

RUN

by

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&

Different Animal

RUBY (34, wearing yoga clothes), sits in her car in the parking lot outside a building with a coffee shop downstairs and a yoga class upstairs.

She's on the phone. We don't hear what the person on the other end is saying. Ruby sounds fairly calm to begin with.

RUBY

Hey darling.

Beat.

Yoga

Beat.

No, I'm about to go in. What's up?

Beat.

You need *someone* to be in?

She laughs.

Some nonspecific congregation of human matter?

Beat.

I'm not coming home for your package.

Beat.

I don't know yet.

Beat.

I like not knowing. It's my day off.

Beat.

I don't really wanna do that.

Beat.

No it's gone.

Beat.

'Where has it gone'?

Beat. Her voice goes much harder.

Groceries Laurence. SnackPack pudding cups and your fucking matcha latte powder. That's where it's gone.

Beat. Now she sounds tired.

I don't know why, either. I guess I'm - yeah, probably womb-related.

Beat.

I'm sorry.

Beat. She rolls her eyes.

Now? But I'm -

Beat.

Okay! Fine, I'll come back.

She puts the phone down. She frowns at herself, annoyed that she capitulated so easily.

She stops. Shakes her head.

RUBY (CONT'D)

No.

She goes to her phone, having changed her mind. Suddenly she gets a text.

She looks at her phone. It's from 'Billy'. It says one word:

"RUN"

Ruby glances at it then, looks away. But everything has changed. A vein in her throat seems to be throbbing. Her vision is blurry. A bead of sweat runs down the side of her face as she flushes. Her breathing quickens.

The text lights up her phone again.

"RUN"

She looks up at it, and then stares into space. Another GIRL with a yoga mat walks past the cars. The birds twitter, but apart from that, all is silent. She shakes her head to herself and puts her phone in her bag. She goes to open the door.

She jumps. Another car is extremely close to her, and her door knocked against it. She can't get out that way. She watches as the driver walks away from the car, having thoughtlessly penned her in.

She switches seats, looks out. On the other side of the passenger door are some thorny bushes. She opens that door, but it scratches against the bushes. A magazine is stuck in the bushes, it's open at a glossy advert. It's a perfume ad of a tiny little naked woman sitting in the palm of a man's hand, looking up at him adoringly. Ruby focuses in on it blankly. She grabs her bag and goes to grab her phone.

The text lights up for a third time.

"RUN"

A barrow passes. It says on the side, 'Fresh brown "eggs" for sale.' She winces slightly at the terrible use of inverted commas. An expression in her eyes starts to change.

There is a tone in her ears now. She pulls the car door shut.

Suddenly she lurches to her phone and types back,

"RUN"

Ruby is really shaking now. The tone is getting louder. She stares in shock at the word she just typed. Then, her hand shaking, her finger lowers towards the phone. She presses it.

SEND.

She chucks the phone onto the seat next to her like it's red hot. Her eyes are wide and intense. Almost in slow motion, Ruby reverses her car out of the space, out of the parking lot, onto the road. She puts her foot down.

2 EXT. LAX AIRPORT CARPARK. LATE MORNING. 2

Ruby drives into a space, gets out, slams the door and walks.

She passes someone paying for a ticket. She strides past them without a glance.

She has her tote bag over her shoulder, which still has a yoga mat in it. She marches towards the checkout, a look of shock and determination on her face.

3 INT. LAX AIRPORT. LATE MORNING. 3

Ruby is standing in the queue, trying to compose a text, but keeps deleting it. It's to 'Laurence'.

"I have no idea..."

"I'm so sor..."

She looks angry for a second. Maybe she isn't sorry.

"I want you to be calm when I..."

She reaches the front of the queue to meet a TICKET AGENT (Female, 30s).

TICKET AGENT

Hi there.

RUBY

(faux-casual)

Hi. Can I buy a ticket, please?

4.

TICKET AGENT

To?

RUBY

New York. I'd like the next flight to New York.

TICKET AGENT

Certainly Ma'am. There's one leaving in thirty minutes, I can get you on that flight, so long as you scoot.

Ruby hands her a drivers license.

RUBY

I can scoot!

They share a smile.

TICKET AGENT

Will you be checking a bag?

RUBY

I'll carry this with me.

She's indicating her purse. She realizes she's still holding the yoga mat.

RUBY (CONT'D)

I guess I'll put this in the - trash before I leave. It's a shame, it's a good one. Do you want it?

TICKET AGENT

Nope. I do not.

The Ticket Agent smiles, clearly she now thinks Ruby is insane.

TICKET AGENT (CONT'D)

You currently have a middle seat. Would you prefer a window or an aisle?

RUBY

Window. No. Aisle. How long is the flight?

TICKET AGENT

Five and a half hours.

RUBY

So aisle then.

TICKET AGENT

No problem.

5.

RUBY
Or a window seat.

TICKET AGENT
Window?

RUBY
Aisle. Window. I'm stuck! Pass?

TICKET AGENT
Shall we go with a middle seat?

RUBY
(Trying to joke)
It's the only one I don't want!

TICKET ATTENDANT
You don't want it -?

RUBY
Ahahahaaa don't ask me questions
just give me the goddamn ticket.

The Ticket Agent hands her the ticket, alarmed. Ruby turns and runs.

4 INT. JFK AIRPORT. ARRIVALS. AFTERNOON. 4

Ruby has just landed and is perusing the shop. She grabs a hairspray.

5 INT. JFK AIRPORT LADIES' RESTROOM. AFTERNOON. 5

There is the sound of hairspray being sprayed liberally.

In the mirror's reflection, Ruby flicks her hair up and back. She has been trying to 'poof' it, and has totally oversprayed her hair so now it is clumping and sticky, and resembling a fright-wig. Her face registers panic as she tries desperately to tame it. Suddenly she's overcome with a surge of arousal.

RUBY
Ahhh fuck! Calm down.

She presses her legs together then presses the heel of her hand for a beat on her pubis.

She gets out a new lipstick that she has just bought. She applies it. The color is too orange and doesn't suit her. She tries to blend it in, grimacing.

6 EXT. JFK AIRPORT. CAB RANK. AFTERNOON. 6

Ruby comes out of the airport looking stressed. Her hair looks weird. She gets in the queue for a cab.

A TEENAGE BOY (16, Skinny, Metallica t-shirt), in the queue, stares at her. She gives him a withering look, then looks away, then glances back. He's still staring. Irritated, she decides to stare back and hold his gaze. She blinks first. She smiles at him, almost flirtatiously, admitting defeat. The boy's expression doesn't change.

Then a CARER (45), wearing a badge and lanyard, takes the boy's hand and leads him into a cab.

Another cab arrives and Ruby gets into it, slamming the door.

RUBY
Penn Station, please.

The cab leaves the cab rank.

7 INT. PENN STATION TRAIN PLATFORM. MOMENTS LATER. 7

Ruby wanders onto the train platform looking around her desperately.

Seemingly unable to find whatever she was looking for, she turns and sees a train slowly coming in to the station.

She starts to walk dangerously close to the edge of the platform, closer and closer. A few people notice her.

Then, standing right on the edge as the train comes in, she suddenly starts to hyperventilate.

RUBY
Oh my god. Ohmygodohmygodohmygod...

A MOTHER (45) with a young daughter and a baby strapped to her, wanders towards her.

MOTHER
Are you alright, dear?

Suddenly a MAN (34, English) appears out of nowhere.

MAN
Okay there, we're okay.

The MAN smiles at the MOTHER, who is grateful to let someone else take over.

Ruby takes one look at the Man and flinches away at his touch, but falls silent. She takes a step back and they stare at each other. He grins at her. She frowns and then there's a tiny flicker of a smile in response.

Then she starts hyperventilating again. The Man ferries her towards a bench. Once seated, he encourages Ruby to breathe deeply, by doing so himself.

Ruby suddenly puts her head between her legs, pulling her legs up on the bench.

MAN (CONT'D)

You're alright.

Ruby's breathing calms slightly. The Man sits back against the bench. She seems hyper-aware of him. The MOTHER is sitting on the other side of Ruby, and seems to be concerned.

MOTHER

Is she okay?

RUBY

Thanks. I just - had a moment.

MOTHER

Do you know each other?

MAN

No, but anxiety is an old friend.

MOTHER

For me too.

RUBY

I'm not anxious.

MAN

Yes you are.

He strokes her arm.

MAN (CONT'D)

I get it *really* badly on train platforms, oddly. I convince myself I'm gonna jump in front of the train.

MOTHER

Yes! Or push someone?

Ruby looks weirded out by this. The child smiles at her.

MAN

No... When the train comes in there is a sense of a build up. Towards a point when everything could change, my whole life's trajectory could finish there and everything I've ever been, and everything I've tried to be. It's not astonishing in any way other than being a distinct and real possibility.. Of death.. Right now. Gone.

He claps and indicates a separation with his hands, and the MOTHER jumps. The MAN makes a tonal noise. Ruby is listening.

MAN (CONT'D)

I mean, after the scraping and hosing and the sad phonecalls, the question would linger on everyone's lips:

WOMAN

Are you okay with him rubbing your back?

RUBY

Not really.

MAN

"Why, mate? What could possibly have transpired for you to take such desperate action?" And if I could talk, I'd be like, "I don't know why I did it. I'm as surprised as you are."

WOMAN

I have a question.

MAN

No you don't.
(To Ruby)
Here we go.

The train starts pulling in.

MAN (CONT'D)

Is this you?

RUBY

I don't know.

MAN

Well it's definitely me.

He gets up. She gets up. He gestures for her to go first and she steps on the train.

The Man and Ruby are boarding the train. Ruby checks her phone, concealing it from The Man, who is behind her.

The Man looks up. Suddenly Ruby is gone. A toilet door clicks.

9 INT. AMTRAK TRAIN TOILET.

9

Ruby closes the door as quietly as she can. She checks her phone again. There are two messages. We see them briefly. They seem to be saying "Where are you?!"

She stares in the mirror and breathes. Then she seems to decide something. She nods her head briefly, then shakes her head to herself intensely. She leaves the toilet with purpose, and heads towards the door.

RUBY

(Under her breath)

No no no no no no no no no....

The Man is standing in the doorway, blocking the exit. He is having a conversation on the phone. She stops and listens to him, though he doesn't seem to have noticed her. He is eating from a packet of dates. Ruby hides from him and listens.

MAN

(cheerfully)

Yes, I have packed it Lillia my darling, I am not a gibbering imbecile.

He leans around to where she's hiding and grins at Ruby.

Honey. *Lillia!* Listen to me.
Where's my girl?

Ruby emerges from her hiding place and moves towards him, apparently planning on leaving the train via the door he is blocking. He looks up and smiles at her, without moving.

There's my girl. No more freaking out, okay?

He offers her the dates.

MAN (CONT'D)

Date?

She shakes her head.

MAN (CONT'D)

How about a dried piece of fruit?

He laughs at his joke. Then he goes back to the phone.

MAN (CONT'D)

No that wasn't to you.

Ruby spins and goes back into the loo, looking nonplussed.

INT. AMTRAK TRAIN BY THE DOORS. SECONDS LATER.

Ruby emerges again from the toilet. There are suddenly a lot of people getting on around her. Several crying children. There are so many people getting on that she doesn't stand a chance with the exits. She fights her way back towards the carriage The Man was closest to.

10

INT. AMTRAK TRAIN SEATING AREA. SECONDS LATER.

10

In this carriage, it's much quieter. Ruby enters cautiously. The Man is sitting opposite an Older Lady (70). He's holding a pack of cards up so that they are fanned out, all facing her.

MAN

Pop your card back in the pack.

The Older Lady places her card back into the pack, facing towards her, away from the Man. The Man then gathers the pack and shuffles it, deftly and impressively quickly.

MAN (CONT'D)

Quick shuffle. Are you happy I don't have any markers? Nothing up my sleeves?

He shows her his sleeves.

OLDER LADY

Yes.

The Man now holds the cards up to face her again. This time, Ruby can see that the cards are colored in a particular way on the back, red down the left side and blue down the right. One card is sticking out very clearly, because the Man ensured that the Older Lady put the card back into the pack the other way around.

MAN

Now I need you to say your card in your head over and over.

The Man is whittling the cards down to her card, dropping a few here and there.

MAN (CONT'D)

Louder, Marjorie! I need you to say it as loud as you can in your head. I can't hear it!

MARJORIE

I'm saying it!

MAN

Shout it Marjorie! Shout it in your head! Louder! LOUDER!

Marjorie's face is straining with the effort.

MAN (CONT'D)

Aghhhh....

Pretending to be exhausted, the Man drops the other cards, and is holding up the one which, from his and Ruby's perspective, was obviously always going to be the one he chose.

MARJORIE

WOW!!!!

MAN

Was that your card?! Really?

The Man looks like he can hardly believe it. He's an excellent liar. Marjorie applauds enthusiastically. The Man holds his hand up in a show of modesty.

MAN (CONT'D)

Please.

MARJORIE

You're gifted.

MAN

(pointing at her)

You're absolutely right young lady.

Ruby goes to stow her bag above a table nearby.

MAN (CONT'D)

Allow me.

The Man jumps up and stows her bag above his and Marjorie's booth instead. He flops down on the window side, making room for Ruby. He gestures her seat.

Ruby tentatively sits down in the aisle seat next to the Man.

TRAIN ANNOUNCEMENT

Ladies and gentlemen welcome to the
12 noon AmTrak service from New
York to Chicago. We're glad you
could join us on your trip today...

MAN

I'm Billy. Hi.

Ruby shakes his hand.

MARJORIE

(To Ruby)

Marjorie.

RUBY

Ruby.

Marjorie smiles at her.

BILLY
(To Ruby)
Where you headed?

RUBY
Um...

BILLY
(Making a buzzer noise)
Aggghhh. No pauses, hesitation or
repetition. Question passes to
Marjorie's team.

MARJORIE
Pittsburgh. My daughter lives
there.

BILLY
Is the correct answer.

Marjorie smiles and pulls her fist back in a little
triumphant move.

MARJORIE
Where are you going?

BILLY
I'm going *all* the way.

MARJORIE
(Flirtatiously)
I see.

BILLY
Not like that! Marjorie!

Billy pretends to be shocked. Marjorie chuckles, a dirty
laugh. She takes a hipflask out of her purse and swigs it,
then subtly glances nervously up and down the aisle.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I mean coast to coast. I'll get
this train to Chicago then another
to San Francisco.

MARJORIE
Long journey.

BILLY
Seven days.

MARJORIE
Afraid of flying?

BILLY
Let's go with that.

MARJORIE

I hope you don't get lonely.

BILLY

So do I.

Pause. Billy and Ruby sit very still as Marjorie gets a book and some reading glasses out of her purse.

The whistle sounds. The train is about to pull away. There is a muffled announcement which seems to be saying that anyone not travelling should leave the train now.

Ruby opens her mouth to say something and goes to stand up.

She realises Billy is holding the seam of her shirt, under the table. She tries to pull away but he holds her firm, though he's staring straight ahead, playing with the pack of cards with the other hand. Ruby visibly flushes at the physical contact. His hand brushes her arm and she shivers.

The train finally pulls out of the station. Billy and Ruby appear to exhale together.

Billy smiles again at Marjorie, who beams, excited.

MARJORIE

We're off.

Beat. Marjorie sees him playing with the cards.

Any more magic tricks?

BILLY

Who says they're magic tricks...

Billy wiggles his fingers to his temples in an ominous gesture. Marjorie gasps.

MARJORIE

You're a psychic?

RUBY

Really?

Billy nods solemnly. He looks at Ruby.

BILLY

May I borrow your palm, Miss?

Ruby goes to shake her head but he grabs it anyway and plonks her hand upturned on the table.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Okay, wow, you've got one very strong line here, you see that? That's your heart line.

(MORE)

14.

BILLY (CONT'D)

That is deep, deep, deep and long.
Look at it!

MARJORIE

Is she going to fall deeply in
love?

Billy looks up at Marjorie with a very serious expression.

BILLY

With a line like that, I'm talking
about the kind of love the rest of
us only dream of.

RUBY

The rest of us?

MARJORIE

Has she met him yet?

BILLY

Yes she has. But - hold on, there's
a break in the middle. A long one.

MARJORIE

Is that why she looks so sad?

RUBY

I'm not sad.

BILLY

No, she's not sad... hold on...

He tickles the crease in her elbow. She shivers.

She's sexually aroused.

RUBY

Hey!

Ruby snatches her hand away. Marjorie laughs.

MARJORIE

That's not a thing, psychic Billy.

RUBY

Okay, alright. Since we're showing
off our skills...

Ruby grabs Billy's hand.

BILLY

Do you have the gift?

She traces a line with her fingers.

RUBY

Well let's see. So this is the Love
line.

She suddenly gasps. Ruby looks at Billy, urgently.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Do you have a passionate obsession
with 'little pigs'.

BILLY

No.

RUBY

I think you do. And no, Marjorie,
it's not a perverted metaphor for
naked women, I think he really
loves little pigs. See how deep
this line is? I think he brings
them up *all the time*.

BILLY

They sing to their babies, man.

Ruby's eyes are burning brightly.

RUBY

Is that true?

BILLY

It is true.

RUBY

(Triumphantly to
Marjorie)

Now, how did I do that?

Marjorie applauds as she takes a little bow.

BILLY

Someone's perked up.

RUBY

Hi.

BILLY

Hi. Still never miss an opportunity
to wind me up.

RUBY

It's like riding a bike.

An OLDER MAN (70), arrives with two hot drinks.

OLDER MAN

Well that was a mission.

MARJORIE
(Coldly)
Can I help you?

OLDER MAN
Um... Can I sit down?

MARJORIE
Who is this?

OLDER MAN
It's not funny to fake Alzheimers,
Marje.

MARJORIE
Shh, it's a game, dear.

Marjorie removes her bag from the chair and the Older Man sits. Marjorie winks at Ruby. Ruby smiles back.

OLDER MAN
Okay, well, there's a double
roomette and a cup of cocoa waiting
for my wife, whoever she is. If you
see her, let her know.

Marjorie suddenly looks a bit drunk. She giggles and waves her hand at him dismissively.

He puts his hand out for her.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)
C'mon, baby.

Marjorie grasps his hand and lets him help her up. She falls onto him and he catches her. The gesture is trusting, tender and deeply romantic. He grabs her purse. Her hipflask is sticking out. He pushes it back in.

Billy and Ruby wave at them briefly, and watch them go.

Pause. They still don't look at each other.

MAN
Fuck.

Slowly, RUBY smiles, also looking out of the window.

RUBY
Fuck.

As we have guessed by now, Billy is not a stranger to Ruby.

BILLY
FUCK.

RUBY
FUCK. Look at you. So handsome.

BILLY

FUCK!

RUBY

Fuck. Fuuuuuck. I have nothing with
me - I have - !

She holds up her tote bag. She shows him inside, we can see
it contains hardly anything.

BILLY

You just *left*? In that very moment?

RUBY

I just - yeah. What did you do?

BILLY

Pretty much the same.

They laugh together, an air of panic in their laughter. Billy
links little fingers with her. Ruby jumps so Billy lets go.

RUBY

This... This is unforgiveable.

BILLY

I know. Really? I mean I know.

RUBY

This is too far.

BILLY

People forgive all sorts of things
though, don't they?

RUBY

Not this. Who does this?

Ruby looks at him. The enormity sinking in. He smiles at her
again.

BILLY

Hello.

She smiles for a second, then her smile disappears.

RUBY

(To herself)

Oh my god. What will I say?

BILLY

To who?

She looks at him sharply.

RUBY

What?

BILLY

What will you say to 'who'?

She gazes at him blankly, her mouth half open as if about to speak. Billy is hardly daring to breathe.

RUBY

Can we make a rule?

BILLY

Sure.

RUBY

Just until tomorrow, can we impose a moratorium? No more personal questions.

Billy does a good job of looking casual. He's desperate to know more.

BILLY

A moratorium, huh?

RUBY

A moratorium, yes. An embargo, if you prefer.

BILLY

What, are they the same thing?

She smiles.

Smarty pants.

He touches her cheek affectionately. She jumps with the unexpected sexual energy. He notices and switches gear.

Are you hungry? If that's not too personal a question?

She nods. He stands up and points.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Dining carriage this way.

INT. AMTRAK TRAIN. DINING CAR.

They arrive at a table. Ruby dumps her bag down but doesn't sit.

RUBY

I need the bathroom.

BILLY

Why?

RUBY

I just. Need. You know.

Beat.

BILLY

What?

RUBY

I need to -

BILLY

I'm kidding. See you in a minute.

He smirks. She leaves. Billy is very aware of her bag. He makes sure she's gone, leans over and rummages through it, looking for her phone. He pulls out various things, but can't find it. He shakes the bag.

13 INT. AMTRAK TRAIN TOILET.

13

Ruby closes the door, and puts her phone down on the counter. She leans against it and breathes. She reaches her hand down her pants and urgently starts to masturbate. She goes down into a ballet plie. It doesn't work. She breathes. She bangs the back of her head against the back of the door a few times.

She tries again. It starts to work. She blushes as she starts to cum.

14 INT. AMTRAK DINING CAR.

14

Ruby gets to her seat opposite Billy in the dining car, and smiles at him innocently. She looks slightly flushed.

BILLY

Better?

RUBY

Yes thank you.

Beat. She stretches her arms up, breathing in deeply. Then exhales and drops her arms. She looks a lot more relaxed.

BILLY

Listen. I know this is insane -

RUBY

I'm not dealing with the madness of this right now. I'm too hungry.

BILLY

Okay.

A WAITRESS has come to the table. Ruby grabs the menu.

RUBY

We'll both have the pasta and salad please.

WAITRESS

Sure.

She leaves.

BILLY

Hey -

RUBY

You take forever to choose and you always want what I get. And then you eat mine.

BILLY

You don't think I've changed at all since I was nineteen years old?

RUBY

There's always hope.

She smiles. He grins back.

BILLY

So tell me about work?

RUBY

Nope.

BILLY

Did you design your own house?

RUBY

No.

BILLY

Oh. So what? Short skyscrapers? Luxury abbatoirs? Play centres for childless millenials? Give me *something!*

RUBY

I'm not an architect, Billy.

BILLY

But you trained -

RUBY

I don't do it.

Pause.

BILLY

Tell me something.

RUBY

What?

21.

BILLY
When were you last happy?

Pause.

RUBY
What?

BILLY
First time to come into your head.

RUBY
I never said I was unhappy, did I?

Billy suddenly adopts a different tone - smug, pretentious.
Like he's going to fix everything. His body language changes.

BILLY
Thank you very much. You've
answered my question.

RUBY
What?

BILLY
You won't believe how much you've
told me right there.

RUBY
Can you stop this please? I've seen
your Ted Talk, I don't need to see
it again.

Billy reacts. Ruby watches him.

RUBY (CONT'D)
Look at that. Doesn't know whether
to do flattered or bashful.

BILLY
(Pretending)
I'm both.

RUBY
You're neither. Shamelessly tricked
me into bringing up your thriving
career as a show-off.

BILLY
You've googled me then?

RUBY
Of course I've googled you. Once I
started, it was like locking eyes
with a defecating toddler.

Beat. Ruby briefly smiles at him by way of an apology.

BILLY

Well you're not even on *Facebook*!

RUBY

I don't have time for *Facebook*.

BILLY

Because you're sooo busy.

RUBY

Uh-huh.

BILLY

Uh-huh? With what?

Pause. No reaction from Ruby.

Really?

Pause.

That's fine.

Pause.

I mean it's not fair, but it's fine.

Pause. She smiles at him ambiguously. His face clouds. Their food comes. Ruby paints a polite face on for the waitress.

RUBY

Thank you.

WAITRESS

You're so welcome.

BILLY

So... you didn't like my work?

She starts to stuff food in her mouth. He stops. Watches her. She carries on eating. (She hasn't watched his Ted Talk and she's thinking about how to get around this.) Through the chewing:

RUBY

I didn't say that. I'm impressed!

BILLY

If you read some of my letters, I've helped a lot of p-

RUBY

You did a Ted Talk! They don't just let anyone with a massive ego do a Ted Talk. I liked almost all of it.

BILLY

Except what?

RUBY

No, I just - it didn't reach your eyes.

BILLY

What?

RUBY

It's the same painted-on smile I've seen from all you 'inspirational speakers'. You 'life coaches'. You self-appointed arbiters of 'truth'. It's a smile that masks the fact that you're way more about raising money and profile than you ever are about helping anyone. And I guess what I didn't like, was not just that the advice you're pedalling is potentially dangerous horse-shit, no offence, but that I find myself wondering where you've gone a bit.

BILLY

Right.

RUBY

Also it glosses over the female experience.

BILLY

Wow.

Pause. Billy breathes out. He's blushing. Ruby smiles at him thinly. Then she frowns.

RUBY

That was -

BILLY

Excuse me.

RUBY

Where are you going?

BILLY

To the bathroom.

RUBY

Hey -

He turns to look at her. She hesitates. Tries to smile.

RUBY (CONT'D)

You used to say my tirades were -

But he's gone. Ruby frowns, embarrassed.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Sexy.

INT. AMTRAK TRAIN TOILET. SECONDS LATER.

Billy crashes into the toilet. He looks in the mirror. He closes his eyes.

BILLY

Woman!

He looks down at his trousers. He has an erection.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Shit.

He reaches down to his trousers and unbuckles his belt, undoes his fly. He starts to masturbate.

INT. TRAIN RESTAURANT. MINUTES LATER.

Billy emerges back to the train restaurant and looks around. Ruby is gone.

15 INT. TRAIN. LATER.

15

Billy is sitting on his own, playing with his cards, looking around him. Ruby is nowhere to be seen.

A TICKET ATTENDANT (Female, 61) approaches him, nervously.

TICKET ATTENDANT

Excuse me, Sir.

Billy looks up, questioningly.

TICKET ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

I have - uhh. I have your paper towels.

Billy looks disturbed. He glances around him. The Ticket Attendant also looks around him, increasingly embarrassed.

BILLY

I don't -

Billy goes to get up.

TICKET ATTENDANT

Don't get up - *don't get up!*

Billy sits back down. The Ticket Attendant smiles and speaks a little more slowly and clearly.

TICKET ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Your friend told me about the 'accident'. She asked me to bring you these.

He hands Billy a handful of paper towels.

TICKET ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
She'll be along in a second to help
you clean up. She's just getting
you a new pair of pants.

Billy takes the paper towels.

TICKET ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
You okay here? Would you like me to
wait with you while she comes back?

Billy shakes his head lightly. The Ticket Attendant nods,
feeling she has done her job, leaves the carriage.

Ruby suddenly appears out of nowhere and swaggers over to
him, and sits down, acting natural.

BILLY
Still got the strangest ways of
apologising, I see.

Ruby flops down. She smiles but closes her eyes. Suddenly she
looks exhausted.

BILLY (CONT'D)
All pranked out?

She sort of nods and opens her eyes.

ANNOUNCEMENT
Ladies and Gentlemen, for those of
you who have booked a Roomette but
not yet occupied it, please make
yourself known to our staff as soon
as possible. Thank you.

BILLY
Did you get one?

Ruby shakes her head.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Toots, I got us a
double.

RUBY
No you didn't.

Pause. He looks at her, cheekily.

RUBY (CONT'D)
You're kidding me.

RUBY (CONT'D)
You got a ROOMETTE?!

Billy nods. Ruby stands up in shock.

BILLY
Uh-huh... Is that okay?

RUBY
But I'm - going to have to *use* it!

Billy nods.

Oh god.
I am exhausted.
You didn't get two?
What time does this thing stop?

She grabs the route map from her pocket.

RUBY (CONT'D)
Five am.

Ruby's eyes start to droop and she staggers on the spot slightly. She's clearly exhausted.

BILLY
Woah. C'mon. Let's get you
horizontal.

RUBY
Yeah you'd like that, wouldn't you?

BILLY
That's right.

16 INT. ROOMETTE. EVENING.

16

They have just arrived in the Roomette. Billy pulls a handle under the sofa area.

RUBY
This can't be all it is.

BILLY
What you talking about? It's good.
Look.

Billy pulls the bed out. It is a double bed.

RUBY
Oh lord. That looks incredible.

She staggers forwards. He grabs the back of her clothes as she lurches towards it, face first.

BILLY
Woah. I think they like to put
sheets on. Come here.

He's holding her by the jeans and there's a frisson between them. Suddenly there's a knock at the door. They turn. A SLEEPER ATTENDANT (Male, 65) with a painted-on smile is standing at the door.

SLEEPER ATTENDANT

Hi there, I'm Jack, I'm your Amtrak Bedroom Attendant, You must be Mr Johnson and his guest. I'm delighted to find you. We were worried you hadn't boarded.

BILLY

Worry over, we're here. We've just been -

SLEEPER ATTENDANT

I'd love to perform a turn-down service if you would allow me ten minutes with your room?

RUBY

Thanks, Jack.

SLEEPER ATTENDANT

My pleasure, Ma'am. Enjoy.

RUBY

You too.

Billy smirks as they leave the carriage. He's still holding on to her waistband. She giggles. They are getting flirty.

RUBY (CONT'D)

What?

BILLY

You people.

RUBY

What?

BILLY

'Enjoy' what?

RUBY

Just 'enjoy'.

BILLY

It's a bullshit expression.

SLEEPER ATTENDANT

Sir -

The Sleeper Attendant pops his head out of the Roomette.

BILLY

I'm sorry!

SLEEPER ATTENDANT

No, um, only because my wife would never forgive me. Could I trouble you for your autograph?

He hands Billy a pen and paper.

BILLY

Your wife? Sure.

SLEEPER ATTENDANT

You've really helped her.

BILLY

You don't feel like it "glosses over the female experience?"

SLEEPER ATTENDANT

Far from it.

Billy smiles at Ruby, "see!"

SLEEPER ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

(without irony)

I think she's learned more from you about the female experience than... than...

Ruby smiles back at him, "HA!" Billy hastily hands back the autograph.

BILLY

Alright.

Ruby's phone buzzes again. Ruby's face falls. She grabs her phone to check the message.

He leans round, trying to get close to her to see the screen but she moves out of the way and glares at him briefly. She saw that.

RUBY

(Coldly)

I've gotta sit down

17 INT. AMTRAK TRAIN. 11 PM.

17

Billy and Ruby wander through the train like ghosts, barely noticed by anyone. Lots of people are asleep and have covered themselves with blankets. Some children are all huddled under several coats, fast asleep. It looks uncomfortable.

They find an empty area in a new carriage and sit down. Ruby looks agitated again. Her demeanor has changed since the text and she's keeping her distance. She sits down opposite him, avoiding letting him sit next to her. She looks moody.

BILLY

What?

RUBY

Nothing. Just.

She shrugs. Pause.

RUBY (CONT'D)

You haven't said anything about what I look like.

BILLY

What you - what?

RUBY

I said you looked handsome straight away and you haven't said a word.

BILLY

Do you care?

RUBY

No I don't care, but - to not even mention - it's been seventeen years, do I look wiser, do I look haggard, have I not changed a day?!

BILLY

Jesus Christ, you look exactly the same!

RUBY

Well that's impossible so you're clearly lying about something.

Pause.

BILLY

What is up with you?

RUBY

Are you *joking*?

BILLY

I know it's a lot to take in-

RUBY

Why did you text me?

Beat.

BILLY

Huh?

RUBY

Why today? What drove you to it?

Billy shrugs and grins.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Did you break up with somebody?

BILLY

No.

RUBY

You hate your job?

BILLY

I have the best job in the world.

RUBY

Don't be that guy. It doesn't work with me.

Beat.

I've left my life behind because of you, and you don't even have the decency to be honest with me. Don't bullshit me that your life is so brilliantly perfect, otherwise you wouldn't have texted 'Run' and you wouldn't be on this train.

BILLY

Hey, don't blame me for texting 'Run'. You *texted back*, that's what set everything off. You're turning everything around like you always do.

RUBY

Like I '*always*' do?!

BILLY

I take back the embargo moratoria-whateverthefuck. Fact is you know way more about me than I do about you, and it's only fair for you to give something up. So.

(Pause. Politely)

Are you with a partner right now?

Ruby shakes her head.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You're not?

She shrugs.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Man alive. Alright. You really wanna know why I texted?

She nods.

I was drunk, okay? I was fucking
smashed off my face.

RUBY

Fuck you.

Billy nods briefly, gets up and walks away. She follows.

RUBY (CONT'D)

No, wait there, you little shit. My
whole life is in the balance
because you got wasted? You -

She starts to hyperventilate. Billy turns back around.

BILLY

Hey -

RUBY

27

I don't know you. I don't know you
any more. I must be completely
insane - what am I doing here?
What am I -

27

She looks out of the window. The train appears to be slowing
down. Her expression changes. She watches the speeding view
of outside come into vision.

BILLY

You know me, it's okay.

RUBY

(still distracted)
It's not okay though, is it?

BILLY

Okay, if you want the truth, it's
not okay. We ran away from our
lives for god's sake. But it's *done*
now. And we are going to have to
deal with it.

RUBY

Done?

Ruby checks her watch. She looks out of the window. She looks
at a map of the train stops on the wall. The train's still
slowing.

BILLY

Yes it's done, of course it's done.

RUBY

Who's 'Lillia'?

Billy frowns at her.

RUBY (CONT'D)

The girl you were talking to on the phone?

BILLY

She's my PA.

RUBY

Oh sure you have a - why was she freaking out?

BILLY

Because last thing she knew, I was in Brighton.

RUBY

England, Brighton? When was that?

BILLY

Yesterday.

RUBY

What were you doing there?

BILLY

Your turn.

Ruby looks out of the window again. Billy takes this as a refusal to talk.

BILLY (CONT'D)

When I texted you I was in the bar of a crappy hotel on the sea front. Hammered but thinking very clearly. And you know what I was thinking? That for sure that there wasn't a single human being I ever wanted to see again for the rest of my life. And then I thought of you.

Beat. Ruby's smile flickers a little at the flattery. She nods.

Buzz. Ruby gets another text. She checks her phone, which is already in her hand. Reads the text. Billy watches her. She looks up at him. She looks thrown. She opens her mouth to speak.

Suddenly there's an announcement over the tannoy.

ANNOUNCEMENT

(Quiet)

Ladies and Gentlemen, passengers from New York and for those who have since joined us, welcome to the AMTRAK Express direct to Chicago.

(MORE)

ANNOUNCEMENT (CONT'D)

We will be pausing here in Pittsburgh Station for the next twenty minutes during which time you're welcome to jump off, get some air, stretch your legs. We will be leaving in twenty minutes at 0500 hours.

This seems to make up Ruby's mind. She pulls her tote bag over her shoulder and stands.

BILLY

Where are you going?

RUBY

To get some air...

BILLY

You don't still smoke?

She pulls a packet of cigarettes from her bag, kisses him on the cheek, touches the cheek where she kissed it briefly, and marches off the train. Billy shakes his head to himself.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Badass.

18 EXT. STATION. NIGHT. 18

Billy has followed Ruby outside. He looks around. He can't see her anywhere.

21 EXT. STATION. NIGHT. TEN MINUTES LATER. 21

In the background we can hear the announcement of the five - minute warning as we see Ruby's shoes running along the platform, and then breaking into a jog. She stops. She looks around her. There's a sign for an exit. She turns towards it.

22 EXT. STATION. NIGHT. 22

Billy is wandering up and down the platform, looking for Ruby.

TRAIN ATTENDANT

Will all passengers please board the train. We are about to depart.

23 INT. TRAIN. NIGHT. 23

He gets back on the train. He looks around him.

INT. PITTSBURGH STATION. NIGHT.

Ruby has reached a beautiful brick archway (The Rotunda at Pittsburgh Station). She looks around her for signs. She's breathing heavily. She looks upset, confused.

She spins on her heel and faces one way. She spins and faces another way. She closes her eyes, makes a decision, and runs.

24 INT. ROOMETTE. NIGHT.

24

He checks inside the Roomette. She's not there. He goes to the toilet nearby.

BILLY

Ruby?

He taps on the door lightly.

TRAIN ATTENDANT

Will all passengers please board
the train. We are about to depart.

The door swings open. Another passenger walks out, looking mildly annoyed at his tapping.

BILLY

RUBY?

He starts to panic. He runs to the next carriage, and the next, swinging open the doors to the toilets. They are all empty.

BILLY (CONT'D)

RUBY!

He gets off the train for a second.

BILLY (CONT'D)

RUBY?!

TRAIN ATTENDANT

Will all passengers please board
the train. We are about to depart.
This is our final announcement.

The train doors start to close.

Billy rushes to them, but he can't see her outside, so he doesn't get off.

He bangs the door with frustration. He cries out and grabs the toilet handle and bangs the toilet door with rage. He bangs it again and again, roaring out. The handle comes off in his hand. He's now crying uncontrollably, so he doesn't notice.

The train moves out of the platform, slowly at first. Then it starts to gain speed. Billy marches through another carriage, his chest convulsing with sobs. He looks utterly lost.

Then he emerges through the next carriage and she's there. She's on the train. She's totally out of breath.

She can't speak. Billy can't speak. They look at each other.

RUBY
I'm so unfit.

BILLY
Stretching your legs?

She nods, but her face tells a different story. She looks guilty.

BILLY (CONT'D)
You bastard.

RUBY
Did you pull the handle off a door
because you thought I wasn't coming
back?

He looks down at the toilet door handle, still in his hand. Ruby is grinning, smug.

BILLY
We Brits like to bring our own
toilet handles. It's one of our
adorable little quirks.

She nods. He hands her the toilet handle.

BILLY (CONT'D)
This one's for you.

RUBY
I'll treasure it.

Ruby takes it. She looks down. Her tote bag is behind her on the floor, and the contents - lipstick, hair spray, wallet, phone are all over the floor. She clearly dropped it as she jumped back on the train in the nick of time.

Ruby and Billy share a look. Then she reaches down to pick her stuff up and he helps her.

RUBY (CONT'D)
My phone?

Billy dives under a table and sees her phone.

BILLY
Got it!

He crawls towards it. When he gets to it, presses the button. A picture flashes up as a screen saver. It's of a family of four. Ruby, a man (Laurence) and two young boys of 7 and 9 years old.

His stomach lurches from the shock of it. He cancels the screen.

He makes a quick recovery and crawls back again to give her the phone. She smiles as she takes it and puts it in her bag. They look at each other.

TRAIN ATTENDANT

(Quiet)

Announcement for Mr Johnson and his
guest, your Roomette is now ready.
Thank you.

End.

*