

Everyone in town knew Harold Kemp.
He was the man at Platform Nine, always waiting. Rain or shine, snow or fog; he'd be there in his worn brown coat with the same red suitcase by his side. He didn't speak much, save for the same question every single day:
"Has the 4:44 train to Eddington arrived yet?"
At first, the clerks were polite. Then puzzled. Eventually, annoyed. There hadn't been a train to Eddington in twenty years.
The Eddington Line had collapsed twenty years ago. Just a mile outside the station. The tunnel gave way. Fifty-three passengers aboard the last 4:44 train were buried alive. The company shut the route down and sealed it off. No recovery, no wreckage, no bodies.
Most people moved on.
Harold didn't.
He came every day. Same time. Same question.
The local kids made up stories: that he lost someone on the train. That he was someone from the train. Some said he wasn't even alive—that he'd died waiting. But Harold wasn't a ghost. Not exactly.

One autumn evening, a young journalist named Clara Mallory decided to write a human-interest piece about him. The local legend. Mystery man.
She sat beside Harold on the bench, notepad in hand. He didn't look at her.
"I've heard a lot of stories," she said. "But I want to hear yours. Why wait here every day for a train that doesn't exist?"
He didn't blink. Just whispered, "Because it does exist. It's just... late."
"You know Eddington line is gone. There's nothing left there."
He turned to her then. His eyes were dark voids. They carried something dark. Something... ancient.
"The train never stopped coming," he said. "It just stopped coming for everyone else."
Clara left the station with chills crawling up her spine. She didn't publish the story.

On October 7th, a heavy fog rolled in.
The station was nearly empty. Cold and damp. At 4:44 p.m., the lights above Platform Nine flickered.
That's when it happened.
The steel rails began to hum. Vibrate.
And from the rusted tracks a train emerged from the fog.
Not a train on record. Not even a train that should've been able to move—blackened metal, long-dead lights, windows smeared with something dark. It looked *rotted*, like the corpses of a train.
But it moved as if it were alive. As if it were breathing.
No announcement. No conductor. Just a single door, slowly sliding open with a screech, like teeth against glass.
Harold stood.
No one stopped him.
He picked up his suitcase, stepped forward... and vanished inside.
The train waited for no one else.

The door closed.
The train reversed into the tunnel.
And it disappeared.

The clerk on duty—Mark Reynolds—swore what he saw. So did three college students at the vending machine. All described the same impossible thing. But when the security tapes were reviewed, Harold was shown standing, stepping forward... and then vanishing into the fog. The footage showed no train. Just empty tracks and darkness. Like he walked into thin air.

They investigated Platform Nine the next day. But they found nothing. Still, something strange lingered.

Some claimed you could hear whispers at 4:44 p.m. Others said if you looked down the tunnel, it looked a little *deeper* than before. Like it had no end.

And then the woman appeared.
A week after Harold vanished, a woman in a red scarf came to the platform and asked the clerk:

“Has the 4:44 to Eddington arrived yet?”

He laughed awkwardly. “That line’s closed. Always has been.”

She smiled. “That’s all right. I can wait.”

She sat on the bench with a brown coat and a green suitcase. Every day after, she returned.

Same time. Same spot.

And soon, she wasn’t alone.

More followed.

An old man. A teenager. A woman with a baby stroller that was always empty. All different faces, but they all asked the same question:

“Has the 4:44 to Eddington arrived yet?”

Each one claimed to be waiting for someone. A child. A wife. A brother.

Their stories didn’t match—but their eyes did.

They looked like Harold’s.

Like they had seen something they could never unsee.

The company shut Platform Nine. Permanently.

They poured concrete over the tracks. Ripped up everything. And yet... every few weeks, someone *new* would appear, standing by where the platform used to be. Waiting.

Some days, the clocks at the station would glitch at 4:44. Freezing. Rewinding. One neighbor swore he heard a train whistle echo through the station at midnight. He moved the next day.

Then one morning, Clara Mallory returned to the station. She hadn’t been back since the day she interviewed Harold. But something had been eating at her.

She walked past the new signs. Past the locked gates. To the rusted remnants of Platform Nine.

And someone was there.

A man in a uniform that hadn't been worn in decades.

His face was pale. Eyes bloodshot and staring.

He smiled.

"You're just in time," he said. "We're almost at full capacity."

Clara froze. "Full capacity?"

He held out a punch card. Her name was on it.

"I didn't—" she started, but the whistle cut her off.

Low.

Hollow.

And getting closer.

She never came home.

Her car was found in the parking lot. Her phone and wallet still inside.

But Clara Mallory was never seen again.

Today, Platform Nine no longer exists on maps. It's been removed from all public records.

But sometimes, after the fog rolls in, people say they see a train pull in on rusted rails that shouldn't be there.

A black, groaning engine with no conductor. Inside, faces press against the windows—familiar, broken, forever waiting.

And if you're at the station at just the wrong time, if your grief is loud enough...

You might hear the words:

"Are you here for the 4:44 train?"

If you hear it, don't turn around.

And *never* answer.

Because if you do...

You've already bought a ticket.