

Rhythm of the Train

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July Furious Fiction

- Set on a train
- Include something frozen
- 3 x 3-word sentences in a row

A distant whistle announces its approach. At last.

It's just me on the platform. In my best travelling clothes, clutching my case. About to be whisked to Folkestone, where my man is taking shore leave.

It's 12 months gone since we saw last each other. And tomorrow he might be my husband. No point in waiting, not now war is on.

The factory girls say to live for today. So that's what I'm doing. I took five days' leave and I'll make my own future.

I'm surrounded by steam as the train sighs to a stop. I imagine the steam smothering my old life and opening the door to something new.

By the time I find a seat, the train is clattering and creaking from the station. I settle by the window, turning my head, making it clear I don't seek conversation.

Can I be both excited and scared? At the same time?

Will I be Mrs Albert Dunn in the bread factory next week? No longer plain Miss Nancy Williams with no family and few friends?

Will anyone know? Will they be able to tell?

My thoughts are captured by the rhythm of the train ...

Is he the one?
Will he know me?
Is he the one?
Will he love me?
Is he the one?
Will he want me?
Is he the one?
Will he be there?
Is he the one?
Will he be there?
Is he the one?
Will he ...

'Something from the trolley love?' The tea lady's voice makes me jump.

'What you got there? What you got there?' I gasp when I realise I'm talking aloud in train-timed-talk. The other passengers don't look up, and I can only hope I haven't been muttering for miles.

'Sorry. Lost in thought. Any cold drinks? Or any ices? It's so hot.'

'Fresh lemonade. Made it myself this morning. Still got some ice. Five pence with a bag of ready salted.'

'Perfect. How long to Folkestone?'

'Another 30 minutes, is all.'

The lemonade is cold, sour-sweet, but it can't control my thoughts. The rhythm returns.

Is he the one?
Will he know me?
Is he the one?
Will he love me?
Is he the one?
Will he want me?
Is he the one?
Will he be there?

The train squeals round a bend, and the rhythm slows. It slows my mind, forcing a change of pace ...

Will he know me?
Will—he—love—me?
Will—he—want—me?
Will—he—be—there?
Will—he—

And then I'm off and racing ...

I can see him.
He's here for me.
He's looking for me.
I can see him.

Will HE see ME?

If HE sees ME ...
... HE must love ME
If HE sees ME ...
... HE must love ME
If HE sees ME ...

HE just saw me.
YES he knows me.
YES he loves me.

Grab my things now.
Out the door fast.

My man's here waiting.

My man's MY MAN.