

Crazy Train

Inspired (I guess) by the hit song by Ozzy Osbourne

by

A Model Railroad Enthusiast

FADE IN:

INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - NIGHT

JACKSON REED (20s) sits at his desk and solves a sprawling math problem with steely, relentless precision.

This is sheer mathematical bliss: differential equation domination.

The room is as orderly as Jackson's homework. No dust. No clutter. Not a pizza box or beer can in sight.

Jackson's perfectly made-up bed would pass muster with any hard-ass drill sergeant.

Atop his desk is the only decorative item in the entire room: a locomotive from an antique model train set. It sits inside a protective plastic case.

A small tag on the corner gives more specifics about this collectable. It's a Lionel prewar standard gauge gray 400 E steam locomotive with an appraised value of \$1,200 dollars.

Jackson glances at it as he finishes his work.

Tap! Tap! Tap! Jackson's Zen-like state is broken by someone knocking at his ground-level window.

Jackson squints and scrutinizes for several moments before recognition sets in. He cracks open the window.

JACKSON

Gunnar?

Obscured by the darkness is GUNNAR GREMMINGER, 20s.

GUNNAR

Can ya let me in?

JACKSON

Through the window?

GUNNAR

Gonna make me walk around to the door?

Jackson thinks it over.

GUNNAR

Pop off that screen, bro. Lemme in.

Jackson jiggles the screen, and Gunnar climbs through.

Gunnar is tall and wild. His scraggly long hairstyle screams "My head was hacked by foraging wolverines." His denim jacket has patches and pins from old heavy metal bands, including Black Sabbath. In fact, Gunnar could probably pass for Ozzy Osbourne's cousin, back in the rocker's heyday.

A fresh black eye sprouts from the left side of Gunnar's face, accompanied by a fat lip. Gunnar's been in a brawl.

JACKSON

Crap. You need a ride to the hospital or something?

GUNNAR

Hospitals are for dicks.

JACKSON

Oh.

GUNNAR

I came here to rob you, bro. Straight up.

Amusement spreads across Jackson's face.

JACKSON

You want to take my differential equations assignment? Or how about some free statistics tutoring like I gave you last semester?

Gunnar points to Jackson's antique model locomotive.

GUNNAR

I'm gonna take that.

Jackson isn't fazed by the declaration. It can't be serious.

JACKSON

Who'd you fight? Tell me.

GUNNAR

I went over my limit with that sucker-punching motherfucker, Zeke. Says he'll cut out my eyes if I don't pay up. So we brawled.

Gunnar points again to the model train engine.

GUNNAR

That's why I'm taking your train.

To emphasize the seriousness of his statement, Gunnar pulls out a hunting knife with a six-inch blade.

All the amusement drains out of Jackson's face.

GUNNAR

It's not personal. I just  
remembered seeing that train on  
your desk the last time I was here.  
It's probably worth enough to keep  
Zeke off my back for a while.

Jackson doesn't flinch. His voice turns ice cold.

JACKSON

Don't joke about my four-hundred E  
locomotive, Gunnar.

Gunnar snatches the model train engine off the desk.

JACKSON

Put that down!

Gunnar points his knife at Jackson, who takes two steps back,  
but not out of fear of Gunnar's knife.

With a quick, deft movement, Jackson sweeps a katana from  
under his bed, unsheathes it, and points it at Jackson.

Apparently, Jackson's model locomotive isn't the only  
collectable stashed in the room.

It's a standoff. Jackson's sword gleams. The knife in  
Gunnar's hand trembles with clammy uncertainty.

GUNNAR

You fucker. Why didn't you tell me  
you had one of those?

JACKSON

Put my locomotive down...

He swooshes the sword dangerously.

JACKSON

Or I get crazy.

Gunnar tucks the locomotive under his arm and dashes for the  
window. But there's somebody unexpected blocking his way.

Peering into the room through the open window is ZEKE ZARCO,  
20s, a bald, angry, tattooed, mountainous young man.

He reaches through the opening and clutches at Gunnar.

ZEKE

I found you, dipshit! Think you can ditch me?

Gunnar freezes, caught between the rampaging, debt-collecting Zeke and sword-wielding Jackson.

GUNNAR

Zeke, I was just coming to see you.  
(holds out the model train)  
This should cover some of my losses.

Zeke pokes his head through the window. His face is loaded with cuts, presumably from his earlier fight with Gunnar.

ZEKE

Gonna kill you, asshole...

Full of off-the-rails rage, Zeke pushes himself through the window to break Gunnar in half.

But there's a problem. Zeke gets stuck in the narrow dorm window. His broad shoulders and chest won't squeeze through.

Gunnar uses this delay to plead his case.

GUNNAR

This train is an antique, Zeke.  
It's worth fifteen hundred bucks,  
easy! It's a down payment!

Zeke doesn't listen.

ZEKE

I'm fucking stuck! Pull me through,  
you dummy!

When Gunnar steps closer, Zeke grabs him by the neck and squeezes with his iron-grip fingers.

Gag. Choke. Gunnar can't breathe. So he plunges his knife into Zeke's shoulder. When he pulls it out, blood spurts.

GUNNAR

Jesus, Zeke, I didn't mean...

In a panic Gunnar hands over the locomotive to the bleeding man.

GUNNAR

Here. Take this. It's yours.

Zeke smashes the model against the wall, cracking the case and sending model locomotive shrapnel everywhere.

Jackson's scream echoes through the room. His prized collectable has been destroyed!

Whoosh. Without the slightest hesitation, Jackson slices off Zeke's head with his sword.

Thud. Roll. Squirt. Blood pools onto the floor, mixing with the broken components of the model train.

An astonished, blood-soaked silence takes over. Neither Gunnar nor Jackson can believe what just happened.

Zeke's headless body, still stuck in the open window, sags slightly. His arms hang.

Unnerving quiet. Shock. Jackson drops his katana.

Noise at the door. Someone is keying their way inside.

Through the entrance walks SHARON SMOLKA, 20s, Jackson's girlfriend. She has a plastic bag of snacks in her hand.

SHARON

Hey, Jackson, they didn't have ginger ale, so I got Sprite...

A gasp as she takes in the gory sight. She drops the snacks and the dorm room keys. Jackson croaks out a command to her.

JACKSON

We have to go...

SHARON

But...What happened? I was only gone for fifteen minutes.

JACKSON

We have to go!

He takes one last forlorn look at his shattered locomotive. Rest in peace to the vintage Lionel prewar standard gauge gray 400 E steam engine.

Jackson scoops up his differential equations assignment and guides Sharon and Gunnar out the door.

They're on the run.

All aboard the crazy train...

FADE OUT: