

Wandsworth, My Life, My World

I gasp for breath, trying in the process not to take in the repulsive smell of an unknown wasted metal that must be allocated somewhere in the periodic table. The smell of sweat is fresh in the air and the middle aged old lady next to me flaps her 'Metro' newspaper in front of her face in a desperate attempt to cool herself down. A pregnant lady sitting on the seat opposite me groans and glares at anyone that dares meet her eyes. The tube is so crowded and can easily be the contributing factor towards everyone's frustration and annoyance.

And finally...*finally*...I hear my favourite words on the tannoy....

"Our next stop is...Tooting Broadway..." I picture my escape now. Grabbing my bag, I will carefully avoid the sweaty bodies as I lunge for the exit and a lovely, cool breeze will then greet me. This thought alone makes my good mood surface. The train slowly halts to a stop and I demurely stand up. So does the pregnant lady and the middle- aged one. A few more people straighten up, their eyes gleaming in anticipation and thoughts of breaking free. There is a screeching sound as the train shudders to a halt, and then the sound of the doors slamming open. There is no other way to describe it...but it felt like a stampede of bodies rushing past me, leaping for the exit. Could it be physically true if I were to state that the pregnant lady, by around seven months, practically *dived* her way through the crowd of people? And I, shouldered and pushed till I am probably black and bruised, am the last one to make it out of the dreaded tube before a possible scenario like the doors swiftly closing shut and dragging me by the hem of my top and hauling me all the way to the next station occurs.

I step out of the tube station and the wind flings my bronze hair away from my face. My eyes scream in pain as the intense rays of the sun greet me. The rich red of chillies, bright yellow of bananas and the lush green of fresh coriander are an alluring sight. However, I pull my face in disgust as I pass the meat shop and the man at the counter returns a look of blankness, convincing me that he is met with much the same facial expressions day after day. I see my house in the distance and heave a sigh of relief. *Nearly home*... I practically run and unlock the front door. The scent of home baking wafts through the air. I inhale deeply, closing the door behind me and walk into the kitchen. My mum turns to me and flashes me a smile.

"My, you're early!" she says as she pulls a luxurious chocolate cake out of the oven and places it on the worktop.

"Mmm," I reply.

"Had a nice journey, darling?"

I flash her a wary look. "Mum, don't even ask...."

By Aakifah Amejee