

THE WEST HIGHLAND TRAIN RIDE:
FINAL DESTINATION

by

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INT. PASSENGER CAR - DAY

AUDEN, 18 years old, sits on a train across from his FATHER. Across the aisle sits ELIOT, also 18, ELIOT'S MOTHER and FATHER, and little sister, JANE who's around 3 or 4 years old. The parents are in conversation. Auden stares into space.

ELIOT'S FATHER

What about you Auden? How do you feel about starting uni?

They all turn to him. Auden glances at his dad, then away. He smiles uncomfortably.

AUDEN

(trying to be enthusiastic)
Oh, I'm psyched to be going.

ELIOT'S MOTHER

(while trying to calm down Jane)
Where were you going again?

Auden opens his mouth.

AUDEN'S FATHER

Cambridge University.
(puffing up his chest)
The best of the best.

Auden's smile wavers, then returns to normal.

ELIOT'S MOTHER

Wow, that must be very exciting.

Eliot's mother moves Jane to her lap.

ELIOT'S FATHER

(with a proud smile)
We knew you were always smart. It's good to see you'll be going to a good place.

Auden glances at his dad, then back. Auden is still smiling. He nods.

ELIOT'S MOTHER

It's quite unfortunate that you and Eliot will be so far from each other. The states are not a train ride away.

ELIOT'S FATHER

Oh they'll be fine. I think this will be a great opportunity for them to branch out.

AUDEN'S FATHER

(crossing his arms and nodding)

Eliot is a good lad. You must be very proud of your son.

Auden tenses.

ELIOT'S FATHER

(nods to Eliot)

I am proud of him.

Eliot's father puts an arm around him. Eliot's mother nods. Eliot looks over to Auden and they make eye contact. Auden looks away and to his father. His father is staring at him with a harsh look.

Auden begins to sweat and fidget in his seat. He stands up quickly.

AUDEN

I'm gonna go find the loo.

Auden walks to the train car door. His father watches him go. Then Eliot's parents say something to his father and his attention shifts. Eliot watches Auden the whole time until Auden exits into the next train car.

INT. PASSENGER CAR 2 - CONTINUOUS

Auden enters. This train car is more empty than the last. Auden sits down at an empty window seat. He takes a couple deep breaths, then looks out the window. After a second, he turns and faces forward, leans back against his seat, and closes his eyes. He remains like that for a few moments.

Suddenly, the door where he came in from opens. He flinches. Eliot walks in.

ELIOT

How you doing?

AUDEN

(looking away)

I'm alright. It was just a bit stuffy in there.

Eliot nods. Then he leans forward and hold out his hand as if asking for something. Auden looks at him. There is a brief pause. Then he holds out his arm to Eliot.

Eliot takes his arm and pulls up his sleeve. Auden's arm is covered in various sized bruises, some new and some faded. Eliot pulls out some BRUISE CREAM from his pocket and begins applying. It is silent for a moment.

AUDEN

Why did you choose to go to America?

ELIOT

(focused on Auden's arm)

It wasn't my choice. My parents are forcing me to gain some experience abroad.

Auden turns to look out the window. Eliot finishes applying and grabs the other arm. He stares at it for a second.

ELIOT (CONT'D)

(looks up at Auden)

Why don't we just tell someone, Auden?
We could tell my parents-

AUDEN

(shaking his head)

No, we can't.

ELIOT

But why not? ...I'm worried for you. I think it would be ok-

AUDEN

(shaking his head more)

No, no, it's okay.

Auden pulls his arm away and holds it. He fidgets.

AUDEN (CONT'D)

Once I start uni...once I can get away...everything will be fine.

ELIOT

But what if it's not fine? What's gonna happen when you go home? When your grades drop?

There is a brief pause. Auden looks down. Eliot gestures for him to hold out his arm again and Auden concedes.

AUDEN

It'll be okay. They won't drop.
Everything will be ok-

The train bumps. Eliot stops and looks out the window for a second. He turns back and looks like he's thinking.

ELIOT

What if-

Suddenly, the train lurches. Auden and Eliot fly off of their seats and everything goes black.

INT. AUDEN'S CHILDHOOD HOUSE - DAY

Auden is standing in the entry way of a house that leads into the living room. The front door behind him is replaced by the train car door. The lights are all off except for a light that shines in from the doorway to the kitchen. It is strangely silent.

He looks down at himself and holds his hands forward. He is confused. He is around 7 or 8 years old.

Suddenly, there is a crash that comes from the kitchen. Auden jumps. A woman screams.

AUDEN'S FATHER

YOU F***** SLAG!

Auden peaks into the kitchen. His MOTHER is on the floor with his father standing above her, kicking. Auden runs over and onto his mom to shield her. He puts out a hand.

AUDEN

STOP IT!

His father winds up for another kick. Auden braces himself.

Auden's father kicks him in the face hard once, then twice. On the third time, the whole world shatters.

INT. AUDEN'S CHILDHOOD HOUSE - DAY

Auden wakes up on the floor. He is around 13 or 14 years old now. There is a giant bruise on his face.

The house is dark. He is surrounded by various school subject books. A NOTEBOOK sits on the table with pages ripped out. A BROKEN WOODEN SPOON lays in two pieces on the floor near him.

There is a persistent knock at the front the door. He gets up with a struggle and walks towards it. He opens it slowly and peeks out. Eliot stands there with a ball in his hands.

ELIOT

Auden! Come out and play!

Auden glances back in his house and then back out at Eliot.

AUDEN

(cautiously)

Sorry Eliot, maybe later-

ELIOT

Oh come on! You said that last time. I rarely get to see you these days.

AUDEN

(hiding)

Can you come back another time? I-

A hint of the bruise can be seen on Auden's face. Eliot, confused and concerned, drops his ball and pushes the door open quickly. Auden takes a few steps back from the momentum of the door and falls down. He holds a hand up to his face.

ELIOT

(not moving)

Auden...

Eliot slowly walks towards him, a hand out. Auden turns away, trying to hide in the shadows.

ELIOT (CONT'D)

(concerned)

Auden, what's going on.

Right as Eliot makes it to Auden, the scene melts away and the floor disappears. Auden falls and plunges into a sea of water. He flails around. He tries to breathe, but only bubbles come out of his mouth.

He hears a women's scream, then a voice.

AUDEN'S MOTHER

I can't do this anymore...

There is the sound of pages being flipped along with pencil writing noises.

AUDEN'S FATHER (V.O.)

How much more of an idiot can you be?

(sound of a slap)

This is such a simple problem! Do you want to turn out like your mother?

Auden presses his hands to his ears.

ELIOT (V.O.)

What's wrong Auden?

Auden looks visibly in pain.

AUDEN (V.O.)

I'm so stupid. I can't do anything.

AUDEN'S FATHER (V.O.)

What is wrong with you? Stop being such a stupid arse. You don't deserve to be loved.

AUDEN (V.O.)

I...I-

He slowly loses movement and eventually stops moving altogether.

The screen fades to black.

INT. AUDEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Auden wakes up. He's his current age. Sun shines in through the windows of his room casting a warm glow.

There is a knock at his door and he sits up. His father walks in and up to Auden. Auden looks away.

AUDEN'S FATHER

Auden! What are you up to?

Auden braces himself. After a moment, he looks to his father confused. His father is smiling.

AUDEN'S FATHER (CONT'D)

What's wrong? Still half asleep?

Auden continues staring. His father playfully taps his head.

AUDEN'S FATHER (CONT'D)
Hellllo? Anyone there?

AUDEN
(shaking his head)
Huh? Oh, I-...I must still be a bit
groggy.

AUDEN'S FATHER
(laughing)
Haha, well hurry up and wake up. Your
mother and I have a surprise for you
downstairs.

AUDEN
(confused)
Mum?

AUDEN'S FATHER
Yes! Hurry and get-

Auden's father notices the bruises on Auden's arms.

AUDEN'S FATHER (CONT'D)
Auden, what happened?

He reaches for his arms and Auden flinches. He gently touches
and lifts them.

AUDEN'S FATHER (CONT'D)
Stand up. Let me get you some medicine
for this.

His father gently tugs at his arm for him to stand up.

AUDEN'S FATHER (CONT'D)
What happened to you? Did you get into
a fight? You know how your mother and
I feel about you getting hurt.

Auden looks visibly surprised. He stands up and pauses. His
father has turned towards the door.

AUDEN
(hesitantly and quietly)
You did this to me.

Auden's father begins walking towards the door.

AUDEN'S FATHER
(not looking at Auden)
What do you mean?

AUDEN
(more adamant)
You were the one who hurt me.

His father freezes.

AUDEN'S FATHER
(without turning around)
I...did?

The scene then turns red and melts away. They are now standing in the train car. Auden's father suddenly turns around and picks up Auden.

AUDEN'S FATHER (CONT'D)
HOW DARE YOU SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT?

His father throws him out a window.

Auden flies through the window, shattering it, and begins falling.

EXT. TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Eliot grabs Auden's hand as he is falling. Auden dangles and looks up. His full bruised arm is visible. The train had derailed off the bridge. Eliot is struggling to hold onto him and the train.

ELIOT
Hang on Auden!

The train creaks. a chair falls past Auden. Auden looks up at Eliot's other struggling hand and pauses, then loosens his grip a little. Eliot notices and grabs on tighter.

ELIOT
Auden! What are you doing?

AUDEN
(looking to Eliot)
Just let me go, Eliot. You can't support the both of us for much longer. Just save yourself.

ELIOT
No! Ugh...Help will come. Just hang on
a little bit longer!

Blood drips from Auden's face. He loosens his grip a little
bit more.

ELIOT (CONT'D)
(struggling)
Auden!

Eliot and Auden look into each other's eyes. Auden's face is
calm with no emotion. Tears form in Eliot's eyes. The tears
fall. They stare at each other in silence.

Eliot's face scrunches.

ELIOT (CONT'D)
You can't go...not yet.

The tears fly by Auden. Eliot looks at Auden in desperation.

ELIOT (CONT'D)
(pleading quietly)
Please. Auden...

Eliot's grip on the train is loosening. Auden breaks eye
contact with Eliot and looks down below. Then he looks back
up. A tear falls. He smiles, then loosens his grip
completely.

ELIOT (CONT'D)
NO!

Their grip breaks and Auden falls. He spreads out his arms as
he plummets.

Eliot who is shouting, grows smaller and smaller. The sun
shines onto Auden.

He closes his eyes, lets out a small laugh, and brings his
arms in as to hug himself.

END