

Lost in Transit

by Viji Rajaratnam

Lost in Transit Sample

“Lost in Transit” is a first person sitting simulator about a young woman commuting by train after receiving bad news. Throughout her journey, various characters from her past visit the train compartment.

The game features an experimental mechanic in which the player must fight the camera, as it shifts away from these memories. As the conversations ramp up in intensity, so does the camera.

The aim of this game was to explore how much a camera system can characterize player expressivity and storytelling within constraints.

INT. Train Compartment- Day

A mostly empty train compartment screeches and sways along a bumpy path. We see a woman in her 40's sitting across from us, putting her book down as we look at her.

Mom:

Hey... still not feeling well?

The player can only move the camera up and down with mouse controls, as if they are nodding.

Mom:

No, I don't have any medicine. You should have... nevermind. Let me see if anyone can help.

Mom turns to look at someone presumably sitting to the left of us.

The player cannot look left to see who it is.

Mom:

Hey there, excuse me. (beat) Yeah, we're just here for the holidays.

Mom (to us):

Say hi to the nice lady sitting next to you.

can now look left at the young blonde woman.

The player regains full range of motion and

Kate:

Hi there.

The player returns their gaze to Mom.

Mom:

You'll have to forgive my daughter, she's a bit train sick. (beat) Oh, you have something for that? Excellent. Really nice of you.

Mom (to us):

Hey, little one. This is Kate. She kindly lent us her motion sickness band. How's it feel? Better?

The player can only move the camera up and down, as if they are nodding.

Mom:
Good. Why don't you say thank you?

The player can still only move the camera up and down.

Mom:
Don't be rude. You should face people when talking to them. You want to try that again?

The player regains full range of motion and can now look left at the young blonde woman.

Kate:
That's okay.

The player looks back at Mom.

Mom:
Come on, make a little more effort.

The player looks left at Kate.

Kate:
You know, I have a little girl about your age.

The camera starts to drift right gently and the player must continually move the mouse left in order to advance Kate's dialogue.

Kate (cont.):
She doesn't like strangers, either. (beat) You're very welcome, sweetheart.

Kate (cont):
I get sick on trains, too, sometimes. It helps to find distractions. Pick something and focus on it.
Anchor yourself.

Kate (cont):
Makes me feel a little less boxed in.
The train finally emerges out of a tunnel, winding down a scenic path flanked by mountains.

Kate (cont):

Look, we're finally out of that tunnel. Can you see the mountains outside?

Mom:

See, that wasn't so bad, was it? All this hullabaloo has tired me out. Could you ask for ginger tea when the cart comes around? Just keep an eye out on your right.

The player looks to the right at a young man wheeling a drink cart.

Cart attendant:

Anything to drink? (beat) Hmm... let me check.

The player looks back at Mom.

Mom:

Did they have the tea?

The player looks right at the cart attendant.

Cart attendant:

Looks like it's your lucky day. That'll be \$3.50, please. (beat) Could you get your mom for me?

The player turns to look back at where Mom was sitting, but her seat is now empty. After panickedly looking left and right, the player eventually sees an old man with a grocery cart to the left.

Grocery Shopper:

What's the matter? (beat) Oh, no... Well, where did you last see her? Which aisle were you in? I don't really work here, but... I could get someone for you.

Grocery shopper (cont.):

But why don't you take another look first?

The player turns forward again to find Mom sitting back in her seat.

Mom:

Honestly, how did you manage to get lost...

The camera starts to shift left more aggressively than before and the player must continually move the mouse right in order to advance Mom's dialogue.

Mom (cont.):

...on the way to your own house! And who loads a regular tank with diesel, anyways? You need to wake up. Stop daydreaming and–

The camera suddenly starts shifting to the right and the player must continually move the mouse left in order to advance Mom's dialogue.

Mom (cont.):

Would you look at me when I'm speaking to you? What did I just say? You can't afford to be this careless. You need to take control over your own life. I–I don't even know why I'm wasting my breath. Do what you want.

The camera forces the player to look right at a new character.

Girl:

Oh... hey. How are you? Oh God, stupid question, I know. I'm sorry I didn't reach out, I just...

Girl (cont.):

I figured you wanted space. Okay, maybe not entirely... Truth is, I wasn't sure what to say, but... Don't be a stranger. Okay?

The camera forces the player to look back at Mom.

Mom:

Hey... It's Mom. Just wanted to see how you were doing. But... I guess you're not in. How are you getting on with your studies? Did you finish that assignment in time?

The camera starts to drift gently to the right and the player must continually move the mouse left in order to advance Mom's dialogue.

Mom (cont.):

Your dad and I have been fixing up the house. Hopefully we can sell it by the end of the year. Anyways, give me a call when you can. Oh, and I'd go with the blue dress. It suits you nicely.

The player eventually yields to the camera and turns right.

Mom:

Hi, there. Haven't heard from you in a while. When are you next coming home?

The camera starts to shift left more aggressively than before and the player must continually move the mouse right in order to advance Mom's dialogue.

Mom (cont.):

You'll never believe it. I've started taking art classes. Keen to show you my next piece. You missed a beautiful sunset today.

Mom (cont.):

I know you say you can't stand Florida. But, one of these days you'll miss it. Anyways... call me back. Talk soon.

The player looks left.

Mom:

Did you throw your phone into a ditch? Starting to think that might be the case.

The camera starts shifting to the right and the player must continually move the mouse left in order to advance Mom's dialogue.

Mom (cont.):

People have been asking about you. I made up a boyfriend to ward them off. Is... everything okay?

The camera shifts even more aggressively to the right.

Mom (cont.):

Does this have anything to do... with what we talked about? None of that makes any difference. I don't care about your personal life. Just as long as you're being safe. And not closing yourself off.

Mom (cont.):

Give me a call. Please. I might even be able to help. If not me, talk to someone. Or at least send me proof of life. P.S. You better not lose those gloves. They're my favorite pair!

The player looks right to see a young man with similar features to Mom.

Krish:

How long have you been sitting here? (beat) Oof, not sure that's a good idea, sis.

The camera starts aggressively shifting to the left and the player must continually move the mouse right in order to advance Krish's dialogue.

Krish:

I don't know if you should fixate... (beat) No, but that's how it starts. Listening to old voicemails...

Krish (cont.):

Look, you can do whatever you want. I'm here for you no matter what. I'm sorry... I'm not much of a comforter. You know that. If that's what you're looking for... Maybe you're better off asking someone else. But I'll always tell you the truth.

The player looks left to see the same old man from before, this time without the grocery cart.

Grocery Shopper:

I thought I recognized you! Man, how many years has it been? When'd you get back in town?
(beat) Ah, good for you. How's your mom doing?

The camera starts hyper aggressively shifting to the right and the player must continually move the mouse left in order to advance the Grocery Shopper's dialogue.

Grocery Shopper:

Oh, my... I'm so sorry for your loss. She was just the sweetest person. I have nothing but fond memories of Dr. Raj. Please, take whatever you want. On the house. Say hi to your old man for me, would ya? Send him my best.

The player looks right to see Krish again.

Krish:

What are you doing? No, I mean... What are you really *doing*? Sometimes it feels like you're not here at all. Sure, you don't mind running me in the background. Like a radio you forgot to turn off... before going to sleep. Nodding every now and then before nodding off.

Krish (cont.):

Don't just look at me. Do something! Anything is better than nothing. Or haven't you been paying attention? When's the last time you did something on your own? Without being asked or forced to do it?

Krish (cont.):

Don't be a passenger in your own life. You can't conduct your decisions around others. If you

want to leave, I won't stop you. What happens next is completely up to you.

All camera fighting has stopped, and the player can look ahead with ease.

An old woman and a teenage girl sit across from us.

Old woman:

Oh... Sorry, did we wake you?

Teen girl:

Whoops... the train's not usually this empty, ha. (beat) Aaand it looks like this is us.

Old woman:

Are you getting off here? Is this your stop?

We see the train doors open to a new platform.

End Game