

Setting

A mostly empty space.

The action of the play occurs over a single 24 hours.

Characters

Michael	<i>A youngish man</i>
Ron	<i>A retired train driver</i>
Jess	<i>Michael's girlfriend</i>
Dave	<i>A possum</i>
Steve	<i>Michael's alter ego</i>

Development

19 Trains was developed with the assistance of Melbourne Workers Theatre and PlayWriting Australia. Dramaturgy by Julian Meyrick with Melissa Cantwell, Chris Mead and Daniel Schlusser.

Note

This play concerns fictionalised characters that may bear resemblance to actual people living or dead. It is not the writer's intention to be factual in any way shape or form. Where associations may be drawn between actual people, whether imagined, in name or otherwise, the writer asks for the rights and freedom to explore this material and asks that primarily this play be read in a spirit of artistic enquiry – the way it was written. The writer further asks for forgiveness if any undue assertions or otherwise negative conclusions are drawn about any person, situation or circumstance, whether described or inferred. No offense is meant, and it is hoped that none is taken. The writer would also wish to thank Steve for his contribution.

(Version 1)

Michael stands there as the train blares down, white hot lights, screaming siren, the noise of the gravel chucking up on the rails, chucka chucka violent and angry towards him...

Michael Mutha fucka, you think I don't want this?

And closer still.

Michael I'm choosing this, you think I can't choose? You think I can't decide?

Train horn sounds.

Michael Effing do it, do it effing effer up yours.

Train horn sounds.

Michael Come on shiddlicka. Come on!

Horn, again, again, insistent.

Michael Not enough kunt up it all!

TRAIN WAILING. SCREAMING.

Michael Take me now you kuuuuuunt.

Train screams louder.

And recedes...

(Version 2)

A train approaches, screaming into the present, white hot flames and steaming hooves...

Michael You think I don't want this?
 That what you think?
 Bring it on man!
 Come on man!!!

The train screams through and past.

Ron, retired train driver, stands across the road under a tree holding some apples.

Ron On a clear day, that's maybe the winner. Ya can see 'em, ya can't do a thing about it. Clear as a day, watch them you reckon? Like a gripping Hollywood movie it is.

Dave – a possum – saunters out.

Dave How's them ghosts Ron?

Ron G'day Dave. Yep.

Dave Bring me some apples did ya?

Ron Hungry?

Dave You? Got that look.

Ron Yeah, them ghosts, never go do they. Do they Dave?

Dave I wouldn't know Ron.

Ron Them faces and them bodies, just disappear and all. Them kids and drunks and them faces...never go away.

Pause.

Dave Sorry about that Ronny.

Ron Don't be old mate.

Dave Yeah. Ah well, might go poke the missus.

Ron Good one mate.

Dave Nighty night Ronny old sock.

Ron Night Dave.

Michael is sick and has been for as long as anyone can remember...

Michael They've got to take it all out.

Jess All of it?

Michael All of it. The colon.

Jess All of it? What does that mean?

Michael I'll be getting a bag.

Jess A bag?

Michael Yeah.

Jess Oh shit.

Michael Exactly.

Jess Michael, that's shit.

Michael It's a bag of shit.

Jess Michael.

Michael I know. That's what they reckon.

Jess Isn't there anything else?

Michael They've taken out bits and bits and some more bits, but it's not working.

Jess Who are these people?

Michael Doctor Colo-rectal and his mate Arseface.

Jess I'd really love to just stare him in the feces.

Michael Mr Probe, his anal fixation and the prostate princess.

Jess The fecal king, king of the shit.

Michael A story of one man's quest to be a shitter.

Jess And his battle against the dark lord of the bowel.

Michael Bowel in my presence.

Jess I will wipe you off.

Michael I'll just sit here all quiet on the stool then shall I?

Jess Just like Lord of the Rings.

Michael A colonoscopy the whole family can enjoy.

Jess Lights, camera, action!

Michael I love the smell of shit in the morning.

Jess And... cut.

An uncomfortable silence.

Then a train.

Ronny, standing in the dusk with a bag of apples.

Ron It's flying now, really flying, just kick back, eyes on the screen, the big screen, watch it fly past, let the horn sound, this is driving, this is living. Watch out, crossing up ahead, that one on the Sandy Point line, just level out, blind on both sides, just hold your breath, just clear it, this will do. Huge breath. What a relief. What a bloody relief.

He eats an apple.