Unexpected Passengers

by

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Unexpected Passengers

Splashing through the water Tyrone wrenched open the bus door and climbed aboard. Plopping into the driver’s seat he started trying to nurse the engine to life.

"C'mon" he muttered under his breath. He turned the key continually while pumping the break. Nothing. Finally he smacked the dashboard and swore aloud. The engine roared to life.

"Whoo!"

He leaned out of the door to yell "bring em out." He honked the horn to punctuate his statement. "Let's go!"

Two orderlies pried the sliding glass doors open manually while a third held a lantern up. First came those who could walk with canes or walkers. Nurses walked among them guiding and steadying them. The rain started falling harder. The group was drenched by the time they got on the bus.

Tyrone heard several of the older ladies swear at him under their breaths. His eyes narrowed but he bit his lip to keep from replying.

"Let them bitch" he thought. "Wet is better than dead."

Next came the ones in wheelchairs or worse. Hustling off the bus he grabbed one end of a stretcher.

"Come on, let's go."

Laura came last and looked around. "Dr. Stevens never showed huh?"

"Nah, you'd think the admin would be the first one here but he's probably already in Dallas."

"Damn. Ok, I think this is everyone."

"You think" Tyrone asked. "Don't we have a roll or something?"

"Sure. We have a residents list. It's locked in Stevens’ office. Do you wanna take time to break in and look for it?"

He shook his head. "Ok, you're right."

She smiled at him. "Don't you forget it."

He grabbed the lever to close the door but stopped.

"Wait!"

He squinted out of the door. "Who is that?"

"I don't know" Laura replied.

Three figures shuffled towards them. In a flash Laura was off of the bus helping them. Three rain soaked people, two men and a woman, eased up the stairs.

"I'm so sorry" Tyrone said. "Let me help you."

"Thank you young man" the woman replied as he eased her into a seat.

"Ok, now are we ready?"

At Laura's nod he shut the door and started off. The bus moved slowly sending waves out on either side. The wipers worked furiously trying to keep the windshield clear.

"Just hold on everybody" Tyrone called over his shoulder.

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The radio squawked. "Car six, come in."

The trooper picked up his radio. "This is car six. What's up?"

"We've got a call of an abandoned bus. Swing by and check it out."

"Roger that. What's the location?"

While the dispatch spoke he jotted down notes. Ten minutes later he was cruising along a country road with his spotlight shined off into the woods. Squinting he thought he saw a dark boxy shape. Stopping his patrol car he fought out of the seat belt. Grabbing his light he set off. Half way there he was panting. He stopped and rested his hands on his knees.

"Damn. Maybe it's time to take the missus up on that yoga idea."

He straightened up and started walking again.

"Hello" he called out. "Anybody in there?"

No one answered from the bus. He shone his light up through the windows but didn't see anything. Pushing the door open he pulled himself up into the bus. He stopped at the front with his mouth open. His hand started to shake. In the jittering light he saw the bodies stacked like cord wood in the aisle. Their faces were frozen in screaming masks and blood was splashed everywhere.

He back pedaled and fell out of the bus onto his butt. Rolling over he slid on the grass trying to find his footing. Finally he got traction and ran all the way to his car.

Grabbing his mike he sucked air trying to catch his breath to call it in. His heart was racing.

"Dispatch this is six. Come in this is six."

"Come in six."

"I need back up. It's a freaking bloodbath."

Suddenly pain raced up his arm and his chest felt like it was being crushed.

"And send an ambulance. I think I'm having a heart attack. Hurry!"

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The 18 wheeler slowed to a stop slowly alongside the highway. When it was still the young woman climbed in the passenger side.

She flashed a smile at the lanky driver. "Thank you so much for picking me up. I don't know what I would have done."

He smiled back revealing missing teeth. "It's ok darling, couldn't leave a pretty thing like you out here alone at night."

She slid to the center of the seat. "Oh, I'm not alone. My friends are with me."

He frowned at her as two young men slid in beside her. One was tall with blonde hair. The other was shorter with pitch black hair.

"You don't mind do you" she asked.

The driver’s eyes slowly glazed over. "Of course not. Where are y'all headed?"

"We're just so thirsty. Take us somewhere that we can have a drink."