



Weekend Trip

R. J. Davies



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Online Edition

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It was late, he felt tired. Work had been chaotic this past week. He really needed this little vacation. After he got off work, he packed his duffle bag with a change of clothes and hit the road. Booking a hotel room online using his phone, when he stopped for gas.

“Pump 2,” he told the young woman behind the counter. “And these too.” He placed a bag of chips on the counter and a chocolate bar.

“43.50,” she half smiled.

She had a small tv sitting on shelf behind the counter. The local news was broadcasting. Covering an odd mysterious story, the announcer was telling people about how a whole town of people just disappeared. A small town in the northern Yukon territory. How did 4000 people just disappear off the map. The only survivor is a man who works out of town and came home to an empty house, then he noticed his neighbors were gone. The RCMP have been dispatched to investigate. Local storm warning tickered across the bottom of the screen.

He paid with his credit card, grabbed his treats.

“Receipt?”

“No”

“Heard there was a storm headed this way be careful.” The cashier smiled at him.

“Well, I’m heading out of here, so you be safe too,” he headed out and crossed over to his truck. Getting in the driver’s seat, he put his treats on the tray next to his cell phone and headed to the highway.

The drive to the mountains was about three hours. The winding road offered beautiful scenery as the sun was setting. Nothing but green and blue everywhere.

Victor turned the radio on, "They walk among us, down the streets, at the crosswalks, through the halls. They blend in quietly like a soft whisper, a blurry shadow at the corner of your eye. Were they even there? They are virtually invisible to society, like a cat slipping into a room undetected, observant and with purpose but disregarded. What are they? Who are they? Strangers in the night," the radio announcer chuckled softly, his truck filled with the song 'A Room Full of Strangers'. Going around a bend, the sound began cutting in and out. Then static and then nothing. Frowning, not unusual on this road. The sky went dark grey, glancing in the rearview mirror the normal sky slowly disappeared.

The storm the young woman warned him of. Frowning, guess he wasn't going to miss it after all. He pulled over and decided to relieve himself after drinking the large coffee he had picked up after he stopped for his clothes. Stopping at the side of the road, he put his four-way blinkers on and got out. Walking around to the front of his truck, he unzipped his pants and began his business. The soft hum of his truck was the only noise that filled the air around him and his peeing hitting the asphalt. Shaking it, tucking it back in and zipping up. Looking up at the heavy clouds above his head, he took a deep breath in, the air smelled a little sweeter out there.

Turning to get back into his truck he froze in mid stride. The little hairs on the back of his neck stood on end. A shiver snaked down his spine. A sudden uneasiness about this road washed over him. Swallowing hard, he noticed everything around him, fell silent, there was no breeze rustling the leaves, no birds, no traffic, even his own truck stopped completely. He felt

like he was being sucked into a vacuum. The air felt heavy, it was a heavy pressure pressing down on him, on his hair and skin, his entire body felt like something heavy was resting on him. He felt like he was being watched but there was no one out there. Looking up at the sky again, the dark clouds swirled around but there was no noise. In the direction he was heading there was a strange green glow filling up the sky and the air between the sky and the ground. Was it the northern lights? It looked like a wall swallowing up everything in its path, coming up the road. It was coming fast!

He willed his feet to move! Screaming in his head, to move now! A small voice in his mind screamed at him to move because his life depended on it! His body began to move but not fast enough, he got back in his truck and noticed it was dead. He hadn't turned it off when he got out. He had left it running. Turning it back on, it didn't respond, no noise, no nothing. The creepy bright green clouds were moving towards him. He ducked down over his seats bracing himself for impact. Holding his breath and closing his eyes, he waited. Nothing. There was nothing. Opening one eye the air around him was filled with the creepy green glow. It was inside his truck! It was cold, it felt like he stepped into a walk-in freezer. The twisting bile in his stomach told him that he wasn't imagining this.

Sitting up he looked out the window and his review mirror nothing but the green fog. He wasn't sure what to do. Should he get out? Should he stay in his truck? He tried turning it on again. But it didn't respond. How was his truck dead? Grabbing his phone from the tray he decided to call for help, a tow truck or something. His phone had a black screen. He tried swishing it, pressing the buttons on the side but it was dead too. Feeling a little alarmed by all this, his first instincts were to get out and run, get away from this green fog. Then he wondered

if there was something in the green fog that was waiting for him to get out of his truck and make a run for it.

Logic told him to stay in his truck it was safer there. The air around him was infused in the green glow, there was a familiar smell to the air. He couldn't place it. It was just a weather anomaly, it was moving fast and it would be gone soon. His gut feeling warned him that this wasn't something normal, that the longer he stayed there something was going to get him. Closing his eyes tight he took a couple deep breaths, calming down his racing mind. It was just an odd storm. It will be gone soon. When it was gone, he would try to turn his truck on again, or call for help, and the worst-case scenario he would walk to the nearest business and seek help. He began humming as he bit his bottom lip. Opening his eyes he was still surrounded by the green glowing fog. Pressing his head against the closed window he searched for a break in it. Or anything, just looking for a sign of life and the end to this weird green fog. Waiting for it to pass, it felt like hours, the cold air was becoming unbearable, he rubbed his arms and wished he had his coat. It was in the back of his truck, packed in one of his bags. He wasn't getting outside in the strange green glowing fog to get it. He ate his snacks as slowly as he could.

He saw a dark shadow moving in the fog towards him, was it another vehicle? What was that? He leaned forward, resting on the steering wheel and forcing his focus, was he imagining that? Is there something real moving towards him? There was something out there. It was coming his way. He couldn't tell how far away it was. It did move closer. He pressed the lock down on his door as the shadow approached his window. A man stood outside looking at him. He didn't look right. His clothes were wrong. The look of confusion on his face felt familiar. The fog was beginning to thin.

Victor just looked at the stranger as the stranger watched him. He sat there until the fog faded and rolled off into the distance behind him. The man watched him looking confused.

Victor got out of his truck and nodded at the man.

“Hi, that fog was something else, wasn’t it?”

The man nodded slowly.

Victor took a step towards him and noticed the ground crunching under his feet. Looking down, the paved highway he was on ... was gone! It was a dirt path that he was parked on.

Looking around him, the highway was gone. There were more denser trees around him.

“What?” he stared wide eyed at the man in front of him. “What happened to the road?”

The man took a step back away from Victor and shook his head no.

“The road! Where did the road go?”

“Road here,” the man raised an eyebrow at Victor. “Who are you?”

“I’m Victor Hauss,” he took a few steps away from his truck and looked around at the highway and woods around him. The asphalt highway was gone. Could the fog have picked him up and moved him, without him noticing? He noticed a familiar mountain in the distance, no, he was where he had pulled over. It didn’t make sense, everything was different.

“Come Victor Hauss,” the man motioned him and started walking north. The same direction he had been heading in. He quickly retrieved his cell phone and keys. Then followed the strange man. The song, A Room Full of Strangers, echoed in the back of his mind. Where was he? Who was this guy in front of him?

They had walked for twenty minutes and came to a small village. He didn’t remember this village being here before. The homes were all made of wood and stone. He felt like he had

walked into one of those pioneer villages in Southern Ontario. He had gone to one for a high school trip once, it was a bit lame but then again he wasn't interested in pioneering then nor now.

The man's name is Dawn and Dawn took him home, where his wife served them a stew and homemade biscuits. Victor wasn't refusing, his stomach growled as soon as his nose inhaled the stew. After they ate Dawn took him on a tour and introduced him to a few of the people there.

The sun began setting and Dawn invited him back to his home again and allowed him to sleep on the floor in front of the fireplace. Victor thanked him and waited until everyone was asleep. In all fairness, he couldn't sleep. His brain was running in overdrive. Listening to his new friends sleeping, he quietly got up and sneaked outside. The whole village was quiet and sleeping. Looking up he had never noticed how bright the moon and stars were. It was such a clear night. Which was good for him. He used the moonlight as a guide and retraced his steps from earlier back to his truck. He was worried that his truck wouldn't be there when he got back.

His truck greeted him like a familiar old friend, just sitting there waiting for him to return in the moonlight. Digging out his jacket in the back of the truck he slipped it on and hopped back inside and tried turning it on again. Nothing, the engine or battery was dead. In the distance a wolf howled, and it echoed through the night.

Victor decided to sleep in his truck. He wasn't going to walk back to Dawn's place if he didn't have to. Confused by this whole adventure, Victor didn't know what to make of it. This was real, he wasn't dreaming.

Earlier he walked to Dawn's village, ate food at his table and was going to sleep on his floor in front of the warm fire. Closing his eyes he rested his head against the window. It was late, he wasn't going to get any answers tonight. He would figure it out in the morning. He felt the coolness of the window from the night air against his forehead. He could hear himself breath in and then out. Sleep won over.

His mouth felt dry. Waking to someone knocking on his window. He blinked awake. Stretching and looking around him. Expecting to see Dawn looking at him again. He was surprised to see highway patrol. The officer indicated to him to roll down his window.

He tried turning his truck on, expecting nothing but it purred into existence. Not sure what to make of it, he rolled the window down.

"Sir have you been drinking?"

"No," he shook his head. Then again maybe he had been.

The highway payment was there, he was parked on the side of the road, where he had stopped to take a pee. The officer eyeballing him suspiciously, "Hand me your license and registration, please."

Victor reached over the central console and pulled out the folder with the registration information, then fished out his license from his wallet. Passing it over to the officer he wanted to know what day it was but didn't dare ask."

"Don't move." The officer disappeared back to his car. Looking around him, he noticed his phone had power again. Picking it up he checked the time 11:40 AM. Oh ok that was good. It was the 15th? That wasn't right. There is no way that it was the 15th!

The officer returned and asked him to step out of the truck. He complied.

“Mr. Hauss, there are a few people looking for you.”

“What? Who?”

“Your mother, sister, your boss all have reported you missing.”

“I was just going up north for the weekend.”

“Yes, that’s what they said but that was three weeks ago.”

“What day is it?”

“The 15th of March.”

“That’s not possible.”

“It most certainly is. Do you remember where you were for the last three weeks?”

“I don’t know. I just stopped to take a break. I don’t know,” he looked confused and ran his fingers through his hair. Shaking his head. “My mom!”

“I’ve already notified everyone that you have been located.”

“She’s going to kill me.”

“Sir I am going to get you to follow me. We’re going to go to the hospital just to get you checked over, okay?”

He nodded.

Three hours later his mother came rushing into the room and hugged him so tight with tears running down her face. “Where were you?”

“I don’t know.”

The nurse poked her nose in the room. “You’re free to go Mr. Hauss.”

“Honestly mom, I was going to check into a hotel for the weekend, I stopped to pee, there was this strange storm. I fell asleep and woke up to the cop knocking on the window. I have no idea what happened in the three weeks that I was gone.”

“They said you were okay a little dehydrated but otherwise okay.”

“I want you to come stay with me for a couple of days, okay?”

He nodded. He wanted to tell her about Dawn but didn't dare, for fear they would lock him up in the nutty ward. Grabbing his jacket, he followed his mom out.