

*DARREN. Subway.  
Destitute, on his knees.  
He looks out over the tracks.*

DARREN

Oh no.  
Oh man.  
Oh no no.  
No no no.  
No. Not happening.  
Now! Why! To me?  
Ahhhhhhh.

*CAROL & REBA, MTA workers.  
They observe from afar, as though from a  
weird MTA heaven, or (maybe more apt)  
underworld. They are wearing signature  
MTA orange vests, and they are  
omniscient.*

REBA

I've located an F station elevated track candidate at 1 a.m.

CAROL

Where, I don't see anyone?  
Oh, there.

DARREN

No way, no way, *no way*.

REBA

He's dropped his keys. Classic. You haven't executed a keys scenario yet, have you?

CAROL

I'd love to. But no, I haven't.

REBA

Specimen has dropped his keys into the tracks and he's afraid to descend. Does it look like he's going to descend? Just to make certain:

*She gets out a microphone.*

REBA (amplified)

If you drop something onto the tracks, LEAVE IT. Notify an MTA employee, a police officer, or approach the Customer Assistance Intercom.

*DARREN looks up, startled.*

REBA

That will hold him for awhile - there is no Customer Assistance Intercom.

CAROL

I'm ready.

REBA

He's a strong candidate. I note in particular his hot bod. See if you can get him to take his coat off prior to acquisition. Just to be sure he's consistently fit. We're low on dancers. Go now, agent Carol.

CAROL (ritualistically)

Stand clear of the closing doors, please.

REBA (ritual also)

There's another train directly behind this one.

*CAROL REMOVES HER ORANGE VEST. Underneath she is wearing something slinky, club-wear.*

*She approaches DARREN in the subway.*

CAROL

Excuse me but are you okay?

DARREN

NO I'M NOT OKA-

*He notices who is asking.*

DARREN (cont'd)

Hey. Hi. Aren't you cold?

CAROL

No, I'm on my way somewhere.  
(Dammit)

What? DARREN

Ask me again, I messed that up- CAROL

...what? DARREN

Would you like to offer me your coat? CAROL

Oh. Yeah, yes, yes I would. DARREN

*DARREN REMOVES HIS COAT,  
GIVES IT TO CAROL, WHO PUTS IT  
ON.*

Nice heavy coat CAROL

DARREN  
Yeah, it's very practical. I spend a lot of time outdoors! I labor. Hence the muscles. One of my jobs. I lived with my parents until two months ago! I don't know why I'm telling you this. But I had my keys to my new apartment in my coat pocket instead of in my jeans, because they're skinny jeans and when I put my keys in my jeans pocket they poke at me and hurt me, so my keys were in my coat and when I went to take out my gloves the keys were in there first, you know, in front of the gloves, and so I just went into my pocket like this see? And the keys FLEW OUT and they're down there somewhere. I can't see where. I'd go down there but I can't see where the damn keys are! And a train might come. And then where would you be, you know?

Dead. CAROL

Yeah *exactly* so that's my situation. DARREN

CAROL

Let me tell you something.  
It's a secret and I probably shouldn't but.  
I *work* for the MTA.

DARREN

You?

CAROL

Yes, me.

DARREN

No way.

CAROL

But that's not the secret necessarily.  
The secret is that there's a period of time, between about 3:34 a.m. and 5:16 a.m. where no trains will run, ever. It's plenty of time for you to come and get your keys without any fear of a train. Just avoid the third rail, okay, because it'll destroy your existence.

DARREN

Yeah, third rail, okay. But it's only like 1 a.m. right now.

CAROL

Is that an invitation?

DARREN

...I'm just stating the time.

CAROL

What's your name?

DARREN

Darren, my name is Darren.

CAROL

I'm Carol. There's a third part of the secret.

DARREN

Why are you telling me all these secrets?

CAROL (*momentarily stumped*)

Um.

DARREN

Why did you ask if I was inviting you somewhere?

Do you-

You *wanna* go somewhere?

With me?

CAROL

Darren, yes. I do.

DARREN

Okay, so, like - wow, I mean - tonight was turning so bad and now it could be so GOOD -

CAROL (*interrupting*)

Sudden reversals of fortune make life worth living, don't you think?

DARREN

...Sure. Yeah, I never thought that but it's probably a good thing to keep in mind for the future.

CAROL

Where shall we go? Just for a couple of hours, so that you can come back during the after hour period and retrieve your keys.

DARREN

Yeah of *course* just for a couple of hours, and well this is my neighborhood and it's kinda shitty but there's a latino place a couple of blocks away that's usually still open and we can buy beer inna bottle, they play good music, it's not a bar so much as like a deli with seating, but-

CAROL

I have a different and better idea.

DARREN

Oh, well, okay then.

CAROL

Follow me through this door.

DARREN

That's an employees only door!

Exactly.

CAROL

Oh *right* 'cause you're a-

DARREN

*CAROL stands in front of a closed door.*

Stand clear the closing doors please.

CAROL

*The door opens.  
THUMPING MUSIC POURS OUT  
FROM BEHIND IT.*

Whoa.

DARREN

Follow closely.

CAROL

*DARREN & CAROL, as though through  
a portal, enter into the 'MTA AFTER  
HOURS ALL NIGHT PARTY CLUB.'*

Weren't we just outside?

DARREN

Now we're inside.

CAROL

*REBA appears.*

Hello Darren.  
This is the Metro Transit Authority After Hours All Night Party Club.  
Welcome.  
Have a beer.

REBA

DARREN (accepts a can of beer)  
Oh thanks but I don't like drinking from cans-

REBA

Drink it.

DARREN

Oh, okay.

*DARREN raises the beer to his lips.  
It's as if he intends to just take a sip but  
something about REBA's intense stare  
makes him chug the whole thing instead.*

DARREN

Wow, that's...  
What kind of beer is that?

REBA

We brew it ourselves underground. 2nd Avenue Project is actually a brewery.

DARREN

Oh man, just wait 'til I tell somebody about all this!

REBA

No, Darren, here's the thing.  
Agent Carol, you're excused.

CAROL

Excuse me?

REBA

Exactly, that's what I'm doing.

CAROL

No, I mean, I just wanted-

REBA

What, a compliment? A pat on the back?  
Good job Carol, he'll do.

CAROL

He'll DO, this is a prime specimen! Don't I get to-

REBA

Darren, punch Agent Carol.

DARREN

I don't want to do that.

REBA

Punch Agent Carol.

*DARREN TRIES TO PUNCH CAROL  
BUT SHE EASILY CATCHES HIS  
HAND IN MID-AIR.*

DARREN

You're really strong.

CAROL (shrugs)

I work for the MTA.

Very well, Miss Reba, enjoy. But *I* get to onboard the next one.

Darren, sorry about your keys.

DARREN

Where are *you* going?

CAROL

This is either the fourth part of my secret, or a fourth secret entirely, but I regret to inform you that you've been, let's call it, acquired. As in, permanently. I hope you like dancing. I'll probably see you around.

*CAROL exits.*

REBA

Do you like dancing?

DARREN

Yeah, I do, love it

but what did she mean *acquired*

REBA

Dance, Darren.

*DARREN dances.  
REBA appreciates his dancing.  
DARREN gets really into it,*



*removes his sweater, swings it around his head.*

REBA

One more thing, Darren.  
If you see something, say something.

DARREN (automatic response)

I see nothing!

REBA

Good boy.

*REBA exits.  
DARREN dances for a second longer.  
The music keeps thumping.  
Then abruptly it cuts out,  
and DARREN stops dancing.  
His keys fall from the sky and land in  
front of him. He picks them up.*

DARREN

I danced non-stop underground for fourteen years.  
When I was spent up, burnt out, they finally let me go  
But when I emerged, the world had changed around me.  
I felt like an alien.

I'd grown used to the sweat, the darkness, the toil and turmoil of underground,  
the screeching of wheels, the head lamps always directed at my torso and groin,  
the rats underfoot, the free craft-brewed 2nd Avenue Line Lager, always there for me when I  
wanted it, and I got thirsty, boy did I!

After I got out, I didn't know where to go.  
I went to my old apartment but someone had renovated it.  
My parents were dead.  
So I did what anyone would do.  
I applied to work for the MTA.

Darren Drummond, MTA 2024, 181st Street elevator operator.  
Stand clear the closing doors.

*End.*