

Film Blog

Everybody Knows

You know the drill by now guys. Whenever there is a big Marvel release, Amy side steps the crowds and slips in to a small screen to see something unheralded instead. I wish Brie Larson and *Captain Marvel* all the best, but honestly, it's just not my cup of tea! This early 2019 edition of comic book avoidance has lead me to the door of a Spanish drama/mystery/thriller, original title *Todos Lo Saben*, translated as *Everybody Knows*.

The film tells the story of a family wedding and reunion in a picturesque village outside of Madrid. Laura (Penelope Cruz) returns to her hometown with her children in tow, only to enter a world of agony and suffering when her teenage daughter Irene (Carla Campra) is kidnapped for ransom. With the help of old flame and family friend Paco (Javier Bardem), the narrative flows as a mad dash to recover Irene, with old secrets and new grudges coming to the surface, no family member spared their moment of suspicion and drama.

Whilst I can't say that the plot is entirely predictable, there are certainly a lot of recognisable and anticipated beats along the way. The film maintains enough drama and suspicion to be an engaging watch from start to finish, but there is nothing about *Everybody Knows* that could be described as mind blowing or truly gripping. Alongside the central focus of Irene's kidnapping there are more domestic themes and issues such as lost love, jealousy, financial grudges, many of the things that one sees in most run of the mill melodramas, and these help to flesh out the story, even seeming more compelling and interesting at times than the central mystery of the story. And at over two hours in length, the film does well not to outstay its welcome. The plot covers a lot of ground and, from a personal point of view at least, it doesn't drag or plod like it so easily could. Compared to many other kidnap drama and thrillers out there, the film stays very small scale, and that definitely works in its favour as the emotions and motivations of the characters come through rather than elaborate fight scenes or car chases.

As somebody who doesn't watch as many foreign language films as she should, I can't help thinking that a lot of the intrigue and enjoyment I found within the movie might be down to its novelty 'otherness'. The audience get a visually pleasing look at a slightly different culture, and the foreign aspect might just make the picture more interesting for me than if it were simply another English language kidnap movie.

Overall, *Everybody Knows* is a slightly more effective than average kidnap thriller, one that prefers character depth and secrets to big set pieces and edge of the seat action. There is certainly enough tension and intrigue to keep you going, and the film is massively boosted by two central performances that are better than the material itself. It's not going to stick in the memory for a long time, but it's definitely a worthy side step companion in another week when Marvel is here to clean up the box office.

Mental Health Blog

The Consoling Side Of Sadness And Depression

I was in the car the other day listening to “Paint It Black” by the Rolling Stones when someone asked out loud what they thought the meaning of the song was. As the English major who spent four years analysing writing, they asked for my take on it. Off the top of my head I said I thought it was about how it’s easier being sad than it is to be happy. It’s easier to paint everything black and accept how dark this world truly is than live in an ignorant bliss. When you’re happy, there’s always a risk in becoming sad again, so it’s easier to be permanently dark than walk the tightrope of happiness and despair. I’m not saying that’s exactly right. Mick could’ve been talking about the death of someone and how he wanted the whole world to be in mourning with him for all I know. But the conversation got me thinking nonetheless. Because I *do* find more comfort in sadness than happiness.

There’s something consoling in heartbreak and grief and death and depression. When you’re at the bottom, living in the darkness, there is no way it can get any worse. Happiness is a terrifying sensation because at any moment, it can be ripped away from you and send you tumbling downward. If you live under a dark cloud, you never fear the moment it will rain. It becomes a natural part of your existence. It’s an easy phenomenon to accept. The world sucks – so it goes.

When you’re beginning a new relationship, it is especially terrifying. You are over the moon with blind love and happiness and excitement, yet at any moment it can all go wrong. You can be filled with ecstasy one instant then have your heart shattered into pieces the next. I almost would prefer heartbreak over the anticipation of it. I would rather be sad by myself than be happy with someone, deep down awaiting the day they hurt me.

When you’re sad, nothing can hurt you. It’s *empowering* to be miserable. People say it’s easier to hate than to love. Well, at least in my opinion, it’s easier to be sad than to be happy. You can relish in sadness. You can brood and reflect.

Just like the song Paint It Black, aren’t colours more complicated? Yes, they’re more cheery and heighten your mood and they’re more pleasant to look at, but isn’t black more reasonable, more comfortable? You can get lost in the blackness; you can seek comfort and refuge. You feel more, think more, accept more.

In life, you can and most positively will get hurt. It seems almost easier to go through life prepared for the blow, already in the trenches before you get buried any lower.

Though perhaps I’m being overly dramatic. Would I really appreciate the darkness, the colour black without light and colour to compare it to? And do I truly wish for no-one to be happy and in love? No. So although I find *more* comfort in sadness, I do not begrudge anyone their joy – even myself, even if I know it may only be temporary.

Football Blog

HOW I CELEBRATED ROMELU'S GOAL

I'm writing this today after one of the strangest weeks that I've had, on an individual level, in years. As I told you a week ago, I'm not used to being injured. The week has crawled by without being able to train with my teammates. I've been around them each day, of course, as I am going through my recovery at the training ground, but it's not the same.

It is hard to not be able to contribute, and even more so during a week with two games. To everyone's delight, the team have been doing well out on the pitch, showing that we are all able to compete. On Wednesday we were able to win at a tough stadium like Selhurst Park, where Lukaku scored a brace and James Garner picked out an assist on his debut. Every time that an academy player debuts with the first team, we feel as though this club's best tradition just keeps on going, making us stronger. James, on top of being a great lad, is a great central midfielder who can pick his passes well and control the tempo of games – hopefully he has a huge career ahead of him.

On Saturday, we won again with a comeback against Southampton. They had a good game at Old Trafford and I really hope that they manage to stay up. It was a game of amazing goals in which, fortunately, we were able to get our noses in front. It is weird for me to celebrate goals in front of the television or in the stands like all of you, but in the end I was obviously very happy. It was really important to win this game to help us towards our target for the end of the season, given that our rivals aren't slacking.

This week, we have two more games... which will probably go by slowly for me again, although I will be supporting the team and carrying on with my recovery process. I'm feeling good about it, every day I'm a bit better and I am working to be back as soon as possible.

PSG and Arsenal are both top opponents to be facing this week. The game in Paris is particularly tough due to the first leg, but we are United and we never surrender. We have to believe that it is possible. Later, we will visit the Emirates again in a vital game as we fight for a Champions League place.

In Spain, there were two 'Clásicos' this week. Barça won both of them and as a result go further clear in the league and go through to the final of the cup. In the final, they'll face Valencia, who are there again after an 11-year absence. A lot of people remind me of when I was there, experiencing that particular dream for myself. It was a terrific cup run, it was unforgettable for all of us that were involved and it stands out in my career. I wish them all the best for the final, Valencia fans deserve moments like these.

I'll sign off here for today. I hope you all have a great week.

Travel Blog

Queen of the Dolomites: sunrise on top of the world

It was a still, windless night when my alarm buzzed me away before 5am, with the stars still twinkling outside and no light yet on the horizon in the Dolomites this past January. While I have never professed to be a morning person, sunrise on top of 3000 meter mountain in the Italian Alps can tempt even me out of bed, as long as there an espresso or two thrown in there. I'm glad I can always count on that in Italy.

Come wintertime, there is a very unique experience offered in the Agordino region of the Dolomites. Every Friday you have the chance to take the cablecar to the top of the Marmolada mountain very early in the morning and watch the sunrise from the platforms at the top at 3,265 meters. Known locally as the Queen of the Dolomites, I was excited to pay homage and was prepared to fangirl accordingly. And breakfast at the Punta Serauta is included afterwards. Think bottomless bubbles, all the pastries and cakes, endless cured ham and meats (because Italy) and all of the cappuccino! All hail Italy!

The day before while skiing below I could see the shimmering iconic Marmolada glacier below, and I was excited to head up to the top of the mountain for sunrise.

It was absolutely frigid and dark when we all piled in the huge cablecar pre-sunrise to head up to the top of Marmolada, packed in close with all our skis. With the windchill at a balmy -20° C, I was glad for the extra layers.

The sky was just starting to lighten when we emerged on top of the world at the cablecar station of Punta Rocca. So cold I can only describe it as white walker weather, you could only have your hands bare for a minute or two before you lost all feeling in your fingers. It was so cold that my breath froze on my hair into icicles and created a layer of frost on my camera where I breathed. Call me crazy, but I find that crisp frosty cold very beautiful. The snow sparkles and the world seems frozen in time, almost as if we were inside a snow globe about to be shaken. I love it.

All of the sudden the mountains exploded with color, with Sella in the distance lit up orange and gold and beams of sunlight trickled between all the peaks in the distance. It was absolute magic.

It was in that moment, watching the world wake up from the top of the queen of the Dolomites that I fell in love with the Agordino. What a place! I truly felt her immensity and scale and privilege for getting to experience it in such a wonderful time of day. And to be rewarded with treats and cake afterwards? And get to snowboard down? What. A. Day.

Have you ever experienced a sunrise like this from on top of a mountain? Have you met the Queen of the Dolomites? Spill in the comments below!