

Doors Closing

A Short Play

By Mark Chrisler

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Contact:

Mark Chrisler

markchrisler@gmail.com

www.markchrisler.com

DOORS CLOSING

The barest idea of a train: two banks of two seats facing one another. Veronica is on board, sitting in one of the seats. She looks nervous, maybe sad.

ENGINEER

This is 25th Street. Doors open on the left at 25th Street.

Sam enters, takes a seat across from Veronica.

ENGINEER

Doors closing.

A moment.

SAM

Nervous?

VERONICA

That obvious?

SAM

No, no... A little. You new to this?

VERONICA

Not that new, thanks. It's just...

SAM

Scary.

VERONICA

Yeah. I'm just trying to keep it together through this trip. It's worse, riding alone.

SAM

Well, I'll be here a while, so... just consider this *my* seat.

VERONICA

Thanks...?

SAM

Sam.

Veronica. VERONICA

Nice to meet you, Veronica. SAM

So... what do you do? VERONICA

I'm in non-profit work. Philanthropic. SAM

Really? Me too. VERONICA

No kidding! Do you know Scott Bacon? SAM

I do! VERONICA

SAM
(as an impression)
"These orphans aren't going to cure their own muscular dystrophy!"

Veronica laughs, Sam joins her. They pause and look at one another.

ENGINEER
This is 27th street. Doors open on the right at 27th street.

I love you. SAM

I love you, too. VERONICA

Doors closing. ENGINEER

VERONICA
I'm so glad you came along, Sam. I don't really know how I would have done this otherwise. Stay with me until my stop?

SAM

I promise. Come here.

They kiss, sweetly, like bride and groom.

ENGINEER

This is 30th Street. Doors open on both sides at 30th street.

(pause)

Doors closing.

VERONICA

Oh. I think I had an interview at that stop.

SAM

Oh. I'm sorry.

VERONICA

Well... you know.

SAM

I'm sure there'll be another.

(pause)

ENGINEER

This is 33rd Street. Doors do not open at 33rd Street.

VERONICA

What?

SAM

This train...

(they toss as though bumped)

VERONICA

Rough ride.

SAM

Yeah.

ENGINEER

This is 35th Street. Doors open on the left at 35th Street.

Olive, a little girl enters. She sits beside
Veronica.

ENGINEER
Doors closing.

VERONICA
What's your name?

OLIVE
Ooolll.

VERONICA
Oh, Sam, look: she's trying to talk.

OLIVE
Olive.

VERONICA
Did you hear that?!

SAM
That's right: Olive!

ENGINEER
This is 50th Street. Doors open on the right at 50th Street.

VERONICA
They seem to come faster and faster, don't they? Olive! Pull that dress up!

OLIVE
Leave me alone!
(she stands and crosses to the other side
of the stage, facing away from them)

ENGINEER
Doors closing.

VERONICA
Can you believe her?

SAM
I'll go talk to her.

VERONICA
No, that's the last thing she needs. Just give her some space.

ENGINEER

This is 55th Street. Doors open on the left at 55th Street.

OLIVE

(crossing back to them)

Well, I'm off.

VERONICA

Okay. Call us and let us know you're okay, alright?

(Olive exits)

ENGINEER

Doors closing.

(a moment)

SAM

I miss Olive.

VERONICA

Me too. I love you, Sam.

SAM

I love you, muffin.

(silence)

ENGINEER

This is 67th Street. Doors open on the left at 67th Street.

SAM

Well... This is my stop.

VERONICA

No.

SAM

I'm sorry.

VERONICA

You promised.

SAM

I'm sorry, Veronica.

VERONICA

I think this is my stop, too. I'll get off with you.

SAM

No, Veronica. You've got to stay on until the end of the line.

VERONICA

When's that?

SAM

I don't know. Not too long.

VERONICA

I don't know how to do it.

SAM

See this seat? It's mine. Remember that I was here and it'll be okay.

VERONICA

Okay.

Sam exits.

ENGINEER

Doors closing.

Veronica sits on, staring at Sam's seat.

ENGINEER

85th Street is next. This train stops service at 85th Street.

VERONICA

(with a sigh, collecting herself)

Okay. Let's go.

She stands, black out.

End of play.