

# 30 MINUTES ON A BUS

19th November 2022

Dear diary,

It is me again, Tyler Bateman. On Thursday, since I forgot my headphones at home and there is nothing to see through the window, I will be imagining people's lives in today's 30-minute trip to work.

My first surprise of the day! Today's bus driver is a woman. This should not be a surprise, but I am not used to seeing females driving. Anyway, like I always do, I chose the back seat because from there I can clearly see everything.

Look! I was alone on the bus, but a young man decided to join. He was wearing a grey tracksuit. Although he was very tall, when he approached me I realised that he was not a young man, he was just a teenager. I think I am right if I assume that it was not easy for him to lift off his head the pillow that morning. He chose a seat not so far from me and left his school bag on the floor. He took his headphones out of it, crossed his arms and started looking outside the window. I was able to hear his loud music and I felt like I already knew that song. "Wasn't he listening to "Lux Æterna" by Metallica?" That was a great song to get ready for the day. I am pretty sure he did not have a cool life; he went to school to see his friends and played videogames in the afternoon. Nothing else.

We have stopped. A 50-year-old woman has just come in with an umbrella and a shopping cart. Because of her outfit and jewellery I can tell that she believes in God and the look in her eyes tells me that she has a loveless marriage. The lady is sitting on the opposite side of the teenager's seat. A few seconds before the bus keeps running, she crosses herself, just in case. The silence in the place allows her to hear the boy's music. I know this because of the face of disapproval she makes, staring directly at him to see if he notices how she feels and he turns down the volume.

But the boy was too unbothered. I wish I could tell her not to worry. The teenager would probably get off at the next stop. I saw a high school in the distance.

Just as I imagined, the young boy arrived at his destination and got off the bus with an irritated expression. It was a rainy, cloudy, cold day and he was only wearing a hoodie and forgot his umbrella. Now that I think about it, isn't it strange that he was the only teenager on this bus?

The bus driver continued driving until the next stop. A concerned-looking old man got in holding a hospital report. He took off his beret and rested his cane next to a window seat. He was constantly looking at his watch. I was getting nervous. I looked closer (but without being cheeky) and I noticed that he was not wearing a wedding ring. I mean, if he was younger I would not have cared, but, I don't know, if people his age were usually married... I wonder why... I work in a hospital and, by his expression, I suppose doctors were going to give him the results of some test that he was really concerned about.

And again, the bus stopped. A mother and a little girl came in. Another couple going to the hospital. The little girl was really nervous and afraid and her mother was trying to make her feel better. The woman seemed too young to really have wanted to be the mother of that little six-year old girl.

What do I see? That looks like my workplace! I will get off the bus right here. Today's good thing is that I will enter the hospital with the company of the girl's couple and the old man. I wonder how many stops the God believer will need to arrive at her destination...