

“30,000 FATE”

By

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FADE IN:

INT. AIRPLANE     LATE AFTERNOON

JAMES, early 30's, puts his suitcase in the overhead bin then takes a seat next to the aisle. DANELLE reaches the same row a few seconds later.

DANELLE

Uhh I think you're in my seat.

JAMES

Oh....sorry....I must have the window.

Danelle is a younger woman, late 20's, average looking girl. Carried on more bags than she should've. James slides down to the window seat, takes a quick look outside, then watches Danelle settle in.

JAMES

I'm James.

James reaches out his hand.

Preoccupied and with a slight hesitation Danelle offers her hand in return.

DANELLE

Danelle.

Danelle pretends to dig through her purse. Obviously trying to not get caught up in conversation with James.

JAMES

So is Denver your final stop?

DANELLE

No. I'm changing planes in Denver then heading to Minneapolis.

JAMES

Going for vacation or is Minneapolis home?

DANELLE  
I'm going to visit my sister

JAMES  
Oh ok!

(beat)

I like Minneapolis. Haven't been there in...  
7 or 8 years I guess.

Danelle nods then thumbs through a magazine.

JAMES  
I used to play in a band and we'd get gigs up there a lot.  
And always in the winter time. I think our booking agent  
hated us. But, that was a lifetime ago.

Danelle gives the first sign of a truly friendly smile but it quickly fades.  
Flight attendant appears but mostly off screen.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (O.S.)  
Would you like something to drink?

JAMES  
I'll just have a diet coke.

DANELLE  
I'd like a vodka tonic please.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
No problem. That will be four dollars please.

Danelle opens her large purse and pulls out her wallet. She lays the open wallet on the  
open middle seat between her and James then pays the Attendant.  
James looks down at the wallet and notices a picture of a young boy.

JAMES  
Is that your son?

DANELLE

No, that's my sister's little boy.

JAMES

He's a cutie!

DANELLE

Yeah, he's great.

Danelle puts away her wallet.

DANELLE

Riley.

Danelle grins then looks at James.

DANELLE

Riley is my nephew's name.

JAMES

Ah....great name.

(beat)

JAMES

I don't have any kids.  
Guess I need to get married first, huh.

DANELLE

Well you don't HAVE to.....my sister is not  
married and she's doing great!

JAMES

Well yeah, I guess you're right. But I'm sure it's much  
easier if you're married and have a little help.

DANELLE

Oh I'm sure it is.

Flight attendant brings their drinks. James and Danelle put their tray tables down to get situated.

DANELLE

What band?

James looks over at Danelle with a puzzled look.  
Danelle offers her biggest smile yet.

DANELLE

You said you played in Minneapolis with a band.  
I used to live up there with my sister. What band was it?  
Maybe I heard you play.

JAMES

Oh! Ok. Well don't laugh. We were called the  
Egyptian Kingsmen. Kinda funny, I know.

Danelle interrupts.

DANELLE

Shut up! No way!!

JAMES

You've heard of us?

DANELLE

Me and my sister would go watch you guys at a little  
bar called Murphy's Lab.

JAMES

Oh yeah, I remember that place. They had a tiny stage  
and a really low ceiling.

DANELLE

Yes!! Oh my God. We watched you guys several times  
there. You were good!

JAMES

Man, that's cool.

DANELLE

That's crazy!

DANELLE

What's your name again?

JAMES

Well it's James, but back then they called me Stick. The guys started calling me that when we first started the band. We used to play these pool halls and I would always run the tables after the gigs.

Danelle is listening with a smile then slowly looks down. Her smile fades as her face turns to concentration.

DANELLE

Oh my God.

(beat)

Do you remember one fourth of July, after Murphy's a few of us went to a lake cabin to hang out? A couple of you guys ended up staying the night.

JAMES

Yeah, I think I remember that.

DANELLE

My sister is Vanessa Wyatt.

(beat)

That night, you two....hooked up.

JAMES

Wow. You have a good memory.

Danelle interrupts.

DANELLE

You're the father.

(beat)

Riley is your son.

JAMES

What??? But....I....how do you know?

DANELLE

I remember it! She found out, she was 3 months pregnant. You were the only person she'd been with. Not to mention the name Stick. I could never forget that.

JAMES

Oh my God...

DANELLE

She called me crying, scared to death. It took her a long time to decide she didn't want to contact you.

JAMES

But why? Didn't she think I had a right to know.

DANELLE

Well...yes....but, we all talked about it, we even had a family meeting about it. We just thought that with your lifestyle it was best to not get you involved.

JAMES

I can't believe this.

DANELLE

I probably shouldn't have even told you this.

JAMES

No. I'm glad you did.

They sit in silence. James stares out the window.

JAMES

May I see the picture again?

DANELLE

Of course!

Danelle gets her purse and takes the picture out of her wallet and hands it over to James.

JAMES

He's beautiful.

Danelle smiles.

JAMES

Would you mind...can I keep this?

DANELLE

Sure.

James stares at the picture of Riley, looks out the window, then looks back at the picture.

INT. AIRPORT      EVENING

Danelle and James are standing at the gate. People are passing by them exiting the plane they just arrived on.

DANELLE

Here's the number. I'll talk to Vanessa and, uh, let her know.

JAMES

Thank you. For everything. I mean it.

DANELLE

It was my pleasure. Thank YOU.

JAMES

Well you'd better get to your next flight. You don't want to miss it.

DANELLE

I know, I should go.

Danelle leans in and hugs James.

JAMES

Tell her what I said.

DANELLE

I definitely will. And I'll talk to you soon.

JAMES

You take care. Be safe.

DANELLE

Bye James.

James waves one last goodbye to Danelle. He watches her back away, she waves, then turns to head to her next gate.

James lifts up the picture that's been in his hand the whole time. He takes another look then walks over to the agent at the counter.

AGENT

Hi. May I help you?

JAMES

Hi, I'd like to buy a ticket to Minneapolis.

AGENT

Well you've come to the right place.

Agent starts typing on the computer keyboard.

James smiles.

FADE OUT:

THE END