Under the Sea: The Eurotunnel

On the following morning, right after waking up, I realized I had a new roommate: a cockroach was trying to get into Briony's bowl! I did not want to get into a fight with the bug, but I was not so positively impressed by its presence. Anyway, I left it and Briony alone and went to the main building to have breakfast. It was Saturday morning, early for my standards, and the only people there were male British bikers travelling in small groups. "Hagrid" was not there, but his colleagues were scattered in different tables: I was the only woman, and most of all the only woman travelling alone!





Barbed wire…

I quickly re-packed everything, but for the bug, and left, heading towards Les Coquelles, were the French side of the Eurotunnel is located. It was early, but I was afraid of being late: I was told it takes time to go through the Pet Reception Area. The motorway was, again, virtually empty and the sun was casting dull grey rays. Why the tunnel? As I have always reached England by air, I wanted to reach it by sea to see the "White Cliffs of Dover" (school memories) hence the ferry was an interesting option until I found out that pets must remain in the car. Here in Italy, the opposite happens: you CAN'T leave a dog in a vehicle on a ferry. You are not supposed to do so because it is deemed too dangerous, and rightly so: I know of dogs, illegally left there, who were found dead, probably killed by gas exhalations. Our ferries provide kennels for dogs but you are also allowed to keep the dog with you. British Ferries, instead, follow another policy and dogs must be left in the car: whereas it is true that the trip is quite short, during the summer months temperatures could be too high. Indeed, I investigated and it came out that some pets had died, while crossing from France to England in the summer, cause of death was heatstroke. This is how I made my decision.



Inside the tunnel

The Pet Reception Area was almost empty, outside there was a van full of horses and I thought it was going to slower things but, everything was very quick: they checked the dog's microchip and passport and gave me a badge. Outside of the building there was a fenced dog park and I brought Briony there: its ground was made of plastic grass! A bit odd but reminded me of my childhood: I spent my first 8 years of life living in the city centre, right in the cathedral shadow. Roads were paved with stones and granite and I suffered that, I wanted grass and I thought I could have had lawn made with plastic grass… But anyway, she quickly made friends with a Greater Swiss Mountain Dog. Her owners were British and going back to England on vacation: they told me they now lived in France where they were running a B&B, apparently they were much happier in France. While they were talking I noticed some tiny black dots between Briony's hair but I did not want to think about the "worst case scenario", put her back in her crate and drove towards the train.

"How was the tunnel?" is the most frequent question I get asked. People are really curious and, most likely, imagine something else. *"Can you see fishes?" " No, just sea monsters!"*. Seriously, I have never answered like that but… I had the fishes question asked several times. When I describe the tunnel like an underground, people get disappointed! But, in reality, it is not much different than Milan, London or Paris underground! It looks the same, but instead of featuring seats, these trains feature parking spaces for cars. That's it, once you get inside the tunnel you see nothing but grey

walls. The journey is very short: to go from France to England it took less than to go from one side of Milan to another on the underground. Not as beautiful as the White Cliffs of Dover, but very convenient if you are travelling with a pet!

You can read about our arrival in England here.