

European Delight

Our adventure started in London. Oh sweet London. With the smell of rotting fish and beer on every corner, I knew it was gonna be good. But let me take the time to explain exactly the situation I was in. The tour I was on consisted of 8 different countries spent with two cousins, Carson and Cameron, my brother, Leif, and my over-religious, closed-minded, bible-thumping grandparents. Not that there's anything with religion but it can be blown out of proportion. They made us all sign a damn contract before we went saying that we wouldn't drink alcohol or watch TV past 11 o'clock at night. HELLO! We're four 18 year-old guys in Europe for god's sake. The days were spent riding on the tour bus, looking at historical sites, and hearing the phrase "these are my grandsons" about a million times. But the nights were much more exciting. Being that they went to bed at about 8 pm and we each had separate rooms it wasn't a problem sneaking away.

The first night we were somewhat nervous about sneaking out. But by 9 o'clock we decided to go through with it.

Carson poked his head into grandma's room, "The jet lag's killing us. We're hitting the sack. Goodnight. Love you."

Half-asleep grandma responded, "Okay kids. Now remember, no TV after 11. Love you too. See you in the morning."

After tip-toeing downstairs, we proceeded to get on the Underground and hightail it to Leicester Square, the most happenin' part of the whole city. After going to a nightclub, we went to a bar, specializing in Guinness ales, where we ordered "sample platters" of beer. Staggering back to the hotel, we decided to take advantage of a photo- op in front of this massive brewery. The next night was much

the same with less alcohol. Don't get me wrong there was some, just not as much as the night before. On day three we woke at 6 a.m., got ready and loaded the bus for Belgium. When we got to the capital of the European Union, Brussels, we went on another excursion to a local restaurant, where I had the chicken brasciole with a pint of Jupiler, the least expensive beer on the menu. After supper the four of us found ourselves at a karaoke bar singing four different songs including "Piano Man", "Stairway to Heaven", "Personal Jesus" and "Paper Planes". I don't think the people liked any of us or our American music but who cares; we were having a good time. We proceeded to the land of beer, Germany the next day. We didn't have the luxury of nearby restaurants or bars this time so we had to improvise. Cameron and I went to a supermarket, located next to our hotel, where we bought two bottles of both red zinfandel and white wines, along with some beer. We had to be extremely careful sneaking the goods back up to our room because if grandma found out she'd fall over with despair. After half a bottle of wine and a couple beers it was time for bed. We moved the next day to the town of Innsbruck, Austria, skiing capitol of the world. Describe it in one word? Beautiful. I swear to god that I saw Shawn White in Maximilian's courtyard. The crisp, cool air reminded me of Arkansas in early winter. Venice, Italy was the next stop. This was the part of the trip I was looking forward to the most. Ironically it was my least favorite place that we visited. Italy was horrible. The people were extremely rude and didn't care to inconvenience anyone for their own personal gain.

"Are you guys from Israel?!" an Italian dressed as a gladiator asked.

"No. We're American." I replied.

"America and Israel are same country!!!" this jackass retaliated.

After looking at him like "Was that supposed to offend us?" we walked away. Despite the Italians, we did however meet some girls that night at the hotel who were from New York, were our age, and weren't bad looking. I remember going outside and talking to them.

“So are you guys virgins?” one of them questioned.

“Whoa Nelly!” I thought. A gentleman doesn’t kiss and tell. And neither do I. The subject eventually changed and we conversed for what seemed like hours. I noticed a glow in the eastern sky. I looked at my watch and confirmed the thought. I was thinking “Oh my god, I’ve stayed awake all night talking to these beautiful women.” A couple hours later we were on our way to Switzerland, my favorite part of the trip. It was the most scenic, picturesque place I’ve ever been or seen. That night we met a young man name Fredi Euler. He bought us 75 dollars worth of Swiss beer, which was also the best beer on the trip. We made a promise to this young man.

“Will you guys come back next summer?” Fredi asked.

I responded, “Fredi, if you buy me as much beer as you did tonight, I’ll come back tomorrow.”

Our excursion continued to Paris the next day. After exploring the Louvre and the Eiffel tower I was ready to eat. There was a Chinese restaurant next to our hotel that we decided to take advantage of.

At this point in the trip everyone was ready to head back home. There were no more late nights from this point on. I guess you could say that they were catching up to us. The next day we headed back to London and boarded our home-bound flight.

I was very impressed that throughout the trip we were able to maintain the “Nice young men” routine in front of the grandparents. It was a sort of Jekyll and Hyde bit. During the day it was “yes sir” and “yes Ma’am” but after they went to bed it was “hell yeah”. I’m just glad they’ll never know the truth.