

Holding Out For

by

Teddy Beer?

OWC Simply Web site 4/16

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FADE IN:

EXT. QUIET SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Nice houses either side with manicured gardens. A low sun shines on a lonely bench.

It sits near a bus stop in front of a house. A wooden sign states 'It ain't it, but it'll do, for now' in a fancy font.

CARL trundles to the bus stop. 30s, slim, in light colored trousers, long jacket, white shirt and dark running shoes.

Takes a seat. Puts his shades on. Plays with his phone for a few moments, sighs, turns it off -- pockets it.

He stands, leans from side to side as he checks the times at the stop. Tuts while he returns to his seat.

He glances up as a Young Woman approaches...

ELAINE

Can I sit here?

She points to the empty end of the bench.

CARL

Of course you can. Don't mind me.

ELAINE is late 20s, also slim and in casual clothes. She sits. Pulls her phone out of her bag to flick through menus.

Carl turns to see if the bus is coming. It isn't.

Elaine's phone beeps. Carl keeps looking for his transport to arrive -- as if he didn't hear her phone.

Elaine reads a text. Shakes her head with disgust. Turns her phone off. Dumps it in her handbag.

She tugs at her hair. Carl can't help but notice.

CARL

Not my business, but are you okay?

She pauses, stares at him. Forlornly smiles.

ELAINE

It's good of you. I... I'm okay.

CARL

Glad to hear it.

A few cars whizz by. But no buses.

ELAINE

You going into the city? Sorry...

CARL
You're okay. I often tell complete
strangers all sorts about me.

They both grin.

CARL
I am going there. Few things to
get, A few people to see. Drinkies
to be drank. Then back home here.

ELAINE
Sounds fun.

CARL
Should be. Hoping so.

ELAINE
Can I ask you some... Oh no.

Carl turns to see her staring at a burly 25 year old Man fast
approaching from across the road - Vernon. He prefers VERNE.

VERNE
The fuck's going on here?

Carl stays still, but turns his head almost toward Verne.

Elaine's up on her feet quick with her hands up.

ELAINE
Please don't do this.

VERNE
Sit down and listen for a change.
Who the hell's this?

Verne points a finger straight at Carl - he crosses his legs
and turns to look away.

ELAINE
I've no idea. I presume he's just
waiting for a bus. He was already
here, Verne. Please go home.

VERNE
Fuck that. Who the fuck are ya?

Verne steps up. Stands only two feet from Carl - who remains
stock still - as if Verne isn't there.

VERNE
Oi! Cloth ears. What the fuck are
you doing here with my girlfriend?

Carl turns his head toward Verne - ever so slow.

A wry smile flickers over his lips.

CARL
Waiting for a bus?

VERNE
Don't be a smartarse. Nobody likes
a fucking smartarse.

CARL
Really? You're sure about this?

VERNE
You are a fuckin' smartarse. Fuck
you doing here? Come on, spill it.

Carl slowly folds his arms. Another wry smile comes and goes.

CARL
Already told you.

ELAINE
Vernon. Stop it. I don't even know
him. You know what'll happen if -

VERNE
Shut the fuck up! I'm talking to
this silent prick here for -

Carl rises slow to his feet. Stretches his arms at his sides.

VERNE
Woah. Fuck are you doing now?

CARL
Standing. Stretching. Problem?

Verne steps back. Snarls and shakes his head. Carl stands still while watching for his bus. Takes out his phone and plays with it -- but doesn't turn it on.

VERNE
What the hell is this, Elaine?

Elaine puts her head in her hands again. She sobs, then lifts her gaze to force the tears back.

ELAINE
Just go home, Verne. You're making
a bloody fool of yourself again.

VERNE
So come with me. It'll be alright.
I'll make it alright. I promise.

Carl sits down and puts his phone away. Rests his hands on his thighs. His expression brightens.

ELAINE
I can't, okay?

A tear slips from her eye. Verne sees it. Clenches his fists.

ELAINE

Not after this morning. I will,
okay? Just not yet.

Verne throws his hands in the air with a loud cough.

Carl watches him as he storms away with passion.

A bus actually turns up as Elaine sobs once more.

It stops right in front of Carl. He waves it away with a gesture to Elaine. Bus DRIVER swears under his breath then roars off with speed.

Carl looks to where Verne stormed off. Once the bus passes he sees Verne standing -- hands in pockets, face like a bag of wasps. He's about thirty feet away and glares - hard.

Carl turns to see if another bus is coming while whispering -

CARL

Don't cry. It'll be okay.

Elaine glances at him but sobs more when she sees Verne hard foot it straight towards Carl.

She puzzles when she sees Carl barely react to Verne fume close to Carl's feet -- he leans back, hands behind his head.

VERNE

This is it, dickhead. Get the fuck up. Why didn't you get on that fuckin' autobus, if you were waiting for it, tough guy. Riddle me that!

Carl clears his throat. Stretches his fingers straight then, curls them. Does it again.

VERNE

Arthritis?

CARL

Not right now, thanks. Maybe later.

VERNE

Fuck you. Why didn't you get on the bus just gone? Eh? WHY. NOT?

CARL

Wrong omnibus. Not going my way.

VERNE

Only one bus on this route, sonny.

CARL

Still, wasn't right.

VERNE

I think you've said enough.

CARL

Maybe. What now?

Verne snarls as he takes off his jacket. Throws it down.

Elaine cries and turns her face away. Carl watches all this with a smirk and wide wild eyes.

VERNE

Get the fuck up. It's time,
knobhead.

CARL

Time for...? Verne, ain't it?

ELAINE

Vernon! No! You can't.

VERNE

I can. Got to. No choice now.

Carl slips his coat off with style. Puts it neatly on the bench. Stands, stretches then does moves like Neo in the Matrix, much to Verne's chagrin.

CARL

You sure about this?

A green and rusty Honda Charade drives past them. Inside is a man in a Batman costume. He sticks his arm out of the window and does a thumbs up as he passes. His horn beeps twice.

Carl salutes him then turns his attention back to Verne.

VERNE

Fucking fancy dress wankers.

CARL

You were saying. Yes we can?

VERNE

You fucking gobshite. You get one
free shot, then your arse is mine.

CARL

Oh my. You sing the language of the
poets. Shall we dance, sweetie?

Verne swings for him. Misses.

VERNE

You friggin'...

He almost falls over, but he's up and swinging quick. Carl ducks, weaves and dives - seemingly in slow motion.

Elaine wipes her tears away. Watches then with amazement in total silence. Carl holds his hands behind his back.

Hums 'Shall We Dance' from the Sound of Music. Or was it the King & I? Should look it up.

Verne's out of breath in no time - and yet to land a punch.

Carl turns to check on Elaine. Verne sucker punches him in the stomach with as much power as he can muster.

Carl bends over and coughs - serious. Verne steps back with satisfaction and a big smile. Carl spits blood.

VERNE

Knew it.

Verne grabs Carl by his shirt then pulls his fist back like he's John Wayne in his prime. Carl pushes him away and steps back in one move. Rrripp.

Verne ends up with a small cloth souvenir.

Elaine stares at Carl's ripped white shirt - or rather what's under it. His undershirt is dark and rather shiny. It features an unusual and large symbol (*TBA*). Carl adjusts what's left of his white shirt to cover it.

CARL

Did ya? Be sure. C'mon.

VERNE

A fuckin' smartarse to the end.

CARL

Ain't over yet, kid.

Verne watches with surprise as Carl stands and beckons him closer - Bruce Lee is back and here. In spirit at least.

Verne steps up. Carl leads with a right punch. Verne ducks. And Carl flattens him with a left. Verne goes down like a sack of spuds. Or a classy trick in the posh part of Paris.

Elaine rushes to Verne. She sees he's out cold -- but breathing. Carl puts his coat back. Checks his pockets.

CARL

Don't worry, Elaine. He'll be okay, in about a minute or two. Or close.

ELAINE

You sure? I've never seen... that.

CARL

Merely stunned. You need a lift anywhere? My car's parked just round the corner.

ELAINE

You have a car?

Carl nods. Lights a small cigar as he stares at sleepy Verne.

Elaine considers, she plays with her hair as she does so.

ELAINE

When we first met, I was gonna ask
you... if you'd like to see a film.

CARL

With you? Sounds... wonderful.

ELAINE

Are you a gentleman?

Carl nods. They wander off together into the sunset. She
whispers something in Carl's ear.

He giggles like a child as they turn a corner. Birds sing.

An unseen car starts up. Revs. Roars away. When Verne finally
awakens Elaine and Carl are no longer within his sight.

FADE OUT.