

# ON THE WRONG TRACK

## Introduction

This is a version of the illustration that Jesus used about the broad and narrow ways, using the modern-day context of a train journey. There is just one simple point to this illustration: following the broad, easy, popular way does not lead to eternal life; following Jesus is the alternative way, the narrow and difficult way that only a few are prepared to take. Depending on space, any number of train passengers can be involved, only one of whom has to have a speaking part. This makes the sketch ideal for groups with variable acting talent and unpredictable numbers.

**Bible base**    Matthew 7.13-14.

**Cast**            Jo  
                      Andy  
                      Train Passengers (*any appropriate number, more than four*)  
                      Steward (*only as a voice over the intercom*)  
                      Ticket Inspector  
                      Driver (*only as a voice over the intercom*)

*The stage is set up to represent the carriage of a train. The Passengers arrive, settle in their seats, and take out newspapers, sandwiches, headphones, etc. There is an announcement over the train's intercom.*

**Steward**            Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. This is your steward welcoming you aboard this train. This service is operated by the Popular Line. We will be departing in one minute for the newly restored station of Paradise Gardens. The journey is expected to take a lifetime. Please have your tickets ready for inspection. We hope that all our customers have a safe and pleasant journey. Thank you.

*(Andy and Jo arrive, breathless, worried about missing the train. Repeatedly saying 'Excuse me' and 'Thank you', they find two seats and collapse in them.)*

**Andy**                Phew! Made it!

**Jo**                    I really thought we were going to miss it!

**Andy**                (*Looking at his watch*) Just in time! (*Looking out of the window*)  
Look, Jo, we're off!

*(All the Passengers move in unison, as though being shaken by the movement of the train as it gets going, and accompany this with*

*appropriate train-noises. Then, in unison, all the Passengers except Jo and Andy take out their mobile phones and go through the actions of making a call. They then all speak in unison.)*

- Passengers** Hello, darling. I'm on the train. We're just leaving. Love you. Bye.  
*(Still in unison, they put their mobiles away and return to their newspapers etc.)*
- Jo** So, here we are at last. I knew I'd get you on this train one day.
- Andy** Yes, here we are. But it's busier than I expected.
- Jo** Well, they call it the Popular Line. We were lucky to get seats.
- Andy** It is crowded, though. I didn't expect it to be like this.
- Jo** I know what you mean. There's something . . . not quite right . . .
- Andy** So, what do we do now?
- Jo** Just sit back, Andy. Let's enjoy the journey!  
*(They stretch out. A ticket inspector comes along and checks all the tickets.)*
- Inspector** Tickets please! Thank you. That's fine. My word, we're busy this evening. Tickets please! Thank you. Every seat taken. Yes, that's fine. Thank you. Tickets please!  
*(Exit. There is another announcement.)*
- Steward** Ladies and gentlemen. Your chief steward here again. There seems to be something of a problem. You're not going to believe this, but we appear to be on completely the wrong track. Sorry about this, but I think we are actually going in totally the wrong direction.  
*(Andy and Jo look around anxiously. The other passengers are unmoved.)*
- Andy** What was that? The wrong direction? What's going on?
- Passenger** Oh, just ignore all that. They're always getting in a muddle. He doesn't know what he's talking about.
- Steward** *(Still on the intercom)* Oh, yes, I do. Ladies and gentlemen, I can now confirm that this train is definitely not heading for Paradise Gardens. The driver seems to have followed a wrong signal. I will get back to you as soon as I have more information from the Chief Controller of Journeynet.
- Andy** Oh, golly! What's happening?
- Jo** Don't panic, Andy. The Chief Controller will sort it out.
- Passenger** Sort what out? There's nothing to sort out. We'll get there, don't you worry. Relax.
- Steward** *(Still on the intercom)* Right. Now, listen carefully. I shall say this only once. I have a message from the Chief Controller of Journeynet. We will shortly be making an unscheduled stop at Decision Point. You will have just this one opportunity to change trains at this stop. You will be able to pick up an alternative train operated by Grace Line that is guaranteed to take you direct to your destination.
- Passenger** Load of nonsense.
- Jo** Ssh. We're trying to listen.

- Steward** But I have to warn you that this will be on a narrow-gauge track. It is bound to be a difficult journey, at times uncomfortable. The Chief Controller does not guarantee all the amenities that you have come to expect on the Popular Line.
- Passenger** No, thank you. I'm not moving.
- Andy** What do you think, Jo?
- Jo** I'm not sure; but I did say that something didn't seem quite right . . .
- Steward** Of course, customers may stay on this train and your Popular Line driver will try to find an alternative way of getting there by his own means.  
*(The train stops. This is indicated by all the Passengers being jolted in the same direction.)*
- Steward** Customers are advised that we have now arrived at Decision Point. Passengers changing to the Grace Line, please leave this train now and follow me. *(Jo and Andy consult each other; the other passengers just ignore the announcements.)* This is your last opportunity for the narrow-gauge track to Paradise Gardens. There is plenty of room on the Grace Line train. It seems that only a few passengers are choosing to take this option. Please remember: it may be uncomfortable and difficult, but your security and your safe arrival are guaranteed by the Chief Controller himself.
- Jo** Come on, Andy!
- Andy** Yes! Let's go for it, Jo!
- Passenger** Goodbye! Put your coats on. It's cold and miserable out there!  
*(Jo and Andy grab their things and exit in a hurry.)*
- Passenger** Fools!  
*(The train starts again – indicated by Passengers moving and making sound effects. Then a different, slightly sinister voice is heard on the intercom.)*
- Driver** This is your driver speaking. Thank you for staying with Popular Line. In the end, most people do. The lights in your compartments will now be extinguished and the rest of your journey will be undertaken in darkness. Thank you.  
*(Blackout!)*