CANDU

by Steve Burton

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FADE IN

EXT. SUBWAY STAIRWAY - EARLY EVENING

Bob, a young man with a backpack, walks into a subway station with people in the background.

EXT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - FOLLOWING

Bob stands alone.

An arriving train screeches to a halt in front of him, and then the doors open.

He walks in and then the doors quickly close.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - FOLLOWING

The car is empty, he carefully sits down on a seat, and then it begins to move.

The car stops at the next station and then the doors open.

Two people look in and then quickly move away as if to another car.

EXT. SUBWAY CAR - FOLLOWING

The empty car stops again, the doors open, but nobody walks in.

The doors close and then it moves away.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - FOLLOWING

Bob remains seated as the car again pulls to a stop.

The doors open, nobody enters, and then it takes off.

It begins to move and then abruptly stops.

An empty soda can rolls down the aisle towards the man.

When it gets close enough, he kicks it away.

A VOICE comes on the intercom to announce that there are transit problems and the train will be temporarily delayed.

The same can from before moves towards him.

When it gets close enough, he gets up to stomp on it, and then a voice interrupts.

VOICE (OS) Please don't do that. I don't have long to live anyway.

Bob looks around.

VOICE (OS) Sorry to shock you, but I can speak.

He kicks the can away, and then runs towards the exit door to the next car.

When he reaches the sliding door, the sign in the window reads, "No Exit".

He tries the door in vain, and then turns around.

The same can from before is upright a short distance away.

Bob is poised to kick it.

VOICE (OS) Stop! It won't do any good! Whether you stomp or kick on me, my voice will continue.

Bob is frozen.

VOICE (OS)

Please don't be afraid of me. There's no way I can harm you. I'm just waiting for the big crush at the end of the line. It's all part of the job.

Pause continues.

VOICE (OS) Oh, it's so nice to be able to talk to someone. What's your name?

BOB (Mumbles)

Bob.

VOICE (OS) Could you say that louder?

BOB (Louder)

Bob.

VOICE (OS) Oh great. I don't really have a name, but maybe I should come up with one.

Pause.

		VOICE	(OS)
How	about,	"Candu"?	

Pause.

VOICE (OS) Yes, I like that! Do you get it? Put together can which I am and do. I'm just a "can do" kind of thing! Ho! Ho! But, I'll spell it with a U instead of an O, just to be different. It seems to fit, don't you think?

BOB (Meekly)

Yes.

CANDU (OS) Don't worry about this. It will all pass.

A frustrated Bob sits down on a seat.

BOB

I'm here alone talking to a can. This is insane. Some kind of a nightmare.

CANDU (OS)

Well, if that's the way you want to see it. Or maybe I'm here to bring you something. A drink is out of the question because I'm empty. My usefulness is nearly over when I get swept up into a plastic bag.

Pause.

I envy you for being human. That would be fun. BOB Well, there are problems with that too. It's sometimes like this train, empty and spooky. CANDU (OS) I know, but it's freedom. You didn't have to stay on this train, but you chose to for whatever reason. I will never experience that. BOB What makes you so wise? CANDU (OS) How can I be wise? I'm a can. There is nothing but air inside me. BOB

CANDU (OS)

But, I'm talking to you and what sense is that?

CANDU (OS) Don't try to make sense. Let's just be here now.

BOB

Now?

CANDU (OS) Yes. You've got the brain. Figure it out. It's all so simple.

BOB

No, it's not.

The train slowly moves.

CANDU (OS) Your stop is coming up. BOB

How do you know?

CANDU (OS)

Well, it's fair to assume you entered this journey with a destination in mind. Certainly not this surprise with me. Although, it's not so bad. I'm good company.

BOB Am I going to wake up from this?

CANDU (OS) There is nothing to awake from, but believe it's a dream if you wish.

BOB

I feel lost.

CANDU (OS)

Well, just think of it as being lost and then found. You and I are founders together. For whatever happens.

As the train moves, Bob continues to look down at Candu.

As seen through a window, the train approaches a stop.

Bob quickly puts Candu in his backpack, and then exits through the open doors.

Waiting passengers look on with curious skepticism at the train's emptiness, until one brave, high-energy man jumps in and then others follow inside.

EXT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - FOLLOWING

Bob walks away as the doors close.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Bob walks through a light crowd.

INT. OFFICE RECEPTION ROOM - FOLLOWING

Bob sits with other people his age to read a few pages from a script.

INT. CASTING OFFICE - FOLLOWING

As two casting directors sit by a camera, Bob holds a script as he plays a scene in an audition.

He is stopped by a direction, after which the script is put down.

A brief pause follows, and then Bob reaches down into his backpack to retrieve Candu.

He displays it to the audience and then proceeds to create an improvisational scene.

After the scene, Bob sits on a chair that faces the casting directors to have a relaxed, positive conversation.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Bob walks, and then hails a taxicab.

INT. TAXICAB - FOLLOWING

In the rear seat with the backpack beside him, Bob takes out Candu to put on the seat.

The driver responds to Bob.

DRIVER

Please, no drinking or eating.

BOB

Don't worry. The can is empty and I'll take it with me.

He re-considers.

BOB

No, I take that back. It's not empty, but I mean....There's no liquid in it. Oh, it doesn't matter. We'll be all right sir.... It's a beautiful day!

EXT. TAXICAB - FOLLOWING

The cab enters the Brooklyn Bridge and then moves across towards Brooklyn.

FADE OUT