

OFF SEASON

Written by

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Mary hates the camper van and is stuck with her disgusting husband Tony, but fate takes the wheel and brings her on an unexpected journey.



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FADE IN:

EXT./INT. CAMPER VAN - AFTERNOON

It's grey September. Slow and steady, a creaky camper van snakes around blind bends - high with hedges - the roads too narrow.

MARY (52) is behind the wheel, wrapped in a comfy cardigan, lost to her thoughts.

Husband TONY (59) stuffed into the passenger seat, ingesting the seatbelt and a can of stout. He slurps from the rim, his breathing laboured.

TONY

You're driving like Miss-Fuckin'-
Daisy, Mary. Put the foot down will
ye?

MARY

I'm doing the limit.

TONY

Just put the foot down.

Tony adjusts his crotch, the hint of a wedding band smothered by fat fingers.

A straight stretch of road opens up and they enter a small town.

Heavy rain.

Windscreen wipers on full.

A young boy jumps into the road, darts in front of the van.

Mary hits the breaks, they lurch to a stop.

MARY

Sorry.

TONY

Jesus Christ Mary.

MARY

I said sorry.

MARY (CONT'D)

He just jumped out of nowhere.

Mary moves the van on, checking for the boy. She finds him, tucked into a doorway with a loaf of bread.

MARY (CONT'D)

He's soaked to the skin, God love him.

TONY

Next left.

MARY

He looks like Jamie.

TONY

I said left, Mary. Turn left.

Mary indicates, takes the turn.

TONY (CONT'D)

Now, open her up a bit, get this holiday started.

Tony pulls on his vape, Mary cracks the window, breaks the fourth wall.

MARY (TO CAMERA)

How can there be so much rain? It's desperate. When I see people getting pelted by it, getting soaked through, it makes the rain feel more bothersome - more hostile. Do you know what I mean? I don't know the name of this town. I keep trying to find a Credit Union or a shop sign that might give me a hint of where we are... I'm afraid I tuned out a bit, maybe for the last hour or so. I was trying to imagine how deep the water would be, and how submerged this town would be if the rain never stopped.

We're always late to our 'holiday'. I'm not expecting much, but he knows best, of course. "*We'll go off-season, in September, it'll be cheaper*", he said. So, we're heading back to somewhere-or-other again this year.

Tony opens another can.

MARY (TO CAMERA) (CONT'D)

I call him 'THE LUMP'. It helps.

TONY

Hanley's coming up on the right.

MARY (TO CAMERA)

And I hate driving this contraption... It's at least another hour until we get to the coast. One stop along the way to fill up the tank, and for The Lump to stuff his face. He likes the larger service stations, with the fast-food outlets attached. I've packed myself a sambo - so I don't have to watch him eating in public.

Tony checks the map on his smartphone.

TONY

Hanley's in 800 metres.

MARY (TO CAMERA)

I don't know why he just doesn't turn up the volume - so I can hear the directions. He prefers to bark them at me, like the big man he is. He'll mutter them under his breath, so I miss the turning. He does that when I'm getting tired.

TONY

Hanley's. Mary? RIGHT TURN.

Tony claps his hands in front of Mary's face.

TONY (CONT'D)

TAKE THE RIGHT!

Mary indicates, pulls the camper onto the forecourt.

CUT TO:

EXT. HANLEY'S SERVICE STATION - PETROL PUMPS - MOMENTS LATER

Mary struggles with the petrol cap, starts filling the tank.

She watches The Lump wander to the entrance, pulling a cloud of vape behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. FAST-FOOD RESTAURANT - TEN MINUTES LATER

Tony sits alone, watching a crass comedy on his phone with the volume travelling. He methodically pushes food into his mouth. He doesn't savour or enjoy the food.

CUT TO:

EXT. HANLEY'S SERVICE STATION - PARKING AREA - SAME TIME

Mary picks at a plain sandwich in the back of the camper van, watching a steady stream of traffic pass.

The gentle buzz of a message lands to Mary's phone, lighting up the screen. She opens it.

ON MARY'S MOBILE PHONE SCREEN:

A photo from Jamie with husband Todd (mid 30s), sitting beside a sun-drenched pool. The text says 'WISH YOU WERE HERE, J Xx'.

Mary zooms in and lingers on their faces. Jamie is so happy.

BACK TO SCENE

Mary takes a bite from her sandwich, the van shakes as a truck speeds past.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. QUIET BYROAD - EARLY EVENING

As the sun sets, the van climbs a hill road. The headlights flick on.

Mary suppresses a yawn, lifts her glasses to rub her eyes.

Tony opens a bag of crisps, puts his weight on one buttock for a moment, grins at Mary.

TONY
(proudly)
Incoming.

Tony fans his hands at Mary, so the stench hits its mark.

Mary winces, holds her hand to her nose, cracks the window.

MARY
Jesus Tony.

Tony laughs, inhales air theatrically.

MARY (TO CAMERA) (CONT'D)
I hate this.

He leans in close, forces a burp into Mary's face.

She tries to block him with her hand.

TONY

Two for the price of one, Mary. Two
for the price of one.

MARY

Jesus Tony, would you ever grow up?
You're not funny.

Mary fans her hands, pushing away the stench. She turns the
radio on.

MARY (CONT'D)

You're rotten inside.

Tony shuts off the radio, looks at his phone.

TONY

I want to try this next pub coming
up. Just up ahead.

MARY

Where'll we park up?

TONY

In the car park.

It starts to rain.

MARY

I meant for the night.

TONY

It'll be grand here.

MARY (TO CAMERA)

The Lump thinks booking a camp site
is a waste of money. He'd rather
spend it on drink. The evenings are
the worst. We stagnate at a table
until he's ready to leave: 'People
Watching' from a corner. He'll
stare until they feel
uncomfortable. When they look back
at him, he'll always look away -
like the coward he is.

Mary turns the windscreen wipers on.

TONY

Here it is, Tommy's Bar - on the
left.

MARY (TO CAMERA)
I'll tell him I'm tired, that
sometimes works on the first night,
after I've been driving.

TONY
Park around the back.

Mary does as she's told, parking as far from the pub and
other cars as possible.

TONY (CONT'D)
This'll do.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. CAMPER VAN - TOMMY'S BAR CAR PARK - MOMENTS LATER

In the wing mirror, Mary glimpses the beach.

Tony opens the door, turns back.

TONY
You coming in?

MARY
You go on. I'm tired from all the
driving, is that okay?

Tony stares at her.

MARY (CONT'D)
Alright then, I'll come in for a
bit, so. I'll join you in a little
while, I just need to stretch my
legs, once the rain dies down.

TONY
Just don't be long. Don't start
talking to people, I know what
you're like when you go off doing
your walking nonsense.

Tony slides out of the seat, slams the door behind him.

Mary watches through the wipers, her face somewhere between a
grimace and a laugh as The Lump lurches awkwardly to the pub.

MARY (TO CAMERA)
He only ever runs if it's raining.
Not so much a run, mind. Not sure
what you'd call that. He never
runs, not since Jamie was a boy,
when he forced football on him.

(MORE)

MARY (TO CAMERA) (CONT'D)

Tony said it would *"make him a man"*, *"toughen him up a bit"*. *"Stop him playing with girls"*.

Tony steps in a puddle, his body twists like a fish out of water.

MARY (TO CAMERA) (CONT'D)

Jamie was quite content with his fashion magazines and my old clothes - cutting them up to create his 'catwalk creations'.

Mary's smile hardens.

MARY (TO CAMERA) (CONT'D)

He couldn't wait to leave. I don't blame him, I understand his reasons.

Mary watches Tony interrupt a lad smoking in the doorway, taking shelter under an overhang. Tony pauses, gestures for a smoke - the lad shakes his head.

MARY (TO CAMERA) (CONT'D)

Scabby bastard.

In the wing mirror, Mary stares at the beach.

CUT TO:

EXT. SANDY BEACH - DAY [FLASHBACK]

A younger Mary walks with Jamie (mid 20s), they link arms.

MARY

I'll miss you, you know? Are you sure about this?

JAMIE

One hundred percent. You have to promise me though, that you'll come visit?

Mary rests her head on Jamie's shoulder.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

At least once, mam?

Mary hides her tears.

[FLASHBACK ENDS]

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CAMPER VAN - TOMMY'S BAR CAR PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Mary peers out at the rain. The lad discards his cigarette, walks into the pub.

Mary checks herself in the rear view mirror. She dries her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY HOME - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Jamie aggressively packs clothes into a suitcase. Mary is in tears, trying to stop him. Tony shouts from the next room.

TONY (O.C.)

Let him go, New York is full of his lot, they're like rats. No place for that sort of carry on here. You hear me?

MARY

Let me talk to him again.

JAMIE

I can't take his shite anymore, mam.

TONY (O.C.)

My house - my rules!

MARY

He doesn't mean it, you know how he gets.

Tony slams the back door. From the window, Mary watches him walk down the street.

JAMIE

That's just it though, he does mean it. That's what hurts.

Mary falls silent. Jamie comforts her.

MARY

It's alright. I'll be okay.

JAMIE

Mam? You need to get away from him.

[FLASHBACK ENDS]

CUT TO:

INT. TOMMY'S BAR - BESIDE THE TOILETS - EVENING

There's a lively atmosphere in the bar. Tony and Mary sit alone in a corner, empty pint glasses and crisp packets litter the table.

Tony has a fresh pint of Guinness and a bag of peanuts open. Mary silently plays games on her phone, finishing her glass of wine. She checks her watch.

MARY

It's getting late. I still have the bed to make up.

TONY

You've had ample time, Mary. That's something you should have done straight away. Go on, you best get it ready.

MARY

Right. I'll see you later.

TONY

Order me another pint before you go.

A couple of twenty-something girls snigger as they pass.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. CAMPER VAN - TOMMY'S BAR CAR PARK - CLOSING TIME

A light on in the back of the camper van, curtains drawn. Shouts and whistles, palms bang on the side of the van as drinkers head home.

In bed, Mary removes her glasses, puts her book away.

She hears Tony's key hitting off the lock - quickly arranges herself to appear asleep.

The door swings open and Tony staggers about in a drunken stupor, grappling for the light.

Mary turns over to face the wall, pulls the duvet over her head.

The sound of his zipper as The Lump squeezes himself onto the toilet. The van shudders. He urinates loudly and breaks wind from both ends.

Mary takes a blanket and her pillow to sleep in the cab.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. CAMPER VAN - TOMMY'S BAR CAR PARK - EARLY MORNING

It's a glorious day. The van is alone in the car park.

Mary wakes, winds down a window to freshen the stale air. She watches seagulls, breathes in the sea air.

The van is silent. The bed is empty.

She pulls on fresh clothes and a pair of runners.

Mary opens more windows, sounds of the beach grow louder.

MARY

Tony? I'm going for my walk now.

She stops outside the bathroom, its door ajar.

MARY (CONT'D)

Tony...? Are you going to be long in there? Tony?

Mary opens the door.

Tony is slumped in a heap on the toilet.

MARY (CONT'D)

Come on Tony, this isn't funny. Not this time. Tony?

She pokes him with a finger.

MARY (CONT'D)

You awake? Tony?

Mary freezes.

She closes the bathroom door.

CUT TO:

EXT. PEBBLE BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Mary walks briskly, without pleasure.

CUT TO:

EXT. PEBBLE BEACH - LATE MORNING

Mary pulls out her mobile.

ON MARY'S MOBILE PHONE SCREEN:

She searches: 'Camp sites near to me' and a map displays several results. She clicks on 'CARRAHAVEN', then on the phone number.

BACK TO SCENE

Mary brings the phone to her ear.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMPER VAN - MOMENTS LATER

Mary takes the wheel and a long breath, closes the door.

A rucksack sits in the passenger seat.

ON MARY'S MOBILE PHONE SCREEN:

She opens the map app and plots a route to 'CARRAHAVEN' - hits 'START'.

BACK TO SCENE

She turns the key, sets off. The map app speaks.

AUTOMATED VOICE
Head west, you are on the fastest
route. In 500 metres, at the
junction, turn right.

MARY
My pleasure.

AUTOMATED VOICE
Turn right.

MARY
Okay-dokey.

AUTOMATED VOICE
Head east.

AUTOMATED VOICE (CONT'D)
In 800 metres, sharp left.

MARY
You weren't kidding, that was
sharp!

AUTOMATED VOICE

They really should put up chevrons.
Continue for 200 metres, then
slight right.

MARY

I'd say it's caused a few
accidents.

AUTOMATED VOICE

Oh, it has. Slight right, if you
like. Or you could take the next
left, maybe you'd like to try the
other route?

MARY

Which is best?

AUTOMATED VOICE

It's up to you now, Mary. But, what
are you going to do about *him*?

MARY

I don't want to talk about *him*.

AUTOMATED VOICE

You'll have to do something. He may
have been a dose, but you can't
just leave him in there.

MARY

I know, I know.

AUTOMATED VOICE

Let me just say this, there'll be a
right bang off him - and soon - you
know? Just saying.

MARY

What?

AUTOMATED VOICE

I said he's dead, Mary.
STONE. COLD. DEAD.

Mary is silent.

AUTOMATED VOICE (CONT'D)

In 300 metres, your destination
will be on the right.

CUT TO:

EXT. 'CARAHAVEN' CAMP SITE - CAMPER VAN - AFTERNOON

Mary parks the camper van in a shaded spot, away from the site entrance.

She gathers herself behind the wheel, then grabs her rucksack.

MARY
I'm leaving now.

Mary shuts the door behind her.

MARY (CONT'D)
You'll have to sort yourself out now.

Walking out the gates, she pulls out her mobile.

ON MARY'S MOBILE PHONE SCREEN:

Mary types 'flights to New York', hits search.

She finds Jamie's number in her contacts, takes a moment to look at his photo, hits dial.

BACK TO SCENE

Mary brings the phone to her ear.

FADE OUT.

THE END