

Waiting for the Bus

By

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EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Outskirts of the city, fall season--the discolored autumn leaves lay scattered on the stone sidewalk beside a vacant road which leads toward the city. HOMELESS MAN--late 50s, dirty and unkempt--sits on a lone bench facing the road which marks the area for the bus stop. He slouches in the bench, cloaked in tattered layers of clothes and clutching a cardboard sign in his lap. STUDENT--20, male, long sleeve shirt and jeans, and carrying a backpack on his shoulders--enters and stands facing the road beside the bus stop sign. He tries to avoid looking at the homeless man. The homeless man's gaze follows the student onscreen, and he speaks out with a raspy voice.

HOMELESS MAN

Spare change?

The student turns his head slowly to the bench where the homeless man is sitting, as if to say he is not sure whether the man was talking to him. After enough time passes for him to realize there is nobody around.

STUDENT

No... sorry.

HOMELESS MAN

No?

The student shrugs and faces the street again, trying to ignore the homeless man.

HOMELESS MAN

Are you a student here?

STUDENT

(Avoiding conversation.)

Yes.

HOMELESS MAN

Good, good. It's a great school. I graduated from here thirty years ago. Best years of my life.

The student purses his lips, puffs his cheeks and nods as if to say "good for you" sarcastically.

HOMELESS MAN

(Cont.)

What's your major?

(CONTINUED)

STUDENT
Accounting.

HOMELESS MAN
No kiddin'? I majored in
accounting.

STUDENT
(Under breath)
Go figure.

HOMELESS MAN
Is Professor Johnson still there?

STUDENT
Nope.

Pause.

HOMELESS MAN
Lemme tell you somethin' kiddo. I'm
starting to think the world is run
by greedy pirates. They'll do
anything to shake your wallet dry.
They charge you more money than you
could ever possibly make just to
get an education you'll never use.
It's all a conspiracy and we're the
fools.

STUDENT
Right... I got a scholarship.

HOMELESS MAN
(Quick, shallow laugh.)
So I bet you think you're pretty
set, huh? That's how they trick
you. They make you think you're
something pretty special. It's all
just a fairy tale. You're Peter
Pan, thinking you can keep up this
youthful charade forever but then
Captain Hook comes along and steals
your magic pixie dust and you end
growing old and putting your heart
and soul into a girl, the love of
your life, but she ends up meeting
a rich doctor and leaving me on the
street to rot. That's what pirates
do. They steal your pixie dust. And
guess what! I heard somewhere that
pirates run the world. Greedy
bastards.

(CONTINUED)

STUDENT

Yeah, I'm pretty sure you're the one who said that.

HOMELESS MAN

Well, it *is* true. Pirates run this country. But I have a plan. I know how we can overthrow them and get our money back! We just have to get someone on the inside, see? Like a double-agent. Get it? Destroy them from the inside out.

The boy sighs and walks up to the homeless man. He pulls his wallet out and takes out a dollar and hands it to the homeless man then walks back to the curb.

STUDENT

There. You're welcome.

HOMELESS MAN

You lying little bastard!

STUDENT

What?!

HOMELESS MAN

You said you didn't have any money. You lied to me. And that's a sin.

The student chuckles. The homeless man pulls a Bible out from beneath his tattered jacket.

HOMELESS MAN

(Cont.)

It's a sin boy, and you'll go to hell for it.

STUDENT

I think an all-powerful, all-knowing God is far beyond the trivial sins of every individual.

HOMELESS MAN

It's in the Bible!

The homeless man holds up his bible.

HOMELESS MAN

(Cont.)

See? Look.

(CONTINUED)

STUDENT

I have one of those.

Student pulls his Astronomy book out of his backpack and waves it.

STUDENT

(Cont.)

Your book is just a bastardization of mine.

HOMELESS MAN

Are you calling your Lord a bastard, son!?

STUDENT

(Chuckling, speaking softly)

Nevermind. It's not worth it.

The student puts the Astronomy book back into his backpack. There is a long pause. The homeless man starts laughing out loud.

HOMELESS MAN

You know what, kiddo. We're a lot alike. We think for ourselves. Don't let nobody get to us.

STUDENT

Not to be rude, but I thought giving you money would mean you'd stop talking to me.

HOMELESS MAN

If I learned anything out on these streets, it's that everyone out there is the damn same... the damn same. Here I am living off the street, struggling to survive and waiting to die. What makes the difference between living a happy, sheltered life and living this hell? Money. That's it. Not ethics, or faith or education. Just money.

The city bus pulls up in front of the student.

STUDENT

So I'm guessing the only thing that makes you and I different is money?

(CONTINUED)

HOMELESS MAN

Nah, there's still time kid. I was
just like you when I was your age.
I see a lot of myself in you.

The student steps onto the bus as he speaks.

STUDENT

I'm nothing like you.

HOMELESS MAN

(Chuckling)

Of course you are kid. Of course
you are.

As the bus departs, the student avoids looking out the
window at the homeless man.