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1 LONG TRAIN RUNNIN' 1

by Lisa Eismen

2 EXT. TRAIN TRACKS. DAY. 2

The sound of a distant train WHISTLE blows long and hard. One time. Then again a few seconds later, but this time already much closer.

There is a Native American boy, RALPH, 15, sitting on a country platform watching the train as it goes by at full speed. The wheels of the train CLICK-CLACK against the metal rails. The boy COUGHS, HAWKS and SPITS on the platform he's sitting on.

He looks down at his hands and sees a thin stream of blood in his saliva. Obviously in pain as he COUGHS, he holds his ribs in discomfort.

Ralph is sporting a massive swollen, black eye and a dried but bloodied lip. He's nervous and hot sitting in the Arizona sun. He holds onto a one-way ticket with a battered hand. The wind comes up and flicks the ticket out of his hand.

The boy SCRAMBLES for it, bounding off the platform onto the hard Arizona dirt. GRUNTING as he lands, he holds his ribs as he runs for the ticket; his scuffed cowboy boots GRIND into the packed dry earth.

The wind takes the ticket and tumbles it up and around the air. The boy reaches and jumps for it. The sound of the train is now a distant memory as the last of the carriages whiz by; blowing its WHISTLE one last time.

3 INT. ONE-ROOM SHACK -DAY - CONTINUOUS 3

A large, unkept man rolls out of his bed. His sheets are grey and sweat-stained. He sits up. The bed creaks. He wipes the sleep from his eyes and groans as he tries to get up.

Obviously hung-over he looks at the bottle of rum beside his bed. He takes it and brings it to his mouth. Not enough in it to wet a seed. He throws the bottle across the room. It hits the wall with a loud THUMP but doesn't break.

He leans over to the table in the middle of the room and sees his wallet laying open. He looks through it. Empty.

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In a rage, he throws the wallet and whatever else he can get his hands on against the wall. He weaves and groans as he throws his filthy, greasy pants back on. His crusty t-shirt still on from three days ago.

He finds the keys in his pants pocket and rushes out the door; letting it SLAM firmly behind him.

The MOTOR of an engine is heard RUMBLING and car wheels shoot rocks against the tiny house as he PEELS out of the driveway in a rage.

Finally, the boy snatches the tumbling ticket out of the air. He goes back to his place on the platform and waits. He checks the broken clock in the shelter. Still not working, he goes over to the coke machine.

He puts coins in the machine and they CLINK and CLANK on their way down. The WHIRRING of the mechanism is loud in the empty structure. The coke can falls with a loud THUD.

He takes the can from the machine, leaving the plastic protector to BANG against the metal. The sound of his actions are exaggerated by the quiet and stillness of the shed; all but for the WIND that has now picked up strength and is HOWLING and WHIPPING up debris and rubbish and FLINGING it at the structure.

The boy sits outside drinking his coke and waiting for his train. The train crossing signal goes off in a cacophony of CHIMES and BELLS as the train approaches. The boy gets up and picks up his one very small bag of belongings and waits.

He turns to look at the road as he hears the sound of a RACING pick-up truck SCREECHING to a halt. Dust billows around the revved-up pick-up truck and a man gets out. The boy sees the pick-up and starts running along side the train; looking for the farthest entry of the train possible.

Ralph is BREATHING loudly and WINCES with pain as his sore ribs get knocked in his attempt to get on the train. The train stops and opens its doors. The boy alights the train.

He finds a seat and plops his bag down and limps to the window on the other side of the train; taking one last look at the man who called himself his father. He smiles and takes a swig from his coke SLURPING down every last drop. The train's wheels TURN and the engine CHUGS and the WHISTLE BLOWS.

Ralph looks out the window in a mix of trepidation and elation as the long train picks up speed taking him far away from his father.

Sitting down carefully, he takes out his wallet and counts his money. Not exactly enough to get him to Europe, but possibly enough to take him where he needs to go.

In his wallet is another section and he pulls out two photos. One is a picture of a woman, holding a younger version of Ralph and a little girl.

He lovingly rubs his finger over the photos, looks out the window and smiles hopefully.

THE END