Unstoppable Today

“I’m going to London in December”, I casually dropped into Jon’s live stream chat. “Hey, let’s hook up, I could come up to London to meet you!” was his immediate reaction – making my heart take a little leap of joy. Exactly what I had secretly wished for but hadn’t really dared to hope for. Meeting Jon Campling in person – and not at some event but casually for tea in London, like a proper friend date! But that wasn’t all. “I wanted to go to London anyway, to play on a public piano. Oh wait, I could play your song… and you could sing along, only if you want to, no pressure!” The song in question was “Unstoppable” by Sia, which we both loved and related to. To be honest, singing in public was a daunting prospect for me. Due to social anxiety, I had always avoided being the center of attention, let alone giving any kind of performance in front of strangers. But there was absolutely no way in hell that I was going to pass up the opportunity to share such an iconic moment with Jon, and I felt immensely proud that he trusted me to be so brave.
I spent the following weeks on a dopamine high that felt almost too much, like my brain might explode at any moment whilst I was plotting and planning to make that magic moment happen.

In November, just before Jon’s birthday, an unexpected twist of fate shattered my joyful excitement. Jon began to suffer from sinusitis paired with a debilitating migraine. He was doing poorly, and my hopes for our glorious plan began to crumble. Even worse, I feared for his long-term physical and mental health, since he had only just been cured from two and a half years of chronic sinusitis and was terrified of the past repeating itself all over again. The weeks until December turned into a brutal emotional rollercoaster, constantly torn between excitement and anxiety.

Shortly before my trip to London I had gathered some hope again as Jon was feeling a little better, and he assured me he would come and meet me if he possibly could.

The day I boarded my plane to London, I allowed joyful anticipation to take me over. The view from the plane was beautiful, fluffy white clouds beneath us and sunshine glistening on the sea. It felt like the universe was sending me an auspicious sign.

After having arrived at my cousin’s house in Herne Hill, I enjoyed a quiet evening walk to Brixton and a burger in a quaint little shopping arcade. That night I lay awake for a long time, listening to Sia’s Christmas album, unable to calm down with excitement.

Late the next morning I got word from Jon that he was feeling well enough to travel to London. A few hours later, I found myself waiting in Victoria Station for the arrival of the train from Eastbourne, counting down the minutes on the station clock with my heart racing in my chest. After what felt like an eternity staring at the clock and at the masses of people drifting towards the platform gates, I spotted his tall striking figure, standing out from the crowd in a floral bucket hat and leopard print fur jacket, waving to me as he walked up to the gates. The big moment had arrived! Jon greeted me cheerfully and gave me a friendly hug. With his fluffy jacket it felt like hugging a six-foot-plus teddy bear. My nerves calmed immediately as I felt that familiar warmth and sense of closeness with him. We started chatting right away, without any awkward moment or pause - just rolling together like the good friends we had become. While we went to grab a coffee at a kiosk inside the station, I complimented Jon on

his colourful outfit including the golden sneakers, and humble as ever he admitted he had just put on the only clean clothes left since his washing machine was broken.
As we made our way through the maze of the London underground, headed for King's Cross/St. Pancras Station, we talked about Christmas markets and Jon's time in Halle, Germany, where he worked as a DJ and learned to say "Ich habe Kopfschmerzen" when he needed to scrounge some pain killers at the hotel reception after a wild night out. It struck me how effortlessly handsome he looked in real life, with a presence that was even more striking than on camera, radiating a vibrant energy that was captivating.

The magnificent arcade of St. Pancras Station was resplendent with Christmas decorations. When we spotted a free public piano, Jon decided to seize the moment. He sat down and we launched straight into "Unstoppable". I had imagined this moment so many times, worrying if I would be able to pull it off or if my voice would fail me. But when the moment arrived, there was no time to overthink. Reading the lyrics from Jon's phone, I was able to focus completely on my singing. "I'm unstoppable, I'm a Porsche with no brakes, I'm invincible, yeah I win every single game…" Jon's piano playing was confident and full of momentum, carrying me forward as I belted out the familiar tune. From the corner of my eye, I noticed some passers-by stopping to listen. When we finished, they applauded, smiling. Jon stood up and we shared a spontaneous celebratory hug - one of those moments that seem to briefly suspend time.

Now we had certainly earned our afternoon tea, and since I had mentioned that I would love to have scones, Jon was determined to find a café that offered them. We found a nice place in the station arcade where we shared a big buttermilk scone with cream and jam and had some Earl Grey tea with it. Conversation was flowing naturally – we had a lot to tell each other. I took the opportunity to hand Jon my gifts - a self-made bracelet in Slytherin green with the words "Magic Works", some home-baked cookies in the form of the dark mark, a letter and some lyrics I had written. To my delight he put the bracelet on and struck a cute pose for me to take a picture. After tea, Jon kindly signed some photos of his death eater character that he had brought along for me and some of my friends and family. To help with his dyslexia, I wrote down the names for him to copy. He explained to me that it felt like there was an evil goblin in his head swapping the letters just when he was about to write them down. Before we left the café, the lovely waitress also received a free autograph.

We returned to the piano and Jon played "Let it go" from the movie "Frozen" and his original song "The Duke". In his colourful outfit he looked every bit the part of "the Duke", the imaginary rock star persona from his song that he had somehow miraculously become in real life. For "Magic Works" I joined him again - the song that had brought us together in the first place when Jon's performance in the Magical Music of Harry Potter concert had touched my heart.

Afterwards we went on to Platform 9 ¾ at King's Cross station to watch the "Muggles" getting their photos taken, and Jon took some selfies of us at the festive Honeydukes hut. He revealed his death eater persona to some surprised Potterheads, and when they looked incredulous, I would chime in with "it's true!" It was heart-warming to observe how friendly and humble Jon was with all the people we met. At the Harry Potter shop he kindly bought me a Hufflepuff chocolate as well as a Slytherin chocolate for himself, after having shared a

hilarious story from the filming of Harry Potter featuring a very solemn-looking crew member in a black cloak and top hat who offered him a box of wands to choose from.

Finally, we had to return to Victoria Station to go on our separate ways. In a rather surreal moment on the underground train, Jon explained to me how, according to AI, his brain was unique in the whole universe – a mind-boggling notion, to which he added “it’s a good thing I don’t have an ego”. As bizarre as this might sound - knowing Jon, I realized it was nothing but the truth.

In Victoria Station, we hugged goodbye in the very place where we had met. Jon told me that our time together had been the highlight of his month. “It’s been wonderful to hang out with you, my darling!” The look of warmth and affection in his eyes etched itself deep into my memory. I walked away with my heart full and the quiet certainty that this was only just the beginning of a beautiful friendship.