

Arctic Monkeys "A Choice of Three"

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In the tunnel I noticed I had a choice of three. While I thought it very kind of them to offer me this, I do wonder if they realized what a dilemma they were sending to face me.

The trouble was, if I looked at your reflection in the left window I missed the actual image of you and your reflection in the right. And if I looked in the right I had the same problem but the other way around.

At first I thought I should probably settle on one of the mirrors as they were soon to disappear, but that idea quickly wilted, and my attention was drawn back to the center, occasionally checking on either side.

I must say I did question the authenticity of your nap a few minutes before. As the train left Loughborough I suspected it could've been a device to avoid conversation. I'd barely considered this for a moment, however, when a heavy breath and a gulping sound that I decided would be too embarrassing to fake led me to conclude that your nap wasn't fraudulent.

I found it difficult to concentrate on anything else as you slumped beneath your coat. Delighted that we'd waited until this hour to travel so the evening sun got its opportunity to skip across those sleeping cheeks, but unnerved by the prospect of being removed from the opposing chair to yours. I knew it was reserved but hoped that whoever had reserved it had fallen over. It looked as if today I'd be safe. The train wasn't too busy but I did take a moment to recall the time when I was less fortunate.

I remembered it with a chilling vividity we were on the way to Brighton.

I knew it was going to be his seat as soon as I saw him on the platform, unzipping, checking, zipping, and rechecking things. Something about his face suggested that he had for years had a mustache and had not long since removed it. He wasn't going to think twice about disposing of me, especially considering then he'd get the chance to sit with you.

Though his hiking boot-march through the carriage was rather revolting, it wasn't this that made my hands tense up into sour claws of nausea. It was the way he said it.

"You're in my seat."

No "excuse me," no polite uncertainty, just the rigid, hideous fact. The thud with which it landed expelled all my preparation. Before I remembered my plans to pretend to be asleep, deaf, French, or only sat there because someone else was in my seat, I was walking to find another vacancy.

I ended up dwelling unhappily beside a girl with a boys bum. I knew that because she walked too far past when she returned to one of what I thought to be two empty seats when I sat myself there. I fidgeted until our reunion on the platform, where you brutally informed me "That man was really rather pleasant, actually."

Today I thought I'd better make sure that couldn't happen again and I pulled the ticket from the top of my seat. It took a few attempts and the facade of hanging a jacket to finally complete. I was terribly cautious. There's a threat of punishment for such deeds by fine as far as I understand, but those shackles were at the back of my mind as I crushed the reservation in my hidden fist. Folding and squeezing as if it were that beast on the way to the seaside.

Fortunately, there was no retribution. If anything the train got quieter as the journey continued.

And so in the tunnel, unable to decide, my head flicked through this trilogy of angles, angel after angle, until we were out the other side.

My frantic twitching no doubt caused the man at the adjacent table to narrow his eyes at the very least, I imagine.

I don't know for sure.

I didn't have time tot add him to the cycle

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