

Once upon a time, in a small city, that some even call a village in comparison to other, larger, conurbations peering the land and expanding through the incorrupt nature, in the east of Slovakia, there lived three friends.

The most well-known of them was a young student of medicine and partially (sarcastically) successful businessman Guy. He went in cahoots with another businessman a while back, one that promised riches and cajoled Guy into joining a scam. As he was young and inexperienced in the art of deceit, he unwisely agreed to help this spurious man in his plan and invested all his life savings into a cryptocurrency. But, as could have been with enough prudence foreseen, the fraud fled with all the profits and Guy never heard of him or his promised money again.

On the other hand, Charles never had money in the first place. He lived from paycheck to paycheck, never really enjoying life and becoming more irritable every year, until one day he decided to cut all ties with his old friends and went his separate way. Everyone from the original group is out of touch with him so they don't know what happened to him after that, however there are rumours, that he is a CEO of a successful corporation in the States.

Of the three friends, Dick was physically the shortest, yet he was not lesser in character to the rest because of it. Hardly disclosing his opinions, he seldom agitated people. In the city he was mostly known for being friends with Guy the inveigler and his stoic personality. Having known Charles for over 10 years, it was a great shock to find out that he left without a notice or some sort of final goodbye.

On a murky Saturday evening, somewhen in 1989, no sooner than 6 p.m., Guy invited Dick and one other friend on a trip to southern Slovakia. Specifically, to southern Košice. As he had nothing better to do that weekend, Dick agreed. But what appalled Dick was, that Guy insisted on going right then. Dick didn't want to sound rude or hurt Guy's feelings by refusing after he has already committed himself to this venture. Then he thought of something.

"But you don't have enough money for a trip to Košice." He said as politely as he could, believing, such comment would discourage Guy from the idea, or maybe just reconsider it for another day.

"Don't worry, my friend will pay for it all." Guy replied immediately, shattering all hope Dick had of escaping this increasingly ominous situation.

"Fine, I'll go. But may I at least know who this friend of yours is?" If he couldn't slip out of this setting, he wanted to scope it out.

"No need to worry, I've known him for a long time." Guy stopped for a moment, looking to the ground for a few seconds and then continuing.

"And if you're worried about him being another scammer, then I can guarantee, he is not. We're going to meet him at the train station and there you can talk to him yourself." he acknowledged Dick's implied concern.

And so, they left for the station, where they were to meet this unknown acquaintance. Both didn't know this yet, but it will be a journey they will remember for the rest of their lives.

When they arrived at the station it was already dusk. Not many people were present, apart from the occasional gamblers, coming to buy this week's special lottery. They believed the same lie of immediate wealth as once Guy did. Although this one does not have a friendly face, a welcoming smile and warm words attached to it. Just flashy colours and sometimes the television telling you to try your luck. Anyway, the station was virtually empty. Not even the friend who Guy was mentioning wasn't there. And so, as they waited, a single familiar face appeared. It was Guy's ex-girlfriend Lesana. And, unfortunately for Guy, she sat right on the bench next to them, seemingly not noticing the two. He tried to signal Dick that they should maybe change the bench by kicking him, but when

Dick finally, after some two minutes of being fascinated by the mosaic on the wall, noticed the girl, he instinctively waved.

"Hey, Lesana, what a surprise!" he shouted.

At that moment Guy got up and tried walking away.

"Guy!" Lesana shouted back.

Guy stopped, looked back and said:

"Lesana, I didn't notice you there. What are you doing here this evening?"

"Just changing trains. ... And you?"

"Waiting for a friend."

"Right, right. Where are you going, if I may ask?"

"Home."

"And if I may ask again ..." but he was interrupted by Lesana.

"No."

After the surprising encounter Guy and Lesana exchanged a few quick words.

Despite initiating the conversation, Dick was ignored during this exchange. And a deathly silence ensued. In this moment, they kept looking at one another with escalating tension. Then, like a bolt from the blue, both unwanted participants of the 'debate' screamed out in fear.

"It is getting dark, my friends." A voice of a young man came out of the badly lit hallway, connecting the platforms.

Suddenly, a pair of silhouettes could have been seen emerging from the darkness. First, a man about the same size as Guy approached the group. He was wearing a shirt with short sleeves, shorts with pockets stuffed to the brim with something and most notably socks in sandals. The second silhouette was easier to recognize to Guy. It was another of Guy's ex-girlfriends, Severina.

"What the fuck Gejza, what is this supposed to mean?"

"You seem a bit miffed, Guy. And a brief reunion will not kill you, will it?" Gejza cut Guy off immediately as he sensed a slight pause in his speech. If he had left him speak, it could have been a long and demotivating speech, and everyone present would have ended up offended.

Another pause followed, and after everyone exchanged worried and angry looks Gejza spoke.

"So, you may be wondering why I invited you here. Well, the four of us will go on a bonding trip to Košice and enjoy the sites and work out all of our problems on the way."

"I refuse to go." retaliated Guy. "If she is going, I am staying here."

"But that is the point of this activity. It's about building mutual understanding and overcoming past ..." argued Gejza, but was in turn cut off.

"Still, I thought this would be a relaxing evening, but you had to ..." then Gejza continued talking over Guy and both gradually became louder and louder

Guy and Gejza started arguing, gradually increasing in volume, until they weren't shouting at each other.

As Dick still didn't know who any of these people were, he stayed silent. Lesana offered him a bag of salted pistachios she had bought at the local snack bar. And they sat there confused together. After a bit Severina joined them and in an instance the pistachios were gone.

Some time has passed, and Guy finally noticed that at some point he has boarded the train to Košice along with Gejza. Although Dick, Lesana and Severina weren't there in the same compartment, they must have been somewhere on the train. "They wouldn't have left us here, no?" he asked Gejza, who for some reason was sleeping. At the same moment Guy realised, he was talking to himself for the past 2 hours as Gejza had by then fallen asleep. As he was not responding, Guy went to search for the rest of the squad.

As he left the coupe, Lesana, standing in the aisle, looking out of the window.

“Wait,” asked Guy “why are you here? Weren’t you supposed to go home?”

Lesana sighed and lowered her head.

“Yes, I got pulled by Dick when someone called the police on you back at the station and we boarded the first train going south.” Lesana replied in a melancholic voice.

Guy inquired about why she was there, and she explained that they boarded the first train south in a hurry, after a quick police chase on the station.

“My friend!” Guy heard an annoyingly familiar voice from the compartment.

And out came Gejza and reminded Guy about what Lesana once told him, about him not being wealthy enough for her. And at that moment Guy decided to, for some unknown reason, leave the train while it was still moving. At that instant Gejza pulled him back into the coupe and closed the door behind him. He resumed the conversation with Lesana. The whereabouts of Dick were still unknown to the group. Also, Severina was nowhere to be found, but that was not as important as she wasn’t a real character and didn’t even have a line of dialogue.

And so, they talked while Guy was stuck in the coupe. He tried breaking out, but to no avail. He couldn’t hear the content of the conversation, but he saw, through the small window on the doors, that Lesana was becoming angrier by every word Gejza said. He was in the process of ruining Guy’s reputation even more! And he was succeeding.

Then out of nowhere, an old man came in and said:

“Fiatalok, akik Magyarországra utaznak, ez egy olyan látvány, amit rég nem láttam. Azt kell mondanom, hogy fiatal koromban egyszer Komáromba utaztam, és az egész családomat elveszítettem egy vonatbalesetben. Kár lenne, ha ez megisméltódné.”

For some reason Guy understood him perfectly, unlike our listeners, and a feeling of paranoia overcame him. Firstly, he didn’t know how he understood Hungarian, and secondly, what the man said sounded creepily familiar. As if he was inconspicuously describing what was to happen.

Gejza immediately asked for the old man’s name.

“A nevem Máté a látnok. Bánátból származom, de a szüleim nem voltak magyar származásúak.”

“Wait!” The sentence horrified Guy. They were not going to Košice. Their train was rapidly approaching...

“On behalf of the Železničná Spoločnosť Slovensko we would like to inform you, that we will soon be arriving in Komárno.”

At that moment Guy was desperate to stop whatever was happening and tried breaking out of the room one last time. As if by a miracle, the door gave way and Guy was free to roam the train as himself again. He stormed past the terrified Lesana and rushed straight to the front to stop the engine. When he arrived at the destination, he shot the driver by the means of a gun he fucking manifested from thin air or something, IDK it’s midnight I just want to sleep. And halted the locomotive, derailing the machine.

In another wagon, Dick was sitting on a bench with other passengers.

“Fuck!” He forgot to close the fridge when he left for the trip, and he felt the need to tell it to the entire car. The poor cat will now rot. In aid of his situation a passenger patted him on the back.

“Happens to the best of us.” he tried to cheer him up.

And the rest of the car shared his sorrow, until the brakes suddenly decelerated the train and threw everyone, including Dick, forward and out of the train.

After all was over, only Gejza and Guy remained. Both were laying on a field somewhere in the outskirts of Komárno. Beside them, the train they were traveling in just a minute ago, was also laying

on the same field near Komárno. The dead people are not important to the story, but they were also somewhere there, wanting to be in Komárno, but instead they travelled straight to the end of their lives. Then Gejza stood up and said to Guy that this entire situation was his, and only his fault. That he caused every one of his friends to either leave him or die. That he was the only reason why people in his village hated him, and that on the strength of all this he should just end it here, in a grass field near Komárno. And Guy found himself holding a gun. And on some field among equally guilty passengers of life...

He shot himself.