

NEXT STOP

by Ken Bradbury



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A scene for three characters: Wilson, Mack, and Ford. The scene may be played by characters of either gender but have all been labeled “he” for the sake of simplicity.

Two chairs representing seats on a train sit side by side. Mack is sitting in one of the seats, reading his paper.

- WILSON:** *(rushing in and plopping down in the seat beside Mack)* Whew! Made it!
- MACK:** Nearly missed the train?
- WILSON:** Yeah. Got off work late.
- MACK:** Last train of the night.
- WILSON:** I know. Glad I made it.
- MACK:** Going home?
- WILSON:** Yep. You?
- MACK:** Done for the day.
- FORD:** *(the conductor, entering)* Evening, everybody. Tickets?
- MACK:** Sure. *(hands Ford a ticket as does Wilson)*
- FORD:** Glad you made it. Saw you running through the station.
- WILSON:** Thanks.
- FORD:** Gonna be a nice night.
- WILSON:** Hope so.
- FORD:** Next stop Pleasant Corners.
- WILSON:** That’s me.
- MACK:** Servin’ coffee tonight, Sean?
- FORD:** It’ll be here in just a minute. Evenin’. *(Ford exits.)*
- MACK:** Nice touch ... serving coffee on the evening trains.
- WILSON:** Yeah. Great idea. Boy I’m tired. Long day. Can’t wait to get home and stretch out.
- MACK:** My dogs always miss me when I’m away all week. Hope that coffee comes soon. I can hardly stay awake.

- WILSON:** Go ahead and take a nap. I'll wake you up when it comes around.
- MACK:** Thanks. I appreciate that. (*and he closes his eyes and stretches out a bit*)
- FORD:** (*entering*) Next stop ... Biggsville.
- WILSON:** What?
- FORD:** Biggsville.
- WILSON:** We just left Biggsville.
- FORD:** Sorry, Mister. We just left Hoopstown.
- WILSON:** But I got on in Biggsville.
- FORD:** Had a long day?
- WILSON:** Yes, but ...
- FORD:** Happens all the time. Where you goin'?
- WILSON:** Pleasant Corners.
- FORD:** That'll be the stop after Biggsville. Just keep your seat when the train stops.
- MACK:** (*waking*) They serving coffee tonight, Sean?
- FORD:** It'll be here in just a minute. Tickets?
- MACK:** Sure. (*hands Ford his ticket*)
- WILSON:** I just gave you my ticket.
- FORD:** Uh ... sorry. This is the first time I've been through this car.
- WILSON:** That's crazy.
- FORD:** Yeah, a crazy life. Ticket? (*Wilson hands him his ticket, Ford looks at it, then*) Gonna be a nice night. Evening.
- WILSON:** (*as Mack closes his eyes again*) I've been working too hard. This is nuts.
- MACK:** Nice service.
- WILSON:** What's that?
- MACK:** Serving coffee on the night trains.
- WILSON:** Even your dogs wouldn't believe what just happened.
- MACK:** What dogs?
- WILSON:** Your dogs at home.
- MACK:** I don't own a dog. I'm allergic. Wanna wake me up when we get to Pleasant Corners? (*and he nods off*)

- WILSON:** Maybe it was something I ate. The fumes from the train. I'll get off at the next stop and get some air and everything will be ...
- FORD:** (*entering*) Next stop ... Biggsville.
- WILSON:** What?!
- FORD:** Biggsville Station. Tickets?
- WILSON:** You just said that the last stop was Biggsville!
- FORD:** Last stop was Hoopstown. Biggsville then Pleasant Corners. Got your tickets, folks?
- WILSON:** (*nudging Mack*) He wants your ticket again.
- MACK:** (*waking and searching for his ticket*) I put it here somewhere.
- WILSON:** You put it in your front pocket.
- MACK:** (*looking in his front pocket*) I don't know how you'd know that. I haven't had it out since I got on the train. (*finds it in his pants pocket and offers it to Ford*) Here you go.
- WILSON:** How'd you do that?
- FORD:** (*to Wilson*) Ticket?
- WILSON:** I just gave it to you.
- FORD:** (*exchanges a brief and concerned look with Mack*) You okay, Mister?
- WILSON:** Of course I'm okay! I've given you my ticket twice!
- FORD:** Well then let's just play a little game. Give it to me a third time. (*winking at Mack*) That's a good fella. Now just sit back and take it easy. We're about to pull into Pleasant Corners. You getting off there?
- WILSON:** Yes.
- FORD:** Good.
- MACK:** They serving coffee tonight, Sean?
- FORD:** It'll be right here.
- WILSON:** I'll bet it won't.
- FORD:** Gonna be a nice night. (*He exits.*)
- WILSON:** That guy is crazy!
- MACK:** You want me to move to another seat? You seem to be a little ... you know ...
- WILSON:** Crazy?



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