over powering stink of someone's BO. I walked to the back of the bus hoping to escape the body odour but I seemed to walk right into the epicentre of the smell. I sat down and zipped my coat up as far as I could and buried my nose in my scarf but believe me when I tell you that my efforts were futile. So instead I tried to deduce who could be the perpetrator of this particular offence and I came up with four suspects nearest to me, an elderly gentleman with a well-worn raincoat, a teenager in a school uniform, a man in his thirties wearing a sweatshirt and a young woman surgically attached to her mobile phone. One by one the suspects disembarked from the bus and the smell persisted until the last of my suspects got off (the man in the sweatshirt). Within a few minutes, the air on the bus was breathable and I no longer felt as if I was being asphyxiated. What I still don't understand is how people can be oblivious to the body odour emanating from them. If I had my way, I would make it a public offence!



A few months ago I had a somewhat bizarre encounter on the bus with a woman who looked like she had a rug or blanket draped around her. I noticed her because of her interesting choice of wardrobe.The woman was sitting at the back of the bus in the far corner and I was on the other side. Once I sat down, checked my emails and played a game on my phone I had forgotten that she was there. There were two ladies sitting opposite me and when they smiled at me I smiled back and before long we were exchanging pleasantries (probably discussing the weather) and waved goodbye to them when they got off the bus.

Suddenly the lady in the blanket turned and said, "Stop staring at me". I looked around to see who she was talking to and then realised I was in her direct line of vision.

"Excuse me" I said slightly taken aback.

"I said stop staring at me! You've been watching me since you got on the bus" said the woman.

"No I haven't", I replied, "I wasn't even looking at you, I was chatting to the two ladies sitting with me."

"Yes you were so stop staring at me you weirdo," she carried on.

By this stage my temper was rising and I looked at her and said, "No, really I wasn't looking at you, in fact you're not particularly interesting to look at!" with this I got out of my seat and flounced off the bus and tried to give her a withering look as I alighted (a stop too early I might add). Immediately afterwards I felt bad for having been goaded into responding to the woman as I thought that she might have been suffering from some mental disorder. But then again she might just have been a disagreeable person.

I have also met some people who have been immensely entertaining or interesting by virtue of travelling on the underground. There was a woman who still makes me smile every time I think of her. She befriended me on a train journey a while ago and the thirty minutes I spent in her company was like being on a roller coaster ride. She immediately introduced herself to me and without any prompting told me about her life. By the end of my journey I knew that she was from Hong Kong and had lived there until she was married, that her husband who despite being a good provider was never really a great companion. They travelled a lot and her daughter had lived in France and that she also had a grandson. She had just been visiting them but felt that her son-in-law should make more of an effort to come and see them in London. She asked me whether I was married and if I had children. She also asked me if my mother was beautiful (strange question) and whether my children looked like me or my husband! All this was done in an extremely loud voice so I think not only was I privy to her life story but everyone else in the vicinity.

She was truly an extraordinary character and made that particular journey quite memorable. I do hope I get the opportunity in the future to meet more people like her on my trips on the London underground and fewer people like the blanket lady on the bus! ■