

JANUARY 24, 1971  
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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**Jacqueline Wilson** is an elderly woman suffering from Alzheimer's. In this memory blip, she is an ambitious, driven doctor who is on her way to take the medical board exam. Despite her sharp tongue and intense focus, she has a strong sense of community and respect.

African-American. Pageboy style, black bob. Tan pant suit with checkered pattern coat.

Played by an actress in her late 60's.

**Izaak Morales** is a well-rounded man in his early 70s whose eyes are deep with wisdom and compassion. His soft-spoken words convey the gentleness of his spirit. He has learned how to navigate his wife's condition, but he is emotionally exhausted by the effort. Afro-Hispanic.

Thick head of dark brown hair. Wears simple, plain church clothes.

**Jarobi Morales** embodies what it means to be a good man: assertive yet considerate, family-oriented yet ambitious, strong yet open. He seems to be concerned for those around him, always jumping to offer a helping-hand. He has a hard time seeing his mom in this condition; despite this, he visits her as much as possible. Afro-Hispanic. Dark, buzz-cut hair.

Wears a brown leather jacket, plain, red shirt, and blue jeans. Late 30's.

**The Man** is an elderly, white man sitting near the other characters. His presence makes Jacqueline uneasy.

**The Setting** is both a nursing home and a typical 1970s passenger train, loosely based on the Nebraska Zephyr. The train is on the path from Lincoln, Nebraska to Chicago, Illinois. Izaak and Jarobi seem out of place with this aspect of the environment.

*AT RISE: It is the early 2000s in a small, warmly decorated nursing home in western Delaware. In the mind of JACQUELINE, it is the winter of 1971. For her, it is an atypically quiet morning aboard the Nebraska Zephyr as it endures the eleven hour journey from Lincoln, Nebraska to Chicago, Illinois. Fields of lush, green vegetation live beyond the large window. A chilled breeze floats around the dining cart and is only made bearable by the warm, glowing sunlight that pours through the tinted glass. The smell of eggs and hash browns lingers around the half-eaten breakfast platter served to JACQUELINE less than an hour earlier. A popular James Brown tune flows through the radio, accompanied by an occasional flutter of static.*

*LIGHTS UP: Only one person is occupying the spacious dining car of the passenger train. JACQUELINE WILSON sits with HER legs tightly crossed and back firmly pressed against the thinly stuffed, obnoxiously bright leather seat. SHE refuses to slouch in public, despite how badly SHE wishes to shove HER nose into the bulky medical journal SHE holds in HER thin, delicate hands.*

*IZAAK and JAROBI enter. THEY approach JACQUELINE hesitantly.*

IZAAK

Excuse me, ma'am? Uh, ma'am?

*JACQUELINE does not hear HIM.*

JAROBI

Ma'am.

*JACQUELINE reads for a moment longer, places HER finger on the page, then looks up. SHE reaches over to the window sill where a small, silver radio stands and turns it off.*

JACQUELINE

Yes?

JAROBI

Do you have the date?

JACQUELINE

Is it not on your ticket?

*JAROBI looks at IZAAK. JACQUELINE sighs and returns to HER book.*

January 24th.

*JAROBI and IZAAK hover there for a moment.*

Was there something else?

IZAAK

You wouldn't mind if we joined you, would you?

JACQUELINE

Forgive me, sir, but this cart is practically empty.

IZAAK

I, uh...I think a little company would do me and my boy well.

JACQUELINE *puts down HER book and cranes HER head to look around at all of the available seats. HER eyes land on THE MAN, who sits in the front, right corner of the train. HE looks away when THEIR eyes meet, but it seems that HE was watching THEM. SHE shifts uncomfortably.*

JACQUELINE

I suppose I don't mind.

IZAAK *nods appreciatively.*

JAROBİ

Thank you, ma'am.

JACQUELINE *moves HER breakfast plate over and gently places HER book on top of a briefcase purse in the seat beside HER. IZAAK and JAROBİ settle THEMSELVES into the seats in front of JACQUELINE, with IZAAK taking the window seat and JAROBİ the outside one.*

*A moment of silence lingers amongst THEM.*

Jarobi. Jarobi Morales, ma'am?

*Silence.*

I, uh...This is my father, Izaak Morales.

JACQUELINE

Dr. Jacqueline Wilson.

IZAAK

Well, that is a mighty beautiful ring you got there, Dr. Wilson.

IZAAK *gestures towards the wedding band on JACQUELINE's hand.*

You married?

JACQUELINE *twists the ring on HER hand  
confusedly.*

JACQUELINE

No. No, I'm not. I...Well, I don't quite remember where I got this. Must've been a gift, I suppose.

IZAAK

Oh, okay. I just...I could swear on my life they sell those at Mani's jewelry store, back in Newark. You know, the one with the locket on the logo? I met the girl I married just around the corner from there.

JACQUELINE

I don't know anybody named Imani. It sounds like a lovely place.

IZAAK

Tell me, dear, where you workin'?

JACQUELINE

I'm a resident at FMC.

JAROBİ

FMC?

JACQUELINE

Fairview Medical Center. In Beatrice. It's a little ways south of Lincoln.

JAROBİ

Oh, I see.

JACQUELINE

Are you not from the area?

JAROBİ

No, ma'am. We live in Newark. Delaware.

JACQUELINE

It's rare to see out-of-state passengers, especially this time of year. I reckon you two were looking to escape the cold, weren't you? (*Chuckles*)

JAROBİ

(*Laughs restrainedly*) You betcha.

JACQUELINE

I knew it! (*Chuckles*) The farthest I've ever been north, is...well, I suppose this train ride.

JAROBİ

Funny that you mention that. You know, I've always heard that folks from out west fry their eggs. You got 'em scrambled, just how my daddy likes them.

JACQUELINE

That is...that is funny. I'm not sure why I ordered them this way. They were delicious, but I'm feeling too nervous to eat a whole lot. You two should order something. We've still got miles of track between us and Chicago.

IZAAK

What's waiting for you in Chicago that's makin' you too nervous to eat?

JACQUELINE

Waiting for me? No, sir, I'm the one waiting. I'm taking my boards in a few days. They always host those exams in these big, crowded cities--oh, Lord do they make me anxious. Regardless, I'll be roughing it there for a little while.

IZAAK

Being a doctor must be challenging for you then.

JAROBİ

It sounds intense. I've never known how both of my parents managed to raise me so well while having jobs like that.

JACQUELINE

Intense? That word doesn't do it justice. You know, people always tell me that; they--they say "Dr. Wilson, I just don't know how you do it, being in that busy ER working trauma, then spending hours and hours in surgery every single day!" You know what I tell 'em?

IZAAK

JAROBİ

Hm?

What?

JACQUELINE

I tell those folks that being a doctor isn't what's stressful for me, probably not for your mama and daddy either. It's not bouncing between a dozen patients, trying to assess every little wound somebody has while I got patients bleeding out in the trauma rooms. It's not standing in that OR until I can't feel my legs, and my vision starts to leave me. It's not holding a dead man's still-beating heart in my own hands about to put it inside another man's empty chest. It's none of that. It's that blanket of invisibility they try to throw over my head while I'm not looking. It's the dismissal. It's the invalidation. The white men I work for don't see me, don't see my value, don't see that I'm the best damn doctor that has ever walked the halls of Fairview.

*SHE glances back in the direction of THE MAN.*

A pause.

I'm gonna make them see me. I'm gonna cut with such precision that they won't trust anybody else with a scalpel. I'm gonna diagnose my patients--accurately, mind you--with such efficiency that they'll have no other choice than to call me in when they are unable. My score on the exam is gonna be so damn high those little interns who gawk and sneer at me are gonna tuck their blonde tails and run every time I turn the corner. They're gonna tell stories about me.

IZAAK

Damn right they are, Jackie.

*JACQUELINE's face falters.*

That's all you can do with men like Charles Carter. Show 'em up and let them know that you ain't taking' nothin' from--

JAROBI

*(Whispers)* Dad.

*JACQUELINE's face is scrunched up in confusion.  
IZAAK's proud grin fades, and HE subtly sinks  
back into HIS seat, realizing HIS error.*

JACQUELINE

Only my mama calls me Jackie.

IZAAK

My apologies, miss. I--I got carried away there.

JACQUELINE

A-and how do you know Dr. Carter?

IZAAK

I, um, actually had him as a doctor. Bit of a pretentious man, I noticed.

JACQUELINE

You said you were just visiting, and unless I've got you all wrong, you don't have any business seeing an OB-GYN.

*IZAAK sighs. JACQUELINE folds HER arms across HER chest.*

What is going on here?

*IZAAK leans forward and gestures towards the window.*

IZAAK

Take a look out that window for me, would ya, dear?

JACQUELINE

Wh--

IZAAK

Go on, now.

*JACQUELINE hesitantly leans over, looking out the window.*

You see, Jackie? We're not movin'. See them trees? They're still.

JACQUELINE

That's odd. The train must've stopped while we were talking. Strange how we didn't feel it. They must have pulled the break real slow.

IZAAK

You know that doesn't make sense, Jackie. Think about it. Look at where we are.

JACQUELINE *looks distressed as SHE visually examines the cart.*

JACQUELINE

You're talking nonsense.

SHE *turns to* JAROBI.

Is something wrong with your father, boy?

JAROBI

*(Softly)* No, ma'am, nothing at all.

JACQUELINE

Then *why* is he saying all of this crazy mess?

JAROBI

He's just trying to help.

JACQUELINE

Help *what*?

JAROBI

You're confused again.

JACQUELINE

Wh--what? Confused about what? I was enjoying my ride just fine up until you two came along.

JAROBI

We're not on a train, mama.

JACQUELINE

Who are you calling Mama? I don't have kids. I'm not even married.

JAROBİ

Yes, you do. Three of them, actually, and four grandkids--a fifth one on the way.

JACQUELINE

To who exactly?

JAROBİ

*(Gestures to IZAAK)* Him.

JACQUELINE

*(Laughs)* What are you talking about? I swore that I wouldn't mess with that stuff until I became an attending. I think I would remember my own marriage giving birth *three times*, and I'm only 32. How on Earth could I have five grandkids?

JAROBİ

This isn't the 70's, ma. You're not on a train to Chicago, and you're not taking the boards this weekend.

IZAAK

*(Smiles sadly)* Those have long passed you, dear.

JAROBİ

You're at Pine Rest nursing home.

JACQUELINE

No.

JAROBİ

I know this is scary for you. Mama, you've got Alzheimer's, and you, you get stuck in these little memory blips.

JACQUELINE

*(Flustered)* Stop telling me what's going on! I am taking the Zephyr, heading to Chicago, so I can take my boards! This is the most important exam of my life, and I don't need a couple of crazy folks harassing me and spouting gibberish. Now, please, go so I can study in peace.

IZAAK

Jackie--

JAROBİ

Mama--

JACQUELINE

I won't tell you again. Leave me be.

IZAAK

C'mon, son.

*JACQUELINE picks up the medical journal and returns to the spot SHE left off on.*

JAROBI

But Dad--

IZAAK

Let her get back to it. You know it's easier for her this way.

*JAROBI sighs and looks at JACQUELINE sadly. HE reluctantly scoots out of HIS seat, and IZAAK follows. JACQUELINE watches THEM as THEY somberly exit stage.*

*As IZAAK looks back at HER, SHE looks down once more, tucking a piece of hair back behind HER ear. HE walks away, a sorrowful look encapsulating HIS tired face.*

*JACQUELINE reaches over and turns on the radio. The same song from earlier begins to play.*

LIGHTS OUT.