

TRAVELING BACK TO THE OLD WEST: A TIMELESS CROSSING

written by

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INTRODUCTION

This is a story about two Wild West history buffs, Emmett, a paramedic who lives in New York City and Jasper, a postal worker in New Jersey. They are also cousins on their mother's side. They've decided to charter a private train that will take them to 4 historic towns reminiscent of the Old West. They want to get a flavor of this period in US history so they can create their own Wild West Reenactment Production Company. They have also been pursuing a novel on the Wild West. Since their book requires authentic accounts of what life was like back then, they decided on a unique train excursion)

CHARACTERS

EMMETT, 38

JASPER, 34

TIME

Mid-October, 2021, late afternoon

PLACE

Emmett's cramped and cluttered office at home in New York City. Unfinished scripts are piled up everywhere in the room. His office has wood paneling everywhere installed about two decades ago. His desk is situated in front of a large picture window that provides a nice view of a sprawling lawn lined with pine trees. The air outside is a bit chilled due to an early cold front.

INT: SCENE I-1

(EMMETT IS CALLING JASPER WITH GOOD NEWS)3 OF 35

(Jasper answers his phone)

JASPER

Hello!

EMMETT

Hey, Jasper. It's me, Emmett.

JASPER

What's up?

EMMETT

I wanted to let you know that our agent found a publishing company who's interested in our manuscript.

JASPER

You're kidding!

EMMETT

They want a polished copy in 6 weeks. We'll have to put our idea of a Wild West re-enactment production company on a back burner. Now, our heart and soul can be spent on this book deal. I just never expected anything like this.

JASPER

To tell you the truth, the idea of our own production company seems too complicated to realize. We barely have enough time maintaining a steady job. Now, we have a book to complete.

EMMETT

Granted, but maybe we're fooling ourselves. A production company is just not doable. You have to admit though, it would be fun.

JASPER

This book deal is still hard to believe. I wonder what appealed to the editor?

EMMETT

Jim Agent would know. I'll ask him.
American Press! Can you believe it.
Am I dreaming?

JASPER

I think we're about to enter one.

EMMETT

I guess we better move quickly and
reserve this Wild West train
charter we've been talking about
for so long. It should give us a
realistic perspective of what life
was like in 1850.

JASPER

No time to waste now...we have a
book to finish.

EMMETT

Our adventure is about to begin.
Talk to you tomorrow.

THE FOLLOWING DAY, EMMETT CALLS JASPER ABOUT CHARTERING THE
EXCURSION

EMMETT

Hi Jasper. Today, I'm gonna book
the train we agreed to charter.

JASPER

Great!

EMMETT

Oh, I did talk with Jim and he said
that the editors felt that bringing
tales of the Wild West to the
foreground capitalizes on the
country's clamor for roughshod
politics. In other words, the tough
guy image that marked the Old West
is making a comeback in today's
America. It's like a call to the
wild...even the notorious,
politically speaking. Whether we
agree or not with such a view, it
has given our book momentum.

JASPER

Timing is everything! There are
enough books published on the

(MORE)

JASPER (CONT'D)

untamed West but a new one such as ours will take precedence over those sitting on dusty shelves in bookstores and warehouses. Timing, timing, timing!

EMMETT

Yep! This charter will take us back to the real deal, figuratively speaking. We'll travel to reconstructed versions of former frontier boomtowns that give you a feel for the historic past of gun-slashing cowboys, dastardly outlaws, swinging saloon doors, one-room jailhouses, and liquor-fueled shootouts.

JASPER

So, it's an excursion into the mid-19th century.

EMMETT

Yep! I just texted you photos of our train.

JASPER

Got it: Perfect! A passenger car and caboose. Any pics of the interior?

EMMETT

I just sent a pic of our quarters in the caboose and the passenger car.

JASPER

Looks like we'll have all the comforts for a 10 day train ride. By the way, how much?

EMMETT

As you know, the original quote was \$21,000. However, since we decided to cut costs by using a caboose for traveling quarters, the total came to \$15,750. A larger passenger car with all the space and luxury options would cost an additional \$12,000.

JASPER

I like the deal you cut. We don't need luxury, just the basics. The caboose package is fine.

EMMETT

The train includes an authentic passenger car that we can ride in. There are plenty of windows for panoramic views. The best part is that our \$20,000 advance from American Press covers all our costs.

JASPER

This is a dream come true! Send me all the information.

EMMETT

I will. Oh, before I forget, contact the rail company and give them your clothing and shoe size. We're supposed to dress exactly as they did in 1850. This is to be an "immersive" experience! For the duration of our travels, we will be cowboys. The ride back to Rapid City from Tombstone will take 3 days. The entire trip is a total of 10 days. Then we fly back to New York.

JASPER

Since we were kids, it was our dream to become cowboys.

EMMETT

Well, let's have fun polishing our manuscript as we travel

"back in time."

THE WILD WEST ADVENTURE BEGINS: JASPER PAYS EMMETT A VISIT SO THEY CAN FINALIZE DETAILS BEFORE THEIR TRAIN EXCURSION)

EMMETT

Glad you could make it over today, Jasper. Let's go over the train route. Take a look at this map. We'll fly out to Rapid City, South Dakota and catch our train there.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Our first stop will be Deadwood which is about an hour's ride. The company indicated that the train route may deviate slightly from this map since our stops will be in the vicinity but at remote locations where they have reconstructed versions of these historic towns.

THE SEQUENCE OF VISITS ARE: 1)DEADWOOD, SOUTH

Dakota, 2 Cody, Wyoming, 3 Dodge City, Kansas, and 4 Tombstone, Arizona. As I said, these are not the actual towns but rather replicas of what they were like back in the day. They were built off the beaten track away from signs of modern civilization.

JASPER

This experience will surely fuel our manuscript. When do we fly out to Rapid City?

EMMETT

Next Saturday. It's a 4 1/2 hour flight from LaGuardia to Rapid City. Don't forget the 1850's clothes the company sent you. We'll change into our western duds after we board the train. This Wild West Rail company insists that we look the part.

The day for their Wild West excursion has arrived. Emmett and Jasper have just landed in Rapid City

JASPER

Here we are in South Dakota. There's a 2 hour time difference. We left at 8am Eastern Standard Time, so we've gained 2 hours. It's now 10am.

EMMETT

Our train leaves at noon, so let's get to the train depot.

JASPER

Uber will give us a ride. (Both men arrive at a remote area outside Rapid City where a small independently owned railway is located)

EMMETT

That small wooden depot by the tracks must be where we check in.

JASPER

So, we're the only two people chartering this train?

EMMETT

Yep! It's our exclusive charter. Speaking of trains, where is it? It's nowhere in sight.

JASPER

That's odd. There's an old man at the window counter. Let's ask him.

EMMETT

Hello! We're here for our Wild West charter.

CLERK

Greetings. We were expecting you. Here's the contractual agreement. Your signatures are required prior to departure. Certainly, but where is the train? We haven't seen any in the vicinity for miles.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Take a look again. Your train is right at the doorstep of this depot. You must have entered from the opposite side of the building which blocks the view of the train. It's a short train with only 3 cars. See for yourself. The engineer is waiting for you so feel free to board now. By the way, please change into the western wear our company sent you. Can't leave until you do. It's all part of the experience.

EMMETT

Surely.

CLERK

The conductor will check in with you after you've boarded.

Emmett and Jasper board the caboose and change into their western duds

JASPER

Well, how do I look?

EMMETT

Like you stepped back in time. I swear these clothes are so authentic appearing...like they came right out of some general store back in 1850.

JASPER

I know. We look like real cowboys.
(Conductor knocks at the door)

JASPER (CONT'D)

Hello. We were expecting you.

CONDUCTOR

Yes, I know. I see you are both in proper attire. It's customary to take a photo of our guests.

JASPER

Be happy to oblige.

EMMETT

You even sound like a cowboy. Ha!

CONDUCTOR

For your photo, stand in front of that partition. Perfect. I'll let the engineer know that we're ready to depart. By the way, throughout this journey, feel free to exit the train upon the various stops. You'll have 12 hours to spend in each town. Suffice it to say, don't be late getting back. We have a schedule to keep. Oh, we'll be going through a mile long tunnel in about 1 hour. Don't be alarmed by flashing lights. You might feel a little disoriented; however, everything normalizes upon exiting the tunnel. At that point, you're part of the Old West. Above all, remember, per your contract, that we are not responsible for any mishap or adverse outcome. Given that, should you voluntarily put yourself at risk as in provoking a brawl in a saloon, or worse... instigating a shootout, this company cannot be held responsible.

(MORE)

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)

This caveat is spelled out in your agreement. Outside of that gentlemen, enjoy the experience.

Conductor leaves

JASPER

I thought the conductor was a little intimidating and not too friendly considering the fact that we're paying good money for this trip!

EMMETT

Forget it. He's just setting the tone of the Wild West. That's his job. The tunnel story is just a metaphor for transitioning back to the mid-1800's.

JASPER

It's an odd way of sprinkling a little "stardust" on this trip.

Conductor returns with the "touched up" photograph

EMMETT

Look at this! We look like cowboys from 170 years ago.

JASPER

It's what we said. They want this trip to be an immersive experience.

SCENE II-2: THE "WORMHOLE"

Emmett and Jasper have settled comfortably in their caboose. The "clickety-clack" sound of the train has a relaxing effect as they begin to enjoy gazing out the windows taking in the countryside

JASPER

Emmett, we're coming up to the tunnel! This may be the transition point from what the conductor was explaining.

EMMETT

Transition point? What are you talking about? It's a show.

JASPER

I don't know. It's just that the conductor made a point to mention a tunnel.

EMMETT

...and with all that mysterious overlay of flashing lights... "stardust" as you so aptly stated.

JASPER

Exactly! Just a tad of intrigue, I guess. There's the tunnel!

EMMETT

Ha! This will be fun.

JASPER

WhoooHooo! Here we go!

After a mile, the train exits the tunnel and all seems normal

JASPER (CONT'D)

Wow! What a light show!

EMMETT

Beautiful! Those lights in tunnel must have been triggered upon entry. Clever idea for effect. It certainly marks the start of our adventure.

JASPER

Emmett, look to your left... a cowboy sitting on his horse! He sure looks authentic! I now realize this is not only a train excursion to historic towns of the Old West but a full reenactment of that period. What a clever idea to incorporate a time travel overlay. Brilliant!

EMMETT

Call the conductor and let him know we enjoyed the light show.

JASPER

Ok.

Ringing

CONDUCTOR

Greetings gentlemen. Can I help you?

EMMETT

You're not the conductor we saw prior to our departure. You look older plus your uniform looks dusty and tattered.

CONDUCTOR

Oh, that conductor is from 2021. I'm the conductor from 1850.

EMMETT

I know this is all a re-enactment for entertainment purposes but do you really expect us to believe what you're saying?

CONDUCTOR

Just take a peek inside the passenger car.

EMMETT

What?

CONDUCTOR

Take a look.

Emmett glances over the conductor's shoulder and sees what appears to be a passenger car filled with people from 1850.

EMMETT

Great holographic photography! Jasper, come here and take a look at a clever 3-D photographic backdrop.

JASPER

What? I just see an empty passenger car.

EMMETT

I guess they shut off the projection device. Cute!

CONDUCTOR

Anything else gentlemen?

JASPER

Thank you, sir.

(Turning to Emmett) Emmett, go with the flow. It's all for show just like we were planning to do with our own production company.

EMMETT

I've not seen such an ambitious re-play of 1850 right down to the vintage appearances of these actors, holographic backdrops, and absolutely convincing characterization. Jasper, look out the window. We're approaching Deadwood. This is not any modern day version of Deadwood. This town sure looks like the real deal. I have a hunch that ever since this train entered that "wormhole" of a tunnel, the intention was for us to believe that we crossed into another time dimension. Remember, the second conductor said he was from 1850.

JASPER

Kinda like the movie, "Back to the Future."

EMMETT

Exactly! This experience is based on the same premise.

Exploring the town of Deadwood EMMETT

EXT:(WALKING WITH JASPER INTO TOWN)

Now, Jasper, keep your wits about you and don't appear like some 21st century, bug-eyed tourist. We're dressed to blend.

JASPER

Agreed.

EMMETT

Let's just experience Deadwood as it was in the 1850's. Remember, the intent is for us to really feel like we're backin time. Let's check out the saloon.

BARTENDER

Greetings! Just come in on the train did y'a?

JASPER
Yep! Dusty ride...need a beer.

BARTENDER
How about your friend?

EMMETT
Sure could drain a beer after that ride.

BARTENDER
That'll be 4 bits.

JASPER
(Muttering to Emmett)
Check the pockets in your vest.
There's 1850's currency. Here's \$2.
Keep the change.

BARTENDER
Mighty thanks to y'a! Hey, let me introduce you to Belle and Sarah.

EMMETT/JASPER
Howdy Madams.

BELLE
Call us Belle and Sarah. We ain't formal.

EMMETT
How about a couple of beers for the ladies?

BELLE
You really are gentlemen. Where you all from?

JASPER
Rapid City. Headed for Tombstone.
We understand the town is booming with gamblers.

SARAH
I bet you two strangers are hustlers.

EMMETT
Not at all. We're traveling to Tombstone to try our hand at some fast money. Kinda like going to Las Vegas.

BARTENDER

Las Vegas? Where's that?

EMMETT

Nothing, not important.

JASPER

Thanks for the beer. Good meeting you all. Oh, Where's your gun shop?

BARTENDER

What fer?

JASPER

My revolver was stolen...gotta replace it. Never know when you'll need it.

BARTENDER

Down the street called Silverton's Gunsmith. We don't want any trouble. We like it nice and peaceful.

JASPER

No worries. I use it only when I have no choice.

BARTENDER

You talk like a gunslinger. We ain't looking for no trouble.

EMMETT

Thanks for your hospitality. Those actors were good! Did you see how simply that Bartender played off of my slip of the tongue when I mentioned Las Vegas? Las Vegas didn't even exist. It was founded in 1905! Long after this place!

Jasper and Emmett leave the saloon. By the way, what we're you thinking making them think you're some sort of gunslinger!

JASPER

Don't worry! I was just improvising...going with the flow. By the way, did you find play money in your pockets?

EMMETT

I did. I assumed that any monies spent would be with modern day currency.

JASPER

Well, modern currency wouldn't fit the times, now would it? That's why the company sponsoring this excursion included exact copies of the currency used in 1850.

EMMETT

You're right. On the subject of gunslinging, keep in mind that the contract specifically spelled out gun purchases were strictly prohibited! They don't want any serious mishaps. Plus, as modern day participants, we wouldn't know the first thing about handling a six-shooter. Blanks are dangerous enough but these re-enactors are trained in using gunslingin' props. We opted only for a safe ride back to the Wild West.

JASPER

Thanks for reminding me. I guess I missed that clause. You're right about blanks. They can cause serious injuries. Can you imagine if they used real bullets

EMMETT

(Sarcastically)

Right! This is all a show! For your information, Jasper, although, blanks don't carry a slug, they still have an explosive charge. At close range it can be potentially lethal especially if a gun is pressed against the body.

JASPER

Ok, I get it. Where are the public restrooms around here?

EMMETT

In keeping with authenticity, it appears that in the reconstruction of these towns, modern conveniences such as running water, bathroom, facilities, and electrical power were left out. Jasper, just ask the merchant at Silverton's for directions to the nearest bathroom. It's probably assumed that we use our facilities on the train.

Entering Silverton's Gun Shop

MERCHANT

Good afternoon fella's.

JASPER

Top of the day to y'a.

MERCHANT

What can I do y'a?

JASPER

Just looking at your pistols.

MERCHANT

Certainly. Take your time.

JASPER

By the way, where are your public restrooms?

MERCHANT

You sure talk peculiar like...public what?

JASPER

Where can I relieve myself?

MERCHANT

Oh, now I get y'a. There's an outhouse at the end of Main Street. It's easy to spot. It sits in a field all by itself.

JASPER

Thank y'a kindly.

MERCHANT

Check back when you're done!

JASPER

Thank goodness we have modern conveniences in our caboose. I don't like the idea of an outhouse. While we're out and about, I want to check out the Post Office. Let's see where I'd be working if I lived in the year of 1850 or so. Ha!

EMMETT

Ok.

They arrive at the town's Post Office

POSTAL CLERK

What can I do fer y'a?

JASPER

(Quietly making a rhetorical comment to Emmett)

Why do they all talk this way? Need some stamps.

CLERK

How many?

JASPER

Five.

CLERK

Will these do?

JASPER

Yep! Let me have 2 of each.

CLERK

That'll be 10 cents.

JASPER

Much obliged.

EMMETT

Let's head back to the train. It's getting dark and I need to rest a bit. It's been a long, long day.

JASPER

Look! There's an altercation in the saloon. Someone was just thrown out on the street. Let's take a peek inside. A bar brawl. I wish I could get snapshots of this fight!

EMMETT

Nope! Not allowed. Our agreement stated no photos. Everything is copyrighted. Besides, I think we should get out of here and head back to the train before someone accidentally takes a swing at us.

Emmett and Jasper skidaddle

NEXT DAY, DEPARTURE TO CODY, WYOMING

EMMETT

Well, we're off again. Next stop, Buffalo Bill's home town. We should be there in 8 hours unless we find another wormhole. Haha!

JASPER

I don't really care about all the make believe. I'm enjoying this experience.

EMMETT

Let's make good use of our time traveling to Cody and work on our book.

JASPER

Good idea, but first I need to put these stamps in a safe place.

EMMETT

You're assuming they're authentic.

JASPER

I'm a U.S. postal officer. I should know. They don't look counterfeit. The edges are even.

EMMETT

You need to read your contract again, Jasper! It states any items purchased must be returned to the company. That includes any currency we haven't spent, your stamps, etc.

JASPER

I wonder why?

EMMETT

It probably costs the company too much to replace facsimiles and artifacts that tourists want to take back home as a souvenir.

JASPER

That makes sense.

EMMETT

They've stated that souvenirs can be purchased with modern currency at the end of our trip. There's a souvenir shop at the depot where we first boarded.

It's 2 o'clock and their train has just pulled into Cody, Wyoming

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Why are these cowboys lined up outside our train?

JASPER

Maybe they're a greeting party for us tourists. Although, not too friendly looking. Let's find out who these dudes are waiting for.

EMMETT

Howdy fellas?

COWBOYS

(No response)

JASPER

Howdy! We're coming from Deadwood. Thought we'd check out Cody.

COWBOY

Well, little feller, I'm Cody.

JASPER

Excuse me sir, but I meant the town. By the way, you bear a strong resemblance to Buffalo Bill.

CODY

You got that right! Cody is my real name and this is my town.

JASPER

Well, it's an honor to meet you, sir. My name is Jasper and Emmett here is my sidekick.

CODY

Good to meet you both. We was wondering if any belles...uh, ladies was on board.

EMMETT

Sorry to say, no women on this train.

CODY

Come on boys. We're wasting our time on an empty train. Nice to meet you two. Come join us for a "round" later at the saloon.

JASPER

We'll do that, sir!
(Buffalo Bill and his
entourage leave)

EMMETT

Since when did I become your sidekick!

JASPER

You saw Buffalo Bill. He was intimidating. I didn't know what to say.

EMMETT

Jasper! He's an actor! You sounded like a little weasel, "sir", "it's an honor." Don't get swept up in this charade.

JASPER

Knock it off, Emmett. I'm just having a little fun...and so are they. These reenactment people need to bounce off of us tourists. That's the whole idea. It's called improvisation!

EMMETT

OK! OK! Certainly authentic looking cowboys. I wonder what year it's supposed to be.

JASPER

Why?

EMMETT

Because Buffalo Bill was born in 1846 and his "stand-in" didn't look much older than 25.

JASPER

Good Observation! Maybe it's 1865.

EMMETT

Could be. I'm more intrigued how these towns are such amazing replicas so strategically placed off the beaten track. This reenactment company has done a remarkable job re-creating these historic towns...actually, communities. There are no reminders of modern times such as cars, conveniences, paved highways, etc. If we were to go to the actual historic locations, it would be nothing more than a carnival-like atmosphere. Main Street would be lined with souvenir stores, cotton candy vendors and the like.

JASPER

That's why this excursion was on the pricey side.

EMMETT

We're paying good money to get a glimpse of how it was in the Old West. It's a replicated society so cleverly done. It ensures the most authentic experience. Very, very intriguing. Oh well, two more towns to go. Let's go to the saloon.

JASPER

There's Buffalo Bill in his youth standing at the bar. I just can't get over the resemblance! This actor was made to order when it came to a search for an uncanny, Buffalo Bill look-alike.

EXT: SCENE III-3: ARRIVAL AT GUNSMOKIN' DODGE CITY

EMMETT

Here we are in Dodge City. This town had the reputation of being the most wicked place in the entire Wild West. From 1876-78, Dodge City was patrolled by the likes of Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, and gone-to-seed dentist John Henry "Doc" Holliday. It attracted an alarmingly high number of gunfighters and brothel-owners.

JASPER

My kind of town!

EMMETT

(Shaking his head in disbelief)

Yeah, a gun-slinging postal worker! Look at all these actors. I swear this company employs top-notch make-up artists, costume designers, architects, etc.

Such a thrilling but strange reenactment of the times!

JASPER

I know. Let's hit the streets or should I say street since there's only one main dusty drag. We only have 12 hours.

EMMETT

We're beginning to take on cowboy habits...let's find the famous Long Branch Saloon. Maybe we'll see Miss Kitty from the show "Gunsmoke."

Saloon is filled with cowboys, drunken characters, painted ladies sporting for money, gamblers, etc

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Gnarly looking characters. Let's get a beer.

JASPER

It stinks in here! I don't think anyone in here has had a bath in over a year! Talk about authenticity!

EMMETT

(Emmett yelling to Jasper
due to the excess volume
of chatter)

Let's finish our beers and get out
of here!

JASPER

Wait! There's Doc Holiday and Wyatt
Earp at that poker table

EMMETT

It is! Lots of gambling and loose
women in this place. A cowboy's
favorite past time!

JASPER

Let's get out of here! These actors
reek of bad odor.

EMMETT

You're right, too much
authenticity! Bathing is definitely
not their past time.

JASPAR

There's a steak house down the
street. Dodge is known for its
beef.

EMMETT

Sounds good. I'm growing tired of
our TV dinners back in the caboose.

Emmett and Jasper find the steakhouse at the corner of Main
Street

JASPER

Now, this place smells good!

EMMETT

Nothing smells better than grilling
steak.

JASPAR

I think I'm in love! Look at that
beautiful women eating by herself.

EMMETT

Jasper, you're married!

JASPER

Not in this century. Haha! Come on Emmett, stop spoiling the fun. It's all a charade, so enjoy it.

EMMETT

You go ahead, I'm enjoying my steak...for real!

JASPER

Well, you eat. I'm gonna offer the lady some company.

Jasper walks over to the lady's table

JASPER (CONT'D)

Good evening Madam. I couldn't help but notice that you were dining by yourself. I thought perhaps I might join you.

LADY

How thoughtful. I'm Amelia.

JASPER

My name is Jasper. My friend and I are headed to Tombston

AMELIA

So am I. I'm an actress traveling with a production company.

We're performing at the Birdcage next week. When we're done performing in Tombstone, we go straight to New York.

JASPER

I'm originally from New Jersey. My friend and I are touring these historic towns of the Wild West.

After an hour of chatting

JASPER (CONT'D)

Well, I guess we'll call it an evening. Please allow me to pay for your dinner. It's the least I can do in exchange for your lovely company.

AMELIA

Thank you Jasper.

Amelia leaves and Jasper returns to Emmett's table

EMMETT

Well, Casanova, how was your date?
While you were sweet talking, I
enjoyed my steak and ate yours too.
You missed out.

JASPER

No matter. I had a lovely chat. She
was so charming.

EXT:SCENE IV-4 EMMETT AND JASPER REACH THE FINAL LEG OF THEIR
EXCURSION: TOMBSTONE

Narrative: Tombstone was founded by prospector Ed Schieffelin
who discovered a wealth of silver in this area in 1877. He
was warned that he would find nothing here other than his own
"tombstone." The town was the setting of the Wild West's most
notorious events - the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral. This 30-
second shootout on 26 October 1881 pitted the Earp
brothers...Wyatt, Virgil, Morgan and their sharp- shooting
sidekick Doc Holliday against Billy Claiborne, Ike and Billy
Clanton, and Tom and Frank McLaury. Though only 30 shots were
fired in total, Billy Clanton and the McLaury brothers were
dead, and Virgil and Morgan Earp and Doc Holliday were
wounded. Tombstone outstripped all other towns when it came
to outlaws and gun-slingers

EMMETT

Here we are...the most notorious
town of the the Old West.

Back in the day, when mining silver was supposedly a big
drawin tombstone, outlaws wanted a piece of the action but at
gun point!

JASPER

From our research, we should be
experiencing history as it was
in 1879. That's when Wyatt Earp
moved from Dodge to Tombstone.
So, we might see the entire clan.

EMMETT

You're right. The Earps clashed
with a group of outlaws known
as the "Cowboys".

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Wyatt, Virgil, and younger brother Morgan held various law-enforcement positions which put them in conflict with Tom McLaury, Frank McLaury, Ike Clanton, and Billy Clanton who threatened to kill the Earps on several occasions.

JASPER

Yep! I wonder if any of these reckless bandits are gonna cause trouble. Given this production, the stage may very well be set for a rumble.

The two men head into town

JASPER (CONT'D)

Check out the stagecoach!

EMMETT

I wonder who's on it. Looks like they could be traveling entertainers. They're parked in front of the famous Birdcage Theatre. Let's go inside. It never ceases to amaze me just how much attention was spent on detail in the reconstruction of these historic towns. I'm even more baffled how they created functioning communities. My guess is that most of the people we've encountered actually live and work in these towns.

JASPER

Especially since these towns or settlements are situated in such remote areas.

EMMETT

...and how they all stay in character. I must say, these actors have given me a realistic perspective.

JASPER

Definitely! Let's keep checking out the town. Hey, see those two cowboys hanging out in front of the saloon? The guy on the left looks like a gunslinger.

EMMETT

Let's head over to the saloon and have a couple of beers.

JASPER

(Talking to the bartender)

It's getting a little rowdy in here.

BARTENDER

It always is.

EMMETT

By the way, who are those four cowboys outside in the street?

BARTENDER

That's Wyatt Earp and his brothers. The fella on the left is Doc Holiday. They always come here around this time and make sure all these hombres check in their pistols. That cowboy and his two friends are looking for trouble. They're wearing their guns. Wyatt will take care of them in short order. Just Watch.

Wyatt Earp walks into the saloon with a no-nonsense look on his face

WYATT EARP

Hey mister! We have a law in this town requiring all pistol carrying cowboys to surrender their firearms.

OUTLAW

So, marshal, what if I don't!

WYATT EARP

Then I guess I'll have to pistol whip you and drag your ass to jail!

OUTLAW

Tough talk Marshall, but I don't think I'll let you arrest me tonight.

WYATT EARP

Walking slowly up to the outlaw)
Now, either you hand over your
weapon or you may be very close to
drawing your last breath.

OUTLAW

In that case, take a deep breath
marshal. At that point, the outlaw
goes for his gun. Faster on the
draw, Wyatt presses his 12 inch
barrel Colt Buntline against the
outlaw's forehead Wyatt's deputy
escorts the outlaw to jail.

WYATT EARP

Everyone else carrying a gun, place
it on the bar. Now!

BARTENDER

See what I mean.

EMMETT

Wow! Wyatt Earp and Doc Holiday in
action. Jasper, this has truly been
an amazing experience. Let's head
back to the train. We have an early
departure tomorrow and finally
homeward bound.

JASPER

Yeah, from these four historic
towns, I think we really got as
close to a realistic feel for the
Old West that we'll ever find. That
"feel" will make the difference
between an ordinary story versus
one that "breathes" what life was
really like during this time in
American history.

After a 3 day train ride, Emmet and Jasper make it back to
the airport in Rapid City the following day

JASPER (CONT'D)

I hope you have our round trip
tickets because I don't.

EMMETT

Yeah, I have them in my money belt.

JASPER

Good.

EMMETT

There's the US Domestic Airlines terminal but I don't see our flight number for New York. None of the flights bound for New York correspond to our tickets. Let's check with the ticket agent.

JASPER

I hope it wasn't cancelled.

EMMETT

(Talking to the ticket agent))

Excuse me but I can't find our flight number anywhere.

TICKET AGENT

Let me see your ticket. That's odd, you can't find your flight because it left Rapid City 13 years ago!

EMMETT

What? Nonsense! Look at the return flight date... November 5th, 2021.

TICKET AGENT

I see that, sir. However, today is November 5th, 2033!!

Writer's note: Apparently, after the chartered mystery train passed through the tunnel, Emmett and Jasper fell into a time warp centered in the Old West. At that point, every historic town and the people who actually lived there, reappeared as it was back in 1850 or thereabouts. Could it be that 13.3 earth years had passed during their 10-day excursion into a distant time dimension? The underlying assumption is: If they did travel through the tunnel (wormhole), at a rate of 99.9999999999% the speed of light, one year and four months would have elapsed on earth (commonly called time dilation). Is it plausible that Emmett and Jasper were transported into a timeless dimension unbeknownst to them? If so, theoretical physics would have it that the entire trip cost them a 13.3year earth lag or latency period. Consequently, Emmett and Jasper's return home could never ever be in the year 2021 but only in 2033 at its earliest. Moreover, per space-time geometry, no amount of earth lag can ever be recovered. So I ask, have you any other ideas about what may have transpired phenomenologically...or is it just this writer's way of tickling the reader's imagination?)

THE END