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AMAZING STORIES

GHOST TRAIN

Story by

Steven Spielberg

Teleplay by

Frank Deese

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1 INT. - ERSTWHILE OLD AGE HOME - DAY 1

JOLEEN and FENTON GLOBE walk along through a lounge filled with old residents watching daytime T.V. The home's Administrator, MR. COLE, escorts them to the door.

MR. COLE

I've been running this home for twenty-five years, Mr. Globe, and I can count on one finger how many times a resident's has been checked out of Erstwhile. (X)

FENTON, an accomplished man of forty-three who's spent most of his adult life in the city, seems unusually satisfied with that remark.

FENTON

I've always thought Dad deserved the best. Now, with our new house and farm, I think he'll finally get what he deserves.

Fenton looks to Joleen, five years his junior with a demeanor perfect for motherhood, who offers her smile of approval.

MR. COLE

You don't know how refreshing it is to hear that. I only wish more young people today felt the same.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. - ERSTWHILE OLD AGE HOME 2

Mr. Cole stops Fenton and Joleen just after passing through the front door into the courtyard.

MR. COLE

There is one other thing I thought I should mention. Just in case.

JOLEEN

Is it something serious?

MR. COLE

Frankly, I haven't decided yet. It's just that in the last few weeks

CONTINUED

(X)

2

CONTINUED

2

MR. COLE (Cont'd)

since you told your father you'd be taking him home with you, he's been -- how do I say? -- behaving oddly.

Joleen appears genuinely concerned. Fenton doesn't.

FENTON

Probably just Dad behaving like Dad.

MR. COLE

The other day, we found him wrapping Christmas presents of all things.

FENTON

More power to him. He's thinking ahead for once.

MR. COLE

Yes...four months ahead. I've also heard some of our other residents talking about how old Mr. Globe is planning to go on a long trip. One he's been waiting for all his life.

Fenton finds that amusing.

FENTON

"Old Pa" telling stories again. He can make practically anybody believe almost anything.

MR. COLE

Maybe so. But it's not uncommon for folks his age to start having delusional fantasies. If that's the case, you should not let it go unchecked.

JOLEEN

Maybe he's right, dear. It couldn't hurt to have it checked.

FENTON

My father's mind is as sound as a steel bridge. Always has been.

Pa hears this comment, smiles, acknowledging it. The three look over at a sturdy old man looking over a brand new CHRYSLER STATION WAGON in the parking lot.

CONTINUED

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2

CONTINUED - 2

2

Mr. Cole takes a BUSINESS CARD from his pocket.

MR. COLE

I'm sure you're right, Mr. Globe,
but just in case you have any
problems, here's the number of a
doctor out your way who's very familiar
with septuageneric "complications."

(X)

Fenton stuffs the card in his front pocket.

FENTON

Thank you. I'll save it for someone
who needs it.

CUT TO:

3

OLD PA

3

looking at himself in the window of the new station wagon.
He smooths back his gray hair like a teenager before a
date. Joleen and Fenton approach from behind.

FENTON

So how do you like it. Dad?

JOLEEN

I wanted a Volvo but Fenton insisted
that if were going to be farmers,
we should drive something American.

(X)

Old Pa looks at the two, then back at the car, perplexed.
He breaks out into a grandfatherly laugh.

OLD PA

Oh! The car! The car's fine. I
was just catchin' a look at myself
in the window. Wanna look my best
when it's time to go.

This time, Joleen and Fenton look perplexed.

CUT TO:

4

INT. - THE STATION WAGON

4

Fenton drives through the Iowa countryside while Joleen
looks back to talk to Old Pa standing in the middle of the
backseat. Old Pa's head and torso stick out of the car's
sunroof so that the others have to shout to talk to him.

(X)

CONTINUED

FENTON

And just last Saturday I put up one of those satellite dishes out back of the house.

(X)

JOLEEN

You'll be able to watch every channel you can imagine.

OLD PA

Can't imagine too many.

FENTON

And it gets movies too. All the pay stations.

OLD PA

Movies. From a satellite even. I'll be jiggered.

Old Pa notices the toggle switch on the backseat door. With the fascination and curiosity of a small child, he runs the electric window up and down in its frame. Joleen notices.

FENTON

You're gonna love the new house, Dad. I designed it myself with three bedrooms on the second floor and another bedroom on the ground floor so you won't be tiring yourself going up and down the stairs.

(X)

OLD PA

I don't imagine I'll be doin' much of that.

JOLEEN

And Fenton designed a special floor and wall heater in your room so you won't get cold at night.

OLD PA

That's mighty thoughtful of him. But I won't be around long enough to enjoy it.

(X)

FENTON

Don't go talking like that, Dad -- People can convince themselves of anything. Whether to live or to die -- often the choice is up to you.

(X)

CONTINUED

4

CONTINUED - 2

4

Old Pa starts to chuckle.

(X)

OLD PA

(continued)

Sorta funny you taking me to die in the cornfields where I shoulda died three quarters of a century ago.

JOLEEN

Fenton?

FENTON

Now, Dad. It's one thing to tell stories to your friends at the old folks home but if you go telling that one to Brian, he'll never get to sleep.

Joleen smiles back at Old Pa as if to apologize for her husband's stern language.

JOLEEN

He's really looking forward to seeing you, Old Pa. That's all he talks about, night and day.

OLD PA

Maybe sometime soon you can drive us all out to the spot where it happened.

(X)

FENTON

Maybe...but we won't have to drive. It turns out that the accident site is on my property.

(X)

Old Pa's eyes shoot open as if he'd heard the most foreboding news of his life.

OLD PA

Your property? Exactly where on your property?

CUT TO:

5

EXT. - THE GLOBE FARMHOUSE

5

In the middle of the Iowa cornfields, a brand new white farmhouse, the dream of any plains state family, stands proudly on a bed of green lawn, under the shade of a fifty foot tall oak tree.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

The VOICE of a small boy can be heard in the foreground.

VOICE

All right, you varmits, come on
out before we burn you out.

(X)

We move down to reveal BRIAN a small nine year-old with wide round eyes, playing with several dozen carefully placed COWBOY and INDIAN figures on the worn away dirt section underneath a SWING SET.

BRIAN

(continued)

Take off, white man. We don't move
for nothin'.

(another voice)

Then you're askin' for it. Let 'em
have it.

Brian pushes the figures together in a violent scramble, complete with sound effects.

He stops all of a sudden as if he heard something. We hear nothing. Brian stands up to look. Down the road a STATION WAGON approaches.

It turns into the driveway as Brian starts the long run across the expansive lawn.

BRIAN

Old Pa! Old Pa!

Just as Old Pa emerges from the backseat, Brian runs up to him and, with Old Pa's assistance, swings himself onto his piggy back as if it were a well-rehearsed routine.

JOLEEN

Brian! Be careful.

While he affectionately musses Brian's hair six or seven inches above his own head, Old Pa stares at the new farmhouse with a fore-boding expression. Fenton waits.

FENTON

So what's the verdict, Dad?

Old Pa shakes his head.

OLD PA

I don't like it. No, sir. Not one bit

Joleen looks to a wounded Fenton, then back to Old Pa.

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED - 2

5

JOLEEN

Maybe you'll like it better from
inside. We just finished decorating
the downstairs.

OLD PA

Oh, the house is fine, Joleen. It's
a fine house. Nicest homestead I
ever seen.

(X)

FENTON

(cautiously)

Then what's wrong, Dad?

Old Pa takes Brian down from his shoulders.

OLD PA

I don't like where you put it.

Fenton smiles to Joleen as if his father had been joking.
Joleen doesn't appear to think so.

CUT TO:

6 INT. - OLD PA'S ROOM

6

Old Pa opens one of his suitcases on the bed while in
another room little Brian can be heard arguing with Joleen

JOLEEN

(O.S.)

Don't make me say it again, Brian.
Your grandpa is ten times older
than you. And people that old need
ten times as much rest.

(X)

BRIAN

(O.S.)

But I only want him to show me where
the Indian fights were. He doesn't
have to run or nothing, he can just
walk slow and point.

(X)

JOLEEN

(O.S.)

Maybe tomorrow. Today you'll have
to make do by yourself.

Old Pa removes three carefully wrapped CHRISTMAS PRESENTS
from the two suitcases and carries them over to the
dresser. He closes the suitcase and puts it by the door
with the other.

CUT TO:

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7

INT - THE KITCHEN

7

While Joleen walks back and forth, preparing for dinner, Brian follows her every move, pleading for his way.

BRIAN

But I never get to play with anyone ever. None of the kids at school come out 'cause it's too far on their bikes.

JOLEEN

You have plenty of toys to play with.

BRIAN

I hate my toys. I hate this house. I wish we never left Chicago.

JOLEEN

Brian!

Joleen stops her work to grab Brian by the shoulders.

JOLEEN

(continued)

Don't you ever let your father hear you say that. You understand?

Over his mother's shoulder, Brian notices Old Pa walking quietly past the kitchen door from his room. With his finger up over his mouth, he motions Brian to shush. Brian beams.

BRIAN

Okay. I take it back.

Brian runs past his mother and on out through the kitchen door (X)

JOLEEN

Don't ever say that again...
(when he's gone)
At least not before I do.

CUT TO:

8

OMITTED

8
(X)

THE GRASSY FIELD

where Brian walks around Old Pa like a journalist around the President. Old Pa appears to be looking for something.

BRIAN

Is this where the Indians used to fight, Old Pa?

OLD PA

It's one of the places.

BRIAN

Do you know which Indians it was?

OLD PA

It was right around here that the Sac Chief, Keokuk, the "watchful fox," fought off the Sioux, who were after the Sac land. Old Keokuk was crafty, alright, but he grew too big for his boots and one day he was poisoned by one of his own tribesmen who thought he was stealing from the tribe.

BRIAN

Did you ever know someone that was scalped by an Indian?

OLD PA

Little Brian -- the Indians were the first people on this land. It was theirs -- all of it. You ask me, they had a right to do what they had to do to protect their families, their land -- their way of life.

(X)

Brian spots something in the grass. He picks up a sharp rock with a somewhat oval shape.

BRIAN

Look, Old Pa! An Indian arrowhead. I found an Indian arrowhead.

Old Pa glances at it as he squats down for something else.

OLD PA

Uh uh. 'Fraid it's just a rock that looks like one.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

Brian tosses it aside as Old Pa intently pushes aside some thick weeds. Brian kneels down to watch his grandfather pull up from the black Iowa soil a RUSTY OLD RAILROAD SPIKE about six inches long.

BRIAN

Wow. Is that an Indian arrowhead?

Old Pa laughs.

OLD PA

No, Brian. It's a railroad spike.

BRIAN

A railroad spike? You mean a real train used to come through here?

Old Pa nods his head.

OLD PA

The Highball Express. Came through right here where we're sitting.

BRIAN

Right here? Which way did it go?

Old Pa stands up from his squat.

OLD PA

That's what we're gonna find out.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Where Old Pa walks in the direction of a renovated BAILING DEPOT and an newly painted WATER TOWER. Brian spots something in the grass.

BRIAN

Old Pa! Is that something?

Brian shows Old Pa to the twisted and rusting pieces of an ancient SEMAPHORE which appears to have been torn apart by some metal eating monster.

Old Pa raises his eyebrows. He seems overcome by a rush of memory.

CONTINUED

OLD PA

Yes, little Brian. That's something.

Old Pa turns around and walks over to where some old RAILROAD TIES, still perfectly intact, indicate where the track once lay. Brian still examines the mangled semaphore pieces.

BRIAN

God! What happened here?

OLD PA

This is where the Highball Express ran off its tracks.

BRIAN

Really? When did that happen?

OLD PA

Back when I was your age, Brian.
Ran clear off its tracks one night.
Killed everything -- board.

That was more than Brian asked for. He kneels down on the railroad ties next to Old Pa.

BRIAN

Killed everything on board? Did you see it?

Old Pa nods his head "yes" as he bends over his knees on the railroad ties and puts his ear to the ground where the rail once was.

BRIAN

(continued)

That musta been a great wreck.
How'd it happen?

(X)

OLD PA

Sssh!

All is quiet as Old Pa listens for something on the antiquated railroad track. Brian waits with patient expectation. Old Pa seems to hear something. A smile grows across his face which is immediately tempered by some sort of realization.

CONTINUED

10 CONTINUED - 2

10

He stands up from the track.

OLD PA

'Fraid this might not be good.

BRIAN

What's gonna happen?

OLD PA

The way I remember it, the Old
Highball went straight east to west
without veerin' an inch.

(X)

Old Pa carefully positions himself on the track, bends down again and shoves the rusty spike into the ground. Looking carefully at the shadow it casts, he points his finger.

OLD PA

(continued)

Thataway.

Brian follows Old Pa's finger pointing straight at the farmhouse several hundred yards away. He becomes excited.

BRIAN

. Bam! Right through our new house.

Old Pa's serious gaze brings Brian back to reality.

In measured three-foot strides, Old Pa follows the line suggested by the spike, the platform, and the semaphore. He mumbles to himself as he walks.

OLD PA

No. T'ain't good, this.

CUT TO:

11 A MODEL TRAIN

11

speeding around its figure-eight track.

It does several turns before we see, from the locomotive's point of view, a truck stopping on the tracks. (X)

The train hits the truck and, in slow motion, buckles up on itself before it derails with an unusually authentic sounding CRASH. (X)

12

INT. - BRIAN'S ROOM

12

Sitting on the floor of his remarkably tidy room, Brian looks up from the crash to Old Pa sitting across from him cross-legged.

Brian stares at him for a second then proceeds to put his train back on the track.

BRIAN

Old Pa. What made the Highball
Express go off the track back then?

Old Pa rolls it over in his mind as if he were going to recount something painful.

OLD PA

Some little boy, about your age, was waiting for the Old 407 to pick him up and take him to visit his Grandpa in Sioux City. Well the train was running late so the boy laid down on the track with his ear to the rail so he could hear if the train was coming. I guess he musta just got tired of listening 'cause he fell asleep right there where he lay. When that train came around, the whistle blew, the semaphore clanged away, the track rumbled, but none of it woke up that sleepy boy.

(X)

(he pauses
to reflect)

The brakeman must not have had the heart to run him over because he locked the wheels on Old 407 and all that weight and pressure made the track turn up on itself. The little boy woke up just in time to see that train roll over just fifty feet in front of him....

(X)

Old Pa takes a deep breath to finish his story. He carefully unfolds a handkerchief from his front pocket.

OLD PA

(continued)

...and just in time to hear the screams and cries of the passengers who died just an instant later.

CONTINUED

12

CONTINUED

12

Old Pa wipes his eyes with the handkerchief while Brian waits for more.

BRIAN

Were you that little boy, Old Pa?

OLD PA

I am that little boy, Brian. And tonight that old 407 is going to do what it shoulda done seventy-five years ago. It's going to take me where I should be.

BRIAN

How long are you gonna be gone?

OLD PA

Brian. When that train comes through here tonight, I'm never coming back.

Brian is speechless. All of a sudden this game they've been playing has frightening implications. Old Pa changes the mood with a clap of his hands.

OLD PA

Well, sir. The way I got it figured the Highball should just miss your parents' room and only take out half the kitchen below so even if they don't get out, which I warned them they should, the train won't hurt 'em when it comes through the house. But you and me, we're right in the way.

FENTON (o.c)

Dad!

13

ANGLE - FENTON

13

standing in doorway.

FENTON

If you're going to be living here, you're going to have to follow house rules and the first rule of the house is about not telling scary stories to Brian.

(X)

CONTINUED

(X)

13

CONTINUED

13

Old Pa breaks out into a hearty chuckle.

OLD PA

After tonight, son, you're not going to have any house to have rules by and any old father to break 'em.

FENTON

Stop! You have to stop this nonsense now. It isn't one bit funny.

OLD PA

(working himself up)

No, son. Not one bit. It ain't. That's why y'all gonna have to pack up and move out now. Better by daylight but no later than the late show. Just take what you can carry. Go on and uproot that fancy ice cream scooper if you gotta watch 400 channels of TV, but for God's sake get little Brian out of here first 'fore you do another thing!

Fenton is so rattled by his father's crazy outburst...he leaves the room.

14

BACK TO SCENE

14

A beat. Old Pa turns to Brian

OLD PA

(sotto)

Around midnight, you'll be seeing a yellow light like you've never seen a yellow light before 'cause this one'll be turning in your house from the eye of an iron dragon. Then you'll smell wood burnin' but you won't know where it's coming from.

Brian is captivated by Old Pa's description.

OLD PA

(continued)

Then, just before it comes crashing through, you'll hear a slow mournful whistle warning you to get the hell outta the way.

CONTINUED

14

CONTINUED

14

BRIAN

What're we gonna do?

OLD PA

I supposed the only thing we can do, seeing is your Pa won't listen and the train is only a few hours away, is to move some of your favorite things out of harm's way. We don't have time to move everything so if you wanted to save something in here, what would be first?

Brian surveys the room where he sits. He stands up and walks around the room. He picks up and autographed baseball, a "Cubs" baseball cap, a Revell model of a WWII bomber, and an old stuffed elephant with one eye missing.

As he looks back around the room for whatever else, he catches his grandfather's friendly gaze. He drops all of his precious toys and runs into Old Pa's arms.

BRIAN

You Old Pa...I'd save you first!!

(X)

OLD PA

(continued)

You didn't understand, Brian. I have to go. It's me it's coming for. It's what's supposed to be!

(X)

Comforting Brian with one hand, Old Pa reaches into one of his drawers and starts taking out clothes.

CUT TO:

15

INT - THE KITCHEN

15

While Joleen wipes the counters around her Mr. Coffee machine, Cuisinart, and G.E. Toast-R-Over, Fenton dries dishes from the rack.

He stops to listen to the rest of the house. It's silent.

FENTON

There. I think they've gone to bed.

Joleen gives an assenting smile as she goes on with her work.

CONTINUED

15

CONTINUED

15

FENTON

(continued)

You know, all his life he's never been able to live down that accident.

JOLEEN

Who could? It's a hideous awful thing to live with.

(X)

FENTON

But it's funny. He never talked about it much before. It was always something better left unsaid.

JOLEEN

That's the way it was with my Grandpa Noble. He never talked about the fleet he steered into German waters until the day he told everyone that same fleet had docked in Lake Michigan to give him another chance.

(X)

Fenton looks sharply at his wife.

FENTON

It's not the same thing.

Joleen doesn't look up. She continues to wipe off the counter that's already been wiped off.

JOLEEN

Then what is it?

FENTON

The move. Being back where he grew up. Seeing Brian again. If I know Dad, he'll be laughing at us and his own ridiculous story by morning.

(X)

JOLEEN

And what if he isn't?

Fenton gives his wife a marital kiss.

FENTON

I'll have him fitted.

JOLEEN

Fenton!

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED - 2

15

A THUNDEROUS RUMBLE can be heard from upstairs. Fenton and Joleen rush into:

16 THE LIVING ROOM

16

just in time to see Old Pa and Brian negotiating a LARGE TRUNK around the curve in the stairway.

FENTON

What in hell's name is going on here?

Old Pa loses his grip on the front end letting the trunk drag a laughing Brian down the carpeted stairs.

BRIAN

Outta control! Highball Express!

JOLEEN

Brian!

The trunk flips up when it hits the bottom step sending Brian over the top and onto the floor. Joleen rushes to help the laughing boy up with the kind of worried expression only mothers get.

BRIAN

Stop fussing, Mom. I'm okay.

(X)

Fenton looks over the whole situation, unable to act. Old Pa notices his helpless look.

OLD PA

Don't worry, son. The way I got it measured the Highball'll miss your room completely and only take out half the kitchen. But Brian and I, well hell, we're right in the way. So you two run along to bed. Me and the boy'll fend for ourselves.

BRIAN

Yeah! We'll fend for ourselves.

FENTON

All right, Dad. I'll give you the benefit of the doubt. Show me where the tracks are.

(X)

CONTINUED

Old Pa starts to laugh. Brian joins in on the chuckle.

OLD PA

Don't be silly, son. They tore out those tracks years ago.

FENTON

Then do you mind telling me how a train could pass through our new house if it isn't on tracks?

OLD PA

The Highball Express don't need no tracks to run just as a ghost don't need wings and a propellor to fly.

Holding Brian as if he were a four year-old, Joleen looks to Fenton as if to ask, "What're you going to go?"

Fenton reaches into his front pocket and takes out the BUSINESS CARD Mr. Cole gave him.

FADE TO BLACK

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

17 EXT. - THE FARMHOUSE - NIGHT 17

A white sedan pulls into the driveway behind the Globe's station wagon. DR. STEELE, about Fenton's age, steps out of his car to see Old Pa on a LADDER over the front door spray painting a big RED LINE down the front of the house as he descends each rung. (X)

Dr. Steele shakes his head as if he'd seen it a million times before. SHOUTING can be heard from inside the house.

CUT TO:

18 INT. - THE FARMHOUSE 18

Brian comes down the stairs with two more cans of model SPRAY PAINT when Joleen accosts him at the front door.

JOLEEN

Brian! Stop this!

BRIAN

But, Mom. Old Pa needs 'em for when the train comes.

Brian opens the door to reveal Dr. Steele holding a black bag and wearing a reassuring smile.

JOLEEN

He's here, Fenton.

Fenton turns from the couch where he's been sitting with resignation. Joleen goes out to talk to Old Pa.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. - THE FARMHOUSE 19

Joleen is just about to call up the ladder to Old Pa when Dr. Steele motions her not to.

DR STEELE

Mr. Globe. I've come to talk to you about a train. A train called The Highball Express. (X)

Old Pa stops what he's doing to study the doctor.

OLD PA

Well it's about time.

CUT TO:

(X)

20

INT. - THE LIVING ROOM

20

Old Pa is going around the room collecting vases and ashtrays and other bric-a-brac. Joleen follows behind him replacing the objects. Brian has his model train in his hand.

OLD PA

I know we don't have time to move the house but if we could just take out some of the valuables, it might save some time when they make their insurance claim tomorrow.

Dr. Steele prepares something with both his hands inside his black bag.

DR. STEELE

Why are you so sure it's coming tonight?

Old Pa holds the Lionel track to his ear to demonstrate --

OLD PA

'Cause I did what I used to do all the time as a boy. I put my ear to the track and heard it. Now don't you think we ought to get to evacuating this place?

DR STEELE

And you think it's going to stop for you?

OLD PA

I know it is. I've got a ticket.

While Old Pa reaches into this pocket to extract an ancient and yellowed RAILWAY TICKET, Dr. Steele wipes alcohol on his inner elbow with a cotton ball.

OLD PA

(continued)

I only hope it'll still be good after all these years.

DR STEELE

I'm sure it will be, Mr. Globe.
I'm sure it will be.

Old Pa hands the ticket to Brian who studies it with utter fascination.

CONTINUED

BRIAN

Wow, it says 'Highball Express'
right on it.

Brian looks up at Old Pa's smiling face then refocuses his attention to Dr. Steele inserting a SYRINGE with a two-inch NEEDLE into Old Pa's inner elbow.

OLD PA

Ouch! What was that? One of those
danged yellow jackets?

Dr. Steele returns the syringe to his black bag.

DR. STEELE

No, Mr. Globe. Just something to
help you sleep before your trip.

Old Pa turns white.

OLD PA

No. No. I can't fall asleep or
I'll miss my train.

DR. STEELE

Don't worry. You'll be awake and
alert by the time the roosters crow!

(X)

OLD PA

No, it's coming before the morning.
I gotta be awake for it when it comes!

DR. STEELE

You can catch the next train.

Old Pa stands up in a panic.

OLD PA

Take it out of me. I can't fall
asleep now. Take it out of me.

Old Pa tries desperately to suck the poison out of his inner elbow as if it were a snake bite.

FENTON

Dad! Sit down! You're making a
fool of yourself.

CONTINUED

20

CONTINUED - 2

20

BRIAN

But you don't get it. He was asleep
the first time. That's why he
missed the train and the train
missed him. That's why it's coming
back.

(X)

Dr. Steele stands up to subdue Old Pa who now begins to
stagger from the drug.

OLD PA

No. This isn't right. This can't
happen. I gotta stay awake. I
gotta. Coffee. Lots of coffee.

BRIAN

Mom! Dad! You gotta do something.

DR. STEELE

Relax, Mr. Globe. We won't let you
miss your train.

When Dr. Steele tries to lay his hand on him, Old Pa pushes
him away, then staggers back into his arms.

DR. STEELE

(to Fenton)

Let's get him to bed.

Dr. Steele and Fenton carry Old Pa off.

21

BRIAN

21

is close to tears, seeing his grandfather and best friend
in such a delirious state.

BRIAN

No! No! He can't sleep there. The
train goes through there. It'll run
him over.

Joleen holds her son's shoulders so that she is looking
straight into his eyes.

JOLEEN

Look at me, Brian. Do you really
think your father and I would put Old
Pa somewhere he could get hurt?

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED

21

BRIAN

You don't understand.

JOLEEN

Would we do that?

BRIAN

No, but...

JOLEEN

No, we wouldn't.

CUT TO:

22 INT. - OLD PA'S ROOM

22

Fenton and Dr. Steele lay the unconscious Old Pa across the bed.

FENTON

I'm sorry, Dr. Steele. He's never been like this before.

DR. STEELE

Nothing to be ashamed of. It's just part of his time of life. (X)

Fenton still seems not to accept that as true.

FENTON

Thank you.

DR. STEELE

You think he might be more comfortable in his bed clothes?

FENTON

He'll be fine, thank you. You can go on home.

DR. STEELE

No, really. It'll be better for his circulation if he's in something lighter.

Fenton lays a blanket over his sleeping father.

FENTON

Please. Just go.

CONTINUED

(X)

22 CONTINUED

22

Dr. Steele looks straight at Fenton with a certain amount of incredulity.

DR. STEELE

You don't actually believe any of this, do you?

Fenton pauses for a moment, then shakes his head.

FENTON

No. I don't.

CUT TO:

23 OMITTED

23

24 INT. - THE LIVING ROOM

24

Brian sits under Joleen arm on the bottom steps of the stairway. Fenton passes on his way upstairs, patting Brian on the head.

JOLEEN

(to Fenton)

I'll be up in a little while

Fenton nods then continues on up the stairs. Brian fingers the old railway Ticket in his hand.

BRIAN

Will he ever get better?

JOLEEN

He might. But it's not like being sick with the flu or having a cold. Sometimes you just don't get better and you have to have other people take care of you.

BRIAN

We'll take care of Old Pa.

JOLEEN

Yes. We'll do that.

CUT TO:

25 INT. - BRIAN'S ROOM

25

Brian lies awake in bed studying every detail of the Highball Express railway ticket by the moonlight coming through his window.

CONTINUED

25

CONTINUED

25

He climbs out of bed, walks over to a bulletin board next to his desk, then pins the precious ticket next to an autographed picture of Ron Cey.

Before getting back into bed, he opens his window facing the driveway and looks out into the moonlit distance. The night is still and crystal clear.

But no sign of the Highball Express.

Not giving up, Brian takes his ASTRONOMY TELESCOPE and stands it on its tripod in front of the open window.

He looks through it. Nothing.

Just as he is about to get into bed, he remembers one more thing.

He gets down on his knees and puts his ear to the floor on his miniature train tracks. Nothing. He squints as if (X) to listen harder.

CUT TO:

26

EXT. - THE GRASSY FIELD

26

The bailing depot and water tower lie still in the night. There is no sign of the train.

The mangled semaphore looks even more grotesque in the blue moonlight.

DOGS start to bark in the distance.

CUT TO:

27

INT. - OLD PA'S ROOM

27

The sound of dogs is even fainter inside the house. Old Pa sleeps with his mouth open, looking like a man put to sleep against his will.

CUT TO:

28

INT. - THE PARENTS' ROOMS

28

Both Joleen and Fenton sleep soundly after their night's ordeal.

CUT TO:

29 INT. - BRIAN'S ROOM

29

still lying on the floor with his ear to the ground, Brian sleeps soundly holding the ENGINE CAR from his train set as if it were a teddy bear.

The room is dead quiet and still until the wind starts blowing through the window left open by Brian. The curtains ruffle and a few loose papers scatter around the room.

30 ANGLE - THE TELESCOPE POINTING OUT THE WINDOW

30

and its eyepiece which gradually illuminates the dust particles in the air behind it with a faint but flickering YELLOW LIGHT.

As if it were from some feverish dream, a faint harmonic AIRHORN sounds in the far far distance.

The light projected from the eyepiece becomes more intense as the faint yellow light starts to play a pattern across the curtains fluttering in the wind.

The airhorn sounds again, this time a decibel louder.

31 ANGLE - THE RAILWAY TICKET

31

pinned to the bulletin board and flapping in the wind. The yellow light dances across it in the same bizarre pattern as on the curtain.

32 ANGLE - BRIAN'S FACE

32

and the yellow light playing across his eyes. He squeezes them shut then rubs his closed fists over them -- like children do -- as he turns onto his back.

The airhorn sounds again, this time as if to intentionally wake the boy up.

Dazed and disoriented, Brian opens one eye, and then the other. He sees a yellow light show across the ceiling of his bedroom but doesn't quite know what to make of it.

Brian suddenly bolts upright on the floor. He hops onto his feet knocking the telescope to the floor as he rushes to the open window.

CONTINUED

32 CONTINUED

32

The wind flattens his hair and ruffles his pajamas. The yellow light plays its strongest across his white face. And -- he sees it. His eyes bug out like squished frogs. He tries his best to yell but...

BRIAN

Mo..... Da.....

CUT TO:

33 THE HALLWAY

33

which is reasonably quiet until Brian bursts out through his closed door, screaming.

BRIAN

Mom!! Dad!! It's coming! It's coming fast!

Brian bangs on his parents' door.

BRIAN

(continued)

The train! The Highball Express! I saw it! I saw it coming full steam ahead!

(X)

Fenton yells through the door.

FENTON

Brian. Sssshh! You'll wake your grandfather.

Brian freezes. He suddenly remembers what this is all about.

BRIAN

Old Pa.

CUT TO:

34 INT. - THE PARENTS' ROOM

34

Fenton sits up in bed. Joleen rolls over.

FENTON

He probably already has.

CONTINUED

34 CONTINUED

34

JOLEEN

I knew that story would give him nightmares.

Fenton grudgingly gets out of bed when the house starts to shake on its foundations. The two adults look at each other.

CUT TO:

35 BRIAN

35

running down the stairs when they start to shake. He suddenly remembers something and runs back up the stairs.

CUT TO:

36 THE RAILWAY TICKET

36

flapping in the wind on Brian's bulletin board. Brian takes out the pin and pulls the valuable ticket from its place of distinction.

CUT TO:

37 INT. - THE LIVING ROOM

37

Brian runs down the stairs and is immediately captivated by a bright yellow revolving light approaching rapidly in the distance.

BRIAN

MOM!! DAD!! IT'S COMING!!!

He turns and runs into Old Pa's room. The whistle blows again.

CUT TO:

38 INT. - OLD PA'S ROOM

38

Brian practically dives onto Old Pa's sleeping body.

BRIAN

Old Pa! You gotta get up. It's your train. It's coming through this room.

OLD PA

W-w-w-hat? The 407?

Brian tries lifting him up off the bed but can't.

CUT TO:

39

INT. - THE LIVING ROOM

39

Fenton and Joleen rush down into the living room, shaking at its foundations and flooded with yellow light.

Outside, a WHISTLE and HORN shriek together indicating a train not far from impact.

Brian runs in to throw Old Pa's two suitcases into the corner.

BRIAN

Old Pa! He's right in the way!

Not waiting for his parents' help, Brian disappears again.

FENTON

What in God's name is this!

JOLEEN

You don't think...

Fenton moves to the front door.

CUT TO:

40

BRIAN

40

practically dragging Old Pa out the door of his room.

41

JOLEEN

41

screams at the same time the SCREECHING of metal wheels on metal track cuts loose from outside.

JOLEEN

Fenton!! Don't!!

Fenton opens the front door to see the HIGHBALL EXPRESS knocking aside the Chrysler station wagon as it speeds up their front walkway.

Joleen pushes Fenton out of the way and Brian pulls Old Pa down behind the couch just as --

42

A TREMENDOUS CRASH AND EXPLOSION OF WOOD, GLASS, AND CEMENT

42

followed by:

- 43 AN EIGHTEEN TON LOCOMOTIVE 43
 PLOWING EFFORTLESSLY THROUGH THE HOUSE. STEAM GUSHING FROM
 ITS WHEELS.
 It slowly trundles to a stop, half in and half outside the
 house.
- 44 STEAM ENVELOPES 44
 the Family now standing back up from the ordeal.
- 45 JOLEEN AND FENTON 45
 stare at the apparition, hardly believing what they are
 seeing.
- FENTON
 Why'd it stop?
- OLD PA
 Ha! Leave it to my son not to
 listen.
- Old Pa turns to the living room mirror and straightens his hair.
- 46 GREEN EERIE LIGHT 46
 glows from the windows of the passenger compartment, now
 facing everyone in the half-destroyed living room. The
 PASSENGERS inside, all dressed in clothing contemporary to
 1910, stare out the window in utter fascination.
- 47 SOME POINT OUT 47
 particular objects in the late twentieth century home that
 they find particularly interesting: The Television the
 Digital L.E.D. Clock and the Family standing in their bed
 clothes..
- 48 THE CONDUCTOR 48
 fumbles with the COLLAPSIBLE BOARDING STAIRS.
- CONDUCTOR
 Dang this thing! Never works.
 Never works.

CONTINUED

48 CONTINUED

48

Once off the train, he calls out as if on a crowded platform.

CONDUCTOR

(continued)

Tickets! Tickets!

49 OLD PA

49

pats his clothes in a brief panic.

OLD PA

My ticket! I can't go without my ticket.

He feels inside each pocket. Brian taps him on the back.

BRIAN

Here's your ticket, Old Pa.

Old Pa falls onto one knee so that he is eye level with Brian holding the old railway ticket. Brian starts to give it to him but can't.

BRIAN

(continued)

Can I come along too, Old Pa?

OLD PA

You know that's not right, Brian. You belong here with your Mom and Dad. And I belong on that there train. I am goin' somewhere!

(X)

Brian still holds back the ticket.

BRIAN

But who's gonna tell me stories about where the Indians fought, and all that stuff?

Old Pa thinks for a moment.

OLD PA

You remember all the stories I told you already? About the trading posts. And the war parties and the Pony Express.

(X)

CONTINUED

49

CONTINUED

49

Brian nods, his eyes now welled up with tears.

OLD PA

(continued)

Well as long as you remember those stories, I'll always be there to tell 'em.

Brian rolls this over in his nine year-old mind. He offers half a smile of understanding as the Conductor calls out once more.

CONDUCTOR

Tickets! Tickets!

Brian little hand puts the ancient and worn Railway Ticket in Old Pa's large hand. Old Pa pats Brian on the head before turning to the conductor with the ticket.

OLD PA

Is my ticket still good? It's kinda old.

CONDUCTOR

It always was good, Mr. Globe.

The conductor punches the time worn ticket.

CONDUCTOR

(continued)

And we've been waiting a long time for it.

Old Pa turns to say good-bye to the befuddled parents.

OLD PA

Thanks for taking me in, Joleen. I'm sorry I couldn't stay a while longer.

when he gives her a hug, Joleen notices the ENGINEER and the BRAKEMAN hopping off the train and wandering into the half kitchen.

CUT TO:

50

INT. - THE KITCHEN

50

With a 1910 THERMOS in hand, the Engineer studies the MR. COFFEE MACHINE while the Brakeman goes through the cupboard and refrigerator.

CONTINUED

50

CONTINUED

50

ENGINEER

(reading)

Mis-ter-Cof-fee. Hmmm.

The Engineer takes the half full carafe, still hot from Old Pa's tirade, and pours it into his Thermos. He replaces the carafe, still staring at the machine.

ENGINEER

(continued; polite)

Why thank you, Mister Coffee.

(tipping his cap)

Much obliged.

The Brakeman walks over holding a BOX OF TWINKIES and SIX-PACK OF COCA COLA.

BRAKEMAN

Lookee here. Each one's all wrapped up inside.

(shaking the six-pack to his ear)

Don't know what this is.

ENGINEER

Figure it out on board. We're late, as usual.

The two turn and walk past Joleen who has come to investigate.

The Engineer tips his cap to her while the Brakeman continues to shake the six-pack.

ENGINEER

(continued)

Sorry about the house, ma'am. But ya never shoulda put it here. Not when the train comes through.

Joleen doesn't know what to say except --

JOLEEN

Sorry.

51

THE TWO MEN

51

step back to the locomotive.

CONTINUED

51 CONTINUED

51

ENGINEER

ALL ABOARD!!

CUT TO:

52 OLD PA

52

giving his son Fenton a hug and a pat on the back.

OLD PA

And you thought I was losing my marbles. You sure don't know your Old Pa.

Old Pa backs to the train handing the Conductor his bags.

OLD PA

(continued;
pointing to
his head)

Got a mind as sound as a steel bridge. Always have.

Brian smiles at his grandfather's manner. Old Pa winks to him as he gets on the train. He straightens his hair again.

OLD PA

(continued;
to Brian)

Your Christmas present is in your parents' closet. Keep your hands off it.

53 STEAM SPEWS FROM THE ENGINE

53

as the gigantic pistons start to churn. As the train begins to move, the Family watches Old Pa being received by the Passengers with great adulation.

After offering a final wave to his family, Old Pa wastes no time motioning out the story of the train crashing through the farmhouse. As the train slowly pulls through the house, the last anyone sees of Old Pa is him with the passengers inside, laughing and on the edge of their seats.

Several more cars pass through the house until the caboose disappears into a cloud of steam. When the wind blows the steam away, there is nothing but cornfields and stars...

CONTINUED

53

CONTINUED

53

...and a family from Chicago with a big hole through the center of their new farmhouse.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END