his seat and approaches that of the Suitcase Man. He reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out a box of cigarettes, offering one to the man.

LORD FELLWORTH

Pardon me, sir, but I see you're ... you're travelling alone.

The Suitcase Man gives Fellworth a curious look, as if he does not quite know how to answer this stranger's masked query.

LORD FELLWORTH

Care for a smoke?

SUITCASE MAN

I'm quite fine, thank you.

LORD FELLWORTH

Very well then. Quite a night, wouldn't you say?

SUITCASE MAN

Excuse me, Mr. ...

LORD FELLWORTH

Fellworth. Lord Quinton Fellworth.

The Suitcase Man raises an eyebrow. He offers Lord Fellworth a light for his cigarette - but in such a way to test his identity with a code phrase.

SUITCASE MAN

Care for a light? A match?

LORD FELLWORTH

Thank you, but I carry a lighter.

SUITCASE MAN

And you've got sufficient fluid?

LORD FELLWORTH

I'll fill it again at our final stop.

The Suitcase Man nods slowly, understanding that Lord Fellworth is a man to be trusted - and one knowledgeable of military affairs. He discreetly slides the suitcase into view of Fellworth.

SUITCASE MAN

(whispers) I've been tasked to bring this to Emory. Sensitive battlefield information.

LORD FELLWORTH

(whispers) And what prompted you to board an empty train at night? You've all but exposed your cover!

SUITCASE MAN

(lowers voice further) I was to take the 6:45 train, but I was followed just outside of Manorshire. By the time I lost them, the next train available was the 10:15.

LORD FELLWORTH

Quite a predicament ...

The Suitcase Man slowly raises his head, eyes darting about the train. He lowers himself yet again and quietly resumes his conversation with Lord Fellworth.

SUITCASE MAN

(whispers) There's another spy aboard this train, Fellworth, and I've reason to believe he's after these documents.

LORD FELLWORTH

(whispers) What of the soldier? Is he not with you?

SUITCASE MAN

(whispers) I've reason to believe he followed me from Manorshire. The Businessman has the voice of his accomplice - I'd recognize his boisterous tone anywhere. The woman there, with the dress, was at the hotel when I checked out this morning. As for the mother and daughter, is there any reason to doubt that they are a plant as well?

LORD FELLWORTH

You've dug quite the hole for yourself, Mr. ...

SUITCASE MAN

It would be best if my name were left secret. I've dug quite the hole, Lord Fellworth, but these documents are priority number one. If I must go to desperate measures ...

The Suitcase Man carefully reveals the barrel of a pistol; the light of the train car barely reflects off the cold steel.

LORD FELLWORTH

(hisses) Are you mad?

SUITCASE MAN

(whispers) I can only say so much, but if you knew what was in here, you would understand.

LORD FELLWORTH

(whispers) Come now, let's not be hasty. I'm sure we can work out a less ... rash ... plan of escape.

SUITCASE MAN

(hisses) And what do you propose?

Lord Fellworth pauses and thinks for a moment, then pitches his idea to the Suitcase Man.

LORD FELLWORTH

(whispers) We'll be pulling into Emory shortly. If we quietly move to the back deck of the car, you can escape and walk the remaining distance to Emory without entering the station and exposing yourself.

SUITCASE MAN

Are you sure it'll work?

LORD FELLWORTH

Quite positive. The train isn't moving very quickly now, and if you act quickly, you can ensure a swift and quiet arrival.

SUITCASE MAN

(sighs) Then we best better get to it.

Discreetly, Lord Fellworth and the Suitcase Man wait for the other passengers to be distracted, then leave their

seats and slowly walk towards the back of the car. With his hand on the door, Lord Fellworth freezes as a single, clicking sound interrupts the quiet train.

SOLDIER

Give me the suitcase.

The Suitcase Man pauses.

SOLDIER

Right now.

The Suitcase Man slowly lowers the case, placing it on the ground softly in an act of surrender. He quickly jerks his body upwards, grabbing the Soldier's hand and pulling the gun away from him and Fellworth. A gunshot erupts as the Mother screams, the Daughter covers her ears, and the Businessman and Black-Dress Woman emerge from their seats with guns of their own.

The Suitcase Man kicks the suitcase under the nearby seats to protect it from the attackers, engaging in a fight with the Soldier as he tries to draw his gun back to the others. The Businessman fires at Lord Fellworth, who dives to the floor in time to avoid a bullet. He tries to reach for the suitcase, but is kicked in the hand by the stumbling feet of the Soldier. His other foot collides with the suitcase and jams it underneath another seat, pulling it out of Fellworth's grasp.

LORD FELLWORTH

Blast it!

Finally, Suitcase Man shoves the Soldier to the ground and fires two shots - both of which miss the Black-Dress Woman and Businessman but send them behind their seats to avoid gunshot wounds. Taking advantage of the lull, the Suitcase Man ducks between the rows of seats and seizes the suitcase, then races to the door with Fellworth.

SUITCASE MAN

Hurry!

He fumbles with the door handle, eventually opening the door and swiftly sliding through the exit with Fellworth. A bullet collides with the round window, shattering the glass.

SUITCASE MAN

I'm quite sorry, Lord Fellworth, but we'll both have to jump now ...

A clicking sound emerges from behind the Suitcase Man's head. Fellworth holds a gun to his back.

LORD FELLWORTH

Change of plans. Give me the suitcase.

SUITCASE MAN

What? I thought ...

LORD FELLWORTH

How gullible. You board the wrong train, you start a fight you could not hope to finish, and you fell prey to my mechanisms. Until you spoke aloud, I had no clue you even were an enemy of the Confederation - and only then did I realize I'd be a fool to pass up this opportunity.

SUITCASE MAN

You ...

LORD FELLWORTH

One way or another, The Confederation will make good use of this information, I'm certain. And above all else, they'll pay their very best spy - myself, of course - a handsome sum.

Lord Fellworth jerks the suitcase away from the Suitcase Man's hand, his gun never leaving his back.

SUITCASE MAN

(mutters) I'll make you pay, Fellworth. I will find you and ...

LORD FELLWORTH

(laughs) You're a persistent one! However, though you'll remember me as

Lord Fellworth, you'll remember my name
mistakenly. Farewell.

With that, Lord Fellworth leaps from the deck of the train and tumbles into the long grass on the side of the track. He quickly disappears into the night as a shocked Suitcase Man watches in despair, the train putting more and more distance between the two.

He enters the train car again, raising his hands in the presence of the other passengers. The Businessman, Black-Dress Woman, and Soldier point their guns at him and await his response.

SUITCASE MAN

It's gone.

Slowly, the other passengers stow their weapons and return to their seats. The Suitcase Man returns to his own row, staring out the window and silently concocting an explanation for his superiors as the Mother comforts her child.

FADE OUT.

SCENE 3: ARRIVING IN EMORY

INT. EMORY TRAIN STATION - NIGHT, 11:30 PM

The speakers crackle with the announcement of the Train Engineer. The train begins to slow as the lights of Emory's station come into view.

TRAIN ENGINEER

Emory! This stop, Emory!

The Suitcase Man quietly leaves the train without any luggage in hand. He steps onto the platform and sits on a bench, facing the tracks. The only light provided comes from the lampposts within the station, as the time draws closer and closer to midnight.

Shortly afterwards, a man in military uniform sits on the other side of the bench, holding a newspaper in his hand. His rank indicates that he is a GENERAL - and he is here to receive a report.

GENERAL

I had a canary once. It wouldn't sing.

SUITCASE MAN

Sorry to hear, mine sings just fine.

The code phrases are a success; each can trust the other.
The General nods and begins the questioning.

GENERAL

What of our spy?

SUITCASE MAN

He stole the suitcase and jumped off the train. I'm sure he's heading back to the Confederation now.

GENERAL

Are you certain? Did he really escape with the suitcase?

SUITCASE MAN

Yes. He's long gone by now.

GENERAL

Good.

The conversation pauses; the silence is interrupted only by the gentle wind and the sounds of an entering train on another track.

SUITCASE MAN

I don't know where he's going next, I'm afraid.

GENERAL

We will know soon enough. Knowing the way that this man operates, he will bring the documents to the enemy - and thanks to your performance aboard the train, they will assume the information is legitimate.

SUITCASE MAN

When he finds out about the other passengers and that they were in on this whole operation ...

GENERAL

They'll be taken into witness protection, including yourself. Every one of you played a significant role in completing this assignment. The Confederation will believe they've acquired sensitive documents, then act on that information accordingly.

SUITCASE MAN

And they will fall into our ambush.

GENERAL

Precisely. We will turn the tides of this war and, in time, the nation will know Sergeant Sawyer Greene as the hero who put a suitcase of false intel into enemy hands.

SUITCASE MAN

Thank you, General.

GENERAL

Thank you, Sergeant, for your service to this nation.

SERGEANT SAWYER GREENE, known simply as the Suitcase Man by the spy "Lord Fellworth," rises from his bench and leaves the train station. He dissolves into the small crowd of people leaving the busy train station of Emory - in the typical fashion of an agent in the aftermath of success.

FADE OUT.

THE END