

LAST STOP

by

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(Based on his original short story)

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FADE IN

INT./EXT. COMMERCIAL BUS - DAY

As the vehicle rolls to a stop.

THE DRIVER (O.S.)

Hmph. Back of beyond, of the end of the world.

THE DRIVER, grizzled, forties, is looking out the window at a dusty trail, in the boonies.

No signs. No bus shelter.

It's middle of nowhere, squared.

The Driver shakes his head.

THE DRIVER

No; dust storms. Crud out here doesn't even qualify, as sand.

BAG LADY (O.S.)

Excuse me?

INT. COMMERCIAL BUS - DAY

Seated near the back of the bus is BAG LADY, thirties, maybe forties; hard to tell. Not homeless; just an average-looking lady, with a gym bag, in her lap.

She's staring at The Driver. Bland, but curious.

She's visible in the big studio mirror beside The Driver's seat.

There's a security camera above The Driver's alcove - lens obscured by a huge wad of chewing gum.

He turns, in his seat.

THE DRIVER

It's nothing, just, umm...  
You're sure, this is your stop?

Bag Lady clears her throat.

BAG LADY  
Do you have a drink?

The Driver perks up. He reaches down into a compartment under the dash. Rummaging.

THE DRIVER  
Uh, sure. Think I might have something  
stashed away, here. Let's see, now... Ah!

He pulls a brown bag out of the hideout; half-pint of bourbon.

The Driver twists round in his seat, to display the bottle.

THE DRIVER  
No ice, no water. Sorry.  
(chuckles)  
No peanuts, either.

BAG LADY  
That's okay.

She slumps back, in her seat. Not interested, apparently.

BAG LADY  
Knock yourself out.

The Driver shrugs.

Behind him, Bag Lady unzips her gym bag.

She roots round in it, then draws out a handsome stack of bills.

Observing in the mirror, The Driver's eyes light up.

BAG LADY  
I'm expecting someone. Might be a few  
minutes.

She holds up the cash.

BAG LADY  
Is this enough?

THE DRIVER

(shrugs)

Sure. It's your dime, lady.

He unscrews the cap on the bottle and takes a pull.

BAG LADY

Must be thirsty work.

THE DRIVER

Hmph.

He swigs some more.

THE DRIVER

Can be. Sometimes.

BAG LADY

You see a lot of action, out here? Driving?

The Driver shoots a look over his shoulder.

Turns back. Drinks, some more.

Loosening up, now.

THE DRIVER

I guess.

(laughs)

Could tell you a few stories.

BAG LADY

Mmm. I'll bet.

THE DRIVER

Late nights...

BAG LADY

Secret love affairs, cops and robbers.

(a beat)

Accidents.

A rap, on the passenger door.

Bag Lady and The Driver turn toward the sound, in unison.

Her face lights up; completely different woman. Even her voice has character, now.

BAG LADY

My date.

The Driver's not impressed.

THE DRIVER

Hmph.

He hisses open the passenger door.

Bag Lady's date is THE STRANGER, an unremarkable-looking guy in his thirties. Plain casual clothes.

The Stranger steps up to the barrier, as Bag Lady's voices rings clear, from the back of the bus.

BAG LADY

She was ten.

The Driver squints.

He's got a buzz on, from the bourbon.

Trying to keep the new guy, and the Bag Lady, and what Bag Lady's saying, in focus - all at the same time.

BAG LADY

My daughter.

The Driver's eyes go wide. Recognition? Too late.

PHUTT! PHUTT!

The silenced 9-millimeter in The Stranger's hand hisses, twice.

Splatters The Driver's brains over the dashboard, and through the side window.

Calm, and unhurried, Bag Lady stuffs the wad of bills she was holding back into her tote.

She rises, and steps up to The Stranger.

Smiling, radiant, she hands him the bag.

BAG LADY

Thank you.

The Stranger nods.

THE STRANGER

No prob.

Looking like a million bucks, Bag Lady sweeps down the steps, off the bus.

THE STRANGER

Hey.

Bag Lady turns.

THE STRANGER

Can I give you a lift, somewhere?

BAG LADY

No thanks. I'll be fine, from here.

She turns. Then strides off, into the bleak landscape.

THE STRANGER

Drive safe.

He smiles.

Then he goes down the steps, and heads off in another direction.

FADE TO BLACK