

Illusion

By Karen Lewis

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Dailey Swan Publishing, Inc
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Pinole Ca 94564
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ILLUSION

She boarded the bus on its last run of the night. He felt attracted to her immediately. She dropped in the coin fare. Flashed him a smile before sitting down. He watched her covertly through the rear view mirror. A few stops later, she remained the sole passenger.

“It’s a cold night,” he remarked, hoping to draw her into conversation.

She nodded. “Forecast said we might get snow before morning.”

Frost lay heavy on the sidewalks as the bus climbed higher up the mountain. Soon they would be in the exclusive Princess Park area.

“Next stop’s mine,” she said.

He felt disappointed. If her destination had been lower down the road, he might have stood a chance with her. But up here...there were only expensive homes, out of his league. She wouldn’t be interested in a bus driver.

“Good night,” she called back to him as she left.

Damn, it wasn’t every day you met someone that seemed so right. He gunned the bus faster than usual round the dark empty streets. He imagined her curled up by the fire in one of the mansions by the park, a servant bringing her supper on a tray.

* *

After the bus disappeared into the night a feeling of isolation and fear engulfed her. The driver had seemed so nice. She’d felt an instant connection.

It was freezing. She started walking as quickly as she could. Most of the houses were in darkness. The street lights infrequent and dim.

When she got to the park entrance, she hurried down the main path heading for the trail. Would she be able to find what she’d left earlier, in this almost total darkness?

Her breath froze on the frigid air. Oh God, how long could she go on living like this?

Ah, this was the spot. She recognised the gnarled old oak tree. She rummaged around in the bushes, her hands blue with cold, fumbled with the pile of sticks, lit a small fire. She wrapped the blankets around herself and climbed into the sleeping bag.

--The End--