



- 1 -

## DENNIS SEVERS' HOUSE

18 Folgate Street • Spitalfields • London E1 6BX  
[www.dennissevershouse.co.uk](http://www.dennissevershouse.co.uk)

Walk through the doors at 18 Folgate Street and step into another century. Founded by the late Dennis Severs and run today by his friend David Milne, this eighteenth-century silk weavers house is a time machine filled with the sights, smells and sensations of a lost world. It's like nothing you've experienced before, and it was the main inspiration for my book.

*Joseph stood on his toes and looked through one of the glowing windows. A magnificent fire burned brightly in a fireplace, and a sparkling chandelier ringed with candles hung from the ceiling. On a shiny black table beneath the chandelier were tall, glimmering white tapers, a pair of silver pitchers, a few sets of crystal goblets and the half-eaten remains of a lavish dinner . . . Joseph felt as if someone had taken a pair of scissors and cut into the fabric of the street, pulling it back to reveal a hidden nineteenth-century world, waiting just beneath the freezing twentieth-century surface.*

- 3 -

## THEATRE ROYAL HAYMARKET

18 Suffolk Street • London SW1Y 4HT • [www.trh.co.uk](http://www.trh.co.uk)

One of the oldest theatres in London, the Royal Haymarket, in its various incarnations, has stood on this site since 1720. It was the first theatre in London to boast electric lights, and it hosted the world premieres of two of Oscar Wilde's plays. The fictional Royal Theatre in my book, including many of the backstage scenes, is closely modelled on the Haymarket.

*The cracked yellow walls were lined with electric lights in wire cages, posters for old shows and photographs of actors who had appeared in the theatre over the years . . . At the top of the stairs, they continued through another door, turned a corner, and found themselves backstage . . . Miles of rope crisscrossed the space, running up toward the ceiling, turning on pulleys and coming down the walls, where weights and other mechanisms held the rigging in place. It was like being aboard a ship, thought Joseph.*

- 6 -

## CHRIST CHURCH

Commercial Street • Spitalfields • London E1 • [www.ccsptalfields.org](http://www.ccsptalfields.org)

This beautiful church, designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor, was built between 1714 and 1729. Here, in early 2000, a candlelit memorial service was held for Dennis Severs, who inspired much of my book (*See* Dennis Severs' House).

- 2, 5, 8, 11 -

## CITY OF LONDON BOUNDARY DRAGONS

These cast-iron sculptures of dragons mark the original boundaries of the City of London. They were used as the models for the dragon aboard the whaling ship the *Kraken*, which opens my story, and later, Joseph passes some of them as he travels to and from the theatre. Four of the ten locations of the dragon sculptures are represented on this map.

*The carriage clattered along cobblestoned streets, beneath lampposts and past statues of dragons along the edge of the river.*

- 4 -

## OLD SPITALFIELDS MARKET

16 Horner Square • Spitalfields • London E1 6EW  
[www.oldspitalfieldsmarket.com](http://www.oldspitalfieldsmarket.com)

Old Spitalfields Market was once the thriving hub of the community, bustling with fruit and vegetable sellers at all hours of the day and night. A market had stood on the site since 1638, and it survived in one form or another until 1991 when it was moved to Leyton. Today the market is filled with antique shops, restaurants and clothing stores. In *The Marvels*, when the main character, Joseph Jervis, arrives in Spitalfields, he soon stumbles upon the market, which was bursting with activity in the middle of the night.

*Delivery trucks pulled in and out of the market, and inside were a hundred different stalls, with names like Gibbs and Pardoe Fruits, Great British Mushrooms and David Kira, Banana Merchants. Old crates filled with fruits and vegetables were piled everywhere, and the place teemed with people, even at this hour . . . A dizzying cascade of smells mingled in the cold air.*

- 7 -

## MUDLARKING

Along the shores of the Thames  
[www.mudlarking.blogspot.com](http://www.mudlarking.blogspot.com)

Hunting for treasures along the shores of the Thames is called mudlarking. There are many spots along the river where you can do this. On this map, I've marked one, near where David Milne first pointed out to me that upon closer inspection, the endless rocks and stones you see turn out to be much more than they appear. As the character of Albert Nightingale says in *The Marvels*:

*"These aren't rocks and stones beneath your feet, you know. They're what is left of the city over thousands of years . . . Right here, see? This is a piece of a Roman road. Think of all the lovers who may have walked along this road. And this bit of brick? Perhaps it's from a house that sheltered a murderer once . . . Who knows? But I'll guarantee you this, every fragment you see here, every scrap, once had a story."*

- 9 -

## TOBACCO DOCK

The Dock, Tobacco Quay • Wapping Lane • London E1W 2SF  
[www.tobaccodocklondon.com](http://www.tobaccodocklondon.com)

Built in the nineteenth century as a warehouse for tobacco brought in by cargo ships, Tobacco Dock is used today for large events, and children can explore two reproduction pirate ships permanently docked nearby. The gates of Tobacco Dock can be found in *The Marvels* when Leo Marvel runs away from home, hoping to sail to India.

- 10 -

## TWO TEMPLE PLACE

2 Temple Place • London WC2R 3BD • [www.twotempleplace.org](http://www.twotempleplace.org)

Built by William Waldorf Astor, and opened in 1895, Two Temple Place is now owned by the Bulldog Trust charity, which hosts art exhibitions in its beautiful chambers. The golden ship on the roof inspired a similar ship that plays a central role in my story.

*Once it was finished, Marcus helped install it on the roof. And for the first time in decades, maybe centuries, the ship was free to turn in the wind.*

- 12 -

## SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM

13 Lincoln's Inn Fields • London WC2A 3BP • [www.soane.org](http://www.soane.org)

Sir John Soane was a nineteenth-century architect and teacher who travelled the world collecting sculptures, casts, ceramics, paintings, pottery and architectural objects, all of which he proudly displayed in his home. These displays, which he opened up to his students, have been kept intact, according to his wishes, for future generations to enjoy. His house – a treasure trove of surprises, stuffed floor to ceiling with his beloved millennium-spanning possessions – and elements of it, along with Dennis Severs' House, served as inspirations for the house that Albert Nightingale creates in *The Marvels*.

- 13 -

## MONUMENT TO THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON

Fish Street Hill • London EC3R 8AH • [www.themonument.info](http://www.themonument.info)

The Great Fire of London wiped out most of the city in 1666. The Monument, completed in 1677, stands 61 metres high (202 feet), which is the exact distance the Monument stands from the place where the fire began, in Pudding Lane. Fire plays a central thematic role in *The Marvels*. Joseph mentions the Great Fire while he is mudlarking with his uncle along the Thames.

*"I once did a report on the Great Fire," said Joseph. "People threw all their belongings into the river to save them from the flames. Could this pipe be from 1666, from someone who was running from the fire maybe, and dropped his pipe, and it broke and rolled into the river?"*

DISCOVER  
★ ALL THE REAL ★  
PLACES  
IN LONDON  
★ THAT INSPIRED ★  
BRIAN SELZNICK'S  
THE MARVELS  
MUSEUMS!  
DRAGONS!  
GOLDEN SHIPS!  
MYSTERIOUS THINGS!  
SCHOLASTIC PRESS

