

Journey Number Three Paddington to King's Cross - 17th October 2006

Paddington

There's been a fire at Praed Street so I'm on the Hammersmith and City line again. The burly man next to me has bulky shiny boots and moved over when I sat down. He is reading a hardback book a little too far from his eyes. A Spanish looking woman (50ish) has summer shoes on and a red streak in her hair, which is longer than the rest of her cut. Opposite me is a fat man reading a paper. He is bunched a little into the corner, but spreads to force his neighbour into the corner of their seat. He is reading a free paper and opening it out fully, rather than folding it back. Standing there's a guy eating a sausage sandwich, he looks down and starts reading a sitter's paper. It's October, but warm, and all kinds of clothes are on display – sandals, winter coats, sturdy boots and t-shirts. It is quiet as we wait for the delay to end. A man, sitting, who asked for Baker Street is nervously twitching his legs – like people do in offices and it drives colleagues mad. He is holding and fiddling with his 'phone, but there's no signal down here.

Edgware Road

Fat, encroaching man gets off revealing the space he was occupying along with the paper. It's filled right up and all I can see is legs. One pair is in fishnets and heels. A slim woman, close to me is smart in a mannish pinstripe and carries a red suede bag. It's great but doesn't match her blue framed glasses.

Baker Street

The lights are on and off, which never bothered me, but now it does a bit. A mother gets on with her son, chivvying him along to fill the space up. He has big ears and a green fleece. Next to me the burly man has gone to be replaced with a woman who is listening to a walkman. Suddenly the thin woman in the winter coat standing to my left folds up and faints. I give up my seat as soon as I can. She appears to be catatonic but eventually makes eye contact. Fishnet stockings says "I'd offer you a sweet but I've only got sugar free gum". Eventually the woman who passed out starts to cry, but I leave at King's Cross before I find out why.