

Messin' wiv Mikey!

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Still in London (this is a photo of my hotel here), still going to the theater every night...thank goodness the stagehands' strike has not yet traveled across the pond. Two nights ago, a dazzling production of MacBeth, with Patrick Stewart...yes, the Star Trek guy...who knew he was a brilliant classical actor? (Well, obviously the producer who cast MacBeth)

Last night, the musical Billy Elliott, from the charming film of a few years ago. Tonight, Shadowlands.

But what about daytime, if you are in another city but one you've been to often before, so you're not really a tourist and no thank you, don't WANT to see the crown jewels again?

Well, yesterday I went to Old Bailey. This is a fairly well-kept secret, I think, that visitors, if they can find the special entrance and go through the metal detector and the patting-down search for contraband, and are not carrying a camera, and promise to be very very quiet...can sit and watch the criminal court in action. That's what I did yesterday, and happened on a murder trial. Tawdry plot: drugs; hooded sweatshirts; knives; guns; cash. But the dialogue was wonderful:

Barrister (adjusting his wig): "And so, after the tall man grabbed the gun and shot your father, did he say anything?"

Witness: "Yeah, well, he shouted out, 'That's wot yer get fer messin' wiv Mikey!'"

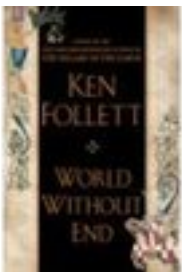
Barrister: "And did you recognize his accent? Might it have been Caribbean, or perhaps African?"

Witness: "Huh?"

Stuff like that beats spending money at Madame Tussaud's any day.

Today I realized to my dismay that I will finish the book I'm reading..."World Without End" by Ken Follett...before a six-hour plane ride home Saturday. So I made my way by red London bus to the Waterstone's on Jermyn Street and stocked up on reading material, since there is nothing worse than running out mid-flight...or opening a book and realizing you've already read it, as I've done. ("Why is the woman in seat 23-C shrieking?" "I dunno. Looks as if she opened a book and recognized the first paragraph.").

I keep hearing about e-books, where you can download several books..maybe more than several...into an electronic device and thereby not have to schlep stacks of books with you on trips. But they're very expensive and I think I mistrust the technology still.



I am thoroughly enjoying "World Without End"...sequel to "Pillars of the Earth," which I read and recommended probably 13-15 years ago. Now Oprah has just discovered it so there will be a

surge of interest and enthusiasm. Both books are very long but hold the reader's interest from the first page.

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