

a brief wait? Or a more intense ride, with a long wait? As I weighed my options, I overheard someone say, "The green ticket is for little kids and old people."

I chose the orange ticket. Of course.

The attendant handed me a large orange plastic ticket, and I saw others nervously making their choice. Entering the orange gateway, I glanced behind my shoulder to the green entrance. Little kids and old people streamed in. I felt good about my decision.

As I joined the long line, I glanced at my orange ticket. Skimming the bulleted list of disclaimers, I could tell this would not be your average ride. The ticket was filled with warnings. Dire warnings. With a surge of adrenaline, I read everything that could potentially go wrong, from nausea to back injury. I questioned my *bravado*.

I wasn't the only person who felt that jolt of adrenaline. Ahead of me, the single-file line buzzed with excitement and anticipation. People whooped and woo-hoed, congratulating each other, as though we'd just embarked on an episode of *Amazing Race*. We were pumped, making knowing glances at each other, affirming our decision, congratulating ourselves, chests puffed. We hadn't winced out. We were Team Orange.

Yet as the line crawled along, more dire warnings flashed on either side of us. An Orwellian voice announced that it was *not too late* to exit the orange ride.

"It's not too late," I told myself. I could still escape what now appeared to be near-certain death. I wouldn't be the only one to give up. A couple in matching Nebraska T-shirts held hands to reassure each other while quietly exiting the line, eyes downcast to avoid eye contact with their former ride-mates. I could exit behind that Nebraska couple, and downgrade to green. No shame.

Yet like most people in that line, I felt a strange sense of commitment. I'd dialed in for this half an hour ago, and by golly, I wasn't going to quit now. Within minutes, our parade of strangers

had bonded into a team. People took selfies with their orange ticket, proudly posting them on Facebook. There was tweeting and retweeting. It was a marketer's dream.

Our team of tourists continued through the tunnel, the air thick with anticipation for what lay ahead. Our collective mood alternated between swagger and curiosity. Was this a ride, or an extreme sport?

At last, the wait was over. The ride lay immediately ahead. It was go time. Inside the capsule, barf bags waited expectantly.

As the ride began, someone exclaimed that *this* was the best ride she had been on all day—and that she couldn't wait to go back and do the ride again. My last thought, as I sat down and clutched my barf bag, was that it was remarkable to have repeat customers for a ride that hadn't technically started yet. That's the last thing I remember before my life flashed in front of my eyes.

So, was this ride good? Yes. And yes, it was intense. But even better than the ride was the emotional experience. We did it! As we slowed down to a stop, I congratulated myself. Sure, I might be a little dizzy, but that barf bag was clearly empty. (And yay, I am not paralyzed!)

I wasn't the only one who felt giddy with accomplishment. All around me, riders high-fived as they exited the ride. People emerged from the ride thrilled and flushed, beaming with a collective sense of accomplishment. From the looks on people's faces, you'd have thought we had just completed the Iditarod. We hadn't just *chosen* orange . . . we'd *earned* it.

I watched a pack of teenagers run back to the start to get new orange tickets and do it all over again. More high-fives. More tweets. More congratulations. They were already repeat customers, recruiting others, building loyalty and talk value on social media.

The marketer inside me wanted to know what exactly the difference was between the orange-ticket ride and the green. Why all the fuss?