

Compassion for a Bus Rider

It happened on a bus at the terminal in a busy city – a remarkable story of human kindness. Shery Ma Belle Arrieta-Russ, founder of The e-Writer's Place, tells the story.

The bus was not full. It was nearly 6 p.m., and passengers were loading. A middle-aged woman took a seat, crying. Without directly talking to anyone, she continued to weep and tell her story. She had come to the city to visit her daughter and was going back home. On the way to the bus terminal, one of her bags – containing half the money she had brought with her – was snatched and stolen. The other half was rolled in a handkerchief and hidden in her blouse. After a few minutes, she stopped talking, took out some cheese bread from her bag and began to eat.

An old man in tattered clothes got on the bus and took a seat directly in front of the crying woman. A few more minutes and all the seats were taken, and the bus conductor began taking up tickets and asking passengers where they were getting off.

When he got to the old man, he asked if he had any money with him. The old man said no, but he knew where he was getting off. He said he spent all his money that morning when he accidentally got off the wrong bus. The conductor told the old man he couldn't ride and ordered him off the bus. The old man wouldn't budge and, tears welling up, begged the conductor to let him ride so he could get home. The driver, hearing the conversation, approached the old man and he, too, told him to get off.

The woman with the cheese bread was listening and observing. When the driver and conductor began raising their voices to the old man, she interfered. "Stop harassing him," she said. "Can't you see he's just trying to go home?"

"He doesn't have the money!" the driver roared back. "Well, that's not reason enough!" she insisted. "Where will he get off and how much is his fare?" The conductor mumbled the amount.

"Fine," said the woman, and she reached between her blouse and took out her only remaining money. She gave it to the conductor. "Here's his fare and mine. I'll pay for him. It's only money. Just stop giving him a hard time. Can't you see he's old and weak?"

All heads on the bus turned to the woman. Minutes before, they were watching her cry over the money she lost, and now she was paying the old man's fare with what was left of her money. Everyone felt humbled by the woman's kindness and unselfishness.

Finally, the bus left the terminal. Not content to pay for the old man's fare, she gave him some of her food. She smiled the rest of the trip.

The people who work in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home have also learned the inner joy and contentment from giving unselfishly to meet the needs of others.

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:4 NKJV).