

Three Kids and a Train Ride

by

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Twins Krissi and Kenny and their older brother Billy were sitting in the back seat of the car. They were excited because they were on the way to the train station and their first train trip. They were off to visit Aunt Annabelle and Uncle Jack, and couldn't wait!

"Are we there yet?", asked Kenny.

"Soon", said their Mom.

"Is the train station a big place?", asked Krissi.

"Very big", said their Dad. "Make sure you stay close to Mom and me once we get there."

"How will we get all these bags onto the train?", asked Billy.

"Don't worry," Mom replied, "there are men at the train station called Red Caps. They'll help us with our bags."

It wasn't long before the car pulled up in front of the big train station. It was a block long and the front of it was made up of large columns that seemed to go forever.

"I'll help with the bags.", said Billy.

"Me too!", exclaimed Kenny, and they hopped out of the car.

There, waiting outside the station, was the Red Cap that was going to help them with their luggage. He had a cart to put their bags on, and they discovered that he was called a Red Cap because he was wearing a red hat. It wasn't long before the luggage was loaded on his cart and the family was moving through the station towards their train.

"Wow", said Billy, "this sure is a big place!" And he was right. The main waiting room was an immense place full of hundreds of people coming and going.

"I bet you could go anywhere in the world from this station." said Krissi.

"Even across the ocean?", asked Kenny.

"Well, anywhere but there.", answered Krissi.

Soon the family was down on track level and heading towards their train. "Wow, look at this!", said Kenny as they approached the long silver train.

"I'll bet this train can go faster than a sports car!", exclaimed Billy.

The whole family got on the train and walked up to a door marked 304A. "What's in here?", asked Krissi.

"It's our compartment", said their Dad, "why don't you open the door and we'll see what it's like."

Krissi opened the door and found a room unlike anything she had ever seen before. There were couches built into both side walls. In the middle of the room there were two chairs and a table in front of a picture window. On the wall to the left there was a narrow door.

"Wow!" was all Krissi could say.

"What's behind that door?", asked Kenny

Mom said, "Take a look."

Kenny went to the door and opened it. "Billy, Krissi, you've got to see this!"

What the three kids saw was the most compact, well organized bathroom that they'd ever seen. "This is great", said Billy, "but there's no sink!"

"What about this?", asked his Dad as he pushed a panel and a tiny sink dropped down from the wall.

"This is great! I could live here forever!" Krissi said as she flopped down on one of the couches.

It was about ten minutes later when the kids heard a loud voice out in the hall call, "All Aboard".

"Who's that?, asked Krissi. "I hope he's not living next door! He's even louder than us!"

"That's the conductor", said Dad, "and he's announcing that the train is about to leave."

"Well why didn't he say so?", said Krissi.

"I'm ready", said Kenny sitting himself down in front of the big window.

At first there was nothing. Then a slight bump. Then another bump followed by another and another and another. Before the kids knew it, the train was moving. They all watched the platform going by the window, and then suddenly darkness.

"What happened?", asked Krissi. "Where'd the outside go?"

"We're just in the tunnel", said her Mom. "Wait till we get out of it."

It was a long tunnel. It was a very long tunnel. For better than 10 minutes nothing but blackness went by the window. The kids continued to watch, but enough was enough.

"This is really boring", said Billy.

No sooner had he said that than the train broke out into bright sunshine and the room was aglow. Now the view out of the window was anything but dull. There, just beyond the tracks, was a beautiful river. On the river, there were many kinds of boats, and on the other side of the river, cliffs rose that were covered with trees full of leaves all the colors of the rainbow.

"Wow", said Krissi. "This is great!"

The rest of the afternoon was one of the best that the kids had ever spent. They read, or played with toys or games, or listened to music, but mostly they just looked out the window. It was their window on the world and it was a world that was constantly changing. First there was the river, then towns, then farms, then factories, then fields, then cities. The kids loved it.

As the train sped through the afternoon, the sun got lower and lower in the western sky until it dropped below the horizon. The family continued to watch the world pass until Billy voiced a concern that was on everyone's mind.

"I'm hungry! When is the train going to stop so that we can eat?"

"The train doesn't stop, Bill", replied his Dad.

"No Food!", shouted Kenny and Krissi.

"I didn't say that", said Dad. "Come on, lets all go to the dining car."

"What's a dining car?", asked Billy.

"You'll see.", said their Mom.

The family put down their books and games, washed their hands, and left the compartment. They walked to the end of the car, went out a door, and across to the next car. This car was identical to their's.

"So where's the food car?", asked Billy.

"Just hold your horses.", said Dad.

The family continued through this car, and into two more before their travels were done. When they opened the door to the dining car, they all knew they'd reached their destination. Instead of compartment doors or people in seats, this car looked exactly like a restaurant. There were people seated at tables set with dishes, glasses, and silverware. There were men in black jackets taking orders and other men in white jackets bringing plates of food from the kitchen. There were the sights, the sounds and the smells of a restaurant.

"Hey this is neat...let's eat!", said Billy

With that, the family selected a table by the windows on the left side of the car. They had chicken, hamburgers, hot dogs and ice cream for desert. By the time the family started working their way back to their compartment they were no longer hungry. In fact, they were full...very full.

"I'm full.", said Krissi.

"Me too", said Kenny, "and kinda tired too!"

"I'm tired too.", said Billy. "It's too bad there are no beds in our compartment."

"Come on you guys. Stop complaining and let's get back to the compartment.", said their Dad.

All the way back to their car on the train the three kids were arguing about where they were going to sleep.

"I'm too big to sleep in a chair.", said Billy. "One of you guys will have to let me sleep on one of the couches."

"Hey I'm a girl," said Krissi, "Ladies first you know!"

"Wait a minute,", said Kenny, "I'm the baby of the family. You guys are older than me. You should let me sleep on one of the couches."

"Kenny", said Krissi. "We're twins. We're the same age."

"Oh no...you're two minutes older than me. I am the baby!", answered Kenny.

By the time they got back to the compartment door, their Dad had had enough. "If you guys will give it a rest, we'll work this out." He opened the door and flipped on the light. "Notice anything different?"

"Hey, what happened?", Krissi exclaimed.

During the time the family had been eating, their compartment had ben totally re-made. Instead of two couches, the walls now contained four bunk beds. Instead of a table and two chairs in front of the big window, there was another bed. The sheets and blankets were turned down and the bed pillows looked really fluffy and inviting.

"I get the top.", said Kenny heading towards the beds.

"Oh no you don't.", said Billy. "You're the baby of the family!"

"No fair", Kenny answered.

"Okay you two. Lets all get ready for bed and then we'll work out the sleeping arrangements.", said Mom.

"How come nobody is answering my question?", Krissi demanded.

"What's that kiddo?", asked Dad.

"How did this happen?", she answered.

"Oh that's easy.", said Dad. "There is a man called a porter that works in the car. When everybody goes to dinner, he goes from compartment to compartment and changes them from day rooms to night rooms."

"But where does he keep all the beds?", asked Kenny.

"Right here.", said Dad. "These bunks on each wall are here all the time. The bottom ones are the couches made up like beds and the top ones fold in and out of the wall. The two chairs were changed into that bed in front of the window and Presto Chango, we go from a sitting room to a bedroom."

The family spent the next few minutes getting into pajamas, going in an out of the compact bathroom, and brushing teeth in the fold down sink. Sleeping arrangements were finalized, and it was agreed that Billy and Kenny would sleep in the two upper bunks, Krissi would sleep in the single bed by the window, and Mom and Dad would sleep in the two lower bunks.

Good nights were said all around, blankets were tucked in, and lights were turned out.

As they settled down Kenny said, "I love traveling on a train!"

"Me too.", said Krissi

"Me three", added Billy

"Good night!", said their Dad encouraging the kids to settle down. "Close your eyes and listen to the lullaby of the rails."

"What's that mean, Dad?", asked Kenny.

"Well if you guys quiet down,", said Dad, "You'll hear the noise that the train wheels make on the track."

"Oh, I hear it Daddy", said Krissi. "You mean that Clickity Clack sound?"

"That's it...now go to sleep. All of you!"

And so, that's how the family ended their day. They all fell asleep rocked by the motion of the train while listening to the clickity clack lullaby.

Clickity Clack, good night. Clickity Clack, sleep tight.
Clickity Clack, pleasant dreams. Clickity Clack. Clickity Clack. Clickity Clack.....