

NEXT STOP, SALVATION

Written by

The Savior

FADE IN:

INT./EXT. WASTELAND - BUS - DAY (DRIVING)

Empty, well-worn seats line the belly of the motorized beast. A thin film of red dust coats the fabric.

It's old, creaky, and heavily fortified. Criss-crossed metal barricades cover all the windows.

MAC, 35, dirty, in tattered clothes, is at the wheel.

A gas mask sits propped on top of his head, ready for immediate use.

He stares vacantly out over an arid wasteland. Everything, as far as the eye can see, is covered in red dirt.

It's as if even the light itself is tinted red.

The bus kicks up clouds of dust as it races towards the ruins of a city.

A CB radio CRACKLES to life.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Mac, report.

Mac lifts the receiver to his mouth.

MAC

Ten minutes until pickup commences.
How's the satellite looking?

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Clear, but hurry back.

MAC

Don't have to tell me twice. We'll see you soon.

INT./EXT CITY RUINS - BUS - DAY (DRIVING)

Mac slowly navigates the bus through deserted streets.

He scans empty cars and demolished skyscrapers for signs of life as he passes. They're all coated in the same red dirt.

The only sound comes from the buses laboured engine and old suspension, that SQUEAKS loudly from the smallest hurdle.

Mac brings the bus to a halt.

INT. CITY RUINS - BUS - DAY

He sounds the horn.

The bus doors swing open, in rushes --

LINDEN, 30, gas mask on, in the ragged remains of military uniform. A large backpack hangs on her shoulders beside an M16 rifle.

The doors close.

She removes the mask to reveal gaunt, yet attractive features, and dark tired eyes.

Mac tips his gas mask as if it was a top hat.

MAC

Linden.

LINDEN

Mac.

She flings her arms around him, pulls him in tight.

MAC

I missed you.

LINDEN

Me too.

MAC

How'd it go?

Linden releases him, removes the backpack, and opens it.

It's filled to the brim with medical supplies.

LINDEN

Prosperous day, indeed.

A smile, defeated as it may be, crosses her face.

She closes the bag, takes a seat.

LINDEN

Any news?

MAC

Free sailing all the way home,
baby.

Linden lets out a sigh, leans her head on a window, and closes her eyes.

The bus pulls away, continues its journey.

INT./EXT. CITY RUINS - BUS - DAY (DRIVING)

Mac weaves through the stationary traffic.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Mac, we have an update.

He grabs the receiver.

MAC
Send it through.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
I don't want to alarm you, but the satellite's showing a storm headed your way. It's small at the moment, but I really think you should come back soon.

Mac peers over his shoulder towards Linden, she's out, slumped in her seat.

MAC
Roger that, one more pickup and we'll be on our way.

He places the receiver down.

Linden's eyes flutter open. She sits up straight, yawns.

LINDEN
Was that the radio?

MAC
Yeah.

LINDEN
What'd they want?

MAC
Nothing, just checking in.

The bus comes to another stop.

INT. CITY RUINS - BUS - DAY

The horn HONKS, the doors open.

KANE and CODY, 25, both with gas masks on, and military attire, enter the bus.

They to have rifles and backpacks that seem to weigh heavily on their shoulders.

The doors close.

Masks are removed to reveal twins, the only difference, the large scar that crosses the entire length of Cody's face.

MAC
Welcome back, boys. Take a seat.

They do as instructed. Both nod an acknowledgement to Linden as they pass. She smiles back at them.

CODY
Homeward bound?

MAC
Sure are. Sit back, relax. I'll have us there in no time.

The bus pulls away.

INT./EXT. WASTELAND - BUS - DAY (DRIVING)

Mac watches as the sun slowly dips closer to the horizon.

The Operator speaks through a broken transmission.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
-- Mac -- massive -- your way --

He lifts the receiver.

Linden, Cody, and Kane all lean forward to listen in.

MAC
Say again, not received.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
-- The storm's coming! -- they're coming! --

Mac throws the receiver down.

LINDEN
Mac? What storm?

MAC
I didn't want to worry you. It's okay, I've got this.

Kane stands up.

KANE

You've got this? They're fucking coming for us, we're screwed!

Cody rises, places a hand on Kane's shoulder.

CODY

Calm down, you aren't helping.

Kane swats the hand away.

KANE

(to Cody)

Are you fucking kidding me? You think you're gonna come off so lightly again?

Mac looks back.

MAC

Shut up, you two!

He locks eyes with Linden.

MAC

I promise, we'll be okay.

She nods, the fear evident on her face.

Mac refocuses on the road. Floors it.

MOMENTS LATER

The entire bus shakes as the ground below it trembles.

Cody points out the window.

CODY

There it is.

Everyone gazes out into the distance. A colossal dust storm, deep red in colour, rages towards the bus.

LINDEN

Can we go round?

She looks outside, the storm surrounds them.

MAC

We're going through. Masks on!
Weapons ready!

Mac pulls on his mask.

The others do the same. All three point their rifles in different directions, try to cover all areas of the bus.

KANE
We're fucked!

CODY
Just breathe.

LINDEN
Mac, I love you! No matter --

-- The dust storm hits them like a ton of bricks. It drowns out the light.

The buses headlights are virtually useless.

Linden, Cody, and Kane all activate flashlights on their rifles, the beams barely cut through the haze.

A deafening SHRIEK fills the air. Kane drops to his knees, covers his ears and screams.

Linden and Cody fight to stay upright.

Mac barely remains in control of the bus.

Suddenly, something big, something heavy, lands on the roof, dents it.

There's another dent, and another.

Shots RING out as Linden and Cody fire at the unseen creatures, they only SHRIEK louder.

Dazed, Kane struggles to his feet.

In an instant, a large spiked limb drives a hole through the side of the bus, it continues through flesh and bone, impaling Kane's torso.

CODY
No!

Cody fires at the limb.

It retracts, leaving Kane's lifeless body to drop to the floor. A hole the size of a fist through his chest.

Another spiked limb drives through the roof, It catches the side of Mac's thigh, gouges a large chunk of flesh from it.

He screams in pain, the bus swerves along the road.

The limb retracts. Blood pulsates from his leg.

Cody fires in all directions.

Linden rushes to Mac's aid. She quickly releases her belt, tourniquets his leg.

LINDEN

You've got this remember! We're almost there!

Mac nods, gathers himself, and slams his foot on the gas.

Metal tears as a section of the roof, at the back of the bus, rips off.

A monstrous, red, eight-limbed creature drops through the newly formed entrance.

Each limb is long and spiked. Its head and body are similar to that of a spider, with large jaws and a hard exoskeleton.

Cody and Linden proceed to empty their clips.

It's useless, the creature advances on Cody, in one swift motion its jaws surround his head, remove it from his body, blood sprays as he drops.

LINDEN

Go, Mac! Go!

Mac struggles to keep his eyes open, the blood loss is severe, and taking its toll.

The creature motions towards Linden.

She quickly changes the clip on her rifle.

Linden screams as she rains bullets into the creature.

It's right in front of her.

Jaws open as they lower towards her head, then --

-- The bus breaks through the storm.

The creature stops, SHRIEKS painfully, and escapes out of the hole from which it came.

It vanishes back into the receding dust storm.

Linden drops her rifle, and rips off the gas mask.

She races to Mac, lifts off his mask.

He's white as a ghost.

Linden lightly slaps his face, searches his eyes for the slightest recognition.

LINDEN
Mac, you with me?

He looks at her, smiles.

MAC
We made it.

LINDEN
I know, we're out.

Mac nods towards the horizon.

MAC
No, we made it.

Linden stares out of the windscreen.

Up ahead, a huge fortress-like structure.

MAC
Home.

The bus races towards it.

Exhausted, Linden drops back onto a seat. Tears of joy roll down her face.

MOMENTS LATER

The bus pulls to a stop. They've arrived, worse for wear, but alive nonetheless.

Linden takes Mac's hand, his eyes focus on a familiar sight.

INSERT - SIGN

Welcome to Salvation.

Population 1480.

FADE OUT.