

## Moon

There is a boy in front of me on the coach, a father with a baby in a car seat facing rearwards in the seat next to him and across the aisle sits his heroin-blond wife (partner, whatever) and another child, a son, who is standing on his seat. The boy has a hole in his earlobe the size of a twenty-pence-piece held open by a black doughnut and his phone rings. It is ridiculously loud for the close confines of the coach, but he doesn't seem embarrassed. The backlight of the screen as he holds it to his ear and repeats all those tired travelling phone phrases - "I'm on the coach, leaving Birmingham, give you a bell when we get to Studly, 20 minutes late at the mo" - shines through the 20p hole and casts a circle of light on his neck catching the fine hairs in glow.

And outside, in the night, I can see the moon is full.

The coach more or less lapses into silence but for an ancient couple of ladies on the front seats, one of whom is saying, in lifetime-smoker badly-tuned-radio crackle "...been married 68 years now which makes her daughter 69/70... so that's how it is." 68 years. So that would be 1940. It's an easy sum but I don't do maths anymore. The war. Now she's saying something about gasworks, the son is being silly and the mum telling him so and behind me is sitting a girl who must be Spanish, of the lighter sort, the radio is really sounding out sitting on the dock of the bay and I've seen her earlier, wandering around the coach station. I think she's pretty hot actually but she reminds me of a friend, a friend I've just spent the weekend with and we've fallen out. Truthfully though, I don't know why. "Mummy's ready for bed now." I really should have sat behind her so I might catch glimpses between the seats not of holed ears but of something more tantalising, seeds of fantasies - though I've never been in lust with this friend of mine, the one it seems who's changed her thoughts about me. It's difficult to hear actually but I'm sure the old lady has belched and said something about "essence of Eggs Benedict".

"mum. mum. mum. mum."

"that's where Debbie lives, Aunt Sandy, you hasn't got any real aunties... there's too of you."

I should probably concoct a leaky bladder, so I can keep on walking to the loo at the back of the coach, and try and meet the Spaniard's eyes each time, not that I suppose a leaky bladder is particularly sexy, and on second thoughts she might be a bit young for me, though don't tell that to the kid I went home with Friday who I'm pretty sure was below my lower limit. At least she wasn't

living with her parents but in a flat with a bicycle in the hall that stank of Rottweiler, the hall not the bike - though I didn't sniff the bike - too busy unzipping her boots, black books, but then who sniffs bikes?

I could try some Spanish on her even, I speak a bit, enough to order a sangria anyway, but then she could be Portuguese now I think about it, and that would just be embarrassing. The friend who it appears thinks I wronged her is Spanish though, and they do look strikingly similar.

The only other people on the coach are right at the back.

"I can't get over - I mean, I can get over but I can't get back."

"You can't get back?"

"Nah."

"But you must..."

"I'll try. Red car. Blue Car. Silver Car. Yellow car. Black car..."

They are silent and Japanese, or, well, I can't tell, as we've established - Koreans? I'm terrible at this and always wonder if that makes me a racist, though I don't worry about having problems with Spanish/Portuguese - except when it comes to choosing a language to speak to a hot girl in. Not that I will speak to her. I should have sat behind her. I shouldn't have said sorry by text, I should have called her. I shouldn't have said sorry at all seeing as how I don't know what the whole thing's about. Still no reply.

The driver turns off lights.

Eleven people on a coach.

The driver.

The radio says once, twice, three times a lady.

Two old ladies, silent again.

A couple, one of them with holes in his ears, and their two children.

The red toilet-occupied light is on, though we're all still here.

Me.

"I love this song."

"I think her nappy needs doing."

The hot girl, nationality in question.

And the other two at the back, origin also disputed.

In the night time.

My friend, a different one, who is a Scorpio too, genuinely believes things go a bit crazy at the full moon. And I kind of believe she's right. And I'm wasting this one in a coach. And I can't even see the hot one. I wonder if the moon affects her too.

“Quiero una sangria.”