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A WEBSITE SERVING AS AN ARCHIVE OF MY
DIFFERENT ADVENTURES ON PLANET EARTH...



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A 15hr train journey in the wrong cabin - Part 2

This was getting unbearable. I couldn't move or leave my seat and even if I did, I couldn't be certain that my bag or seat would be there when I returned. Toilet break. I say toilet, it was a large hole in a room. 'Space at last I thought - fuck you China, I'm winning now' I screamed as I danced maniacally around the hole / room - ignoring the putrid stench of years of filth that had been ignored.

I was getting hungry, I'd already left my chair and my bag was there on my return. 'Fuck it' I thought, I'm getting some beers and rice. I couldn't speak a word of Chinese, so acted out the food / beer I wanted. To my surprise the cabin found this amusing. And I had cards in my pocket.

After ten minutes I'd bought the whole carriage beers and we were all getting along famously. I got back to my seat that now looked like a dream of comfort and without talking got to know the rest of the cabin who all now seemed friendly and fun. I know, I was pissed but the cabin was changing. I was pissed. A baby started screaming and crying so I bought the little chap a toy. With this little gesture the carriage seemed to think 'this guy might be alright, sure he's absurdly tall and has curly hair but he makes an effort'. Suddenly Anglo-Chinese lessons were happening and we were singing songs. This cabin was great.

What had happened? I'd thought 'fuck it' and jumped right in. I may have got on the wrong cabin at the beginning of that journey but I left the right one by the end of it.

In China

A 15hr train journey in the wrong cabin - Part 1

I was in China and travelling from Jinan to Xian - that's a 15hr train journey (and that's if the train decides to go fast). As I ignored every person in the station staring at me gawp-eyed as if I was wearing a clown outfit and had just shat myself I got on to the train. Hold the phone, this carriage seems fairly over-crowded. No, this can't be right. I then proceeded to try and bribe the ticket inspector - 'come on I'm a white man with lots of dollars' I said to him as he stood there bemused by my height, my hair colour and my t-shirt choice. It didn't look like I was moving anywhere and I slumped in my small wooden chair that only allowed for a maximum 20% comfort level.

Then the bags toppled on top of the chairs, people's heads and every conceivable space around me. Not only was I stuck on this train, I couldn't actually move now without some pretty aggressive shoving. 'I know' I thought 'I'll chill out to some tunes and fall asleep' - no battery on iPod. So I people watched. Still 14.5hrs left. This was going to be tough.

The cabin was now as busy as the District Line in rush-hour in London - as more and more crowded on I thought am I going to actually survive this? Will this be how it all ends? Me stuck on a train that seemingly never ends while the whole cabin wonders who I am and what I'm doing there? It felt like eyes were on me constantly - each nuance or gesticulation was a source of intrigue, disgust and vague disappointment for the rest of the carriage.

In China

A messy night on the Malecon

2002, a barmy night in Havana and I'd just finished up an over-priced Mojito in Hotel Nacional. I looked out over the harbour below and breathed it all in - this was Cuba. I headed down to the Malecon sea wall and with a milk bottle full of rum in my hand and got to know the locals.

One particular lady I got on with well with and, before I knew it, we were talking about going back to her place. My Spanish has only ever been so good, but I remembered her saying the following: 'If you stay around mine tonight, can you leave some money on the table in the morning'. I was 19 and wasn't about to start paying for a ho. I decided to ignore her comment and we went to a club and the rum-drinking continued. But still she insisted that coming back to hers was a good idea / that my dollars would look great on her bedside table. I said I needed to cool-out outside - the club was hot and I sensed an escape plan was the only way to go.

Stumbling out of the club drunk I suddenly fell and dropped somehow underwater. I was hugely drunk so this was all very confusing. I emerged from the water to realise I'd fallen in an one of Havana's larger open sewers to the amusement of the whole club. I hadn't paid for sex that night but I'd escaped her and her friends her were now looking rough. I washed myself off and then proceeded with my rum-binge fascination to the encouragement of the locals.

From that night I learnt a valuable lesson, self-respect is never stronger when you know the path you're walking.

In Cuba

Why is the website called bytestories.com?

This is a place for "byte-sized" stories and there is a 1500 character (about 250 words) limit for two main reasons. Firstly, we want you to know that "War and Peace" isn't required to leave your mark. Secondly, it takes about 2 minutes to read each story meaning you can head here whenever you want a quick (and entertaining) read.

If you would like to share a story or create your own eBook, simply head to bytestories.com, Register an account and click on the "Share a Story" button.