

With Eyes Wide Open

Portsmouth College's Student Newspaper

London on a Budget

By Sophie Lazarov

London remains one of the most popular and dense cities in the world, making it the perfect place to visit if you're looking for an exciting day trip out. However, it can seem a little daunting at first in size and expense if you aren't already familiar with the area. The following is a list I've compiled of all the cheapest and best tourist hotspots that I recommend you catch a short two hour train down to visit one day.

The London Eye

The London Eye is such a statement piece of London that there is almost an obligation to visit if you get the chance. A lot of people are put off by the price - £27 if you book in advance - but if it's the view you're after and you want to save money, there are plenty of other ways to see the sights of the city without spending a fortune (a couple of options can be found later in this article). Even if you don't want to actually ride the Eye, it is definitely still worth walking along the river Thames with the company of a friend or your favourite music, and taking in the famous sights visible along the riverside.

Buckingham Palace

Another staple of the London experience, the palace is free to visit and photograph to your heart's content. It's worth noting that if you time your visit right, you'll be able to catch the formal 'Changing the Guard' ceremony, starting at 10:45 every day and lasting about 45 minutes, in which you'll be able to watch as the New Guard replaces the Old Guard at their posts outside the palace. The ceremony is one of the most iconic events in London, and is free for all to experience.

Piccadilly Circus

Filled with bright lights, bustling people and loud billboards, Piccadilly Circus comes to life at night, and is the perfect place to spend an evening exploring, with plenty of cafés, restaurants and fast food places for you to stop for something to eat when the hunger sets in. Leading on to Chinatown, Leicester Square and more, the area acts as a central point between numerous spots just asking to be posted on social media.

The Sky Garden

As mentioned earlier, London is full of great places that offer a spectacular view of the city, and the Sky Garden is arguably one of the best. Located inside the 'Walkie Talkie' building, the tourist attraction is filled to the brim with luscious plants inside a glass greenhouse-type room that allows for jaw dropping panoramic views of London. There's even an open air terrace facing out towards the river Thames to allow for the full experience of being so elevated, and a little café offering a sit down and a hot drink while 160m up. The best part? It's free! All you have to do is book a time slot in advance and you're in.

The British Museum

Yet another destination to leave you awestruck, this museum holds approximately eight million historic items. The building documents the evolution of human culture with artefacts dating up to two million years ago. Open to the public for free since 1759, the museum is the perfect place for anyone, young or old, to satiate some of their curiosity as to how the human race has developed over time.

More to Consider

If I were to list every place in London that you could visit and capture stunning pictures of, this article would be endless, but here are some more of my favourite places for you to check out if you're still stuck for ideas :

- Soho (lively and filled with shops)
- Covent Gardens (an area filled with instagram worthy buildings and shops)
- Neals Yard (a fantastic photo opportunity)
- Canary Wharf (towering buildings and a huge shopping centre)
- Royal Academy of Arts (a breathtaking art gallery)
- Trafalgar Square (amazing photo opportunity, filled with historic monuments)
- The British Library (bookshelves for miles)
- Camden Market (a bustling outdoor market to get lost in)
- Royal Emirates Cable Cars (transport over the Thames with a view of the iconic skyline)

My Domain

By Dylan Evans

It felt as if I had spent years searching for the underground palace of Pholomirr. I had travelled sweeping plains, climbed lofty cliffs, waded through the depths of necrotic marshes and plunged deep into caverns that writhed with corruption and evil. Trust me, traversing through wooden bridges that are the width of a spinal cord while being pursued by rampaging goblins and battling a shiver of burrowing land sharks has certainly taken its toll.

But that is irrelevant; I now speak of a point where I had been graced with the greatest fortune that outweighs any amount in gold that stood

before me. History. Towering, ornate pillars over 100ft tall stretched up into marble arches across the ceiling. The walls, pieces of triumphant architecture, were once chiselled with elegant engravings of esoteric glyphs and long past battles between valiant warriors and ancient aberrant creatures. Since that distant age had passed time had taken its toll and degraded the images from their once pristine condition. Those people: whoever they may have been, are lost to time like a forgotten memory, yet their feats of engineering remain in the grandeur of this echoing chamber.

I've begun to ramble. If my fascination with the alluring splendour of ancient architecture wasn't already clear then I have certainly made it apparent now. This recollection. However, it is unfocused on archaic constructions but instead my colloquy with the monster that had

usurped it from the hand of man. Therefore, it is important that I illustrate the once great inner workings of this sanctuary beneath the earth. This columned hall was once lined with firing crucibles; alloy furnaces and forges the size of cottages, whose scintillating flames, leaping furiously from their glowing chambers, basked the air in a rich carnelian-orange light. On the left wall, a vast door was carved leading into a magnificent monastery, choked with bookshelves with pedestals and magical items of varying rarity. Parallel to the left doorway, led to a monolithic staircase that climbed along the wall and reached upwards towards the surface. Carrying with it rail tracks that bore; minecarts, stocked with wealth from the prosperous mining missions that had been endeavoured below. All these features accumulated to form a bustling society, rich with culture and ambition.

Now that idyllic world is gone; burned to ash in the blazing rage of the red dragon. All that progression appeared to be replaced with a wide ocean of gold and treasure where the dragon buries itself, committing to slumber until the next disturbance. Against my better judgement, I intend to be that disturbance. I'm still unsure what motivated me to breach this chamber. Was it pride or curiosity or foolishness? No matter my drive, there was no going back. Other than the winding spiral staircase, I traversed to get down all other entrances that became caved in. The monastery had been reduced to debris and the mines completely drained of all value. The hall appeared desolate, barren of all life. Even the feeble mice that could have littered the golden sea were purged by the dragon below.

What's important for me to address for those who don't understand; is that you don't simply *summon* a dragon. A dragon reveals itself for one of only two reasons: to kill you or to mock you. You'd be dead before any summoning could even occur. Another important note is that dragons always remained as three things: condescending, greedy and vain. (Writing this down portrays its most apparent foolishness as a definite factor in stumbling down into this lair). Although it should be noted: a

dragon can sense your intent like it can sense the faintest odour. Therefore, if you hold no intent to steal and only to converse then it's outlook on your intrusion may be more placid.

I had spent a decent portion of time admiring the structure, when the great dragon suddenly began to emerge. It always begins with a rumbling. First came the tail, lashing out from the golden mass which led to it cracking violently like a whip, twisting up and jutting out with its jagged end. Then came a row of oily black spines, ripping up through the gold and twitching with an arched back of crimson scales that are only partially revealed. Finally, the head. In my opinion, a dragon's most distinguishable and terrifying feature is its eyes. That hypnotic gaze still haunts me upon my recollection. Those brooding, fiery eyes, holding a bitter rancour for all but itself, festered beneath those fluttering eyelids. Two great horns resembling that of a ram sprouted from above its brow, yet only one curled up; the other had been fractured in fierce combat. Varying scales of red, gold and brown encrusted its leathery skin with precision that felt unnatural. With an animalistic snarl smoke billowed from its two wide nostrils, flickering with wisps of cinder. Although the dragon's features held elegance and majesty, it's smug countenance exhaled an air of superiority and condescension.

One massive arm outstretched towards me, its claws unlatched and leapt outwards. I was prepared to be mangled there and then, yet I was surprised to see hesitation in the arm as it withdrew. Pholomirr, the Ancient Red Dragon, refrained from what could've been a simple dispatching of fresh prey to utter these following words. In a coarse and echoing voice he inquired, "What does something like you need from my domain?"

Personal Anecdote of Arthur Rednir - Volume 27

To be Continued (?)

Stories and how we relate to them

By Ethan Bland

The reason we can connect to stories so deeply is because it relates to us in some way. There is no "it relates to them", there is only 'us' as a personal collective. We all draw from the same well of emotions, which is why we connect so deeply to stories. Most of the time, we relate to characters who have attributes we wish to have, they are something we are not or even they have been through something we have, giving us common ground. The fundamental truth of this is that we are able to be put in other people's shoes and in a spiritual way, it connects and binds us, Showing us how under all the trivial differences we may have, we are all human.

Not everyone is a monster slayer, but it is not about the surface levels of these stories or the titles or even the setting that intrigues us so deeply. When a character opens up emotionally, it has the same effect as if it were a friend to do so. It doesn't matter what happens in a story, it is about the characters and how we can relate to them. This is how we connect to these stories. Characters are conduits for the audience to be let into that world and to experience it.

You may not remember a story because it has an overcomplicated plot that is only technical, making it a higher concept story and giving it harder qualities to relate to. A good story takes a different turn, It never becomes more than just a plot. In theory, You only need a simple plot but you need to have complex characters, with a harsher background to really 'stick the landing.'

It sounds cold to be scientific about something that is so emotionally motivated, but as you connect with these characters the brain releases oxytocin, often known as the "love" hormone. This is what brings us close to these characters despite them not actually existing. Feeling unique emotions enables us to recall specific memories for better or for worse, that is why they stick with you as they make you feel something.

Stories can let us live thousands of lives, we can immerse ourselves into it and even self project onto the protagonist making us feel as if we were them. A world without stories would simply be inconceivable.

'Would You Let A Lack Of Ability Stop You From Helping Others?'

By Ruby Jewel



Encanto (2021) is a Disney animated film about a family with unique abilities, each member of the family possesses gifts which are used to help the community. All of the members with the exception of Abuela Alma and Mirabel possess gifts to help the residents of the Encanto*. The film begins in the past with Mirabel and Abuela bonding before Mirabel's gift ceremony over how she can help the Encanto with high expectations placed upon her. Mirabel has a perceived lack of ability or gift and is therefore 'magic deficient' and then is viewed as a burden, a disappointment and is useless in Abuela's eyes. Years later, the movie then focuses on the present day in the Encanto. With Abuela still placing expectations on The Family Madrigal.

Abuela, despite being seemingly powerless, is the matriarch who is responsible for running the town and viewing which family members are appropriate when supporting the community in the Encanto. Luisa is valued for her ability to lift incredible weights and heavy objects, Isabella is viewed as perfect with her goals being set for her to continue the family legacy and provide flora around the Encanto. Dolores can hear great distances and can be used to spread information and requests made of the villagers. Pepa provides appropriate weather for the Encanto during the seasons and in daily life. Camilo shapeshifts to give aid, be an extra pair of hands and is able to give respite to parents from their children. Julieta provides healing and first aid to injured people. Finally, there is Mirabel who desperately wants to help but is constantly denied opportunities to prove herself and is simply waiting on a miracle to let others know her worth.

In summary, each family member's gifts are valued and used effectively, however, looking at the family as a whole, there are cracks within the support network in which some powers are more valuable than others and the individuals such as Mirabel without powers are neglected and viewed as useless. Despite most of the members of the family being valued, there are several who also fall through the cracks. Bruno, who has

the ability to see the future and is blamed for everything that goes wrong, Luisa, who is burdened with so much weight that her anxiety and stress causes her to weaken in her abilities and Isabella, who was only following Abuela Alma's wishes without speaking up for herself in fear of losing the 'perfect' label.

These cracks begin to be seen by the audience when the youngest member, Antonio, acquires his gift to speak to animals. During the ceremony, physical cracks appear in the Casita with the less visible cracks being the individual flaws and personalities of the discussed family members being exposed. Firstly, Luisa is constantly under too much surface pressure, until Mirabel fixes this crack by suggesting that Luisa not carry so much. Bruno meanwhile is blamed for every negative prediction prior to Mirabel finding the light in his vision by showing that no vision is set in stone and the negative consequences are based on the interpretation of the images. Isabella is allowed to speak the truth to Mirabel about how she feels and what she wants to make rather than her perfect image. Finally, Alma is forced to show her cracks when the Casita is destroyed and the candle goes out. Abuela has constantly put pressure on the family to earn the gifts that the candle is given.

Throughout the film from Abuela Alma's perspective, Mirabel was the one to blame for everything that had gone wrong; the loss of the magic, the candle going out, Luisa's lack of strength, the breakdown of Isabella's proposal and why Bruno ran away. All because Mirabel was viewed as the cause of all of the problems and a weak link. Contrastly, all Mirabel wanted to do was help, she was constantly told by the family, "work and dedication will help the miracle" and that she had "nothing to prove". But in Mirabel's eyes, she was always looked down upon by Abuela Alma, especially when Abuela told her "the best way for some of us to help is to stay out of the way" and she should "leave the decorations to someone else."

When both perspectives are shown (the understanding of Mirabel in Abuela's eyes) there is finally an understanding in which Mirabel should be allowed to be in The Family Madrigal whether she has powers or not. By the end of the film the whole family -including the long excluded Bruno- come together. Mirabel herself is now finally understood by everybody that her magical impairment makes her the most qualified to lead The Family Madrigal and value everyone in the Encanto. Mirabel's family learns that everyone can help people whether they have magic or not and that nothing, not even a lack of ability can stand in the way of a person's commitment to helping others.

*Encanto - can mean many things in regard to magic and charm but in this context it refers to the village, the magical candle and Casita (the magical home).

Thoughts on a song of Achilles

By Ellie Holmes

Spoilers ahead!!

When you read that book, don't you worry that you might never experience such an innocent, pure and strong love? That's my problem when I read about myths or ideal circumstances; I become jealous or stressed by the idea that I can only find that rare love in books...

Tyler Durden said it first: "We're the middle children of history, man. No purpose or place. We have no Great War. No Great Depression." Perhaps Such love is common when we're kids, and more common still under extraordinary circumstances. Achilles and Patroclus were still boys when they reached Troy and grew up under the most extraordinary of circumstances; a war. Death in close proximity always robs us of our over-thinking, our scheming, our doubts. It leaves behind only the most primary of our thoughts and emotions, and if we're lucky then they are

love and concern for our loved ones and a singular desire to protect them from harm.

Maybe I am not yet naive enough to believe in such love, but the ideal love we always read and watch about always happens with a plot that puts a deadline to it, and the running time makes everything else irrelevant. I am sure such great love stories were lived but not written during WWII, or back when smallpox was taking lives. It is all too possible that, had they survived, Achilles and Patroclus might have had problems with the demands of being a prince, or keeping things secret or the fact that at some point one of them might want kids.

And I wouldn't wish it for us because great love stories seem to come at the cost of a happy life. Health, prosperity, order, and a bright future for the next generations are all important too. And such love stories seldom have happy endings too. There is this saying: "Love is when you can't unite."