

# HEROISM

He stood waiting for the train. He kept turning his head, looking up at the time, watching the minutes pass one by one. He'd woken up late; succumbing to the seduction of *just another ten minutes in bed*. One hour later, he'd snapped out of bed, realising how late it was, and hurriedly thrown his clothes on and raced out of the door.

In his mind, he rehearsed his excuses that he would give to his boss, but the stress was clouding his mind.

He looked across to the platform opposite; a man with thinning grey hair stood there, close to the edge, looking anxious. Perhaps he too was running late, and had picked a spot close to the edge so that he could climb aboard the train before anyone else; as if that would make any difference to the speed of the train itself.

He looked up once more to the clock, watching another minute pass; as if regularly checking the clock was going to make the train come any sooner.

The train was nine minutes late; he was running on forty five minutes so far. If he could keep it under an hour, that –for some reason– would look better.

He could tell his boss that he'd twisted his ankle. Maybe he could fake a limp for a few days. Surely then he'd get bonus points for coming into work despite his injury.

No; that's absurd. He'd be sent to the hospital, and the hospital would know he was faking it. Perhaps he really could twist his ankle; but was it ethical to waste the valuable time and resources of the hardworking medical staff of the United Kingdom? Perhaps not.

He looked back at the man on the other side of the platform. In the distance, he could hear the rumbling of a train coming. It wouldn't be long now. He could think of an excuse whilst he was on the train.

Maybe he could say he got mugged?

No, that's ridiculous, he'd have to hide his wallet. And there'd be a police report.

The look of anxiety on the face of the man on the opposite platform faded, his mouth hanging open as his eyes closed and his body seemed to sink; he fell forwards, limply flopping off the platform and falling into a heap on the train tracks.

Suddenly, the sounds of the approaching train that he'd eagerly anticipated became unbearable; filling him with mortal dread. The passengers panicked, some rushing about to inform the railway staff, who made panicked calls, knowing that the train would not be able to

stop in time. Others held their hands out, waving frantically to signal for the train to stop.

He looked down at the man, his hands flung limply over the rails. His head resting on the stones, unaware of his fate.

A surge of adrenaline overtook him, and before he realised what he was doing, he'd leapt off the platform edge, and had begun to cross the rails. The train's horn blared as it approached, the brakes screeching, desperately straining to stop.

He gripped the man under the shoulders, feeling the vibrations of the railway line as they reverberated through the man's bones. With less than a second to spare, he yanked the man from the rails, pulling him to safety; feeling the force of the wind as the train tore past them.

He looked down at the man, who began to slowly regain consciousness. He knew now what his excuse would be.

Q: Why did the character decide against faking a twisted ankle?

A: Because he'd be sent to hospital, and they'd know he was faking it. He also didn't want to waste the valuable time and resources of the hardworking medical staff of the UK.

Q: The man opposite him had what kind of look on his face?

A: Anxiety.

Q: What did he feel as he pulled the man to safety?

A: The force of the wind as the train tore past them.