

← **Seat**
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Sale →

Half way between the feeling and the doubt.



I had been hitchhiking for maybe an hour by then. And I was tired and obviously a little sore. My hands had the feeling of rope, like iron, and I felt the urge to lie down. My garment bag, wasting away from overuse was pulling and tearing at the seams as if someone was trying to get out. But it was almost empty.

My boots were the lace up kind, black patent leather with thick rubber soles. I was wearing a pair of woolen socks over my ankle socks because wool socks make my feet itch, and I was smoking a DuMaurier cigarette. I was happy, in a way.

It was at least a form of happiness: that one derives from running away from something.

I had not yet been gone an hour when I felt a tremendous burden had been lifted from shoulders. The weight of worry and the suggestion of sadness under which adult life is lived all of the sudden vanished from my sight in the same way a car moving in the other direction on a freeway does: with-

out thought to it.

I had not shaved since it happened.

My pockets were full of notebooks and strange reminders of my lost life when I decided, as if in a dream, to merely pull them inside out and dump their contents onto the windy ground. From the black notebook, the one with the cover that flipped open in the detective fashion, I tore out the last page which had only a name and a number scrawled on them: Kate 2-7688.

Some numbers you can disregard. Some pieces of paper fly though your life with all the importance of a cheap bic pen, and you treat them that way.

But some you hold on to.

There are small graying bits of paper in your grandmother's house right now. And she has them between two pages of a book that will not be opened but to see that piece of paper. Your daughter has one too. It is there in her wallet. The one stuffed with all the pictures of her high school friends; all signed with hearts and XXOOs. She has a piece of paper in her wallet that she would not show you on punishment of death. It is hers and she guards it with something just as important as her life: her privacy and her intimacy.

My piece of paper is not the one I tore out of the black notebook. But that is another story and anyway we were talking about intimacy.

Rookies do not drive the trucks that drive Canada's highways.

Mostly the cross country tucker is the old timer, the one who knows exactly when he needs to sleep, when he can begin his day, and what speed to take down a 7% incline; he does not need reminders. And if you have the right kind of vision you can spot them from the way they brake, the way they pull into a truck stop, the

way they pull over for hitchhikers.

They do it in much the same way a basketball player — point guard more succinctly — dribbles a basketball. Like he was meant to do it. A truck driver manipulating an 18-wheeler with a fully loaded trailer has the art of a sculptor, the sense of a chess player, and the instincts of a race car driver — but he has the soul of a point guard.

He never speeds up when he should slow down, and he understands which travelers he can overtake, and which he must yield too. The analogy of the point guard extends here too because in much the same way the best point guards — Magic Johnson, Bob Cousy, Isiah Thomas, John Stockton — see and understand the traffic of player movement both before and as it happens, a professional long range trucker can spot a trouble spot before anyone else who is watching can even sense a minor problem. The trucker sees weakness, as the

point guard sees weakness, and in much the same way the trucker avoids it in such a fashion as to render it impossible, just as the point guard moves here or there, or directs a teammate to do so, he renders the problem moot by his own proclivity.

Good truck drivers and good point guards are not wary of trouble. They understand it. They seek it out if only to prevent and destroy it. They are not afraid of that which would scare other people because they know, if only by their own rare in-born instincts that it is they and they alone, that the trouble was made for. They can control and prevent it so they embrace and welcome it.

Hitchhikers have no use for trouble and should avoid it at all cost. Like that Nova idling to a halt there. It is too anxious for me. Too in desire of me to get in for the ride. So I opt out. Play my own defense. Move.

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