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Seeing Yourself

By Erma Fiste

This could easily be your story!

I say this because I know at one time or another every Rike-Kumlerite has experienced a bus ride home during the hour that follows the store's closing. However, for those of you who have since acquired a mode of transportation devoid of "painful pitfalls" I would like to verbally draw you a picture of the events that occur after store hours.

The first trick of this trade is to get your foot firmly planted on the first step of the bus. Even if the driver tries to discourage you by catching your head in the door, hold your ground. By passing your nickel to the woman in front of you, who is nonchalantly jabbing her umbrella down your throat, you pay your fare. Above the din of the idle chatter of the occupants of the bus the bus driver roars, "Comseguir of the us, police!" At least that's what it sounds like to you . . . by this time you're trying to recover your package that was hurled to the floor at the last stop when 25 more people entered the bus to fill the gap left by the one man who got off. "What's he talking about?" you say aloud to anyone who will listen. "He said, 'Move to the rear of the bus,' " offered a little gray-haired lady who has been resting on your foot for the last three blocks. You bring your foot up to take a step. This is a mistake. It never reaches the floor again. A youngster who is hanging from the "No Smoking" sign by his feet mimicks, "Why be irritated—Light an Old Gold."

Twenty minutes later you begin to worry how and when to make your exit. The lady next to you wants to make conversation. "Mercy, but it's hot in here. You'd think the people with seats would crack a window or two. I was just saying to my Henry the other day . . ." (the rest of her speech is interrupted when the door opens and unwillingly you are carried half way out the door. A bit dazed by it all, you crawl back and stand up just as the friendly passenger questions, "Don't you agree with Henry?" You nod your head. The bus jolts suddenly and you find yourself sitting down—on a strange man's lap. You hastily strive for footing, apologize, and pretend to be intensely interested in a "Shampoo ad" decorating the interior of the bus.

Then it's your stop and gaining exit is the easiest part of the ordeal—you just stand in the doorway and the 28 civilian commandos behind you go the rest. As you limp painfully home—your skirt wrinkled beyond recognition, your full-fashioned Nylons hanging in shreds, and your sour disposition showing, you meet the family. "Hard day at the store, dear?" they query. You can stand it no longer . . . you . . . this could very easily be your story, so you finish it.