

Brooklyn Taylor 2019

Perspectives on Riding the Bus

-Perspective 1-

"Are you getting on or what?" the bus driver yelled, shaking me out of my trance.

"Oh ya, ya, sorry." I replied, shaking my head and reaching down to grab my bag. I slung it over my shoulder, grunting from the effort, and climbed the 3, steep steps onto the bus. The doors quickly shut behind me and I knew there was no going back now. The bus lurched forward with a vengeance, nearly making me lose my balance and my breakfast. The bus driver just snickered as I grappled for a handhold,

"Better find a seat, little missy." he said, roughly. I got the impression that he wasn't the kind of guy to ask twice so I turned around and started looking for a seat. There was the seat next to the flirty girl, texting like her life depended on it. The bus lurched around a corner, throwing me down next to her.

"Ew, gross!" she shrieked, pushing me off. Ok, I thought, I guess that's a no. I moved on and saw there was a seat by a boy wearing all black, looking out the window with a glare that would strike a butterfly from the air. As I walked by, his eyes lifted to me and I felt as though my soul was about to be ripped from my body. A definite no, I thought, moving quickly past. Looking up I saw that I was about half way through the bus and there was still a considerable amount of available spots. Just then, the bus lurched to a stop and a flood of people pushed me aside, moving to sit with their friends. When I was again able to stand and look around, I saw I was now left with two options, a poofy haired girl with dark skin, brightly colored clothes and a smile that took up most of her face or a scrawny looking boy with glasses buried deep in a very thick book. As my dad always said, pick your poison. I opted for the boy, thinking that since he was reading he wouldn't want to socialize too much. The moment I sat down, the bus pulled to its final stop in front of Salem Hills High. Everybody stood up at once but I slunk down. I changed my mind, it wasn't too late, I could still book it right when I got off the bus.

"Hello." I heard a voice say, I looked next to me and saw it was the boy. He had put down his book and was looking at me. Spurred on by the dumb look that was probably plastered on my face, he repeated himself.

"Hello," he said, a little more shyly. "What's your name?"

I simultaneously felt like a kindergartner being talked down to and a caged animal waiting to be let free but even as these feelings were swirling around inside of me, I felt a smile spread across my lips. I looked at him a little a closer, noticing that he didn't look as much like the nerd I had pegged him as than at first. He was a little taller than me, 5'8, 5'9, maybe with broad shoulders and long, sandy hair that flopped in his face when he moved. His eyes were a bright, intense green that made me both intimidated and excited at the same time.

"Jessa," I said in a low whisper, my eyes never leaving his. "My name is Jessa."

-Perspective 2-

Jessa. Oh, didn't that name just roll off the tongue like song out of a bird's throat? Like honey and sunshine and long summer days. Jessa. I knew this was the beginning of something great and by the

look in her eyes, she felt it too. I put good old Shakespeare in my backpack and zipped it up with a flourish.

"It's very nice to meet you, Jessa," I said, being careful not to put too much extra emphasis on that beautiful last word. "My name is Noah. Are you new to this school?"

She looked away from me for the first time, clasping her hands in her lap and nodded. "Yes, I just moved here from Northern Washington," she said, her voice as sweet and soft as the morning dew.

"That's cool," I said, trying to sound both interested and interesting. "I've heard it's very pretty up there, lush and green. I've also heard it rains a lot."

I looked to her, hoping she would save my awkward attempt. She smiled, I could tell she understood.

"Yes, it is very beautiful, and it does rain a lot," she said, and I could see the longing in her eyes as she continued, "I've lived there since I was born. I remember jumping in the puddles and climbing the trees. I would go all the way to the top and lean my cheek against the deep, resilient trunk. I would look out across the valley and see the green hills rolling out for as far as I could see, miles of nothing but different shades of green." I could see her zoning out with a deep sigh, retreating to her land of memories.

"It sounds like you really loved it there," I said, gently, not wanting to break her trance. She seemed not sad, but thoughtful as her eyes resumed looking at mine. "I really did." she sighed. "But, it's better here, it has to be." All the sudden she snapped and seemed to remember where she was. "But I don't know why I'm sharing this with you. Nothing personal, it's just... well, it's just that we just met. But at the same time, it feels like... well, never mind, it's silly." She shook her head and moved to gather her things, seeming to be done with the conversation.

But I wasn't ready to be done.

"Wait, please, tell me what you were going to say." She looked up and into my eyes, deeply. I could feel her there, sense her. She was looking for something, and as I opened myself up to her, I felt her find it.

"I feel like I already know you," she said, with more confidence in her voice than he had previously heard. "In fact," she continued, gathering her stuff with a rush and standing up, "I think you are the reason I'm here."

As she turned and started walking off the bus, I couldn't help but stare. There's no way I could've met her before, I definitely would've remembered that, and yet deep down, I felt she was right. There was a connection there that I both couldn't and didn't want to deny.

"I guess my mom was right," I muttered, grabbing my things. "This is going to be my year."