

# THE TRAIN

## A STEWARDSHIP SKETCH

BY  
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1 **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

2 The Train is a fable about stewardship. In it three passengers who are more accustomed to  
3 pampered treatment find that they are expected to contribute their talents toward the "family"  
4 traveling together on the train.

5 This is a popular sketch with audiences—and pastors. It delivers a simple, direct message on  
6 stewardship—be it stewardship of our time, money or talents.

7 The characters are sketched and played broadly—almost as caricatures. With an unlimited  
8 budget, they would be costumed in Victorian or Edwardian dress, with high collars, bustles, etc.  
9 In lieu of that, Sunday-go-to-meeting dress will do.

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10 **CHARACTERS**

11 Mrs. Shipley (middle-aged)

12 Miss Newelpost (younger)

13 Mr. Periwinkle (middle-aged)

14 Conductor (middle-aged)

15 (Note: Character ages are loosely defined here, and may be adjusted for personnel.)

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17 **PROPS**

18 Conductor: a "brochure" for the train, and a little black notepad

19 Mr. Periwinkle: a business card, a train ticket

20 Purses for the women.

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23 **SET**

24 3 chairs, arranged with 2 on one side and 1 on the other with an "aisle" between.

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27 **SCENE**

28 **House lights down.**

29 **Stage lights up.**

30 **As the three passengers enter they are making small talk.**





1 No, that wouldn't be right at all.

2

3

**Mrs. Shipley**

4

*(aghast)*

5

See here! What do you mean?

6

*(to her companions)*

7

Such impertinence.

8

9

**Conductor**

10

*(nervously fumbles for a brochure out of an inside pocket)*

11

Dear, dear—this is unseemly. I thought it was stated clearly in the brochure.

12

13

*(reading)*

14

"First-class passage... no charge for ticket... all necessities provided..." Yes, here it is: "Responsibility for all the above lies completely with the passengers themselves."

15

16

17

*(putting away brochure; relieved; pleasantly)*

18

Well, that's a relief! For a minute there I thought we might have a lawsuit on our hands.

19

20

*(pause)*

21

You see, you are the stewards.

22

*(turning to go)*

23

Now, will there be anything else?

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**Mr. Periwinkle**

26

Now hold on! This is an outrage!

27

28

**Mrs. Shipley**

29

There must be some mistake. I never would have agreed to such an arrangement.

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**Miss Newelpost**

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We are more accustomed to having people take care of us.

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**Conductor**

Ah, but you see, you're on "The Train" now. Things are different. You're now a part of the family.

***The passengers look at each other, confused, mouthing the word "family".***

**Conductor**

*(with pride)*

The Father's train is different from others. It has the finest accommodations—everything the best. It also has the finest engineer and

*(preening)*

conductor. The engineer and conductor keep the train running perfectly and on time. But the passengers on the train are expected to give of themselves. They have been left in charge of the rest of the family.

**Mr. Periwinkle**

*(blankly incredulous)*

Really?

**Conductor**

*(impatiently)*

It was on your ticket!

*(he snatches the ticket from Mr. Periwinkle;  
after scanning to locate what he is looking for)*

Yes, here it is: 1 Peter 4:10, "Each one has received a special gift; employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

***He returns the ticket to Mr. Periwinkle.***

**Mrs. Shipley**

But, what can we do?

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**Conductor**

*(pulling out a small pad)*

Let's see, Mrs. Shipley, isn't it? Oh yes, I see here that you are an excellent cook.

**Mrs. Shipley nods her head proudly.**

**Conductor**

Well then, you can be in charge of our Wednesday night dinners.

**Mrs. Shipley**

*(considering, then graciously condescending)*

Yes, I could do that once.

**Conductor**

*(amused)*

Once?!

*(chuckling)*

Why, no, my dear. We will need it every week.

**Mrs. Shipley**

*(weakly)*

Every week?

**Conductor**

He gave you that gift! What have you been doing with it?

*(turning to Miss Newelpost; finding her name on his pad)*

Now, Miss Newelpost, you're a school teacher. Third grade, correct?

**Miss Newelpost nods, pleased.**

**Conductor**

Perfect! The children on the train are always needing Sunday School teachers.

(Miss Newelpost looks a little stunned)

1  
2 It's so important.

3 (pause; looking at list)

4 Now Mr. Periwinkle. It says here you're in sales, and that you—

5  
6 **Mr. Periwinkle**

7 (reaching for his card)

8 Why yes, we have the finest line of—

9  
10 **Conductor**

11 (stopping him)

12 That's really not necessary. But we can certainly use your talents. You  
13 see, we have people in some of the other cars of the train who are  
14 brand new to the family. They just got onto the train and are really  
15 unsure of their next step. We need people who can go into those cars  
16 and speak with the newcomers—help guide them along, as it were.

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18 **Mr. Periwinkle starts to object.**

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20 **Conductor**

21 Also, we sometimes actually leave the train to invite others aboard.  
22 You'd be perfect!

23  
24 **Mr. Periwinkle**

25 (with finality)

26 I—I really wouldn't know what to say to them. I don't think I could.

27  
28 **Conductor**

29 (baffled)

30 You mean, you're refusing?

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32 **Mr. Periwinkle**

33 (stiffening; indignantly)

34 I wasn't aware it was a requirement.  
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**Conductor**

*(with sad resignation)*

It's not. You may ride on the train even if you don't help.

*(pause; begins to leave, then turns back; to all three)*

But isn't it funny that you're all so eager for the free ride and all the extras that go along with it—but don't want to give anything of yourselves. Nothing of the abilities that the Father has so freely given you. You didn't have to pay.

*(pause)*

Well, like I said, there's no obligation. You may stay on the train.

*(as he turns to go; with a wry smile, goading them)*

Perhaps there will be someone else...

**Mr. Periwinkle**

*(after some thought; calling him back)*

W—wait a minute.

*(pause)*

Would I have to do it—alone?

**Conductor**

*(happily encouraged)*

Oh, my no! I'll be there beside you all the time. I'll tell you what to say.

**Mr. Periwinkle**

*(after a pause to think it over; bravely)*

Well, all right. I'll give it a go.

**Conductor**

Oh, He'll be so pleased! Come, come everyone. There are others waiting for you.

**They all exit, trooping after the Conductor.**

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