JUDGEMENT TRAIN
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FADE IN:

EXT. A SMALL TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - DAY

A WOMAN stands absorbed by the book she is reading as she waits for a train. She is early to mid-thirties, mildly attractive, petite...a typical commuter in her smart suit and soft leather bag. There’s another two commuters at the other end of the platform, but no-one else within fifty yards of the woman. A MAN approaches. He is in his forties, dressed casually in jeans, a polo-shirt and corduroy jacket. He pulls a small suitcase. His hairline is receding and he wears gold-rimmed spectacles. Despite the emptiness of the platform he stands near the woman. He glances at his watch.

MAN
In precisely five minutes and thirty five seconds the Portsmouth train will pass through this station.

The woman looks up at the man. He stares back at her, a friendly, relaxed smile on his face. She peers around trying to find the person he’s addressing – it’s obviously her.

WOMAN
I’m sorry, I didn’t....what did you say?

MAN
In precisely five minutes and thirty-five....

He glances at his watch

MAN
.....twenty-six seconds, the Portsmouth train will pass through this station.

He smiles again in his friendly way.

WOMAN
(Confused)
Right, I see.

MAN
It doesn’t stop....

He sweeps his arm through the air.

MAN
.....just goes sailing through.
The woman nods and smiles a feeble smile. He leans towards her.

**MAN**
That last bit’s quite important you see....to you and me.

**WOMAN**
I’m sorry, but I’m catching the seven.....

**MAN**
.....oh-five. Yes, I guessed that.

The Woman shakes her head as she says:

**WOMAN**
So the Portsmouth train doesn’t mean much to me you see.

**MAN**
No, not usually, but it will today.

**WOMAN**
(More assertively)
Look, I’m really not sure what you’re talking about.....

**MAN**
Let me explain....it’s important today, because you will determine whether I throw myself in front of it.

He smiles his friendly smile. The words take a moment to sink into the woman’s brain and then....she shakes her head, her eyes wide with shock.

**WOMAN**
What?

**MAN**
You will determine whether I throw myself in front of it.

She looks around the platform for help. Her eyes fix on the two commuters fifty yards away. She returns her stare to the man.

**WOMAN**
I’m not sure what you’re talking about, but you need some help.

She signals with her hand towards the other commuters.

**WOMAN**
I’ll get someone.
MAN
(Calmly, but firmly)
No, no. You’re the one. You need to decide.

WOMAN
Decide? No, look I’ll get someone.

She tries to make off, but the man catches her arm. His eyes fix on hers. He’s in pain, but determined.

MAN
If you walk off, I’ll jump. By the time you find someone it’ll be too late. It’s up to you. Go now and be responsible for my death, or listen to my story and decide whether to save my wretched soul.
(Beat)
Your choice.

The woman looks horrified. She looks around again and then back at the man. He tries to smile, but just looks sad. The woman swallows.

WOMAN
I don’t know who you are, but I don’t want you to jump, okay? Please?

MAN
You don’t know that. You haven’t heard the facts, so you don’t know.

WOMAN
It doesn’t matter.

MAN
Oh, but I think it does. So I need to tell you this....

He looks at his watch again.

MAN
..... and I need to do it fast. At the end: you decide.

The woman looks fearful, but hesitantly nods.

MAN
It’s the first time I’ve done it.

He appears about to break down, but gathers himself.
MAN
I’ve had…..yearnings before. But
this is the first time.

WOMAN
What?

MAN
The first time I’ve molested a
child.

The woman gasps and puts her hand over her mouth. The man
looks away from her for a second, horrified by his own
admission.

MAN
I know….. I disgust myself. I’m
revolting. If it was down to me
then in a couple of minutes I’ll be
dead.

He hangs his head. The woman removes her hand from her mouth
and steadies herself.

WOMAN
What’s her name?

He looks up at her.

MAN
It’s not a girl – even more
disgusting.

WOMAN
How old?

MAN
He’s nine-years old.

The Woman takes a shocked in-take of breath.

MAN
I didn’t hurt him…..not physically,
but…..

Pause as they stare at each other. He sighs and turns away.

MAN
Why am I doing this…..we both know
I should die.

PLATFORM ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
The next train at Platform One will
not be stopping at this station.
Please keep behind the yellow line.

She looks intently at him, holding his stare.
WOMAN
How could you do that to a little boy?

MAN
I have no excuse....mitigating circumstances maybe.

WOMAN
Go on.

MAN
Someone did it to me. I was six....it’s a cycle

Silence as they stare at each other.

WOMAN
I’m a parent. I have a nine-year old daughter. I need to know something.

In the distance a fast train approaches.

MAN
What?

Noise of train approaching fast. He looks at the train and then at the woman.

WOMAN
Can you stop yourself?

Train is coming nearer.

MAN
(Genuinely, quietly)
Yes.

He turns away from her towards the tracks ready to jump. He lets go of his suitcase. The train is seconds from racing by. She puts her hand on his arm.

WOMAN
Don’t jump.

The train flies past them, the man’s jacket and the woman’s hair moving with the rush of air. The train’s gone. Silence. They stare at each other.

MAN
Thank you.

WOMAN
You need help. You need professional help.
PLATFORM ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
The next train to arrive at Platform One will be the seven-o-five to London Paddington.

MAN
I know. I’ll get it. I promise.

A train pulls in and the woman boards it. She closes the door behind her and then pulls down the window to talk to the man.

WOMAN
Don’t try to do this by yourself. Get help.

The train begins to pull away. The man nods and then says.....

MAN
Your daughter, Sophie, tell her I’m sorry.

She looks confused. The train pulls away, the distance between them grows.

WOMAN
My Sophie? How do you know her name?

He’s shouting now so she can hear him.

MAN
There was no boy: only Sophie. Tell her I didn’t mean to hurt her.

The train has gathered speed. The woman looks horrified with realization.

MAN
(Quietly and to himself)
And thank you. Thank you for your absolution.

He smiles his friendly smile, grabs his suitcase and then walks quickly away.

EXT. A DIFFERENT TRAIN STATION PLATFORM – DAY

The man is talking to a SECOND WOMAN. No-one else is around. There’s the sound of a train approaching fast. He turns away from her towards the tracks, ready to jump.

MAN
I’ll never do it again. I promise you.
The Second Woman grabs his arm.

SECOND WOMAN
Please stop. Don’t…..

The man turns to her, smiling a tortured thank-you. His face changes – shock and fear in his eyes. Someone’s arm and hand appear and push the man into the path of the onrushing train. The arm and hand belong to the woman. She addresses the Second Woman who looks traumatized by what she’s just witnessed.

WOMAN
I’m sorry, I have some very bad news for you.

FADE OUT:

THE END