Creative

End of the Line—A Play in One Act

Irene Ziegler

910 Sabot Street, Richmond, VA 23226, USA; E-Mail: Iziegler2@gmail.com

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Abstract: In this short play, the playwright drew on her experience as a voiceover talent for bus transportation and Global Positioning Systems. The drama humanizes a voice we love to hate, and subsequently adds layers of back-story and meaning to a deceptively slight one-act, which begins in one reality, and ends in another.

Keywords: play; playwright; voiceover; drama; one-act

Character List: BUS DRIVER, any age or race.

BOY, any age or race. The tenor of the play changes according to the boy’s age. Final casting decision is at the director’s discretion.

WOMAN, any age or race. Again, experimentation is encouraged.

FEMALE VOICEOVER (VO), the voice of the bus.

Gender Breakdown: 1 boy
1 man
1 woman
1 female voiceover

Genre: Drama

SETTING: A metropolitan bus.

AT RISE: BUS DRIVER comes to the end of the line, parks the bus. He notices a BOY sitting by himself.
Are you lost?

No, sir.

Is this your stop?

No, sir.

You realize we’ve reached the end of the line.

Yes, sir.

I don’t start up again for another few minutes.

Yes, sir.

And then I just go back the way we came.

Yes, sir.

You’re just going to sit here, then?

Yes, sir. If that’s okay.

Okay by me.

Thank you.

I just saw you back here and wanted to make sure you were, you know…
BOY

I’m not lost.

DRIVER

Okay. Just checking.

A WOMAN gets on the bus.

DRIVER

You’re welcome to sit, ma’am, but we don’t get to moving for another few minutes yet.

WOMAN

Oh, I see. Can you turn the air on?

DRIVER

No, ma’am, I’m sorry. I gotta keep everything cut off until I’m back on line.

WOMAN

Oh, I see.

Yes, ma’am.

WOMAN

I’ll just wait then.

DRIVER

Suit yourself.

SHE sits. DRIVER addresses BOY.

DRIVER

You gonna be all right, then?

BOY

Yes, thank you.

DRIVER

Okay. I’m right outside if you need me.

BOY

Um, there is one thing, actually.

DRIVER

What’s that, son?
Can you make the bus talk?

Talk?

Yeah, you know.

Oh, you mean the GPS voice?

I don’t know what you call it. The voice that says what the next street is.

Yeah, yeah. The GPS voice.

Can you play it?

Well, I have to switch the motor on to do that.

I’m sorry, son.

Okay.

Like I told this lady, I can’t run the air either, so…

Okay. I’ll just wait.

Aw right. We’ll be leaving here in a few minutes.

I like the bus lady voice, too.
Yes, ma’am.

I don’t see so good, so I like it she announces the next stop.

Yes, ma’am.

SHE unrolls a piece of gum.

Would you like a piece of gum?

No thank you.

I have more than one.

No thank you.

WOMAN busies herself with gum, purse, belongings.

Which one is your stop?

None.

None?

No, ma’am. I don’t live on the bus route.

You don’t?

Nuh uh.

Then why do you ride the bus?
Because it talks.

Ooooh, you like that it talks.

Yes ma’am. I like the voice.

It’s nice, isn’t it?

Yes, ma’am. It’s my mother.

What’s your mother, dear?

The voice.

You mean it sounds like your mother?

No ma’am. It’s my mother.

The bus is your mother?

No ma’am. Just the voice.

Oh, I see.

She’s dead.

Who’s dead, dear?

My mother.

A beat.
WOMAN
I see. So you—

BOY
Ride the bus. Yes ma’am.

The driver gets on the bus.

DRIVER
Okie dokie. Back the way we came.

HE starts up the bus.

FEMALE VO
Welcome to the Greater Metro Transit System. Please have your Go Pass ready.

WOMAN
That’s your mother?

BOY
She’s not finished.

FEMALE VO
I love you, Reggie.

The BOY smiles at the bewildered woman. The bus pulls away.

END

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