

Hannah Davidson – Senior Prize Winner

TIME:

07:57 I can barely keep my eyes open. It's so early, too early. I honestly can't believe that I do this five days a week.

Where's my oyster card? Oh yeah, I put it in my purse when I got off the tube yesterday. I put it on the reader and jump a bit as the gates crash loudly in welcoming. I haul all my stuff through just before they gnash shut, as if terrified someone might sneak through behind me.

Oh the stairs. It is still too early to climb those stairs. As I start the climb I jump, as suddenly I hear a yelp from behind me. I turn and see that rather large man with a briefcase had tried to squeeze through the gates, but they had shut too quickly and now he's shouting in annoyance. It was quite funny, but I'm not sure it's a great idea to tell him that, he's now rolling his eyes and sighing loudly, in a way that lets everyone around him know that he does not approve of what just happened. I hate it when people do that. It's not like there's much anyone else can do for him. A few kind people smile sympathetically, even though he doesn't show them any sign of gratitude.

I turn around and continue up to the platform. It's so early it's still dark, but now I can just sit and wait for the train. The seats are practically frozen, and even though I know I'd be better off standing I sit down. The cold is overwhelming, and I can feel my legs becoming numb. I just wish the train would come soon. I jiggle my legs a bit to keep them warm, but it's no good, the cold has taken over. My breath spreads out in a fog in front of me and my throat catches with every breath. Come on, train. The platform starts to fill up as more and more time goes by, among them the large man with the briefcase, who walks a little further along from me. He stares at me so I smile a little, just to be polite. A few more minutes and finally the train is here. It's not as full as yesterday thank goodness.

07:57 OK, look at the watch. Right on time, thank god. Still, could people walk any slower?

Oyster card out of its holder, down on the reader, gates open and- Oooooooooooooooooooooof! For goodness sake! Why can't these gates just open properly?

I sigh, put my card back on the reader and the gates open properly. I squeeze through and ignore the smirks I'm getting from people passing. Eventually someone has the decency to pick up the paper that I dropped, although by this time I'm too hassled to care. I glance up at the stairs and I see that girl, the one who comes here every day, rolling her eyes at me. Well she should just get on with her own journey; I don't bother her so she shouldn't bother me.

Suddenly I see a notice about the weekend engineering works, so I pause for a few minutes to look at it. Great, virtually every tube line has some kind of closure this weekend, as usual.

I continue up the stairs and heave myself onto the platform. It's about time they put an escalator in, it's like we're living in the Stone Age. I stalk right past that girl, who smirks at me as I walk by. I take no notice and continue with my own business.

Right, so I have the budget meeting first thing and then I have to finish those reports. No, Sarah can do them, that's what I hired my assistant for in the first place. God, it's cold, the heating better be on in the next train. One arrives the next minute, at last.

08:11 The tube is really quite nice when you think about it. You don't have to drive, or think about parking, or pay congestion charge. Not that that bothers me, but I know it drives my mum insane. Some of the stations are quite ugly though, all dirty wood and grey signs. I guess they do the job though.

It's a long day ahead of me, I've got almost all my lessons today and only one single free in the middle. I'm so tired I can already feel my attention slipping.

I wonder what my career will be. I look at that man with the briefcase, who is selfish, taking up two seats with his work and I hope that I don't end up like that. He seems to be

marking a set of notes, who knows what for. He must be very senior; he's got a pretty severe suit on. He doesn't look that comfortable, he keeps shifting around. I wonder how old he is?

08:11 I can feel that girl looking at me, obviously being nosy. It's putting me off my work so I shuffle around a bit, trying to give her the impression that I think she is being rude, but she takes no notice.

Ok calm down, today's a big day. If you can make it through the week without having to make any more redundancies it will be a total success. I don't want another day like yesterday.

I never thought I'd have a job like this. I thought it would be more exciting and certainly less stressful. I just never had the time or money to make that possible.

What would I do if I could do it all again? This girl will get her chance but I've had mine. I don't know how I feel about that. When you're young you feel you have all the time in the world, but now it's like there's none left, none to spare. It all sounds very depressing but I guess that's just how it goes. I guess time is of the essence. I should have known.