

In Praise of Mr Watts

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The pen is mightier than the sword... and so is the brush.

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I see a tragedy before me. I see the result of injustice and bigotry. I see a woman who had the heavy weight of sin placed on her shoulders, a sin considered so great there could be no forgiveness. How could this young woman ever hope to carry such a burden? There was no soul on earth willing to help her, no one to turn to except her God in heaven. So she went to meet with her God, to let him be her judge and salvation. She followed the steps of so many other fallen women, a short journey that led to The Bridge of Sighs. She didn't look back, there was nothing to stop her, she stepped over the parapet and dropped into the cold, filthy waters beneath. The poor girl drowned of course, she died along with the unborn child she carried in her womb. But did she find her God? Did she receive her redemption? Well, yes she did. She was rewarded with much more than forgiveness and compassion. Someone, or something, took her soul and placed it for all eternity in the safe hands of a certain Mr Watts. Her heartbreak inspired him, he captured her lonely misery on canvas, and when the moment was right he revealed her story to the world... and the world finally woke up and took notice. Dear Mr Watts, his courage to portray the truth helped sow the seeds of change. There was no turning back for Victorian society, it would take time, a whole century even, but women were finally on the road to receiving justice and equality. "It's a wonderful painting," I say to my sister. "One of the most important of all time," she replies. steffanie xxx Found Drowned by George Watts is on permanent display at the Watts Gallery.