

SAN

(THREE)

Written by

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Based on a True Story.

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EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Mong Kok, Hong Kong. After-work PEAK HOUR. PEDESTRIANS bustle through the streets. COUPLES, GROUPS of FRIENDS, FAMILIES - all taking in the sights and lights of Downtown.

With all the hustle, A FEMALE BACKPACKER in her early twenties, waits alone in a crowded bus stop. Chinese is spoken everywhere around her. Asian Faces pass her by, some stare at the White-skinned Blonde.

A TRAVEL AGENT approaches the Backpacker, gestures for her ticket. She shows. The Agent Checks. The Ticket reads a name - LILY WALKER. The Agent speaks to Lily in Chinese, Lily doesn't understand but nods a polite thank you. The Agent moves to the next passengers.

EXT / INT. BUS DEPOT - DAY / NIGHT

Lily heads inside to the building foyer. It's quiet unlike the street outside. Lily rests her oversized pack to the floor and takes a seat on it. She waits and watches the foreign world outside, a world which suddenly Speeds in TIME LAPSE.

The clock now reads 7:15 p.m. Lily checks her ticket. The boarding time reads 7:30. Lily looks again at the crowd of passengers outside, suddenly alive and all rushing off in the same direction. A Bus must be leaving. Lily hurries, collecting her pack to join the outside commotion.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - NIGHT

The Passengers are disappearing around the corner. Lily, still unsure if it is indeed her bus, casually follows after them.

Then without warning, SOMEONE brushes passed in a hurry. Lily looks up to see an OLD MAN, accompanied by a TEENAGE BOY.

OLD MAN
Come, follow!

No time to hesitate. Lily quickly follows the strangers as they reach the bus which is almost set to leave. The Old Man approaches the Ticket Lady who is locking the luggage compartment. They converse.

Lily watches the quick conversation as The Old Man returns.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Where you go?

LILY
Nanning?

Old man shows Lily his ticket.

OLD MAN
Nanning. We Nanning. Follow We.
Okay?

Lily nods 'okay' as the Old Man walks back to the Ticket Lady. They again converse. Lily looks to the Teenager standing next to her. She offers a polite hello nod. The Boy half smiles a reply. The Old Man returns again.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Not this bus, we wait.

Moments Later, the unlikely trio wait side by side outside the Depot foyer. A small crowd of Passengers hover around also.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
We stay together. Three, Bus no
leave. One, two, Bus leave.
(Pointing)
One, two, three. Bus no leave. Stay
together, always.

LILY
Thank you.

Another Lady arrives asking to see tickets. They show their passes and are then given a green sticker which they place on their shoulders.

OLD MAN
(To Lily)
You have visa?

Lily shows a passport page with the Chinese visa on it.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Ah, Australia!? You have very
beautiful country, Mate.

The Old Man chuckles, impressing himself with his little knowledge of English.

LILY
Have you been to Australia?

OLD MAN
No, I from Nanning.

LILY
(Aware translation was
lost)
Oh, China..? Cool. Do you like Hong
Kong?

OLD MAN

Hong Kong. Number one.
(He chuckles again, then repeats).
Hong Kong number one.

The Old Man, so happy to speak English, turns to his teenage Son and says something in Chinese, mentioning 'Hong Kong' 'number one'. The boy, uninterested, plugs himself into his Ipod. The Old Man shakes his head.

A Bus Pulls up. Passengers ready themselves as the Ticket Lady announces something.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Okay we go.

The three board the bus. The Bus departs.

INT. BUS (MOVING) - NIGHT

It's dark outside and the inside lights of the Bus are off. Lily looks out the Window. The signs outside show 'SHENZHEN, CHINA BORDER' is eleven kilometers away.

EXT. BORDER CUSTOMS (HONG KONG) - NIGHT

The Bus pulls into an allocated space and stops. Many Buses are lined spilling passengers out as they race into the customs departure.

INT. BORDER CUSTOMS (HONG KONG) - CONTINUOUS

The Three are now in a long queue as one Immigration OFFICER checks traveller's documents allowing one through at a time. Only Chinese are in the queue, Lily is the sole Foreigner.

The Old Man collects his stamp and hurries along through the terminal with other passengers. The Teenage Son lets Lily go before him. Lily moves forward to the Customs Officer and offers up her passport and Visa. The Officer shows Lily a departure card which Lily doesn't have. The Officer then points to the end of the queue where a counter has cards and pens. Lily exits the line which is now full with another long line of passengers outside waiting to join the inside.

Lily, deflated, heads right to the back, fills out the form then rejoins the end of a now long line. She's not going to make the bus. Suddenly, CUSTOMS SECURITY waves to Lily and ushers her forward towards the Customs desk. Lily beelines to the front apologising to the other passengers she passes in the queue.

Security unhooks the barrier line and moves Lily to the front of the queue.

She moves up to the Customs officer, who reads through her passport, checking her Visa and her departure card. He stamps the passport and hands it back to Lily.

LILY

Xie Xie.

Lily speeds away in search of her companions.

EXT. BORDER CUSTOMS (CHINA) - CONTINUOUS

The Crowds move quickly. Hundreds of bobbing heads scramble in search of their Bus. There's no sign of the Old Man.

Buses line up waiting to be fed the hoards of passengers. Lily can't find her bus, nothing is familiar, no face, no chance. However, as if on cue, The river of people are suddenly diverting around Two figures, standing still as an Island within a sea of chaos. The Old Man waves, Lily smiles and races to them.

OLD MAN

Three!

LILY

Bus no leave!

They share a laugh as they rejoin the race to find their bus. They board and the Bus departs.

EXT. SHENZHEN BUS DEPOT - NIGHT

The Three are now running across a bridge, bags in tow.

Another Bus, another Group of passengers loading their bags into the compartment. Lily loads her bag and spots the teenager going on to the bus.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Lily, now inside the Bus, removes her sandals as the BUS DRIVER provides her with a plastic bag. Lily shows her ticket as the ticket lady ushers Lily to her bed - a top bed on a bus with bunk formations instead of seats. She hops up into her Bed and gets comfortable in the dark Bus with cool blue neon lights.

The Bus departs.

Lily looks outside the window then feels someone brush by her, walking down the aisle. It's the Old Man. He walks to the front of the bus, checking the lower bunks. Lily wonders what he's doing as The Old Man reaches the front, turns around then walks back checking the top bunks. Lily waves to him. He squints his eyes, looks up at Lily and is relieved.

OLD MAN
Ah, okay, okay.

LILY
Thank you so much.

The Old Man, tired, nods politely then heads to his bed at the back of the bus.

EXT. REST STOP - NIGHT

The Bus pulls up to a stop. Crowds of passengers from other Buses, dine outside the stop restaurants and line for the toilets.

Lily walks towards the line for the toilet. She moves through the crowd as almost every Chinese face stares at her. She queues, hands one yuan to the MONEY COLLECTOR and heads into the loo.

Lily returns to the Bus where the other passengers and Old man and Son are waiting outside.

OLD MAN
You have passport?

Lily points to her pocket.

Old man turns to his Son.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
(In Mandarin)
Look she has hers in her pocket.

He Turns to Lily.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Look. He,
(points to his son)
Passport in there.
(Points to the bus)

The Old Man looks at his son tapping his head. Son is uninterested, plugs himself back into his Ipod. The Old Man shakes his head. Lily smiles.

The Bus departs.

INT. BUS (MOVING) - NIGHT

Lily looks outside. Comfortable. For the first time this journey She is at ease. Lily smiles gratitude to the great land of China outside her window. Lily closes her eyes and sleeps.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. NANNING - DAY

First signs of day light the morning sky.

The Bus pulls into the station. The final stop. The Driver announces something over the Microphone as the passengers awake, stretch and then disembark.

EXT. NANNING BUS DEPOT - CONTINUOUS

Lily collects her Pack, then pulls away from the Bus where the Old Man and Son are checking they have everything. Lily moves over to them.

OLD MAN
Nanning, we here.

LILY
Listen, thank you so much for
everything, I couldn't have done it
without you.

She offers out her hand. The Old man accepts the handshake.

OLD MAN
You are most welcome.
(He chuckles then repeats
his English).
You are most welcome.

LILY
Thank you. You take care of
yourself.

The Old Man nods.

OLD MAN
All the best, Mate.

He chuckles again, so impressed.

Lily waves to the Son. He waves back... sort of. The Teenager plugs his earphones in then begins to walk away empty handed. The Old man says something, gesturing for the son to help with the bags but he can't hear him. The Old Man shakes his head and grabs both suitcases, struggling and mumbling complaints as the two walk away.

Lily watches the Kind Old Man and Teenage Son leave, acknowledging the fact she'll never see her travel companions again.

Lily smiles, gathers a deep breathe, then moves towards the Depot exit. The doors automatically open as Lily walks through, onto Nanning. The doors close behind the Lone Backpacker.

ROLL CREDITS.