

RAY L. RHODES

The Doctor and Fayette get the jump on the opposition, but soon find themselves in deep waters...
Doctor Who, BBC1 7.30pm



8.20pm Seaquest: Deep Space Five

With Rob Schreiber as Captain Carboncopy

By DUSKO IVKOVIC

Things really get out of hand when amazing boy-wonder takes a pregnant, metal-eating termite aboard the submarine as a pet.

7.30-8.20pm Doctor Who

Starring Edward Peel-Smith
In *Story on a Train*

Part one of a three-part adventure by:
JAMES BOW

Though it may be 1989, rest and relaxation are not the Doctor's destination when he and Fayette board a train for a trip across the American Midwest.

The Doctor ... EDWARD PEEL-SMITH
Fayette Calonne WINONA RIDER
Sue Novak CATHLEEN TURNER
Ryan Pamel JON RITTER
The Leader ALAN RICKMAN
Number 4 JON CANDY
Walter Strange AL WAXMEN
Terrorists GENE LEVY,
RICK MORAN, DAVID THOMAS

Stunt Arranger TIP TOPPED
Incidental Music DUDLEY EATON
Location Lighting SUSAN WATTS
Camera Supervisor BRINKS SECURITY
Costume Designer KEN TRUE
Make-up Designer PALOMA PICASSO
Script Editor PATRICIA SMITH *
Designer MARTIN F. PROCTOR *

Producer
GERRY NATION and TERRY DAVIS
Director GRAEME HARPER

* true credit

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LETTERS

I am very impressed. The writing was good and the plotting was very clear – unlike some of the BBC's recent offerings (Season 26). I liked the idea of giving the Doctor more emotions and developing a more attached relationship with one of his companions. A few specific comments:

Was the Master actually retired in **Nottingham**? Seems rather out of character.

The environmental issue tackled in **London Fog** is very timely and continues the show's other crusades against pollution (**The Green Death** is a good example)

I would very much like to contribute to the next issue of **Trenchcoat**, and if I get a workable story, I will forward it to you.

Chris Kocher
Dallas, PA USA

SERIAL 8E

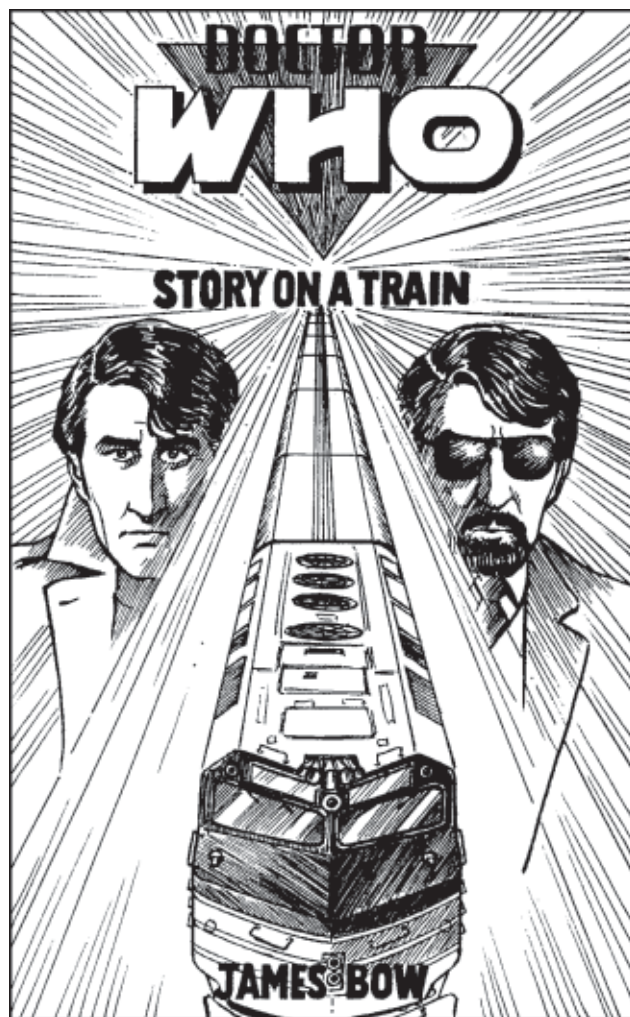
During the Season twenty-eight co-production negotiations, the bidding team of Gerry Nation and Terry Davis were considered to be the front runners by the BBC. They had promised considerable American backing for the show, enough to "bring it back to its former glory." It was for this reason, fans believed, that the BBC gave this production team six episodes of Season twenty-nine to showcase their product, instead of the normal four.

With BBC permission, location filming was arranged in America, including an expensive deal with Amtrak. Some fans started to worry, expecting the sort of cheap action-adventure show often seen on American television. Others, however, felt that a lot of effort was being put into this production and the end result would be good.

Story on a Train was rehearsed and filmed in two months. Stunt people were used in most of the action scenes, even though the regulars were tempted to try their own stunts.

Interestingly, the story was shown as three 45-minute episodes instead of six standard 23-minute episodes. **Eastenders**, usually seen at 8 p.m. after **Doctor Who**, had been cancelled. The temporary change in format was made to allow the BBC time to find a mid-season replacement. This was not, the BBC assured, an experiment in changing the format of **Doctor Who**.

Story on a Train premiered on Sunday, November 7, 1993, at 7:30 p.m., as scheduled.



STORY ON A TRAIN

Written by James Bow

Patrons sat close together at small tables, enjoying each other's company, the food, and even the cramped atmosphere.

A man paid his bill at his table at the back. He paused and let his gaze roam over the faces of the people he could see in the gloom. His steel grey eyes strayed over the smiling face of a young girl enjoying her pizza with her family, and then darted away.

Casting a glance at his watch, he eased through the crowd and out the front door. The loud music and conversation drifted out into the street. Muted, it had a ghostlike quality. The man walked along the sidewalk toward a telephone booth at the corner. Picking up the receiver inside, he cast a glance at the restaurant behind him.

It exploded.

The windows and doors blew out in balls of flame. The music and the conversation vanished into a thunderous roar. Then, after the roar faded and the debris had finished raining down, came a few seconds of stunned silence. Then the screams of pain and terror. The wreckage began to burn.

Smiling, the man in the suit inserted a quarter and dialled a number.

"Hello, Chicago Tribune?"

His voice, like his appearance, was calm and sinister. "I'd like to report a terrorist attack at the Pizzeria Uno at the corner of Chicago and Grand. You know me; I'm with the Holy Path. This makes nine bombs in one month. Now listen carefully. You can expect one more attack, and this will be the most powerful. We will make sure the oppressed holy peoples of the world are noticed."

The man hung up, stepped out and headed down the street to where a black car awaited him. Three silhouettes showed through the tinted windows. He got in and slammed the door. The black car sped away as fire trucks, ambulances, and police cars arrived at the scene.

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Chicago rose up from houses to small buildings, to larger warehouses and factories, culminating in a mass of some of the tallest skyscrapers in America. Cars honked, buses growled, and people walked, always in a hurry.

Amongst these noises, in an old industrial area not far from downtown, a bizarre screeching, grating noise came out of nowhere. With it, the shape of a blue box materialized on a right-of-way of crushed stones, weaving between derelict industrial buildings.

When it had taken full form, there was a pause. Finally, the door to the police box opened and the Doctor peered out. He gazed to his

left, then to his right, and then he looked ahead of him.

His eyebrows shot up. "Oh, dear."

He ducked back inside, slamming the door behind him. The TARDIS began to dematerialize off the railroad tracks. It had just totally disappeared when four green and black Burlington Northern diesel locomotives at the head of a long freight train thundered through, horns blaring.

On board the train, three crewmen stared ahead, saying nothing for a moment. Finally, the engineer croaked, "Did you see that?" He reached for the radio, but one of his co-workers grabbed his wrist.

"No, I didn't," said the crewman. "And you didn't see it either."

Do you want us to get hauled in on suspicion?"

The Burlington Northern freight continued on its way without changing speed.

The TARDIS re-materialized a few feet away in a sheltered alcove where two shabby buildings met, bordering the right-of-way. The Doctor stepped out again, this time bringing two large suitcases with him.

It was too warm for his trenchcoat. But he still wore long dark pants, black polished shoes, and a long sleeved sweatshirt, despite the heat. He surveyed his surroundings, satisfied. "Not bad. Only a kilometre off."

Fayette stepped out after him, dragging a cumbersome suitcase behind, a match for the Doctor's two. She was in her customary white dress, sashed with red, the Doctor having decided that it wasn't too out of place for where they were going.

Fayette struggled with the suitcase and finally brought it up beside the Doctor. She stopped there, for a rest, and looked around. When her eyes fell upon the Chicago skyline, she gawped.

The Doctor closed and locked the TARDIS door and went back to her.

"Impressed?" he said over her shoulder.

"C'est tres grand!" she said.

"Yes, it is. So was London, but you couldn't see any of it." The Doctor hurried her along. "But we're not here to see Chicago. We're here to see something better."

Fayette shot him a glare. "Papa, where are we going? You know I hate surprises."

But the Doctor only smiled.

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They arrived at Chicago Union Station by cab. Fayette cast another dubious look at the seats in the back and glanced at her dress to make sure it was still clean. The Doctor paid the fare, and the cab roared off, splashing a woman who'd come darting out of the station, trying to flag it down.

The Doctor tapped Fayette on the wrist and motioned for her to follow. He didn't even try to speak, she thought. You couldn't hear yourself in a city like Chicago. Everywhere was a cacophony of people, cars and aggressive buildings that gouged the sky.

They entered the station and proceeded down a flight of stairs from the taxi drop-off, entering the Great Hall. Fayette slowed her pace and was almost ploughed into by a dashing commuter. She stepped to the safety of the waiting area and its shielding benches, and looked up at the high, ornate ceiling.

It is like a cathedral, she thought.

Then she looked at the hubbub around her. And so unlike it as well.

She heard the Doctor calling her, and she saw him at the other side of the waiting area, looking this way and that. She ran up to him, lugging her suitcase. He nodded, satisfied, and motioned her to follow. Fayette huffed in irritation and strode after him.

To Fayette's surprise, the Doctor mounted a flight of stairs and stopped. She came up behind him and stopped as well. She was about to hurry him along when she realized to her shock that she was still moving. The flight of stairs was moving down of its own accord. Her eyes widened as she rapidly approached the bottom. She was so entranced with the spectacle of the stairs disappearing into the floor that she stumbled off the escalator. Regaining her composure with an effort, she hurried after the Doctor.

"Your attention please." The p.a. announcement echoed across the vastness of the Great Hall. "Commuter train departing for Aurora, making all stops, is now boarding at north platform 3. All passengers for this train please board."

Fayette winced at the attack on her ears. The din prevented thought and she was constantly dodging people in suits and briefcases sprinting to make their trains. Lengthening her stride, she managed to match the Doctor's quick pace.

"So," she growled. "Where are we going?"

"Seattle," the Doctor replied.

"What is in Seattle?"

"Extinct volcanoes. Budding corporate villain. Something called a 'Space Needle'. Pleasant city, I'm told. I've never been there."

"Oh," said Fayette. "How far away are we from this Seattle?"

"Three days by train," the Doctor replied.

"Three *days*!" Fayette exclaimed. "That must be," she did the math in her head. "Almost a hundred miles!"

"Actually, it's two-thousand, two-hundred and seventeen," said the Doctor. "The average speed of the Empire Builder is over fifty miles per hour, although we make forty stops."

"Two-thousand, two-hundred and seventeen *miles*?" Fayette echoed. "Is the TARDIS that unreliable?"

The Doctor stopped dead, causing Fayette and another commuter to bump into him. The commuter stepped around them, cursing as he hurried down the corridor. The Doctor and Fayette stared at each other.

"Unreliable?" said the Doctor. "How dare you call my TARDIS unreliable?"

"Well, papa, if you would not trust your ship to get you closer than two-thousand—"

"Oh!" said the Doctor. "No, Fayette. Seattle's not the destination."

"It's not?"

"No."

"So, where *are* we going?"

"To Seattle—"

"But, you said—"

"We're not going to Seattle because of Seattle," said the Doctor. "We're going to Seattle because we can take the train to get there. Okay? Now, let's get moving. The train departs in twenty minutes." He turned and resumed his stride.

Fayette staggered after him. When she caught up with him again, she asked, "Papa, what is so important about a train that we have to take it instead of a TARDIS to visit a city you do not want to see?"

"I'm doing it for you," he said without slowing down. "You lived before the time of the railroads, and you never got to see how historically important they are. The industrialized nations of the world owe their might to the train."

"Yes, yes, I read the history books you assigned me."

"Well then, we're going because I happen to like trains. The railroad is a civilized form of transportation. More luxurious than a bus and less rushing around in an aircraft, unless you take the TGV or various commuter runs—"

Fayette wondered how much more rushing around there could be at an airport if Chicago Union Station was any indication.

With far more whine than she had intended, she said, "Papa, do we have to?"

The Doctor stopped. He appeared to think things over for a second. "Well, no. But I could use a holiday."

Well, that was another matter, thought Fayette. "Fine," she said, giving the Doctor a patient smile.

The Doctor smiled back. The gleam in his eye of childish delight did much to melt away Fayette's bad mood.

Again, the musical chiming that preceded a p.a. announcement sounded through the din.

"Your attention please. Amtrak's 'Empire Builder' westbound departing for Seattle and Portland via Milwaukee, Columbus, Tomah, Winona, St. Paul's/Minneapolis, Fargo, Grand Forks, Sandpoint and Spokane is now boarding at platform 12. All passengers for these points please board."

The Doctor moved a suitcase over and carried two with his left hand. Fayette's eyes widened in astonishment: using two hands, she had barely been able to budge one case. With his right hand, he took her arm and steered her through the crowd.

"I hope the TARDIS is safe," she said.

"It will be there when we get back. Nobody but us can get in and very few people can find it. It might have a bit of graffiti on it, but that's life in an American city."

They entered a relatively low ceilinged corridor. A large waiting room could be seen behind a glass partition on their left. On their right were gates leading out to the platforms. The tracks started there, in the trenches between the platforms, leading away from the corridor at a right angle, heading north out of the station. They found gate 12, paused to let the attendant check their tickets, and then passed through.

The array of tracks and platforms stretched away under the station roof, lit garishly by orange lamps and inadequately by a row of large but dirty windows. Traces of diesel exhaust hung in the air. The floor rumbled under the weight of huge engines. Fayette coughed, and wondered when this vacation would begin.

On one side of their platform stood the Empire Builder. It was twelve cars long, double decked. Each car was silver with a horizontal stripe of red, white and blue running halfway between roof and ground. Along the stripe were the words "Amtrak" and "Superliner". People were lining up at the doors and filing in.

The Doctor and Fayette hurried over to the nearest line and filed in at the end. The Amtrak attendant stopped them to check their tickets.

"We have a reservation for two deluxe bedrooms," said the Doctor. "Where can we find them?"

The attendant smiled. She was a blonde young woman in her late twenties, looking very prim in her blue Amtrak uniform. Fayette liked the woman's warm blue eyes and decided she must be good at her job.

"I'll show you. Your names, please?"

Fayette glanced at her adopted father, wondering how he was going to handle this. "Doctor" did not seem like a convincing name on its own.

The Doctor smiled. "This is Fayette Calonne," he motioned to her, "and I'm her father."

The attendant, Sue Novak according to her nametag, checked the information against her clipboard. "Dr. and Miss Calonne. Yes, you have a reservation. Follow me, and I'll take you there."

Taking Fayette's suitcase and one of the Doctor's (he made sure she got the lighter one), Sue led them aboard. The door was closed behind them, leaving the other attended doors near the stairs open for last minute arrivals. There were always a few.

Two minutes before the departure, ten men walked up the stairs. They did not appear to know each other. Each was dressed conservatively in a

business suit and each carried a black suitcase. Without haste, they strode to the train, paused for their tickets to be checked, and climbed inside.

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The Doctor explained to Fayette, as they filed through the train, that the corridors had to be narrow because fitting a series of bedrooms and a comfortable walking space in the same vehicle was difficult, if not impossible. Squeezing by other passengers, they came to room 123. Sue produced a key, unlocked the door, opened it, and handed the key to the Doctor.

The Doctor took his suitcase back and thanked her. She refused a tip. "Not on Amtrak, sir; but thank you. Here are your sleeping quarters. The upper berth is pulled down each night. The lower berth doubles as a sofa by day. The restroom and shower facilities are through here." She pushed open a door, revealing a smaller, windowless white room.

"Miss Calonne," she continued. "You're next door. Here is your key. You can go through the door from the corridor out there, or you can go through this partition door right here." She unlocked a

door in a false wall by the Doctor's restroom. "Often, when people request two suites together, we take down this partition, but some people want their privacy."

"Merci!" said Fayette.

"No, thank you," said Sue. "Dinner will be served in the dining car at 5 p.m. We will be departing in just a couple of minutes." She flashed her warm professional smile. "Enjoy your trip with Amtrak."

She turned to go while the Doctor and Fayette started to unpack. Then she noticed that the suitcase the Doctor had carried was close to the door of the cabin. Sue spotted this and went to move it.

Her hands wrapped around the handle and she jerked, but it didn't budge. Surprise registered in her eyes for half a second, then she pressed forward with her knee and shoved the suitcase along the floor, just a few inches so that the door would close. She nodded to herself, satisfied, and stepped out of the room, closing the door behind her.

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led by two silver and black F40PH's, boxy-looking diesel locomotives, the twelve-car Superliner train rumbled to life and began to inch out of the station. The low roar of the engines escalated like an airplane preparing for takeoff. As the train gathered speed, the lead engine's bell began a long, loud, regular clanging, warning people still on the platform of its passing. Flanged wheels clicked slowly as they passed over rail joints, turnouts, and crossings.

The Empire Builder wove its way out of the station approach and accelerated along the main line out of Chicago.

The Doctor moved along the narrow corridor back to their room, carrying a tray. He had gone to the diner to buy some light snacks before dinner for himself and Fayette. The attendants said it was all right to eat and drink in one's room. The Doctor was glad to find Fayette glued to the window, watching the passing scenery.

She had conceded that she considered the idea of traveling in a moving bedroom interesting, but she didn't see any reason to get excited about it as the Doctor was. That was all right, the Doctor thought. Fayette was just being stubborn. She hadn't seen the best scenery yet.

Along the way, he bumped into a fellow passenger. A short, plump man with short black hair and a dark complexion. He was dressed in a business suit and carried a black suitcase.

The Doctor pressed himself against the wall to let the man pass, but the tray, the suitcase and the short man's belly made the process difficult. Muttering apologies, they struggled past each other, but it was only just after they were free that the man glanced at the Doctor.

Suddenly he looked at the Doctor directly, recognition flashing across his face. The Doctor raised his eyebrows. "I beg your pardon, have we met?"

The man backed away. "Uh- I- er, thought we had, but no." Then he turned and hurried down the corridor, glancing back over his shoulder. Puzzled, the Doctor stared after him before shrugging his shoulders and going on to his room.

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A restaurant on wheels, a bedroom on wheels. The train was really a hotel on wheels, Fayette decided.

And she had to admit that the view had also

improved. Leaving behind the huge urban centres that were Chicago and Milwaukee, the drab industrial buildings that lined the busy tracks had given way to real countryside, with sculpted rolling fields, bluff lands and isolated hills. The lakes and rivers were becoming more numerous as the train headed northwest.

Fayette had the chicken dinner, with mashed potatoes, gravy and green beans. It was delicious, and the setting was pleasant. She was enjoying the train ride but still didn't understand what made the Doctor so fanatical about railroads.

The Doctor felt a presence beside him and looked up. Sue Novak was standing over him, smiling. "Mind if I join you, Doctor?"

The short and fat man who had bumped into the Doctor earlier sat at the table behind them. He registered the attendant's words with a stony lack of expression. He finished his meal, left a tip, got up, and left. The Doctor was too occupied with Sue to notice.

"By all means," he said. "Sit down. You needn't sneak up on people like that."

"Sorry," said Sue. "Force of habit from living in a house with thin walls and inquisitive siblings." She borrowed a chair and sat. "I take it you're foreign?"

The Doctor flashed a smile that said 'more than you could possibly know.' "What makes you say that?" he asked.

"Your daughter's accent." She turned to Fayette who was suppressing a giggle. "Hers still shows through; but you, Doctor, have managed to suppress yours. You sound almost British."

"Yes, I know." The Doctor smiled. "I travelled a lot before my daughter came along."

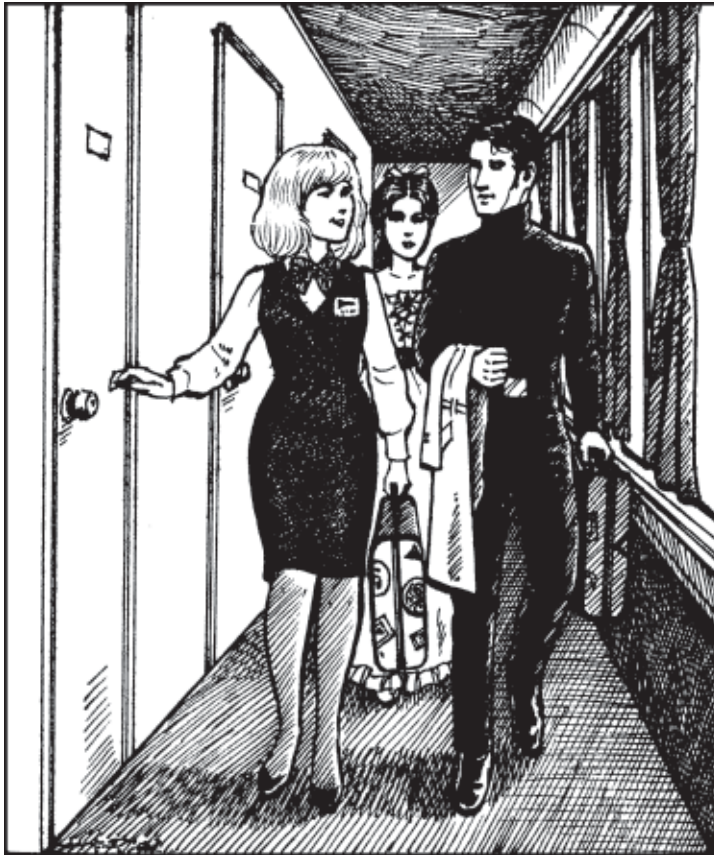
"How are you enjoying America?"

"A lot," said the Doctor. "Once you get past the hustle and bustle, you can appreciate the country's natural beauty. And the people are a lot more friendly than the reputation suggests."

Sue laughed. "Thanks."

Coffee was served, and the three talked till the end of Sue's break.

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The short, pudgy man walked up the corridors nonchalantly and pushed open his cabin door. Once inside, he stepped to his suitcase and opened it. Inside was a portable computer, which he turned on. He inserted a floppy disk and keyed in a password.

After passing through a few screen menus, he accessed a file. Seven faces showed at the top of the screen. The first was of an old studious-looking man with thin white hair but sharp and intelligent eyes. The second was of a younger man with short, straight black hair and a look of levity that almost concealed a great intelligence.

The third picture was of an older man with curly white hair whose face revealed an elegant and intelligent personality despite its dominating nose. The fourth man's mop of curly hair was brown, while his strong face showed humour and tremendous energy. He wore a floppy brown hat. The fifth was young and blond, and far less intimidating than the face of the sixth man: a shortish, clownish-like man, whose perennial smile covered a darker, more intelligent mind.

The seventh was the face of the passenger on board the train.

Underneath the pictures was the information:

Name: the Doctor (used by all seven)

Status: members of this super secret spying use the title, Doctor, as a code name. They have aided the West often, mostly the English. The second, third, fourth, fifth and seventh are connected with U.N.I.T. Not much is known about what these men have contributed.

Other information: -often works with female assistants.

-no medical records or any other information held by Western governments on normal spies are available on the Doctors. This cover-up proves how important they are to the west.

Standing orders: this spy-ring is extremely efficient at concealment. All should be considered dangerous. They are also extremely important to secret Western operations and have been classed as U.S. friendly. With this in mind, if any are found, they are to be eliminated.

The file ended there. The man read it again, then jumped up as his compartment door opened. Instinctively, he pulled out his gun, putting it back in his pocket when he saw who the caller was.

"You should knock, leader," he gasped. "I could have killed you." He spoke with a slight Middle Eastern accent.

"I trust your reflexes, Number 4." The newcomer spoke without an accent. His was the calm, smooth voice of the steely-eyed man who had bombed the Chicago nightclub. "I also trust your ability to follow orders. No killing except in an emergency. We can't have the authorities dropping in on us at this point of our operation." The leader saw Number 4's computer and pointed to it. "What are you looking up?"

Number 4 took another look at the file before turning to his leader. "Something very important, sir. I think you should see this."

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Returning from the dining car, the Doctor motioned Fayette inside their cabins. "Well, let's get off to sleep," he said.

Fayette was skeptical about sleep. She was sure the din of the train and the clickity-clack of metal wheels must keep her awake. However, the way she felt now – Fayette yawned, and then yawned again – she could probably sleep through a train crash. She'd had a long day.

Their rooms had been converted for night use. The sofas that had

been placed by their respective windows were now rearranged into beds and made up with sheets and blankets.

The Doctor nodded, satisfied. "Bonne nuit, ma fille," he said, and headed for the easy chair.

Fayette looked at him, puzzled. "Are you not going to sleep?" "I once said sleep was for tortoises, or for the tired. I am neither." He settled himself comfortably and fished a small pile of magazines out of a nearby suitcase. "You on the other hand, are very tired. Go to bed."

Fayette smiled and kissed him good night. She glanced at the magazines

the Doctor was reading and caught glimpses of titles including: *Trains Illustrated*, *Passenger Train Journal* and *Rail Classics*.

It figured.

She went into her room and closed the door behind her. She changed into her nightdress and slid under the covers of her narrow bed. She cast one more glance out the window before pulling the shade down on the moving vista outside. Within minutes, she was asleep.

Fayette woke later that night and went to the sink to get a drink of water. Seeing a light on in the Doctor's cabin, she tiptoed to the door and opened it slightly, peering through the gap into the Doctor's room. What she saw made her giggle. The Doctor's magazines had slipped, neglected, to the floor and he was snoring softly.

He must have been rocked to sleep by the slight sideways sway of the car, she thought, like a baby being rocked to sleep in a cradle.

Silently, she stepped into his room and turned off his small reading lamp. She kissed him gently on the forehead before draping a blanket over him and returning to her bedroom. The door shut behind her with a click.

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The small dark figure entered the unoccupied compartment unnoticed. Once inside, it produced a box. A few quick touches transformed the box into a signal machine with a keyboard and a screen. The figure started work, typing.

"Suspects on board Empire Builder. Not yet done anything suspicious. All bound for Seattle."

"Additional: one suspect taking unusual interest in passenger named Doctor Calonne. Tall, dark hair, blue eyes, travelling with his daughter, Fayette Calonne. Possibly French. Photo enclosed. Request information on these passengers."

The figure took out a small passport photograph from its pocket and fed it through a small slot in the device. The device spat it out. Then the figure flipped a switch and the box came to life, whirring quietly as it relayed the message. Moments later, the figure turned the box off and crept out into the corridor.

The train's horn echoed off the surrounding hills as the Empire Builder roared into the night, passing a sign identifying the state border of Minnesota.

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Sunlight filtered through the window shade and filled his bedroom with a soft glow. The Doctor got up from the reclining chair and stretched. A railway trip was always so restful, he thought. He had slept for three hours, a good week's sleep, and had spent the rest of the time reading silently in the chair so as not to disturb Fayette in the next room.

A voice, muffled by the walls, broke the Doctor's reverie. "Second call for breakfast!" it intoned. The attendant repeated the shout as he passed further down the corridor and into the next car.

The Doctor's stomach rumbled and he glanced at his watch: 7:30. Breakfast would be just the thing.

Then he heard a groan from Fayette's room, and a muffled "non!"

In an instant, he was through the door and by Fayette's bedside. As he suspected, he found his adopted daughter in the grip of a nightmare.

"Non, non!" she gasped. "Papa!" A tear rolled down her cheek.

"Fayette," said the Doctor, reaching out gingerly to touch her shoulder. "Hey, hey, wake up. It's just a dream."

At his touch, Fayette woke with a sharp gasp. She sat bolt upright in bed and stared around at the unfamiliar surroundings in fear.

The Doctor kept his hand firm on Fayette's shoulder. "It's all right," he said. "It's only a dream."

Fayette's consciousness collected itself. She looked into the Doctor's eyes. Then she looked away. Furious with herself, she levered herself out of bed and shoved past the Doctor, heading to the bathroom to wash and change. The Doctor watched her go, and then stepped back to his own room and waited.

A moment later, Fayette emerged, dressed and combing her wet hair. Her eyes flashed him a curt apology as she continued to bring herself under composure. "What is there for breakfast?" she asked.

"Scrambled eggs, bacon, and coffee in the dining car," the Doctor replied. "Interested?"

Fayette nodded, and gave him a warmer smile. She took his hand and led him out of his cabin and into the corridor.

At breakfast, the Doctor glanced idly out the window. The Empire Builder was just leaving a station and was heading out of a smallish-sized city. The station sign caught the Doctor's attention. It read Grand Forks.

He checked his watch again. It read 7:35. The train was supposed to be out of Grand Forks at 6:36. He found himself chuckling.

"Papa?" asked Fayette, eyeing him over her coffee. "What is so funny?"

"The Empire Builder is almost an hour late."

Fayette looked out the window, a half-second before realizing that she wouldn't be able to confirm this just by looking out the window. She eyed him teasingly. "An hour late? Is that common for trains?"

"It's common for all forms of transportation," said the Doctor. "The faster the vehicle, the later it gets. I hope nobody's on a tight schedule."

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The four dark men spoke quietly in their leader's compartment. The shade was pulled down against the sunlight, darkening the room.

"You are certain that he is aboard, Number 4?" one asked.

"The computer confirmed it," replied the short and pudgy Number 4.

"Why is he here?" asked the thin and jittery Number 3. "He's one of Britain's best spies. Why would he be here except to track us down?"

"I think it is just coincidence," said the leader coldly. "Number 4 found him by accident. If he were trying to track us down, I would have known. Besides, why would a British agent come to America when, right now, we only concern America? I think he's vacationing. Even spies do that."

There was a pause while everyone maintained a respectful silence. Number 2 was the first to speak.

"What shall we do with him, then?"

The leader considered, then spoke decisively. "Eliminate him."

"Do you think that is wise?" Number 4 blurted. He stopped short. The leader was looking at him solemnly, his steel grey eyes expressionless but deadly. Number 4 had seen that look before: seconds before the leader had killed someone. To save himself, Number 4 carried on desperately. "Wouldn't it interfere with the current operation?"

The leader was mollified. "A valid point. It won't interfere if it is done discreetly," he said. "We may have ten men to call on, including ourselves, but we must be subtle. Gunshots attract attention. Everyone understand?"

Everyone understood.

One by one, three of the four slipped out of the compartment after nodding respectfully to their leader. Number 4 was about to leave when he was stopped.

"Number 4." The calm, sinister voice brought him up short.

"Yes, leader?"

"This train had engine problems that required a locomotive change

at St. Paul's. That took time, and we are now an hour late."

Number 4's eyes widened.

"Make the necessary changes." The leader looked hard at Number 4. His voice betrayed a slight nervousness, which for him was remarkable.

Number 4 nodded and left.

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Ryan Parnell left his car in the parking lot of the FBI field office in Chicago. Behind him, a train rattled on the elevated. Ryan pushed through the front door, and the sounds softened.

Ryan was a man in his early thirties. He was clean cut, had brown hair, and wore a conservative grey suit. He carried a briefcase and walked quickly past the security desk with a brief nod to the guard on duty.

Boarding an elevator, he got off at the third floor, nodded to the secretary on his way past, slipped through the corridors, and knocked briefly before entering a meeting room.

"Sorry I'm late," he said to those sitting around the table. "But forensics was a little delayed in finishing their report."

"That's not a problem, agent Parnell," said the greying Superintendent Walter Strange, sitting at the head of the table. "We've only just started. Would you like to go first with your report from forensics?"

Ryan had just plunked himself into his seat. After a pause, he hauled himself to his feet and opened his briefcase. He handed out stapled sheets to all present. "As I said, I was just down the street talking to forensics. They identified the explosion as having occurred in the bathroom of Pizzeria Uno. What little they've found indicates a primitive but decidedly effective device designed to provide local but intense damage."

"How big would this device have to be?" asked Agent Liz Shannon.

"Not large. About the size of an average mail package," said Ryan.

"A similar MO to the other eight attacks?" asked Walter.

"Yes and no," Ryan replied. "Similar targets, similar placements, and the same person calling to claim responsibility, but different devices each time. We're looking at a well armed group."

"Why are we focusing on the previous bomb blasts?" asked Superintendent James Spender irritably. "You all heard the caller's last message: one more attack, the biggest of them all. What are our leads on that? If any?"

"Well," said Ryan. "Thanks to an anonymous tip, we do have a promising lead on some suspects boarding—"

"We have a number of leads," Walter cut in. Ryan glanced at him in surprise, but his superior continued, "They all have agents in the field looking after them. I'll have a report on your desk tomorrow morning, Superintendent Spender."

James nodded curtly. "I look forward to reading it."

"Let's move on," Walter continued.

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The meeting adjourned an hour later. The agents left for their offices. As Ryan was about to depart, Walter called to him. "Ryan?"

Ryan looked up. "Sir?"

"I need to talk to you, in my office."

"This sounds serious. Firing serious?"

Walter chuckled. "No, nothing like that. Come on. Let's talk privately."

He led Ryan through the maze of cubicles until he reached his office, a corner affair that dwarfed Ryan's accommodations. Walter sat down behind his desk. Ryan took his seat in a significantly less comfortable chair.

"You're doing good work, Ryan," said Walter.

"Thank you, sir."

"So good that you've surprised me."

"Sir?"

"Your agent in the field has surprised me, actually. Your protégé, if I recall correctly," said Walter.

Ryan nodded.

"Your protégé submitted some interesting information about the leads on the Empire Builder. Information that had to be taken off the meeting room table back there."

Ryan sat up. "Sir? We're withholding information from our teammates?"

"Not my decision," said Walter. "It's security protocol. Your agent identified two other passengers on board the train. A doctor and his teenage daughter."

"Oh, yes," said Ryan. "I remember. The daughter's cute, but she's barely eighteen."

"You would notice that," said Walter sardonically. "Anyway, as your agent requested additional information on these two, I did a search. Well, to my surprise, there's no reference to Dr. Calonne or his daughter in any of the normal files: medical, tax, you name it. Your agent suggested he was foreign, yet there is no record of them ever entering this country. When, on a whim, I tried under 'the Doctor'..."

"Well?"

"The file is blocked. Top secret, CIA priority one. That's why I couldn't share it with the meeting. I'm bending the rules sharing with you what I have here." He held up a manila file folder.

Ryan stood up and snatched the folder. A single-page printout with the words "Top Secret" blazoned at the top housed a request form for obtaining the report through proper security channels. The CIA's seal was prominent in the corner.

"The CIA?" said Ryan, disbelieving. "They're on this case? But they can't. They're legally barred from operating within the continental U.S!"

"Yeah?" said Walter. "And since when did rules appeal to them? But the trail doesn't stop here. You see the request form. The report is available, to me if not to you. I just have to pull some strings. But I suspect that even if I can share this information with you, you won't be able to share it with anybody else."

Ryan searched for something to say. In the end, he could only think of "Wow."

Walter smirked. "As usual, you put it succinctly. 'Wow.' I think your field agent is onto something. I'll check out this file, and I'll call you when I get it. If I can show it to you, that is. Keep in touch with your agent on board the Empire Builder."

"I will, sir." Ryan left the office.

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Number 4 paced his cabin nervously. "Engine problems, engine problems. Fix the first locomotive and the second develops a fault. If this were an airplane, we would have done the decent thing and blown it up by now. But no, we have to take the train and go on a leisurely tour of this country!"

"Complaining about our assignment, Number 4?" said the leader. Number 4 froze. He hadn't heard him enter. He drew himself up, but did not trust himself to turn around. "I was just upset that we're now almost two hours late."

The leader smirked. "Yes, you would think that a country such as this would have the trains running on time. But I was under the impression that you thought it better that we destroy an aircraft."

Number 4 swallowed hard. "No, leader. I—"

"It is a valid question," said the Leader, moving around to face Number 4. "Why take a train? Why blow up Seattle?"

Number 4 blinked. "Blow up Seattle? So, that's our plan?"

"Of course," said the Leader. "Think about our enemy, Number 4. Think of how they have reacted to our nine bombings. For all of its intrusions on world affairs, the United States has never tasted terrorism on

its own soil, until now. But for all the shock and horror, terrorism is something they understand. They've seen it from afar, in Beirut and Jerusalem. Right now, the Americans are bracing themselves for the next attack. They are expecting a plane to fall out of the sky. They are expecting a building to blow up. We won't give them what they expect. That's why we are here. Nobody expects terrorists on a train these days. And nobody ever thinks of blowing up Seattle."

Number 4 nodded. "Yes, leader."

"But that's not why I am here," said the Leader. "I have an assignment for you, Number 4."

"Yes, leader?"

The leader pulled out a paper packet, not unlike those that contained sugar. "You recognize this?"

"A discreet poison," Number 4 replied. "Dissolves instantly in water and causes heart failure. Virtually undetectable."

"Good. You have been well briefed. The Doctor is now having lunch in the dining car. Take this and kill him with it."

Number 4 frowned. "Now? Leader, do you think that's wise?"

The leader stared at him. "What do you think?"

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At the entrance to the dining car, Number 4 watched the Doctor and his companion eating lunch and enjoying themselves. The Doctor's water glass stood at the side of the table nearest to the aisle. Number 4 nodded to himself, satisfied. This would be childish simple.

He walked casually along the aisle towards the bar at the other end of the diner. He paced himself so that he met a waiter coming the other way, just when they both reached the Doctor's table. Muttering apologies, he slipped by and, unnoticed, tipped the powder into the Doctor's glass of ice

water. He then walked on to the bar, found himself a convenient corner, and watched unobtrusively.

The Doctor stared at his water out of the corner of his eye. It was ironic that he hadn't intended to drink his glass of ice water before it was poisoned. He glanced at Fayette, who had noticed nothing and was still eating her omelette. He glanced at his would-be murderer, who was still watching from the bar, without seeming to watch him. Why was this man trying to kill him? What challenge was this?

The Doctor had a good idea of what the poison was. Just to be sure, he gently took his water and tasted it tentatively. He nodded to himself. Cyanide.

It was a good thing that he was a Time Lord, since cyanide was as harmless to him as water. Obviously the man didn't know that.

The Doctor's mouth twitched. Slowly, deliberately, he drained his glass, set it down and waved amiably to the man at the bar.

Number 4 watched the Doctor with quiet satisfaction. The infidel had drunk his death. There was nothing to do now but wait. He counted the seconds.

One, two, three, four, five... strange, nothing seems to be happening...



seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven... nothing is happening... thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen... maybe my watch is slow... nineteen, twenty, twenty one, twenty two... no, its running fine... twenty-four, twenty-five, twenty-six... Oh my *GOD!*

Pale, Number 4 fled from the car. The Doctor watched his departure with much inner glee, but with many unanswered questions raging in his mind.

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In his compartment, the leader was fixing himself a cup of coffee, thoughtfully stirring in a generous spoonful of sugar. Adding cream, he moved from his dresser to a chair where he sat.

He was about to drink when a tremendous knocking sounded on his door. Before he could move, Number 4 burst in, trembling.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked the leader dangerously.

"Leader, I poisoned the Doctor and it didn't work! He drank it all and lived!"

"Impossible!" the leader hissed.

"I administered it myself! I watched him drink it! He should have died, but he didn't!"

The leader thought for a moment. Then he paled and set his coffee down. "Number 4, powdered cyanide and sugar look similar, do they not?"

Number 4 nodded.

"And we brought boxes of both cyanide and sugar with us. Could these have been mixed up?"

Number 4 thought a minute. It was possible. It would explain why the Doctor hadn't succumbed. It was then that he realized his leader was holding out his cup of coffee to him.

"Drink this, Number 4." The leader again wore that deadly solemn look that so terrified those who knew what it meant.

"M-my leader, I-"

"DRINK!"

Seeing no way out, Number 4 took the cup with shaking hands and sipped it tentatively.

"ALL OF IT!"

Number 4 shrugged fatalistically and he downed the coffee. The leader watched him. Thirty seconds later, Number 4 was still alive, though on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and the leader was shaken.

"Someone has botched this," he said. "Perhaps we took two boxes of sugar with us. Or perhaps... Did the Doctor know you tried to poison him?"

Number 4 twitched. "He did seem to know that I had done something. He... he waved at me! Perhaps he's tricked us?"

The leader stood up and paced the room. "He certainly has. I've underestimated him. Now he suspects, at least, that we are after him. He has become a real danger. Number 4, tell the others to come to my compartment, now! We are going to have to dispense with discretion."

Deeply relieved, Number 4 rushed from the room.

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Sir?"

"Ryan, come in." Walter motioned him to a chair.

"Is it about Doctor Calonne?" asked Ryan. "Is he a CIA agent?"

"No," said Walter. "He's British."

"British?" Ryan echoed.

"Keep your voice down!" Walter hissed. He got up and closed the door to his office. Returning to his desk, he picked up a file folder. "The parts I'm going to show to you are heavily edited. Add to that the fact that the CIA knows very little about this Doctor Calonne, and you have very little left indeed. What you are about to hear, you don't hear, understand?"

"I understand, sir," Ryan said gravely.

"Fine. Here's the file the CIA has on 'the Doctor.'"

The thin bound report fluttered onto the desk. Ryan picked it up and opened it. A moment later, he looked up at Walter. "There are seven faces shown here."

"Yes. Our theory is that 'the Doctor' is a spy ring of six top secret agents, each using that title as a codename. Your agent was only the second one to collect a surname for one of the members of this group: the third man on this list went by the name of John Smith - an obvious alias."

"Who does he... they... work for?" Ryan asked.

"Another mystery," said Walter. "Everyone and no one. Each has dealt with unusual episodes and not cloak and dagger stuff. From 1963 to the early 1980's, at least one of these six has been at the centre of every alien invasion this planet has ever faced and he's helped us win."

Ryan stared at Walter.

Walter stared back. "Yes, I said alien invasions. What of it? Anyway, the second, third and fourth in the file were very active in the seventies when they worked extensively with the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce."

Ryan blinked. "United Nations Intelligence Taskforce?"

"U.N.I.T. was an international military organization set up by the United Nations to deal with alien invasions," said Walter. "I didn't need a CIA file to tell me that. When you sit in this chair, Ryan, you learn a few things that they don't tell you at the academy. However, this is the first I'd heard about the Doctor. Apparently, the impetus for setting up UNIT was another alien invasion that was stopped only with the help of the second Doctor on the file. Both U.N.I.T. and the alien invasions are completely hush-hush. You particularly never heard of them!"

Ryan stared at his superior another moment. Then he shrugged. "Okay, I can work with this."

"That's the spirit!"

"So what is this group, the Doctor, doing now?" asked Ryan.

"Another mystery. The last alien invasion was sometime in the late 1970's, and the group petered out after that. Perhaps the ring disbanded and retired. The one your agent described is the seventh one. He's a particular enigma, only seen once, filling in for the third as UNIT's chief scientific advisor for a week in 1975 when the third was away. They never met. In fact, no two of them have ever been seen together. Doctor Calonne has never been seen again. Till now."

"So what is he doing on board the Empire Builder?"

"No Doctor has ever dealt with terrorists before. I don't see why he should start now. He's likely just on vacation with his daughter, and it's mere chance he boarded the same train as our suspects. However, this complicates things badly."

"How?" asked Ryan.

Walter leaned forward on his desk, lowering his voice. "This is also top secret. A year ago, someone broke into the CIA computer centre and managed to steal several files on CIA-friendly agents. The CIA suspects the group we're dealing with, and they may be planning to use those files to locate and kill important U.S.-friendly spies in an attempt to bring Western intelligence strength to its knees. The Doctor's file was one of those stolen. This could be why the suspects are taking such an interest in him."

Ryan jerked upright in his seat. "If the suspects on board the Empire Builder are the terrorists..."

"Ryan, contact your agent on board the train. Get the Doctor off and to us. The terrorists are going to try and kill him. Seems he's saved the free world a few times, so it's the least we can do to rescue him. Get to it, man!"

Ryan rushed from the office.

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Over the sound of running water could be heard Fayette's bored and apprehensive sigh. She'd been confined to their cabins at the Doctor's order. He hadn't ventured from his confines since they had come back from lunch. They had ordered and eaten dinner in their rooms. Other than that, the Doctor did nothing but sit in the reclining chair and stare hard at the door. He seemed to be meditating.

Something was wrong, Fayette knew. The Doctor was in his 'worried mode'. She had tried asking the Doctor why he was so worried, but he had distractedly told her he would only explain later, when he knew. Then he had asked her nicely but firmly to keep quiet so he could figure out something in his mind. She had left it at that.

Partly to relieve her boredom at being confined to quarters but mostly out of apprehension, Fayette decided to take a shower. It was the next best thing to taking a bath when she felt stressed out. Before her travels with the Doctor, when she'd lived in pre-revolutionary France, Fayette would sit for up to an hour in a steaming tub to soak away her worries.

Amtrak showers disappointed her. The train had a limited water

supply, and water could not be wasted. Fayette had, during the trip, often wondered where the tanks were to store all that clean water and what they did with the wastewater.

She let the soothing warm water wash over her for ten minutes. It was hardly enough time for a good scrub, let alone enough to soothe a worried mind. Besides, the shower was having little effect. She knew the Doctor expected trouble and not even an hour-long shower would have soothed her properly.

Turning off the water, Fayette wrapped herself in a towel, stepped out into her cabin and dried herself. She combed her dark hair, put on her nightdress and went in search of her second resort: a good book.

Casting a quick glance through the partition door, she saw the Doctor still sitting in the reclining chair, almost in a trance, facing the cabin door. Fayette sighed and then slid under the covers. Before reading, she glanced around her compartment.

She had to admit it was quite a way to travel. To take a home with you and to live in it until you reached your destination was a novel idea, but it didn't impress her. Travel was the same now as in Fayette's home era: the more money you paid, the more lavish the accommodations. The TARDIS was a better home, and it went further.

Before turning to her book, she cast a glance out of her window. There, her gaze was held.

The train had left Havre, Montana, half an hour earlier, and it was now passing over short-grass prairie under the setting sun. The train startled a herd of grazing antelope and sent them thundering away in one giant wave towards the horizon. They were surrounded by a dark bowl of earth with solitary buttes of crumbling clay standing on the horizon. Beyond, the imposing silhouettes of mountains stood, like a giant rising from sleep. The setting sun's flaming hue dyed the ground, the sky, the waving grasses and sagebrush a deep orange-red.

The landscape was deserted. Only one rundown house could be seen, miles away, at the foot of a mountain. The train was sailing across the desolate prairie as though carried on some unfathomable tide.

They had arrived in America within the biggest metropolis she had yet seen, and, as the train went further and further west, the settlements kept getting smaller and the territory more rugged. But the progression hadn't prepared for this. The train was alone. Connected metal boxes travelling upon two bars of iron stretching across a landscape where people weren't meant to be.

Fayette forgot about what the Doctor had said about the industrialized world owing its might to the railroad. She even ignored what the Doctor had said about the train being an efficient and civilized form of transportation. Instead, she realized that people had toiled and even died to haul two lines of steel across a landscape that had never previously seen a white man. What had driven them so far from home? Had it been worth it? Those people must have thought so.

Fayette didn't read her book that night. She lay in bed, watching the sun set on the endless Montana prairie. She dozed off after dusk, rocked to sleep by the slight sideways sway of the sleeper car and by the clickity-clack of metal wheels over rail.

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Fayette was awakened by a loud bang. She sat up with a gasp. The noise resounded through the length of the train and shook the car she was in.

Fayette looked around groggily, searching for the source of the noise. Then she heard more noises outside, and she opened her window blind an inch.

It was still dark outside. The clock over the platform read 4:30 a.m. The sign on the building identified the station as Spokane. The Empire Builder had regained some of its time but was still running an hour late. Then a five-car train of Superliners, pushed by a pair of Burlington Northern switcher locomotives, cut off the view of the clock and the station. The switchers stopped there, released the cars, and left.

Soon, two Amtrak locomotives entered the picture and coupled with the set of cars with the same loud bang that had awakened her, but on the other train. The Portland section of the Empire Builder was being set up, she reasoned. It would wait for the Seattle section to depart before leaving itself.

They could have scheduled this better, Fayette thought, or are all Americans heavy sleepers?

While Fayette was watching the railyard drama unfold, a whisper cut through the silence. "Fayette!" it came again.

She turned and saw the tall form of the Doctor silhouetted against the bright lights from his cabin, beckoning her. Silently she got out of bed and crossed the compartment. She opened her mouth to question but the Doctor laid a finger over her lips. He stepped the rest of the way into her room and closed the partition door. Then he leaned close, listening. Fayette mimicked him.

She heard nothing at first. Frustrated, the Doctor motioned for her to keep still and to stop her nightdress rustling. Finally, they heard a scratching noise came from the front door to the Doctor's compartment. It sounded as though someone was trying to pick the lock. The Doctor bent closer to Fayette, an idea lighting up his face. He whispered into her ear.

After a minute of the scratching noise, the door opened and a small, shadowy figure stepped into the Doctor's room. It was Sue. She wasn't playing the Amtrak attendant anymore. She gazed around the room, her normally warm expression grim.

The compartment was deserted. No Doctor, no Miss Calonne. She fingered the chair. The seat was still warm. But where were they?

A flash of worry crossed her face. Her hand darted into her uniform pocket and pulled out a small gun. Her eyes fell upon the partition door, and she crept closer. She pressed her ear to it, and listened hard.

The front door to the Doctor's cabin swung open, and the Doctor strode in. "Oh, hello!" he said. "Is that a gun in your hand or—"

Sue whirled around, her gun raised. Then Fayette kicked the partition door, slamming it hard against the back of Sue's head. With a look of stunned surprise, Sue fell to the floor in a heap, unconscious.

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When Sue recovered, the first thing she noticed was the pain in the back of her head from the hit she'd taken. Then she noticed that her arms and legs had been expertly hog-tied behind her and a large piece of thick tape had been placed over her mouth, preventing all speech. She was lying helpless in this embarrassing state in the middle of the Doctor's compartment.

Behind her, she could hear the Doctor and Fayette talking.

"So, she was never working for Amtrak," said Fayette. "Who knew?" "I did."

"You did?! How?"

"Body language was all wrong," said the Doctor. "Interesting story about inquisitive siblings aside, you can tell that she's had some serious intelligence training, if you look closely enough."

"Oh, yes," said Fayette sarcastically. "I can see it so clearly, now you point it out. How could I have possibly missed it before?"

"Shh," said the Doctor. "She's recovering."

Sue twisted her head around and her eyes fell upon the Doctor and Fayette. The girl had changed back into her normal white dress and watched her silently from her berth. The Doctor held her gun, but it wasn't pointed at her. She struggled against her bonds, making absolutely no progress.

"Good," said the Doctor solemnly. "You were only out for a few minutes. Now let's have some answers, shall we?"

Sue tried to speak. All that came out was a feeble "Hmm, hmmm, umm, mmm, mmph!"

The Doctor motioned to Fayette. "I think she's ready to talk."

With a grin, Fayette got up, stepped forward and yanked the sticky tape off Sue's mouth. Sue squealed. Licking her lips to soothe them, she glared accusingly at the chuckling Fayette. "Sadistic witch," she muttered.

The Doctor was still holding Sue's gun, but he showed no intention of using it. Somehow, that intimidated her. It gave the impression he had no need of it. She decided then and there to answer all questions promptly and as fully as possible.

"Now then," the Doctor said. "Were you trying to kill us just now?"

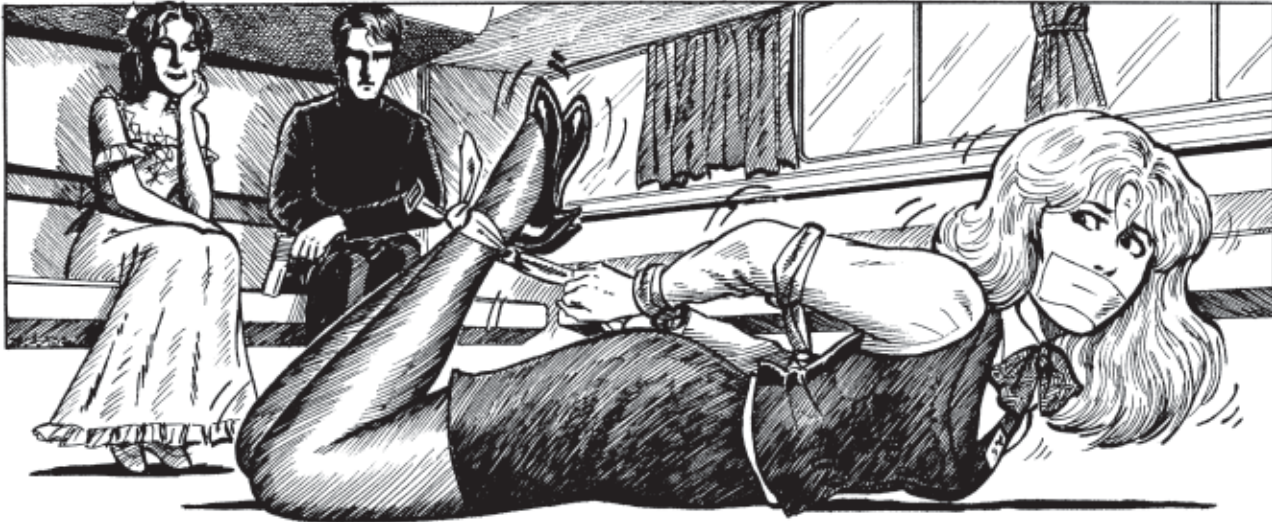
"No!" Sue felt indignant and her voice rose. She couldn't help feeling foolish, though, speaking so defensively while trussed up like a Thanksgiving turkey.

"Give me one good reason why I should believe you." The Doctor's face remained impassive and unreadable.

"Because others have tried to kill you, and not very subtly," she countered. "If I were one of them, I would have burst in shooting. You wouldn't be speaking to me now."

"Point. Who are you, then?"

She stared at him, considering her next move, and decided. "I'm an



F.B.I. agent. I have proof. In my jacket pocket, you'll find I.D." She scrunched over, and nodded at her pocket.

The Doctor motioned to Fayette who went over, searched her, and took out a badge and an I.D. card. She handed them to the Doctor. He studied them, and his face clouded in surprise. He gazed at Sue with respect.

She gave him a warm smile, then gazed hopefully over her shoulder at her arms and legs, still firmly bound. All her lessons in escapology had come to nothing, here.

The Doctor snapped out of his reverie and moved to Sue's side. "Fayette, help me untie her."

Surprised at this new development but trusting the Doctor's instincts, Fayette helped loosen Sue's bonds. Eventually they had her sitting comfortably in the reclining chair while the Doctor and Fayette took the lower berth.

"Tell me why you're here," the Doctor said.

"We've been monitoring a number of suspects we think may be responsible for a series of bombings across the northeastern United States," Sue replied. "An anonymous tip suggested that a group of suspects might board this train. I was put on board, undercover, to monitor them."

"You alone?" Fayette asked. "Aren't you outnumbered?"

"The more undercover agents there are, the more likely one will get found out," said Sue. "Besides, I have access to backup. I have a code radio that keeps me in contact with my superiors at the Bureau. When I told them that these suspects were taking an unusual interest in you, they radioed back that I should get you two off the train and into F.B.I. custody. I don't think we have much time. They've tried to kill you once; now that they've failed, they have to complete the job."

"If I'm such a threat to them," the Doctor pondered, "I'm surprised they're taking so long to try to kill me again."

"They're probably working on some method that will dispose of you without exposing their presence," Sue replied. "I was supposed to get you off at Spokane, but I was rather tied up at the time."

Nobody laughed at the pun. Suddenly Sue got up and began straightening her uniform. "We're a half-hour out of Ephrata. You'll be picked up by F.B.I. agents there. It isn't Spokane, but anywhere is safer than this train, right now. Then you'll give what help you can to our investigation. After that you'll leave, preferably to disappear."

"Oh, we can do that, easily," the Doctor rose to his feet. "Are you getting off with us?"

"No." Sue took out a small make-up kit from her pocket. "The suspects aren't aware of me, yet, so I'm still useful on board... Speaking of which, I'm on duty soon." She headed for Fayette's bathroom to tidy herself up. The Doctor handed over her gun as she passed.

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Number 4 opened his suitcase. From under the folded clothes, he pulled out a gun. He loaded it and screwed on a silencer. "Remember, Number 4," the leader reminded him, "be discreet. No witnesses and no bodies. Are you ready?"

"Yes, leader."

"Number 3 and four other men are waiting to help you."

Number 4 slipped the gun under his jacket, and the two left the compartment.

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We'll be ready, Sue. Thank you." The Doctor and Sue clasped hands briefly before she left. Then he and Fayette pulled out their suitcases and began packing hastily. The Doctor cast a glance out the window. The black sky was growing lighter.

"Dawn is breaking," he said. "They should be making another try, soon."

A frantic knocking thundered on the door. The Doctor rushed over and opened it. It was Sue.

"Doctor, they're coming! I'll delay them. You head that way!" She pointed.

"Fayette," said the Doctor, "forget the packing and let's go!"

He grabbed her by the wrist, setting off at a fast pace in the direction Sue had indicated.

Sue closed the door behind her and moved off the other way. Soon the terrorists entered the car, led by Number 4, all walking nonchalantly down the narrow corridor. She stood in their way.

Muttering apologies, they tried to get past each other, but they never quite made it. Sue kept moving in the wrong direction, with apparent clumsiness. The commotion delayed the men for a minute.

Then Number 4 grabbed Sue by the shoulders and looked her in the eye.

"Forgive us," he said. "We're tourists." Then he flung her against a cabin door. The door gave way, and Sue fell into the cabin with a cry. Number 4 motioned the others to follow and they trotted down the corridor towards the Doctor's compartment.

Sue scrambled to her feet, tossing an apology to the occupant who had been startled awake. She ran to the door and saw the last of them disappear into the next car. She sighed. She had done all she could, short of a shootout. She hoped it was enough.

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Pulling Fayette along, the Doctor sped from car to car, past sleeping passengers in the coaches, through the empty diner, and through another set of coaches to the very front of the passenger area in the lounge car. Here the door was locked. The Doctor frowned. Judging by the speed of the train, they were still far from a station, and they had nowhere left to hide.

Taking out a pocket-knife, he set to work on the lock while Fayette cast nervous glances behind them. Suddenly the group of terrorists entered at the far end of the car. Fayette gasped, "Vite, Papa!"

The lock gave, and the Doctor pulled the door open. He yanked Fayette through just as Number 4 raised his gun and fired. The silencer twipped, and a hole appeared in the wall where the Doctor had been standing. The pursuers cursed as they ran along the car.

The Doctor and Fayette found themselves in the baggage car, with

parcels and cases stacked everywhere. Not a good place to be cornered. On an impulse, the Doctor tried one of the side doors. It slid open, revealing the landscape streaming by. A rung ladder beside the door on the outside led to the roof.

Without a word, he pulled Fayette to the door and made her climb the ladder. When she got to the roof, she turned, knelt and lent him a hand. Suddenly his hand shot up, grabbing her head and pulling it down. A signal bridge whistled past just inches over her head.

That danger past, the Doctor climbed the remaining rungs. The two stood on the curved roof of the baggage car. The wind tore at their clothes. Fayette was having trouble catching her breath. The air was thinner and colder among the mountains and tainted with the exhaust from the two locomotives ahead. She had to fight to keep her balance, too, as the train maintained an incredible speed to make up for lost time.

"Why are we up here?" she shouted.

"Because," the Doctor answered calmly, "they have to come up to get us, and when they do..."

The first head appeared over the side; a gun pointed menacingly. The Doctor reacted swiftly, kicking the gun away. The terrorist clutched at the rungs, almost losing his balance. The Doctor gestured at Fayette. "Other door, other side, watch it!"

Fayette got the idea. At the opposite ladder, another terrorist had appeared, gun in hand. A fierce kick sent it flying. There were four doors to this baggage car, however. They couldn't all be guarded. Soon two terrorists made it to the roof. They crouched a moment, finding their balance, and then rushed forward.

"Aka-hee!" The Doctor lunged out with the best Venusian karate chop he'd managed in centuries. His attacker hit the roof, hard, but another lunged forward. It took about a minute to knock this man down. Then two more reached the roof and one lunged for him.

The Doctor staggered back and fell into the gap between the baggage car and the Superliner. He barely managed to grab hold of the edge of the roof. The terrorist sailed over his head and landed heavily behind him. He picked himself up immediately. Desperately, the Doctor clambered back onto the roof and faced his attacker.

Suddenly his arms jerked back as the first attacker grabbed him from behind. A solid punch buried itself in his stomach and drove the air from his lungs. Another crashed into his face. More punches followed, but the Doctor did not know from where.

Fayette faced her attackers with a fierceness that took them by surprise. As the first man lunged at her, she kicked him between the legs. That stopped him. Bent over in pain, he was easy prey for a solid punch that sent him flying off the edge. The last she saw of him, he was tangled in a tree.

Her second attacker grabbed Fayette from behind, but she twisted free, and he fell back before the onslaught of her teeth and nails. A few seconds later, he followed his partner. She jumped up onto the Superliner roof and launched herself against one of the Doctor's attackers, sending him flying off the train. The Doctor twisted around and settled the other. Soon, the last attacker was lying bruised, bloodied, and unconscious

on the right-of-way. The Doctor and Fayette surveyed the roof, unsure what to do next.

Number 4 clambered onto the roof. Before the Doctor and Fayette could react, he raised his gun.

"Good fighting," he said. "Unfortunately, not good en—"

Thump.

The train passed beneath a partial signal tower. Number 4, standing on the roof, was too tall to clear it. The tower rotated backwards – a safety feature should it ever be hit – and Number 4 was carried off the train, his feet kicking, before his body slipped off, and he disappeared into a grove of pine trees.

The Doctor grimaced. "Well, that took care of—"

Fayette tugged at his sleeve. "Papa?" she said nervously. She pointed.

The Doctor looked at the route ahead and his heart sank. The train was rapidly approaching another signal bridge. This one spanned the tracks, and was unlikely to swing away when struck by something. Where they stood, there was no room on the high Superliner roof for them to duck under.

"I don't like the look of this," he muttered. He took her hand and they backed up, watching the signal bridge come.

"Get ready to jump over!" They tensed. "Now!" They leaped high, just clearing the hurdle as it whistled under them. The Doctor landed on his feet but the bridge had caught Fayette by the toe of one shoe and she fell hard onto the metal roof. She lost her grip and rolled off the Superliner's rounded roof with a scream.

The Doctor lunged and grabbed her wrist as she went over. He fell to his stomach and gripped the roof, holding Fayette as she dangled off the side.

The train rumbled over a high trestle, leaving the ground behind as it passed over a river that raged between rocky banks. The Doctor held Fayette's wrist in a crushing grip. His hearts were in his throat as he watched the ground far below her kicking feet. "Fayette," he said distinctly, "Everything's all right but whatever you do, don't look down!"

She looked down.

Her eyes widened. She let out a single "Eep!" and came to life, clawing and kicking at the side of the car. Five seconds later, she was back on the roof, hugging the Doctor for dear life and gasping in relief.

There was the sound of muffled gunfire. The roof by their feet sparked. The Doctor and Fayette looked up.

Number 3 was standing on the roof, his gun raised.

"How many people do you have on this train?" the Doctor demanded in exasperation.

Number 3 ignored them. "Get up!" he commanded.

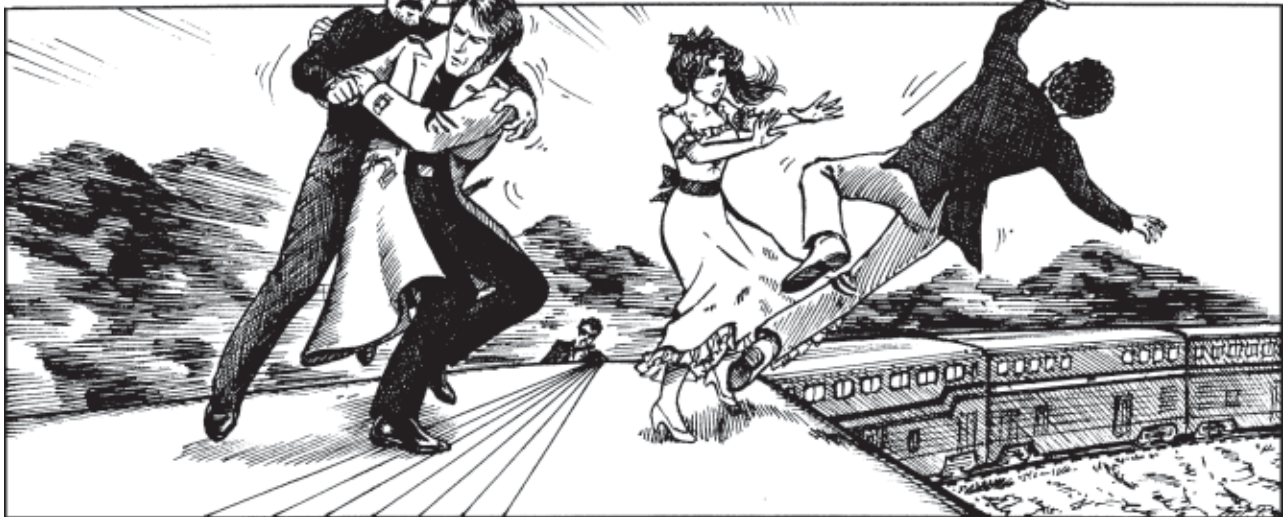
Seeing no alternative, the two slowly got up. Fayette gripped the Doctor's hand fearfully.

Number 3 took aim. "Now, hold still."

Terrified, Fayette closed her eyes. The Doctor looked at the route ahead. Then he looked back at Number 3.

"Friend," he said. "Now that we've passed beneath two signal towers, you're not going to fall for the 'look behind you' trick, are you?"

Number 3 snorted. "No."



"Thought not," said the Doctor, and he fell to his stomach, yanking Fayette down beside him.

Number 3 frowned, then looked behind him.

The train was entering a tunnel. The face of the mountain rushed towards him at fifty miles per hour.

Number 3's scream cut off abruptly as the Doctor and Fayette were carried into the darkness of the tunnel. They could sense the rock ceiling inches over their heads. The roar of the locomotives was deafening. Exhaust fumes choked them. Soon, though, it grew lighter as the end of the tunnel approached. Suddenly they were in the open again and drawing deep breaths of fresh air.

The muffled report of a silencer signalled that the danger was not past. The bullet ricocheted off the roof in front of them. The Doctor looked to see who had fired. The leader was hanging onto the ladder with one arm, gun ready. The Doctor had never seen the man before in his life, but his photographic memory recorded the steel grey eyes, the dark hair and that cold, sinister expression.

The leader fired again, but the train rounded a sharp curve, sending his shot wide. Another shot ricocheted off the roof near the Doctor's head. On their stomachs, the Doctor and Fayette slid backwards.

The leader fired twice again, but the silencer and the movement of the train hampered his aim. Even so, he was getting closer, and they were sitting ducks.

"We're going to have to jump," the Doctor muttered grimly.

Fayette stared at him incredulously. "Quoi?!" she shouted.

"I said, we're going to have to jump! Get ready!"

The leader aimed and pulled the trigger, but the gun clicked harmlessly. Cursing in numerous dialects, he searched his pockets to reload.

"Now!" The Doctor stood up. He pulled Fayette to her feet.

"Vous etes fou!" she screamed.

The train rumbled over another high trestle. A lake lay below and it looked deep.

"Papa! I cannot swim!" she shouted.

But the Doctor had already locked an arm around her waist. "It's too late!" he shouted as they jumped over the edge.

The leader had his gun reloaded, but it was too late for him as well. His targets had disappeared.

Two yells mingled in the air. They cut off abruptly when the Doctor and Fayette hit the water. Still travelling with a forward velocity of fifty miles per hour, the water erupted around the Doctor's body like the wake of a speedboat.

Shielding Fayette with his body meant that the force of the water stunned the Doctor. He felt Fayette slip from his grip and sink like a rock. His lungs called for air and he kicked for the surface. He paused there only long enough to take a quick breath before diving.

He kicked and swam deeper. The pressure of the water on his ears grew more intense and he had to fight harder and harder against his buoyancy. He let some air out of his lungs and sank faster.

He hit the bottom of the lake and felt the mossy rock. The water was murky and he had no hope of seeing Fayette. He had to feel his way. He crawled along the bottom, touching everything. Each passing second lessened Fayette's chances.

Suddenly his hands found something soft among the rocks. He could barely make out the white of Fayette's dress. Lungs bursting, he wrapped an arm around Fayette's body and pulled her to him. He turned her around, rewrapped the arm around her waist, and put the other around her shoulders. He kicked for the surface.

Soon the water became less and less murky, and they burst out into the air. Almost immediately he heard Fayette coughing and spluttering, which was a good sign. At least she was breathing.

On his back, holding Fayette's head above water, the Doctor swam for shore.

???

From the end of the last car, Sue watched the distant figures surfacing and moving toward land. As a curve of the landscape hid them from sight, she heaved a sigh of relief. They'd made it.

???

The Doctor towed Fayette through the still but frigid waters of the mountain lake. After a few minutes, they came to shore.

Feeling her struggle free of his grip, the Doctor let go. They crawled up the bank and collapsed, gasping for breath, shivering with

cold and glaring at each other.

"Fayette," the Doctor managed between gasps. "What do you mean – you can't swim?"

"Why on earth – would an intelligent young woman – want to dive into – cold outdoor waters?" Fayette puffed again. "You would catch your death!"

"Unlike staying on the roof of a moving train?"

Fayette smiled ruefully. "Point. Anyway, my father wanted to teach me, but the nearest river was the Seine. It was dirty, and we didn't want to bathe in public."

The Doctor glared at her. "The next chance we get, you're going to learn how to swim. I'll teach you. It's too important a thing for you not to know."

Fayette glared at him accusingly. "You would never have had to save me if you had not done something so crazy as to get onto the roof of that train in the first place. Going onto the roof was bad enough but jumping off was, was... was absolutely mad!"

"It worked, didn't it?" the Doctor answered back. "What would you rather have done? Stayed there and be shot— What do we have here?"

Men wearing business suits and ties surrounded the pair. Each had a gun in hand. Each gun was pointing at the Doctor and Fayette.

"Put the guns away!" Ryan ordered, as he shouldered his way through the group. "They're not armed. And besides, they're on our side."

The men put their guns away. Ryan held out his hand. "The Doctor, I presume?"

The Doctor's face broke into a broad smile. "You must be the F.B.I."

They shook hands.

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Wrapped in towels and blankets, the Doctor and Fayette dried out over a large and deliciously warm breakfast. They ate hungrily as Ryan filled them in on the details.

"Your high jump was quite a manoeuvre, Doctor," he added. "Not one I'd recommend as standard procedure."

"Nor I!" said Fayette clasping a warm cup of coffee.

"However," Ryan went on, "anywhere was safer than that train. That group has killed over a hundred people already. Two more wouldn't have given them problems for very long."

"Who are they?" asked the Doctor.

"We don't know much about them. They call themselves the Holy Path. Their leader, as yet unnamed, is the only one who has a record, and it's a skimpy one. Ten years ago, when the Ayatollah took power in Iran, the country where they're based, he organized an assassination attempt on the Ayatollah, because he considered his handling of the Americans to be weak."

The Doctor choked on his coffee.

"About ten operatives were caught and executed," Ryan continued. "That apparently that amounted to one quarter of the membership. The rest fled to Azerbaijan and hid in the mountains from Soviet and Iranian troops."

"If they're so small, why are they such a threat?" asked Fayette between sips of coffee.

"It's amazing how so few can create so much havoc in so many lives," said Ryan. "They've deduced that American soil provides an easy venue for terrorist attacks. When you add the fact this group has been trained, armed, and is in close contact with the Italian Red Brigades and Peru's Shining Path, then you've got a big threat."

"Extremist communist organizations with extensive experience in guerrilla warfare, urban and jungle," the Doctor muttered. "A dangerous group indeed."

"Invisible, too," said Ryan. "They bombed nine cities this past month. High traffic areas, too, without warning, causing considerable damage and death. They'd call and claim responsibility after the fact, but even with that, we could only get the barest of leads on them. We got a lead, thanks to an anonymous caller, that some suspects might be on board the Empire Builder. And that led us to you, Doctor."

"Why didn't you arrest your suspects before they got on the train?" asked Fayette.

Ryan stared at her. "We can't just go arresting people off the street! What gave you that idea?"

"We're foreign," said the Doctor. "But now you have something to arrest them for."

"You're right. But we might be too late," said Ryan.

The Doctor stopped eating. "Why?" he asked.

"The last phone call said that this group is aiming for only ten attacks.

The ninth time, they blew up a Chicago restaurant, killing twenty-five people. After that, they phoned the *Chicago Tribune* and promised a grand finale. It's been three days since that phone call. I can hear the drum-roll in my head. Can you help us out, Doctor?"

The Doctor thought for a minute. Then he said, "I can get you convictions on five suspects for attempted murder. Six of them tried to kill us on the way over."

"That's what Sue told us,"

Ryan noted.

"Right. You'll find five of them badly bruised on the right-of-way a few miles back. One man might have to be peeled off the face of a mountain over a tunnel entrance. The leader, or at least I think he's the leader, is alive and still on board."

"Do you have any more info about their last operation?" asked Ryan

"No. I was just enjoying the ride when they tried to poison me. Why did they attack me like that?"

"They stole top secret files on U.S. friendly agents, Doctor. Another project of theirs is killing our best spies and hurting our intelligence strength. Your file was also taken, and so they know of your involvement with U.N.I.T. I know that's top secret, but my superior gave me that information on his authority."

The Doctor looked up. "There's a file on me? Can I read it?"

"Later."

Then another thought struck the Doctor.

"They were very discreet at first in the way they tried to dispense with me. They seemed desperate not to draw the attention of the authorities. Also, when the first attempt failed, they treated me as a threat. An immediate threat to their plans. Whatever they're planning is going to take place on that train."

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The leader reset the timer and pressed a button. He keyed in the password to lock the timer and keep it running no matter what interference occurred. They were now two hours out of Seattle, and the timer was four hours from zero. The hydrogen bomb was primed and ready.

???

A thought was forming in the corners of the Doctor's mind, and he did not like the tone of it.

"What happens to the equipment of the Empire Builder once it arrives in Seattle?" he asked solemnly.

Ryan was startled. "You should have asked Sue this—"

"She's not here. I'm asking you!"

Ryan thought. "I'd assume the equipment would be held overnight in Seattle and then reformed the next morning to become the next day's Empire Builder, Pioneer, or Coast Starlight."

"But it stays in Seattle overnight?"

"I would assume so, yes, but what does that have to do with—"

"Everything!" the Doctor cut him off urgently. "Where's the Empire Builder now?"

"Um... The last time I checked with Sue, it was back on time and just leaving Everett. That was a half hour ago. Why?"

"Sir?" A young FBI agent stepped up. "We've just received a tip. There's a bomb on board that train."

Ryan perked up. "The same guy who put us onto the Empire Builder in the first place?"

The Doctor frowned. "You have a mole?"

"We have no idea who he is."

The Doctor checked his watch. The train would arrive in Seattle at 11:25 a.m. It was 9:40 a.m. now. He gripped Ryan's wrist "You've got to phone Amtrak and tell them to stop that train. Now!"

"Stop the train? But—"

"A group of terrorists on a train and an anonymous tip that there's a bomb on board is not coincidence. They've turned the Empire Builder into a missile on rails. Let's go!"

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On the receiver, a bewildered voice crackled, "Look, how do you know all this? Who are you?"

Number 4 set the payphone back on its hook. "A mole for the Iranians," he replied to no one. "Shame I won't be able to stop the last attack." He sighed, then winced as his ribs protested. "The things I do for my government."

He trudged out to the road and looked to both horizons. Then he perked up. A pickup truck had crested the top of the hill and was coming towards him. Number 4 straightened himself

and picked up a handwritten sign off the ground. It read, "Boise." He stuck out his thumb hopefully.

The pickup truck breezed past without slowing down.

Number 4 sighed again, and began trudging along the shoulder of the road.

???

Edmonds, Washington, was the last stop of the Empire Builder before the end of the line. The train arrives around 9:45 a.m., so it serves no useful purpose for commuters. As a result, more people got off than got on.

Even so, the passengers grumbled as they and their luggage were taken off the train and put on waiting buses. Three hundred people filed along the crowded platform. Some were furious. The train had been up to two hours late in Montana and now that they had made up that time, they were delayed an hour over this mysterious business. Why were those police officers searching the crowd anyway?

Those near enough to see watched in surprise as the police swept down on a bearded gentleman in a dark suit, carrying a black suitcase, and dragged him to a waiting police car. Sue, standing beside a cluster of officers, stopped her discussion as she watched with satisfaction at the terrorist being hustled away.

Ryan's car drove up to join the squad cars on the scene. He, the Doctor, and Fayette got out and, after Ryan showed his I.D. they rushed to Sue, who greeted them with a triumphant smile.

"We got the lot of them, sir!" she exclaimed to Ryan. "They all had guns and other illegal ammunition in their suitcases."

"Did you get the leader?" the Doctor asked.

"What does he look like?" asked Sue.

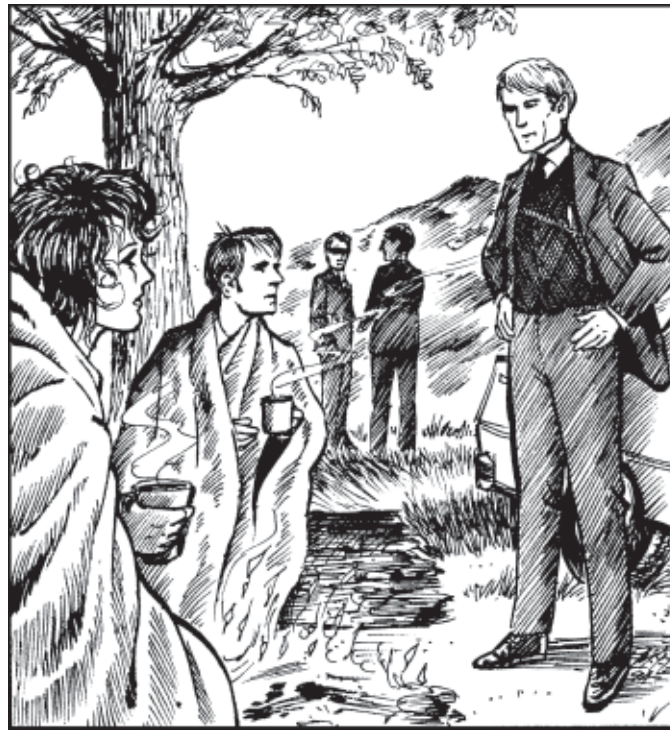
"Dark complexion, steel grey eyes, black hair, beard and roughly as wholesome looking as Dracula."

Sue shook her head. "We haven't found him yet. But don't worry, we will!"

The Doctor's face fell. "If you don't find him soon, there won't be much to be cheerful about."

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Unnoticed, the leader watched the people outside his window. He glanced at the timer in front of him. They had been delayed for an hour in the station and only forty-five minutes remained.



If the train started now, he could just make it to Seattle with the bomb. If the train waited, he could cancel the operation as a failure or he could let the bomb go off here, taking out only a bedroom community. He pondered his choices.

Then he saw the Doctor, and that made up his mind. He had lost this one, but he would not fail without a fight. He had better make his move because soon they would be looking for him.

He left his cabin, walked silently along the corridor and out the open door onto the platform. Blending in with the crowd, he made his way toward the two idling locomotives. He passed Amtrak staff who were milling about in the crowd talking, but he did not see an engineer among them.

He came to the lead engine and found the cab door open. The engineer was sitting alone in the cab, taking advantage of the break to take a quick snooze.

Unnoticed, the leader climbed in, closing the door behind him. He went to the engineer's seat and whirled it around to face him. The man was about 50, paunchy and greying. He woke with a start to find a gun pressed to his jaw and a pair of icy eyes boring into his.

"Your name?"

"Uh... Luther." He had never heard a voice so cold and terrifying, and had instantly decided not to argue with its owner.

"We are going to Seattle, Mr. Luther. Best speed." The leader whirled the seat back around to face the controls.

Luther thought again about refusing. Then he glanced over his shoulder at the steady gun in the man's hand and thought better of it. He performed a few safety checks before starting the locomotive. Then he pulled the throttle and the train began to accelerate. He cast another glance over his shoulder at the leader's gun. Then, on an impulse, he hit a switch and the train's bell clanged out, long, loud and regular.

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At the sound of the bell, everyone turned and saw the train slowly start to pull out of the station.

Sue's jaw dropped. "What the hell's that engineer doing?"

The Doctor was already running. "That train's being hijacked! Come on!"

The Doctor, Sue, Fayette and Ryan rushed for the open door as the train gathered speed. The Doctor reached it and jumped in easily. Sue came after and managed to make it. Fayette had to grab a handlebar and run with the train before she hauled herself in. Ryan didn't make it. He stopped running when he saw the train leave the platform and weave its way along the line to Seattle.

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The leader hit the switch and the train's bell stopped as suddenly as it had started.

"Sorry," Luther mumbled. "Procedure."

"You want to live, friend?"

Luther nodded nervously.

"Then," the leader hissed, "forget procedures! Just concentrate on getting this train to Seattle as fast as possible."

He turned away and looked out the window to see if anyone was following. Unnoticed, the engineer gradually began to lower the throttle, slowing the train down.

???

The Doctor and Sue pelted down the corridors of the Superliner at top speed. Fayette fell further and further behind. She was getting tired of this running. She stopped to rest in a corridor of many compartments, leaning against one of the doors. The door was unlocked and it gave way. She fell into the room in a heap. Cursing her clumsiness, she picked herself up and prepared to follow the Doctor and Sue down the corridor, but something caught her attention.

She moved to the dresser in the corner of the room and pulled open one of the partially opened drawers. A strange object was inside, its timer counting down thirty minutes to zero.

Fayette's eyebrows rose. She might have been born before the French Revolution, but she was not ignorant. She could guess this object did not belong here and was dangerous. She knew nothing of electronics but she could deduce that when the timer reached zero, some message was sent through the wires, the only connection from the timer to the rest of the device.

She also knew she had better not touch the thing and that the Papa should look at it. She went out into the corridor, calling his name, but he and Sue were long gone. Worried, she went back into the compartment and studied the device. She fingered the wires tentatively.

The timer continued counting silently, twenty-eight minutes from zero.

???

The Doctor rushed to the front car of the passenger consist and came to the door that led to the baggage cars. It was locked. Cursing in numerous alien dialects, he began to pick the lock. Sue rushed to his side, producing a set of keys. In a moment she had unlocked the door and they rushed in.

They ran through the two baggage cars, then came to the last door that separated the cars from the locomotives. Sue unlocked it, the Doctor yanked it open, and both stopped dead, gazing at the sight in front of them with open mouths and sinking hearts.

Two F40PH locomotives were pulling the Empire Builder, coupled back to back. The Doctor and Sue found themselves staring at the blunt red-and-white striped snout of the trailing locomotive, with no way of getting into it.

Deciding to work with what he had, the Doctor grabbed a handrail on the front of the engine and stepped over the gap. He clung on, scrambled for a foothold, but found none. The ground whizzed by at a dizzying speed, a yard below his dangling feet.

With a yank of the arms, he swung himself along the locomotive's smooth nose and grabbed a handrail on the side further along. The rail he grasped was the top one of three; his feet found a resting place on the bottom rail.

He started to ease along to the ladder beside the cab door, then had to press himself against the side of the locomotive as it passed a trackside signal. The pole cleared his body by an inch or two. Blowing a sigh of relief, the Doctor moved over to the ladder. He looked back and saw to his astonishment that Sue was on the handrails

beside him, the wind sending her hair flying.

He grinned at her. Then he looked forward to the front of the train; and paled. The leader was leaning out the cab window, gun pointed directly at



his head. The Doctor had no cover and no defence. The leader's grave, almost regretful expression warned that he was about to kill. Already his finger was squeezing the trigger.

Suddenly he paused and looked back into the cab, frowning. He lowered his gun and drew his head and shoulders back inside.

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Why are we going so slow?" the leader demanded furiously. "I don't know what you're talking about," Luther faltered. A gunned fist lashed out and hit the engineer brutally across the face. Luther flew off his seat and landed in a heap on the floor, unconscious.

The leader grabbed the throttle and hauled it to maximum. The train began to accelerate. He sat down on the engineer's seat and started to work the controls.

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The Doctor tried the cab door and found it locked. He turned to Sue, who shrugged her shoulders. She had no keys for the locomotives. Instead she handed him her gun. He pointed it at the lock and fired. Twisting the doorhandle, he was almost pitched off the train when it opened outward instead of inward as he'd expected.

Regaining his balance, the Doctor jumped in, with Sue right behind him. The empty cab was a well-fitted affair that combined the necessities of driving the locomotive with the union demands for crew comfort. They hurried down into the corridor through the very heart of the engine. It rumbled about them, but it was quieter in here than it was outside.

They came to the back door and jerked it open. Then they were outside again, on the platform. The back of the first locomotive faced them and it too had a platform. They jumped over the gap.

Pausing for breath, the Doctor handed the gun back to Sue. She shook her head. "Hold onto it. You'll probably need it. Besides, I have another." She produced a similar gun from inside her uniform and held it ready.

The Doctor grimaced. "You're a one-woman armed camp!"

"I came prepared, that's all," she said calmly.

"I object to guns in principle."

"Why?"

"Because they kill people."

Sue considered this naive and was amazed to think that this was the man who had, according to her boss, saved the free world many times over. Still, every good operative had his own methods, and she could only accept his decision. She was about to take the gun back when she realized the Doctor was going to use it after all. He had tried the door and, finding it locked, prepared to use the gun on it.

With one shot he destroyed the lock. As if in retaliation, a shot from inside shattered the glass window in the door. They both ducked. With a lunge, the Doctor thrust the door open and Sue pumped several shots inside the locomotive. They watched and listened for a few seconds, then entered cautiously.

It was dark inside, except for the gleam of instruments. The engine clattered and bellowed around them. They couldn't see the leader anywhere, but they knew he must be near, hiding in the shadows.

"Come on out!" the Doctor shouted over the noise of the engine. "It's

all over now. Show yourself!"

The leader's voice rang out from the darkness. "No. I haven't lost yet."

Ignoring the gun in his hand, the Doctor tried to pinpoint the source of the voice as he advanced slowly down the corridor. He couldn't place it, so he tried again.

"Are you sure? You don't sound good. You're wounded, aren't you?"

"Just a flesh wound," the leader replied. "In a few minutes, it won't matter one bit."

The Doctor swallowed hard. Won't matter. This was a suicide mission. "Listen," he said. "You don't have to die. All you have to do is drop your gun and give yourself up."

The leader chuckled. "Sorry. The offer's tempting, but my mission isn't finished."

"But your mission has failed!" the Doctor prodded. "We've got you!"

"You've got me, but not the bomb," said the leader. "You could shoot me here, but I will not die alone!"

"How big is this bomb?" the Doctor asked.

"Big enough to blow the heart out of this city and leave a deep crater behind."

The Doctor blanched. "You'd kill millions of innocent people?!"

"Millions of materialistic scum!"

The Doctor was thinking furiously. How much time did he have? Not much. Only seventeen minutes till they reached Seattle, which was obviously the target. He couldn't mount a proper search, even with Sue to help him, not unless they disarmed the terrorist first, and that wouldn't be easy.

The Doctor spoke in Arabic. "Why do this?" he asked. "Doesn't the Koran say not to kill? Doesn't this go against the teachings of Mohammed and the will of Allah?"



A gun-filled fist flew out from an alcove, hitting him flat on the face, sending him to the floor, unconscious. The leader spoke out in Arabic: "Weaking words, Infidel!"

He stepped from the shadows, gun poised. Sue kicked it out of his hand. It slid into the cab, stopping just short of the open cab door. Another karate kick pitched him into the engineer's chair, and she rushed after him.

Jumping up, the leader slammed Sue against the wall of the cab. A fist buried itself in her stomach. She lost all of her breath painfully and dropped her gun. He threw her to the floor where she lay doubled up and groaning. It was a ploy. As he reached for the gun, Sue tangled her legs in his, tripping him. Then she lunged on top of him and the two fought like wildcats in a tangled heap. The leader punched, Sue chopped, he choked, she kicked. They rolled over and over each other.

Still on the floor in the corridor, the Doctor slowly regained consciousness. In a dazed state, he watched the fierce fight in front of him. Both faces were bloody and bruised. Their expressions said plainly both were willing to kill. He wondered how much time he'd lost. His watch told him there were thirteen minutes left.

Suddenly the two broke apart and lunged for their guns. They arrived at the same time, picked up their guns at the same time and fired at the same time. They hit each other. Sue fell over backwards and hit the cab wall, crying out with pain. She clutched her shoulder as blood began to stain her uniform. The leader was also hit in

the shoulder, and he almost fell out the open cab door. He landed heavily on his back on the cab floor by the door with his head and shoulders hanging outside the engine.

Unsteadily, the Doctor got up and made his way into the cab. He knelt to examine Sue, who had slumped unconscious against the wall. The bullet had gone straight through her shoulder and had probably hit nothing vital, but she was losing blood.

He took out a large handkerchief and folded it into a pad. Unbuttoning the collar of her shirt, he placed it over the wound. Using another handkerchief, he padded the other side. Gently removing her jacket, he ripped off a strip of the thick fabric and tied it tightly over the handkerchiefs, under the arm and over the shoulder.

Then he turned to the leader. He was unconscious, too, half in and half out of the cab. Still a little dizzy, the Doctor crossed the cab to him, stepping over the unconscious engineer. Suddenly he stopped and looked out the front window.

The train was still rushing along at breakneck speed and a freight train was roaring towards them on the next track. A quick glance showed that the leader's head and shoulders were directly in its path. A pale-faced engineer could be seen, madly blowing the horn on the other train, unable to do anything as the distance between the trains shrank rapidly. The Doctor saw this with a flash of horror.

He rushed to the leader and frantically pulled him to a sitting position. The man recovered then. With a grimace of hate, he shoved the Doctor away. The push sent the Doctor sprawling backwards to the floor. It also cost him his balance. His upper body dangled out the cab door again.

He began to black out again, weak from loss of blood. For an instant, he saw the massive shape of the locomotive bearing down on him, its horns blaring. Half conscious, unable to move, he hung over the tracks as the steel wall rushed towards him. He let out one final moan.

The Doctor scrambled up and made a desperate lunge for the man, but he was too late. He turned his face away as the doorway suddenly framed a cloud of scarlet spray.

The Doctor flinched away, crying out. "Damn it!" he shouted. "Why didn't you listen?"

He pulled himself together. If he didn't get busy and find that bomb, many more would die. He went to Sue, who was recovering consciousness.

"What...?" she mumbled. Then she winced as pain shot down her injured arm. "Ow! What happened?"

"Don't look!" The Doctor deliberately blocked her view as she turned to look for the leader. "We've got to stop this train!" He moved to the controls and began working at them. Out of the front window he saw the towers of Seattle in the distance, but not nearly far enough away. Sue cast a glance at the headless body and whitened. Shuddering, she stood up and staggered to the Doctor's side.

"I think he's put it on automatic pilot," said the Doctor, frustrated.

Sue frowned. "Trains don't have automatic pilot."

"They do if you take out the brakes. The man's fused the controls!" The Doctor turned to the back of the cab where a button marked Emergency Stop was located. He hit the button. The impact knocked the panel out, revealing mangled wires underneath. The leader had wrecked that too.

"Damn," the Doctor hissed under his breath. A groaning noise alerted his attention. The engineer was recovering consciousness. The Doctor and Sue went to his side and propped him up.

"We've got to stop this train!" the Doctor told him urgently. "But its been sabotaged. How do we do it?"

"The brake's gone?" Luther asked wearily.

"Yes!"

"Emergency stop too?"

"Yes!"

"Uncouple the first locomotive from the second. The first will break away... the second..." His eyes started to close. The Doctor shook him desperately. "Second one... without the forward cab controls... it'll shut down." Luther slumped back into unconsciousness.

"Come on!" the Doctor snapped. "We've got about three minutes!" Together, they hauled the engineer to his feet and dragged him to the back of the locomotive. They stepped out the back door and onto the platform. On either side the outskirts of the city were flashing past: warehouses, lumber yards, a few scruffy apartment buildings. If the bomb went off here, the Doctor thought, it was already too late.

After crossing the gap, Sue held Luther, who swayed in her grip, while

the Doctor knelt down and undid the coupling. The couplers were complex and it took half a minute for him to get them to part. Then the lead engine started to pull away from the rest of the train, but the air and electrical hoses still held the two together. Hanging onto the railing, he kicked at them. Finally they parted in a shower of sparks. The lead engine sailed forward as though released from weights. The roar of the second engine dwindled as it powered down. It decelerated slowly. Too slowly.

"You wait here with him," he said to Sue. "I'll find the bomb."

"But it'll take five minutes to climb back over the engine!"

"Right. So I'll have to jump."

"We're doing seventy!" she screamed. "You can't jump, it'll be suicide! Wait for the train to stop and let the bomb squad handle it!"

"No time!" he shouted. "It can go off any minute. What was the leader's room number?"

"Two-oh-seven! But you can't— It's not humanly possible!"

"Watch, but don't follow!"

Sue watched in shock as the Doctor leaped off the locomotive. He landed on his feet and almost at once jumped again, catching a handrail and swinging up into the open door of the first passenger car as it passed.

"He did it!" she whispered to herself, incredulous.

In the Superliner, the Doctor ran up the stairs to the second level. After racing through a couple of cars, he found room 207 and burst in. The room was like any other Superliner bedroom. There was a berth, a reclining chair, a bathroom, and a dresser. No bomb.

Frantically, he rifled the drawers of the dresser. Still no bomb.

He rushed into the bathroom, tore open the cabinets. Still no bomb.

He pounded the wall in frustration. Then thought hard. Where else could it be? Hadn't there been ten men in the group? Their rooms would be next to the leader's! He rushed to a compartment, one belonging to the late Number 4, and burst in.

And stopped short. There it was, ticking busily away in the corner. He peered at the timer display and his heart jolted. The display read: 0:04, 0:03, 0:02, 0:01...

He threw himself to the floor and clasped his arms over his head. A futile gesture, he knew, but it was instinctive. He awaited the disintegration.

The clock hit 0:00 and beeped.

Beeped?

After a minute, the Doctor took a breath. He propped himself up and looked at the device. The timer read 0:00, but nothing had happened. He was puzzled, not yet sure the danger was over. Then he saw Fayette, who was drooping in the other corner, exhausted.

When she saw him, she smiled. "You took your time. When it got down to one minute, I felt I should do something." She held up a fistful of wires. "I did not know what wires to pull, so I pulled them all."

It took a moment for this to sink in. When it did, the Doctor heaved a sigh of relief and collapsed onto the floor.

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In his car, Ryan picked up his cell phone. "Yes?"

At the other end of the line, an officer said, "Sir, we've heard from Agent Novak. They've located and disarmed the device, and have stopped part of the train just outside Seattle."

Ryan breathed a sigh of relief, then frowned. "Hold on a minute, 'part of the train'?"

"All but the lead locomotive," the officer replied.

"And the lead locomotive?" Ryan prompted.

"Still barreling to Seattle."

Ryan sat bolt upright. "Does Amtrak know about this?"

"Um, I don't know," the officer stammered. "We were sort of focused on finding the device."

"Well, get Seattle Union Station on the phone," shouted Ryan. "Tell them that they've still got a fifty-ton problem on their hands!"

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A bored young man wearing a white shirt and tie picked up the phone. "Station master's office," he said.

Ryan was on the other end of the line. "This is Agent Ryan Parnel of the F.B.I. I'm calling you from the north end of Seattle."

The station staffer took a swig of his coffee. "Are you the guys who delayed the Empire Builder at Everett?"

"Yes," said Ryan quickly. "We have everything under control here, except for one thing. The lead locomotive was detached from the train and

is now proceeding south on the main line at top speed. We can't keep up with it. What are you going to do about it?"

The staffer looked up at the light board that showed the lines leading in and out of Seattle. One blip was moving rapidly in from the left side of the board. It was registered as 'The Empire Builder'.

He turned back to the phone. "Are you sure?"

"What, don't your boards tell you how many cars your locomotives are pulling?" demanded Ryan. "That locomotive is moving on its own. Nobody's on it, which means nobody is going to stop it."

The staffer frowned in disbelief. "Is this some kind of joke—"

"Have you ever been lied to by an F.B.I. agent before?" shouted Ryan. "If you don't listen to me, I'll see to it personally that you are charged with negligence! That locomotive isn't pulling cars and doesn't have an engineer! Now, stop the train, call your manager, or do something else constructive before I start taking down your name and address!"

Quelled by Ryan's tone, the staffer stuttered, "Yes, sir. I'll talk to my manager. I'll get right back to you, sir. I promise."

"No! Don't put me on hold!" Ryan shouted, too late. He glared at the phone, and waited.

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The Amtrak locomotive raced ahead on the mainline, getting green signals all the way. On another track, the engineer of a freight locomotive stared in astonishment as the single diesel engine passed him. He pulled up his radio.

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The staffer had just left the dispatcher's office when a young woman stopped and handed him a slip of paper. The staffer read it and groaned. "Oh, no." He turned around and burst back into the dispatcher's office.

"Sir!" said the subordinate. "It's confirmed. The cab is empty. The Empire Builder is a runaway."

The dispatcher choked on his coffee.

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Ryan perked up as the phone line came to life. "Yes? Who is this?"

"I'm the Seattle dispatcher, Agent Parnel," said the dispatcher. "I just wanted to assure you that we've confirmed 'The Empire Builder' as a runaway. We'll be taking the appropriate measures. We'll handle things from here, okay?"

"Fine." Ryan hung up the phone. "Bloody bureaucrats."

"How did he sound?" asked Ryan's driver.

"Just as I do when telling someone the status of a ticking bomb," Ryan replied.

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The dispatcher looked up at the schematic of Seattle's downtown rail yards. "Each one of these switches is a potential derailment point. We've got dozens here. A derailment on any one switch would block commuter service for the whole afternoon rush hour. Crashing in the station itself would be catastrophic."

"Sir," said his subordinate. "We've just done the calculations. There is no way we can stop this locomotive before it reaches Union station."

The dispatcher's lips tightened. "Well, that's it, then. We'd better evacuate the station."

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The commuters at Seattle Union Station looked up in surprise as a warning siren sounded and a voice came on the P.A. "Attention all passengers," it said. "Please proceed to the street exits in an orderly fashion. I repeat, please proceed to the street exits in an orderly fashion."

The commuters looked around in confusion. The confusion intensified as security guards moved in, gently but firmly ushering people forward. Voices were raised as the crowds were herded to the exits.

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Were clear," said a security officer. "The Great Hall and station platforms are empty,"

The dispatcher heaved a sigh of relief. "Good. We're ready."

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The locomotive roared into the throat track of the yards north of Seattle's Union Station, taking the curves too fast. With a roar of straining engines, the locomotive levelled out on a straight track and barrelled towards the platform area. A stray worker turned to run for the stairs, but the wave of wind knocked him down. He struggled up as the locomotive passed and stared as it shot down the platform track, past the stairs leading to the pedestrian underpasses — and out the other side.

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The dispatcher leaned back in his chair, staring at the blip with relief. "Thank heaven Seattle Union Station isn't stub-ended, or we'd really be in trouble. That danger's past, at least. Let's hope it makes it out of the yards. Are the crews ready to derail the locomotive at the first crossing past the southern throat track?"

"Yes, sir," said a woman manning the computer.

The dispatcher nodded. "Let's hope it gets there."

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Work crews and police officers watched at a deserted road crossing. They had made sure they were well away from two bright yellow clamps that had been placed over the railhead. They eyed the headlight of the runaway locomotive as it approached out of Seattle's downtown railyard. The roar increased as the locomotive came closer.

Then it hit the derailer.

The engine leapt, and crunched into the ground beside the rail. A section of rail snapped and flailed like a cracked whip, bursting through the locomotive's undercarriage and out its side. The ground erupted on both sides of the locomotive, like water around a speedboat as the engine burrowed into the ground. It skittered down an embankment. When it hit bottom, the fuel tanks exploded.

When they were sure the worst was over, the fire fighters moved in with their trucks and began hosing the wreckage down.

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Seattle Union Station was big, thought Fayette, and it matched the city. Americans rarely seemed to do anything on a small scale. Just as in Chicago, everyone was rushing around every which way in a hurry to go everywhere.

They had stayed in Seattle overnight. Sue's wound was only minor, and she was well enough to see them off. She stood beside Ryan, her arm in a sling.

"The derailed of the runaway locomotive caused some damage to the mainline and delayed some commuter trains, but nobody was hurt," said Ryan. "We've prepared a cover story, coordinated with Amtrak, and made sure no mention was made about the bomb or the terrorists. The remaining terrorists are being apprehended as we speak."

"What has that done to the group?" Fayette asked.

"They only had forty members to begin with," Sue answered. "They've lost ten members including a very high-up leader. That should really hurt them."

A loud chime burst through the din, followed by an amplified voice.

"Your attention please," it boomed. "Amtrak's Pioneer eastbound for Chicago via Tacoma, Portland, The Dalles, Baker, Boise, Ogden, Salt Lake City, Grand Junction, Denver, Holdridge, Lincoln, Omaha, and Burlington is now boarding at gate eight. All passengers for these points please board the train."

"Well, I guess this is good-bye," said the Doctor. They all shook hands and said their farewells. Soon the Doctor and Fayette, carrying their suitcases, were heading for their train.

Sue and Ryan watched them go.

"Do you think we got something to add to his file?" Ryan asked.

Sue didn't look at her superior, choosing instead to watch the disappearing couple. "Well, sir, I know that he employs some rather unorthodox methods, but they get the job done. He's dedicated, he's determined, and he's definitely on our side."

"Ours?" asked Ryan. "America's, you mean?"

"No." Sue smiled. "Humanity's."

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A brunette attendant led The Doctor and Fayette through the Superliner consist of the Pioneer, pointing out the amenities. "I cannot believe we are going back by train," Fayette grumbled. "Especially after what happened last time."

"A fluke," the Doctor muttered back. "Besides, admit it. Except for the terrorists, you enjoyed the ride."

"Actually, I think the terrorists added something to the ride," said Fayette. "Someone could perhaps hire actors to simulate these things and add excitement."

The attendant pushed open cabin 321. "Here are your sleeping quarters, Doctor Calonne. The berth doubles as a sofa by day. The restroom and shower facilities are through here." She pushed open a door, revealing a smaller, windowless white room. "Miss Calonne, you're next door. Here is your key. You can go through the door from the corridor out there, or you can go through this partition door right here."

"Merci," said Fayette.

"No, thank you," said the attendant. "Is there anything else I can do for either of you?"

The Doctor and Fayette thought for a moment, then shook their heads.

"Fine. Dinner will be served in the diner car at 5 p.m. We will be departing in just a couple of minutes." She flashed her warm professional smile. "Enjoy your trip with Amtrak."

The attendant turned to go while the Doctor and Fayette started to unpack. Then she noticed that the suitcase the Doctor had carried was close to the door of the cabin. She went to move it.



Her hands wrapped around the handle and she jerked, but it didn't

budge. Surprise registered in her eyes for half a second, then she pressed forward with her knee and shoved the suitcase along the floor, just a few inches so that the door would close. She nodded to herself, satisfied, and stepped out of the room, closing the door behind her.

Fayette turned around. "All right, papa, what's in the case?"

"The case?" the Doctor asked innocently.

"The heaviest case that we've taken on board this trip. The one you haven't opened yet?"

"Oh! I'll show you."

The Doctor pulled the case to the centre of the cabin and undid the latches. The case fell open and the sides flew out. The inside contained landscaped scenery, toy buildings, small figurines—

And trains.

A model train set.

Fayette rolled her eyes. "Papa, you are hopeless."

The Doctor didn't respond. His eyes gleamed as he took out a throttle and began moving the trains back and forth on his layout.

Fayette kissed the top of his head and went into her cabin to read.

END.

Trenchcoat I Missing Adventures Silent Spearhead: By James Bow

The eighth Doctor finds himself in a tricky situation. He has accidentally landed at UNIT H.Q. in 1975, during a time when the third Doctor was briefly off Earth. Though worried at the prospect of meeting himself, he is compelled by the Brigadier to help in an investigation. There are signs that the Nestene Consciousness is making a third attempt to invade Earth, and this time the Autons are not the primary weapon.

I was ten pages into this story before I scrapped it due to problems in crafting the character of the Brigadier and problems in developing the plot. The method of the Auton invasion would have utilized gasses released from specially-constructed plastic (such as the linings of ventilation ducts) that was vapourized. The fumes released would have been hallucinogenic, something unabashedly stolen from the short-lived television series *Stingray*. One possible scene would have had a piece of this plastic vapourizing at UNIT H.Q. and getting into the ventilation system, driving all of the people (the Doctor and Fayette included) insane.

Silent Spearhead was replaced by *London Fog*, but, though invisible, this story still has a place in the **Trenchcoat** canon. Mention is made of the eighth Doctor's appearance at UNIT H.Q. in 1975 in *Story on a Train*, a plot device that links the eighth Doctor to the others listed in the C.I.A. file that Ryan and the terrorists read. Elements of *Silent Spearhead* were reused in *Syndicate*, but the two stories are, on the whole, completely different.

Had this story been completed, the third Doctor would have made a cameo appearance.

