PART.017 - 2021: Full Speed, No Ticket Checks

New Year, New Challenges... And A

Train to Steer!

Scene 1: The Train, The Journey, And A Brand New Year

Tanya set his pen down, folding his hands together with a small, knowing smile.

"Imagine we're on a train, Susie."

Susie narrowed her eyes. "A train?"

Tanya nodded. "Yes. And you're the conductor." He flipped his notebook around, revealing a sketch of a long, winding railway. It stretched from snowy mountains to misty valleys, crisscrossing rivers and weaving through tiny stations with names she didn't recognize. "The front of the train is prevention—everything we do ahead of time to reduce risks, build strong foundations. The back of the train? That's where we scramble to fix things after they've gone wrong. Most people spend their lives running to the back to clean up the mess..."

He tapped the tiny locomotive at the front of his sketch.

"But you, Susie, you're at the front now. You're in control."

Susie stared at the paper, heartbeat just a little steadier.

"So, you're telling me I've been living at the back of the train this whole time?" she muttered.

Tanya smirked. "Most people do. But once you realize you have a choice, you don't have to stay there."

The edges of the paper seemed to **blur** in Susie's vision. She wasn't just looking at a sketch anymore—

she was seeing it. The wheels turning. The landscape rushing past.

"We have the power to cultivate awareness—through training, through mindfulness, through trusting our instincts," Tanya continued. "Safety doesn't begin in the moment of danger. It starts long before. And you, Susie, can build it."

A small shiver ran down her spine.

A train. A journey. A path ahead.

And she was the one holding the map.

Scene 2: First Steps Into a New World When they said goodbye, Tanya emphasized one last thing—

"Sometimes, we forget what we learn in a single day. That's normal. But what matters is action. Start testing these ideas, Susie. Try them out. Watch. Learn. If you hit a roadblock, call me. You're not alone on this train."

A warmth settled in her chest. I'm not alone.

Tanya smiled. "It's the first day of 2021, and we're in this together. I believe in you." Susie lifted her head, eyes shining. "Thank you, Tanya. I'm going to do it." And she meant it. She wasn't afraid. Not this time.

Scene 3: A Moment Suspended in Time By the time she got home, afternoon had already melted into evening. The golden light brushed against the snow-covered rooftops, painting everything in soft, quiet colors.

Her stomach grumbled.

She laughed to herself.

"Talking about safety, trains, and meditation is great... but eating is better."

She **cut herself a slice of pavlova, the scent of vanilla and sugar filling the air** as she curled up, fork in hand. The first bite **melted on her tongue**. Mmm... This is perfect.

For a few seconds, she just let herself be still. No rush. No guilt. Just now.

Then, she sat up.

"The train doesn't wait. It's time to move forward." She stretched her arms, closed her Goal Book with a satisfying thud, and stood up.

This wasn't just an idea anymore.

She was doing it.

Scene 4: Writing to See More Clearly That night, she opened her Goal Book and grabbed a pen.

She pulled out tiny slips of paper, carefully writing on each one.

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 $\ref{eq:product}$ what obstacles might I face?

? What is the very first step I can take tomorrow? She placed them one by one onto the pages. The questions sat in front of her like puzzle pieces. Like station stops.

Like tiny coordinates waiting to be connected.

And for the first time, **it felt possible**. She flipped to the last page and added a final note to herself:

"Step Four: Panic Slightly. Step Five: Ask Tanya If I'm Hallucinating."

Just in case.

Scene 5: The Ticket That Wouldn't Stop Changing She yawned, stretching, about to put the Goal Book away—when something fell out.

A ticket.

Susie frowned.

Wait ... what ticket?

It was thin, yellowed at the edges, like something from an old railway station. The ink flickered.

P Mont Blanc - The Starting Line

 \P Paris – The Station of First Steps

 \P Vienna – The Crossroads of Uncertainty

P Istanbul - The Market of Choices

 \P Buenos Aires – The Station of Trusting the

Unknown

Then, the ticket flickered again. More names appeared.

P Dover Cliffside, UK – The Edge of Second Thoughts (*Don't fall off.*)

P Húsavík, Iceland – The Bay of Lost Letters (Apparently, messages in bottles sent from here never reach their destinations.)

P La Rinconada, Peru – The Gold Rush of False Promises (Dig all you want. Will you find what you're looking for?)

P Tasiilaq, Greenland – The Glacier of Forgotten Plans (Come to make peace with every idea you never followed through on.)

P Shirakawa-go, Japan – The Village of Tiny Lights (Not all destinations have to be grand. Some are just warm places where you drink tea and don't have to know everything yet.)

 \P Tristan da Cunha, The Most Remote Place on

Earth – The Nowhere Stop (Population: You, your thoughts, and absolutely nothing else.)

She stared at the ridiculous list.

"TANYA." Tanya took a sip of coffee. "Yes, Susie?" She flipped the ticket toward him. "WHAT IS THIS NONSENSE." He barely glanced at it. "Oh? The train's just showing you options. Pick one."

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'PICK ONE'? I don't even know what some of these places ARE!"

Tanya smiled, way too amused. "That's the point. The journey doesn't always make sense in the beginning." Susie narrowed her eyes. "Let me guess. You already know where I'm supposed to go next, don't you?" Tanya shrugged. "Maybe. But that's not how this works."

The ticket flickered again. A single line appeared at the bottom: Choose with your gut. Your mind will catch up later."

Scene 6: A Train That Moves Forward, A Susie Who Is Changing That night, she stared at the ticket. The choice had been made. Her train was moving. Where?

She **didn't know.** But she was **on it.** And for the first time in a long time— **That was enough.**

She placed a hand over her belly. *"Happy New Year, Susie."* And just before sleep pulled her under, she heard it— A train whistle. Faint. Distant. Impossible.

₩ SEQUEL: PART.018 - FROM MONT BLANC

TO SILICON VALLEY 🛠 🚟

"The Train That Shouldn't Exist... But Somehow, It Does."

Scene 1: A Ticket to Nowhere (And Everywhere)

Susie turned the mysterious train ticket over in her hands, expecting it to disappear at any moment. The ink shimmered—sometimes bold, sometimes barely visible, as if the ticket was waiting for her to make a choice.

She squinted at the list of destinations.

P Venice (Underground Station – Bring Your Own Gondola)

Pacific Ocean (Floating Platform – Beware of Seagulls)

Madagascar (The Station Hidden Under a Giant Tree – Slow Down & Breathe)

 \P The Desert Mirage Stop (If You Can See It, It's Real.)

The Library Station (Find the Right Book & Enter a Different Story.)

 \P A Floating Island in the Sky (Climb the Wooden

Stairs & Don't Look Down.)

The City where Time Moves Backward (Arrive Old, Leave Young.)

P The Dream Stop (Wake Up Too Soon, and You'll Miss It Forever.)

P Silicon Valley (??? – Unconfirmed Reality Check.)

"Silicon Valley?" Susie muttered, turning the ticket sideways. "What's it doing on the list with *these* places?"

Tanya leaned back, sipping his coffee. "Maybe your train has a sense of humor."

"More like an identity crisis."

Tanya simply grinned. "So, where to first?" Susie stared at the flickering ink. The sensible choice was to go straight to Silicon Valley, but... Wasn't this about something more than just a destination?

She took a deep breath. "Let's take the scenic route."

Scene 2: Venice, But Make It Secret & Submerged The train didn't arrive at a platform. It floated.

Susie blinked in confusion as she stepped off the train and onto a wooden dock gently rocking on the water.

A violinist played in the distance, and the faint scent of espresso and damp stone filled the air. The station itself was underground—but not in the usual way. It was built beneath the flooded canals of Venice, shimmering in golden light, with gondola platforms instead of regular train tracks.

She turned to Tanya. "Do people actually live here?" Tanya gestured toward a café floating just above the waterline, where people were drinking cappuccinos as if **this was perfectly normal**.

"Apparently."

A gondolier approached, balancing effortlessly on his boat. "Signorina, where to?"

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Susie hesitated, then glanced at Tanya.
"You tell me," he said.
She turned back to the gondolier.
"Take me somewhere... unexpected."
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Scene 3: Somewhere in the Middle of the Pacific The train arrived at a platform that had no business existing.

Susie stepped off and found herself standing on a tiny floating dock in the middle of the ocean.

No land in sight.

Just the vast Pacific stretching to infinity. And seagulls. A lot of seagulls.

One stared at her menacingly.

"Uh, Tanya?" she whispered. "I think that seagull is planning something."

"Stand your ground," Tanya murmured.

A second later, the seagull lunged for her sandwich. She yelped, holding it above her head. "This is a

robbery!"

The seagull squawked in triumph.

Another gust of wind, and suddenly, the train's whistle sounded in the distance.

"Train's leaving," Tanya said, already stepping onto the platform.

Susie narrowly escaped the seagull attack, diving back onto the train as it whooshed forward, leaving the endless blue behind.

She collapsed into her seat, heart racing. Tanya smirked. "Well. That was an experience." Susie glared. "Next time, we skip the *seagull mafia*

stop."

Scene 4: A Station in a Giant Tree (Madagascar)

The train slowed down.

Outside the window, a massive baobab tree stretched into the sky, its thick branches creating a natural station.

when Susie stepped out, the air smelled like vanilla

and fresh rain. The sun hung low, casting golden light over the landscape.

A small wooden sign read:

Madagascar - No One's in a Rush Here. Tanya leaned against the train. "You feel that?" Susie closed her eyes. For the first time in forever, she wasn't in a hurry.

She took a deep breath, listening to the rustling leaves, the distant laughter of children, the sound of something bubbling—was that coffee?

A woman in a bright yellow dress handed her a cup. "Sit," she said kindly. Susie did.

For a few moments, she simply existed. And for the first time since she'd started this journey—

That was enough.

Scene 5: The Invisible Desert Station

It was nowhere.

Sand dunes. Wind. Silence.

The train had stopped, but... there was **no station**. Susie turned to Tanya. "Where *exactly* are we?" He pointed ahead. "That depends. Do you see it yet?" She frowned. "See what?"

Tanya didn't answer.

She took a step forward. And suddenly-there it was.

A small, old-fashioned station, appearing out of thin air.

A sign above the door read:

P The Desert Mirage Stop - Only Real If You Believe It Is.

She exhaled sharply.

"That's ... unsettling."

Tanya smiled. "It's just like goals, Susie. If you don't believe in them, they don't exist."

She turned back to the station. It was flickering. Waiting.

Susie swallowed. "I believe in it," she whispered. The station became solid. The doors opened. And the train rolled forward.

Final Scene: The Last Stop (For Now) – Silicon Valley... Or Is It?

when the train finally slowed down, Susie expected to see a futuristic skyline.

Instead?

It looked ... ordinary.

A quiet café. A street with trees. A woman on a laptop, sipping tea.

No flying cars. No robots.

Just real people, thinking, working, dreaming.

She turned to Tanya. "This is Silicon Valley?"

"Depends. What were you expecting?"

She paused.

Somewhere deep down, she'd thought Silicon Valley

would be an answer.

A place where people had **figured everything out**. But standing here now, she realized—

Everyone was still searching.

Still building.

Still on their own trains, moving forward.

Tanya nudged her. "You made it, conductor."

Susie smiled.

"But the train's still moving, isn't it?"

Tanya grinned.

"Always."

