

The Mark





- 3 EDITOR'S NOTE
- 4 JOURNEY TO BELGIUM: A SCHOOL TRIP OF REMEMBRANCE AND REFLECTION
- 5 HOMEWORK: RELEVANT OR RUBBISH?
- 6 SHOULD YOU FOLLOW YOUR HEAD OR YOUR HEART?
- 7 THE 11+ A DEBATE
- 8 MARK MY WORDS
A COLUMN WRITTEN BY RUBY R
- 9 VISIONS OF TOMORROW
- 10 WHY JOINING A SCHOOL CLUB CAN TRANSFORM YOUR RMGS EXPERIENCE
- 11 PARIS FASHION WEEK SPRING/SUMMER COLLECTION 2025: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE INCREDIBLY BORING
- 13 ELF ON THE SHELF 2024
- 14 THE BOOKMARK
A COLUMN WRITTEN BY ISLA B
- 15 PERCY JACKSON- A REVIEW
A COLUMN WRITTEN BY ISLA B
- 16 BOOK VS MOVIES- WHICH WILL REIGN SUPERIOR? A LOOK AT "UGLIES" AND "DIVERGENT"
- 18 MATILDA THE MUSICAL ON NETFLIX: A 'REVOLTING' DELIGHT FULL OF MIRACLES AND MISCHIEF!
- 19 INSIDE THE WORLD OF STAGE MUSICALS: INSIGHTS FROM A PERFORMER
- 20 NEW BUILDINGS AND THEIR IMPACT ON WILDLIFE
- 21 REMARKABLE READS
- 22 THE THREE LIONS: A YEAR OF TRIUMPH AND TURMOIL

EDITOR'S NOTE

WRITTEN BY RUBY R AND ISLA B

The Mark is back!

RMGS's student- run magazine is finally back this year and we are thrilled to announce that we are this year's editors.

As we write this issue's Editor's note, we realise that the making of our first edition of The Mark is already coming to an end. We were so delighted to be told that we were going to be the editors for this year, and we have thoroughly enjoyed writing our columns this term, Mark My Words and The BookMark, as we wrote about things we are passionate about- which is exactly what The Mark is for! We encourage students from all years to write for The Mark as it's a fantastic opportunity to get involved in the school community, read about a plethora of ideas and of course, enhance your writing skills.

Although it is only our first publication of The Mark this year, we have no doubt that this will be one of our favourite editions because of the clear commitment all the journalists have put into their articles. It's great to see so many different ideas and topics from the 11+, to fashion, to film adaptations, there truly is something for everyone to enjoy reading about.

We hope these beautiful, complex articles encourage you to write your own. We can't wait to read them. To submit your articles for next term's edition or for any inquires, don't hesitate to contact us:

Editor, Ruby (a9rroff@rmgs.org.uk)

Deputy editor, Isla (a9ibathgate@rmgs.org.uk)

Happy reading!

'Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on'- Louis L'Amour



JOURNEY TO BELGIUM: A SCHOOL TRIP OF REMEMBRANCE AND REFLECTION

On the 14th of October, a lucky group of Year 11 History students took the 6-hour long coach ride to Ypres, Belgium. The purpose of this trip was to discover more about World War 1 and 2, and to see, first-hand, the memorials and horrific after-effects the wars had. We visited places like Lijssenthoek CWGC cemetery, Langemarck Germany Cemetery, and the Memorial Museum Passchendaele. We also took part in a mournful wreath placing ceremony in the largest commonwealth war cemetery in the world. We placed our wreath beneath the wall of names for the Kent regiment and had a moment of silence for the soldiers we lost. A total of 11,965 graves lies in Tyne cot Cemetery-almost the same as the entire population of Rainham, with 8369 being unnamed.

However, the small detail that shocked me the most during this trip was nonchalantly shared by our group tour guide, Martin. This detail was about the Christmas Truce that took place on battlefronts on Christmas Day in 1914. During this day, soldiers stopped the fighting in the name of the christian celebration. When Martin briefly mentioned the truce, I decided to research more. I was most interested in how this came about.

As I searched the internet, a handful of reasons appeared repeatedly. The most common reason for the yuletide truce was generally a casual agreement bellowed across no man's land. Often started with caroling in their respective languages of German, or English, or even Yiddish, or even the hanging of "lighted objects above the German parapet looking like Chinese lanterns." However, no matter the buildup, the "official" agreements were much more unprofessional: "Anyway, eventually a German said, 'Tomorrow you no shoot, we no shoot.' And the morning

came, and we didn't shoot, and they didn't shoot." - German Army officer Walther Stennes." Yet, this truce was not completely spontaneous. All throughout WWI, Pope Benedict XV had been campaigning for the end of bloodshed, and a few weeks before Christmas day, he had sent yet another letter demanding peace, even explicitly calling for a ceasefire of the 25th of December to celebrate the birth of Christ (although the source is hard to find for this). This could have pushed the soldiers of any fronts to make peace.



Overall, the Christmas truce of 1914 is not only a truce, but a demonstration that even in the most savage, loveless, and brutal of times, love, kindness and humanity, can and will always shine through. Even when the world is covered in a blanket of hate, beacons of hope will always shine. Maybe that's what makes all of us human.

WRITTEN BY ELLA-BLUE C
YEAR 11

HOMework: RELEVANT OR RUBBISH?

Following my first term at RMGS I discovered that fitting in homework and personal life was harder than originally expected. This led me to dwell on the benefits of homework but also the challenges it can create for young people. So here it is folks! The pros and cons of Homework, is it relevant or rubbish? Let's find out...

When researching the benefits of homework many claim that it helps to reinforce learning, develop skills (such as time management), and helps parents and teachers to understand where their children are currently in their learning. It enables students to practice self-discipline, organisational skills and, in some cases, boosts self-motivation and confidence.



Although all of the points listed above are agreeable, this paragraph will likely change your perspective of homework. Here are some cons:

Stress: stress is VERY common when it comes to homework it can also be overwhelming at times.

Physical health: Homework can result in less sleep (the amount of sleep expected for teenagers is 8-10 hours each night). The time spent on homework can also prevent you from going outdoors and exercising.

Mental health: You can experience behavioural changes and can end up spending less time with family, friends and the people you love. It is bad for motivation and impacts overall well-being.

Academic dishonesty: You may be less loyal to academic truth to save time. Academic honesty is about being authentic, truthful and ethical in your work. It is easier than ever to plagiarise and copy other people's work and ideas with developments such as artificial intelligence.

My conclusion is that homework has its down sides and great parts, but I say that we should be given less homework so the negatives of homework don't adversely affect us and it doesn't interfere with our personal lives. In my opinion, if we are to have homework it should have specific purpose and meet our individual needs. Homework should be easy confidence boosters at the outset, then become increasingly challenging over time in order to develop knowledge and skills.

I would LOVE to hear your opinions on the matter. If you share the same opinion or have an opposing argument please get in contact with The Mark.

WRITTEN BY BEA H
YEAR 7



SHOULD YOU FOLLOW YOUR HEAD OR YOUR HEART?

Recently I've found myself faced with this question. However, I have been too conflicted, and exhausted, to make the decision.

The past 3 weeks I haven't been sleeping well. I imagine among the other Year 11s, I'm not the only one. I've been rushing home from long days at school only to have a much longer time at home. My current afternoons include stacks of flash cards in the dozens, endless books overflowing with writing, and a variety of past papers that I am yet to mark. Later, the night sky is held up with the pins of a thousand revision cards plastered upon my walls; shining bright enough from every corner of my room to disguise the darkness outside. I forget to sleep. Then suddenly, its daytime. I find that the days merge with the nights so that my week blends into one endless heap of content- a mountainous pile of revision that I try desperately not to suffocate beneath.

It's 9:00. I'm in the changing room, next door to the sports hall, where I play on table tennis every Friday. However, it's been redecorated. Now, it's the hall that determines my future. I'll sit in temporary pop-up seats, writing words that give me my permanent ending. Exam season is never easy, but it's different when you're in your last year. The year that all the other years were leading up to. Like an ostrich, all I want to do is stick my head so far into the ground, allowing the earth to swallow me whole.

One last moment to flick through my notes (or so I imagined.) Instead, I'm kneeling next to my bag, scrambling for the only working pen I have, which is buried deep at the bottom of it. In this moment all I can think is "why on earth I didn't just give in and buy a clear pencil case?". It gets quieter and quieter. Do I need a calculator for this one? No, it's English. Someone is breathing down my neck. "Hurry up" they tell me, "You're late."

A hundred familiar faces turn to me as I walk in, some look exhausted, nervous but the majority seem mostly bored. In this moment they all morph into strangers whom I feel I've never met before. Walking into a dragon's den, it starts to seem that everyone around me is now an opponent.

But I'm too busy to ponder; I'm hammering every piece of info I can recall to the walls of my brain, hoping the notes won't fall out my ears once the test begins. My heart is lunging out of my chest, pumping caffeine instead of blood. I must remind myself over and over that this isn't even the real deal! It's just a mock! But that only makes my heart bang harder at my rib cage.

*

"Stop writing now." The invigilators shuffle across rows collecting in papers. Did I do enough?

I wish I could say that my world resolves to peace when it's over, but it doesn't. Instead, my ears are immediately flooded by Great Neptune's oceans, with no hint of warning. Everybody screams over one another, pushing and shoving. The riot pounds on my eardrums like the vicious waves of a tsunami. Without a chance for air. I'm drowning in the noise. Meanwhile, the thought of the next exam starts to wrap around my legs like seaweed, dragging me deeper and deeper and back into the hall. Another test.

Now I'm dreaming of air.

Here's my problem. I find myself, at the end of it all, when the exams are over, finally being able to take a deep breath. But I wonder, what was the point? Why did I work so hard? What am I working for?

“Think of the future” My mind replies. And I do.

My brain makes me think about next year. think about Sixth Form and how I’ll need high grades to get into a good one. Then I’m made to think of my A-levels. University. A decent job. Well paid, impressive and secure. Like a lawyer, or a doctor! That’s perfect!

Perfect? Part of me wonders if it’s my brain saying those things or the hundred people in my life, who think they know what’s best, speaking through me. Have I been corrupted into thinking this is what I want? That this is what I need to survive? A million questions swarm me.

But then, if I silence my mind- just for a moment- I can start to notice the hymn of my heartbeat play a picture within me. A harmonic vision of me, in my 20s, on some beach in Barbados. I’m wearing a seashell necklace that I made myself years ago, and an oversized t-shirt that reads “Guarded Apparel”. I’ve been selling pineapple punch to the tourists, from the crack of dawn, for 6 dollars a drink. Afterwards, in the evening, I’m surfing the waves at sunset, and at night I’m lying on the rocks. I’m spotting Cygnus and Orion, dreaming of the Great Bear in the sky coming down from heaven to kiss my forehead as I sleep.

So, I’m left to ask again; should you follow your head or your heart?

WRITTEN BY ANONYMOUS
YEAR 11

THE 11+ A DEBATE

The 11+ is set by the government to decide if certain children should attend a grammar school. Everyone is offered the opportunity, and has the right, to take the test. However, should it be taken at all? Here are the pros and cons of the 11+ examination.

Pros:

- It is fair for all to take the test, opening up opportunities for all.
- Is they pass, student have access to a better education.
- Passing the exam can have long-lasting benefits, such as enhanced academic skills, improved study habits, advanced problem-solving abilities, resilience, and preparation for future exams.
- If children pass, it could be a confidence booster, encouraging them to strive for more and aspire to higher academic achievements.

Cons:

- Many students may not pass the exam, leading to feelings of failure, which can impact their future.
- The pressure and stress can make students feel overwhelmed.
- Families may have limited knowledge of the 11+ and be unsure of how to support their children during the preparation period. Leading to inequality in the system.
- Some less fortunate children may have limited access to resources, such as tutoring, study materials, and a supportive working environment.

Taking the 11+ exam can be a challenging experience for students. In my opinion, the positives outweigh the negatives of taking the 11+. What do you think?

WRITTEN BY RAJNI C
YEAR 7

MARK MY WORDS

"Mark My Words" is a thought-provoking column written by Ruby R, the editor of The Mark, offering her personal insights and opinions on the issues that shape RMGS life, student culture, and current events.

THE DISPUTE OF THE ACADEMICS: ENGLISH VS MATHS

English vs maths. Is there actually a superior out of the two? As somebody who chose to study both of these subjects at A-level, I'm interested in which subject is the true winner of this debate.

Firstly, my favourite subject has been English since I was around 10 years old. English involved reading and writing which are some of the very first skills you learn in life. So, my first thought was that surely English is the most important subject. It came much more natural to me in contrast to Maths which was more new; it was constantly developing and in its own way, it was a different language in itself.

However, during my GCSE years, Maths finally clicked, and quickly became one of my favourite subjects. I love the fact that Maths always has a right answer- for some people, this is a disadvantage because it's not subjective or creative, but I liked the stability of being able to know exactly when I would get questions right and wrong. This, ironically, contrasted English which I found more difficult to revise and improve because there were so many different questions and interpretations that we had to learn and adapt to. Despite this, I still had no objections choosing both subjects at A-level. However, I am now affronted with the decision of what to study at University!

I wonder what degree would be most beneficial... In terms of salary, statistics show that five years after graduating

from a Maths degree, you could expect to be earning around £36,000 on average. However, from English you would only be earning around £25,000. This difference could demonstrate the importance of careers in finance, computing and accounting over careers in journalism, law and marketing. It goes without saying that these subjects are both what employers look out for, in fact, 7 in 10 employers report that Maths skills are essential because when learning maths, you learn how to analyse problems, solve them, explain your ideas and manage your workload- all of which are valuable skills in a variety of careers. In addition, English degrees are extremely versatile and well respected in society, although I think that they are often overlooked for STEM degrees. We shouldn't forget that almost every career originates from English- even if you're studying medicine, you will still need to be able to articulate yourself and read and write accurately, showing that English never truly leaves you.

Ultimately, I think deciding on which subject is most useful in life is difficult because each open up different doors. In my opinion, English teaches skills that are irreplaceable. Whilst for most people, Maths is only needed during school. Even I struggle to see how certain aspects in Maths will be useful in the real world. Perhaps as we get older, we can evaluate this further to see if we use the skills we learn from English more than those from Maths. But for now, I personally think English must be the most functional.

WRITTEN BY RUBY R
YEAR 12

VISIONS OF TOMORROW

No one can predict the future. No one can know whether it is good or bad... At least, no one I know can! The following text is my personal opinions and predictions on the future of our own world.

In regards to the world, it is already an interesting place but one that is becoming increasingly lonely. I believe that in the future the world will become even more solitary. We can already see the beginnings of this in our current reality. The natural world is becoming less and less important to us. With this move away from the natural world, we have become more and more insular. What will it be like, in the future, when this isolation continues? Do we, humanity, cease to exist? A lack of the human race can be good or bad, the greenery of the world would thrive - fewer trees would be chopped down and pollution would die down.

I believe that the world will advance into a robot and technological society where robots will slowly take over the human population. Humans, thought to be an outdated and archaic "natural technology", will eventually vanish. Now, of course this poses many problems: who is going to carry on the technological race? Who is going to fix any problems made in the design of robots? How would anyone know if something went wrong? Those are questions that the future must answer.

Further to my vision of the future, I believe that a time will come when the world will become disfigured due to a meteor shower. With the extinction of humankind, natural disasters are frequent.



I assume the world will remain a fragment of what it is today, the passing pieces of planets unknown to us will slowly chip off at the sides of the Earth. The question of: is Mars a suitable environment for humans or is it hazardous? Will humans ever be able to step foot on Mars? Will humans ever know other universes? Will never be answered, abandoned, left and forgotten.

I will now focus on the future in terms of nature. I believe the natural environment will disappear in the future. We can already see this happening! China, for example, have 3,285 skyscrapers and the USA with a total of 1,025 skyscrapers. In spite of the fact that these altitudinous structures are mesmerising to look at, many pieces of land filled with greenery and alluring picturesque views had to be covered up to make these buildings. This is extremely bad as trees have multiple purposes; they purify our air and they cool our cities and streets.

Without trees many living things will cease to exist, several species will face extinction.



Taking everything that has been spoken into account, the future is one of the most interesting topics to think about.

My vision of the future is one of solidarity, a lack of human connection and limited survival. It is a bleak future but one that, I think, we are walking towards. I sometimes wonder how we counteract this. It will take the whole of society to make changes to our current way of living to help improve the future.

WRITTEN BY MELANIE-ROSE U
YEAR 7

WHY JOINING A SCHOOL CLUB CAN TRANSFORM YOUR RMGS EXPERIENCE

Getting involved in extra-curricular clubs at RMGS is more than just a way to pass the time—it's an opportunity to make the most of your school years. Whether you're into sports, drama, science, or something entirely different, there's something for everyone. Here's why joining (or even helping to run) a club can make a huge difference for you.

MAKE NEW FRIENDS

Clubs bring together people with similar interests, making it easier to connect and form friendships. Whether you're new to the school or looking to expand your circle, joining a club is a great way to meet like-minded peers.

BUILD CONFIDENCE

Trying something new can feel a bit scary, but that's how you grow! Joining a club gives you a chance to step out of your comfort zone, learn new skills, and take on challenges in a supportive environment.

DEVELOP SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

From teamwork and leadership to time

management, being part of a club teaches valuable skills that will help you both in and out of school. If you help run a club, you'll develop even more responsibility and initiative—qualities that universities and employers love to see.

DE-STRESS AND HAVE FUN

Clubs offer a break from the routine of lessons and homework. They're a chance to do something you enjoy, relax, and recharge while still staying productive.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Helping staff run a club gives you the chance to take on a leadership role and make a real impact on your school community. It's a rewarding way to share your passions and inspire others. So why not take a leap and join (or help with) a club? Whether you're a chess enthusiast, a budding musician, or just curious about what's out there, there's something waiting for you. Get involved, and you might just find that being part of a club transforms your RMGS experience in ways you never expected.

PARIS FASHION WEEK SPRING/SUMMER COLLECTION 2025: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE INCREDIBLY BORING

Was the Paris Fashion Week Spring/Summer Collection 2025 worth a week of my time? Honestly, I don't even think it was worth a day.

When it comes to fashion, the Spring/Summer collections are always my favourite. Something about being forced to use 2-3 centimetres of fabric to create a whole dress makes fashion houses more creative and innovative. On the other hand, when the Fall (Autumn) collections are revealed, it makes me realise that fashion houses think that all the average person wears in winter is a trench coat and a pair of long boots! Of course, I do not have the experience of a designer, nor the vision, but I never claimed to have anything of the sort. So here I will discuss the fashion I remembered, some for good reasons and others for the fact that someone needs to hear my opinion on how disgraceful they are.

First, the good, I'd like to start on a positive note because these will start to decrease as the article goes on. In terms of fashion, Dsquared2 has never disappointed me and my opinion of them has only improved after this collection. Dsquared2 knows how to combine streetwear, high fashion, and wearability in every item of clothing they produce. Even at first glance, you can tell that they have a vision, which is something a lot of fashion houses lose over time; or never have in the first place! Often, runways seem confusing at first due to the fact the models are dressed in every piece of clothing the collection has to offer at the same time. I know that is because the designer wants you to focus on each individual item, rather than the outfit as a

whole but this often leads to the models looking like a child that has been allowed to dress itself for the first time. However, Dsquared2 has the ability to show off each individual item and to show that on a good looking outfit. They have the creative direction that I wish for Jaded London (another brand). They are already similar in terms of fashion, but Jaded London is too focused on advertising their clothing to rich young adults in London who say they're not rich, they're just comfortable. Yet, Mummy and Daddy both have their own Wikipedia pages... and Mummy has a section on her Wikipedia dedicated to her corporation partially influencing a political uprising in Liberia, but yes, just 'comfortable'.



Secondly, MiuMiu, I honestly don't have much to say about them other than the fact that they make nice shoes. However, no matter how much I love their Spring/Summer collection, they are affected by the Fashion house curse that summer equals sandals. Fashion often involves breaking down an item into its key components and then simplifying each part to see what makes it integral for the main item. After this simplification, each part is customised so that when put together the item is completely new and modern. The main problem is that sandals are already simple. I argue that they are man's first shoe. When cavemen discovered fire, the next thing they had on their agenda was the creation of sandals. I think the sandals in the collection are atrocious so I refuse to show them, but the trainers are easy on the eyes. I'm not obsessed with them in the sense that I would want to rip them off someone's feet but they're cute. MiuMiu tends to excel in the shoe sector when the shoes have a heel on them, but for now I'm not impressed.

Next, Tommy Hilfiger, they make up 'the incredibly boring' part of this article. The fashion house says they have a vision which is something I usually like but in this case the vision makes me wish I didn't spend so much money on my glasses because, honestly, I'm not seeing it. Tommy Hilfiger prides itself in being American, this is even displayed in their logo and with every item of clothing they produce being red, white, and blue. Personally, I don't get it, the commitment to the colour scheme sometimes means that the clothes are ugly, and it always means that the clothes are boring. However, from a practicality standpoint, the clothing Tommy Hilfiger puts on the runway is expensive, normal people can not afford it, so usually the average consumer buys their basics. Tommy Hilfiger makes good basics, but you know what other company also makes good basics? Primark! The difference is that Primark has shame and is humble, if it wants to sell you an ugly puffer jacket, it will sell it to you for £15. If Tommy Hilfiger wants to sell you that same ugly

puffer jacket, they will sell it to you for £180. And if you don't like the jacket, it's ok, because you know what else they have in stock? Audacity.



Last and definitely least, Mowalola. If a Fashion house cannot innovate something new and be the first to do so, their challenge is to take other designer's innovations and transform them into something new and inspired. For now, Mowalola seems to fail in both of these criteria. One day I wish to see her succeed in both. Mowalola has a problem with involving certain cultures in her fashion in a way that makes it seem like she hasn't done any research. For this fashion week, a key theme in her collection was 'Ebony,' a magazine by African Americans for African Americans. Mowalola is Nigerian born and came to London in her adulthood to attend fashion school. She seems to have a misunderstanding in the basics of fashion because she thinks that for something to

be considered fashion, it must be controversial. Fashion can be controversial, but being controversial does not mean causing offence. Oxford dictionary defines controversy as 'Prolonged public disagreement or heated discussion' if everybody thinks what you have done is offensive, there is no disagreement, which means that there is no controversy. Only offense. I hope to see success in her future, so that means no more printing of the Saudi Arabian flag on cheap looking miniskirts. And honestly, no more miniskirts as a whole!

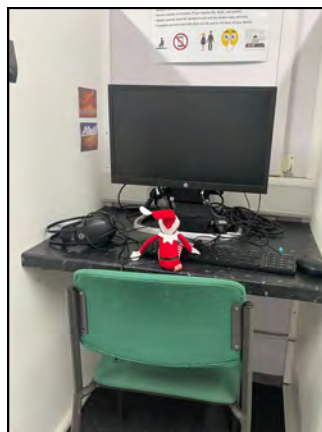
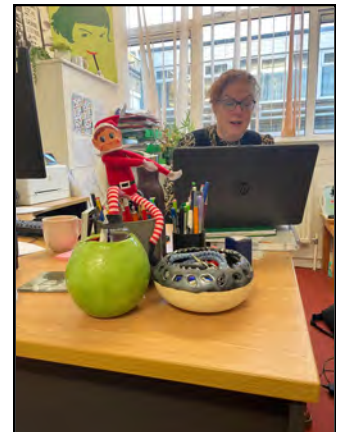
Fashion often seems complicated and alienating at first. You may look at a collection on the runway and think that you couldn't imagine yourself, or anyone you know, wearing the items of clothing that you see. However, that doesn't mean you don't understand fashion. When you look at something at your local Primark and want to buy it, that's a form of fashion. You don't always have to be ahead of trends, and you don't have to follow trends at all. Fashion is subjective, there is no right answer.

WRITTEN BY ORE F
YEAR 12

THE ADVENTURES OF FIDDLESTICKS THE ELF: ELF ON THE SHELF 2024

The RMGS Elf, affectionately named Fiddlesticks, spent the last weeks of Term 2 getting up to mischief across the school. Fiddlesticks made his journey from the North Pole to RMGS on the 1st December and was seen arriving to the school site on Monday, 2nd December.

During his time at RMGS, Fiddlesticks visited many departments and made many friends. He even spent some time in the reflection room for interrupting a meeting in Mrs Horstrup's office! Fiddlesticks would like to say "Thank You" to all of the students who liked the photos of his antics. He looks forward to seeing you all next year.



THE BOOKMARK

“The Bookmark” is a captivating column written by Isla B, the deputy editor of The Mark, dedicated to all things literary. Featured in each issue throughout the 2024-2025 academic year, this column offers a sneak peek into upcoming book releases, along with thoughtful reviews and recommendations from Isla herself.

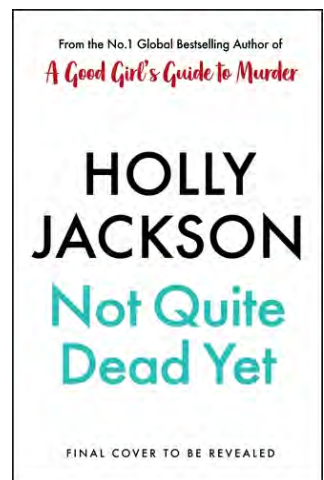
NEW BOOK RELEASES!



‘Sunrise on the Reaping’ by Suzanne Collins is a prequel in the Hunger Games series. The events of this novel begin after the events in *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* and is expected to be released on the 18th of March 2025. The book is set 24 years before the events of *The Hunger Games* and it focuses on Haymitch Abernathy, providing us with insight into his journey and how the things he dealt with as a tribute affected his future. The book will take place on the 50th annual Hunger Games. To honour the Quarter Quell, twice as many tributes will be picked for Haymitch’s Hunger Games. I cannot wait for this release! “May the odds be ever in your favour!”

‘Not Quite Dead Yet’ by New York Times bestselling author Holly Jackson, is expected to be released on the 17th of July 2025. This book will be an exciting and different take on the murder-mystery genre that Jackson is well-known for.

In 7 days, Jet Mason will be dead. She’s the daughter of one of the wealthiest families in Woodstock, Vermont and on Halloween night, she’s violently attacked by an intruder. She suffers a catastrophic head injury due to this which the doctor is certain will, within a week, trigger a deadly aneurysm. Jet never thought that she had any enemies, but this attack is making her re-evaluate those she held close: her family, her former best friend turned sister in law and her ex boyfriend. She has a maximum of 7 days to live as her health deteriorates, but she is determined to solve her own murder.

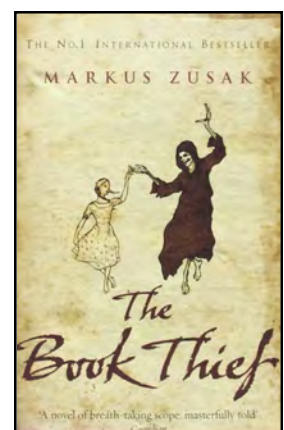


THE BOOK THIEF- A REVIEW

‘The Book Thief’ by Markus Zusak. This book tells the story of a young girl, Liesel, during World War two in Nazi Germany.

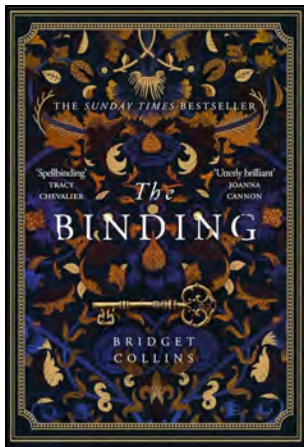
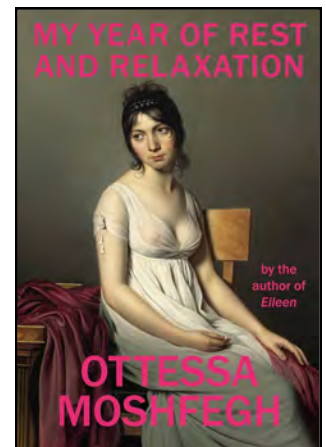
Liesel’s foster parents hide a Jewish man, who is forced to leave once attention is drawn to the family. This book is a beautiful, soul-shattering read about human resilience and compassion. Written from the perspective of Death itself, *The Book Thief* is captivating and unique.

I would recommend this book to anyone who has yet to read it or see the movie. It will move you and give you an insight into World War two that you have never seen before!



OVERRATED OR UNDERRATED?

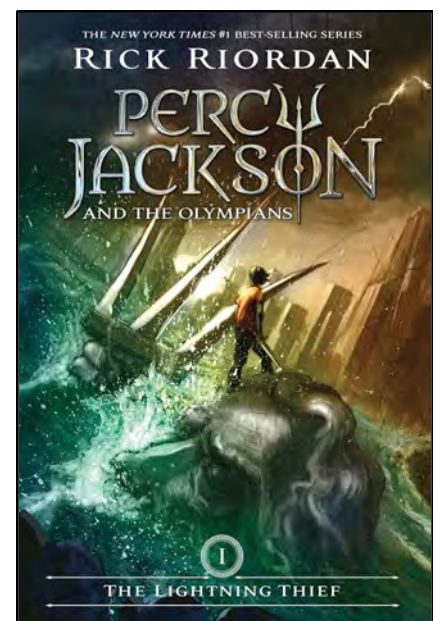
Overrated – ‘My Year of Rest and Relaxation’ by Ottessa Moshfegh. Released in 2018, this novel follows an unnamed protagonist who gradually increases her use of prescription medication in the aim to sleep for an entire year. She struggles to find meaning and purpose in a seemingly meaningless and chaotic world. I personally found this novel boring and dull because it didn’t really have a plot. There was no real climax and I was left feeling disinterested in the characters and their lives. I had high expectations before I read this novel because it ‘blew up’ on Tiktok but those expectations weren’t met and this resulted in me viewing this novel as highly overrated.



Underrated – ‘The Binding’ by Bridget Collins. This book follows Emmet Farmer, who works the fields of his family farm, when a letter arrives summoning him to begin an apprenticeship for a Bookbinder. Bookbinding is a practice that arouses fear and superstition in many, but neither he nor his parents can afford to refuse. I personally really enjoyed this book because it never fails to keep you interested and compels you to continue reading. In the second half of the book, a series of plot twists unfold which shock the reader and makes this book deserving of much more recognition.

PERCY JACKSON- A REVIEW

‘Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief’ is a book set in modern times except with a huge twist. The Greek gods are still alive! I really enjoyed this book but my favourite part is when they get to half-blood hill and get surprised by the minotaur! I also really like the plot I found it exceptionally hard to stop reading. I find it has also helped me when learning Greek myths because the author, Rick Riordan, has cleverly intertwined some of the Greek myths into the story. In this book, Percy goes from a normal kid in school to the target of an international manhunt while gods threaten war. Along with his friends, Annabeth and Grover, Percy is on a quest to retrieve a lightning bolt to avoid war. This is a brilliant book; I give it 5 stars. Other books by this author include Heroes of Olympus, Trials of Apollo, Magnus Chase, and The Kane Chronicles.



WRITTEN BY JOSH B
YEAR 7

BOOK VS MOVIES- WHICH WILL REIGN SUPERIOR? A LOOK AT “UGLIES” AND “DIVERGENT”

Many movie adaptations have been made for popular and -in my opinion - brilliant books. For example, “Uglies” has recently been made into a film which I immensely enjoyed watching and reading. Even my younger sister, who has a short attention span, was disappointed when we had to stop halfway.

It was gripping and perfectly captured the struggle of self-confidence and the fear of individuality in a dystopian world. I loved the emotional turmoil that the main character, Tally, has with herself as she struggles to comprehend the thought of self-acceptance and begins to look at the true beauty that is found, not in appearance but personality.

In a society separated into two sides, ‘Pretties’ and “Uglies’, Tally can’t wait to see what’s on the other side of the bridge. But when her friend, Shay, runs away to the Smoke, a haven for those who don’t want to become a ‘Pretty’, Tally has to track her down and bring her back. But once she’s there, Tally starts to learn why people may voluntarily stay in the Smoke.

I think that the movie was a perfect and well thought-out adaptation and brought the book the honor that it deserves. The relationships between the characters were well built and it is obvious how much they mean to each other. Scenes of heartbreak and elation were made even more gripping due to the chemistry the actors had on-screen. One of the downsides, of this adaptation is that the scenes between David and Tally seemed a little rushed and didn’t perfectly capture the complicated feelings Tally had for her best friend’s boyfriend in the book. In the novel this was an even bigger betrayal for the two friends and drove a canyon between them that seemed unfixable. This conflict was diluted in the film.



Although the adaptation did cover the broken hearts, it didn’t seem big enough for two inseparable friends who trusted each other with their lives. Overall, this was a brilliant adaptation that was true to the original text. The movie form is always going to be less nuanced than the novel. It is hard to distill hours of exposition into 2 hours on the screen.

On a contrasting note, I have recently watched the Divergent series and, while I thoroughly enjoyed the books, the series was a major let-down. While it did mainly stick to the storyline as told in the books, it severely disappointed me with its lack of character

relationships. Tris' relationship with her boyfriend, Tobias, is often strained and in the second book, at risk of falling apart entirely. In the adaptations, their relationship is sweet and supportive despite the number of life-or-death situations that they find themselves in, which I find unrealistic. It isn't until the third movie that some tension between the two characters posed a major issue. In the books, Tris is given the privilege of Tobias telling her who he is, letting her use his real name. In the movies, she still calls him Four which is a huge disappointment as it doesn't capture the trust and love between them.

Another example of this is between Christina and Tris, who in the books have such a strong relationship that Christina was able to forgive Tris when she betrayed her. However, I didn't think this was passed into the films, it felt like they had one or two lines together then went their separate ways. As well as this, many characters, such as Tori, had such an interesting and powerful backstory that wasn't included in the adaptations! These backstories showed that the world was flawed well before Tris realised it and wasn't just brought to attention when the main character came into play. This allowed the story to branch out around the main character, rather than focus on her fully; an aspect that I sorely missed in the film. I also think that the third movie barely followed the book, instead of saving the city from afar, they went inside the gate to stop the memory serum from affecting everyone. I think that the last movie would have had a much better outcome if they stuck to the book more closely.

In conclusion, in my opinion, the "Uglies" film was a much better movie adaptation than I could have expected. Meanwhile, the Divergent series severely disappointed me. Even though the series is incomplete, and probably won't be continued, I doubt that even the last film could have redeemed itself.



WRITTEN BY HOLLY D
YEAR 9



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WELCOME ARTISTS TO
SUBMIT THEIR WORK.

**WEDNESDAY
LUNCH L6**

MATILDA THE MUSICAL ON NETFLIX: A 'REVOLTING' DELIGHT FULL OF MIRACLES AND MISCHIEF!

Matilda The Musical tells the story of Matilda Wormwood, an extraordinary young girl with a love for books and a brilliant mind. Matilda is unappreciated and mistreated by her neglectful parents and tyrannical headmistress, Miss Trunchbull. Despite her challenging circumstances, Matilda finds solace in her vivid imagination and her kind-hearted teacher, Miss Honey.

With catchy tunes, whimsical choreography and a killer story, I review the highly rated, Matilda The Musical.

First of all, I would like to outline what I liked about the production.

Singing - I thought the first song (Miracle) was a beautiful song and it was the perfect way to open a musical. Considering the production as a whole, it was very entertaining, funny and well put together. My favourite songs were the 'school song' and 'revolting children.'

Acting - I think the acting was impressive for a children's play. However, I did notice that the ensemble were emotionless in some scenes. This made it difficult for me to feel immersed in the world of the Wormwoods.

Dancing - The dancing was my favourite part of the entire musical. All of the actors had so much energy and passion; you could tell they had been working hard. Their talent made me feel inspired to get moving!



My only criticism of the production is that the ending was not like the book at all! I'm fully aware that directors and producers must change parts to fit the form of a movie. However, I found the ending lacklustre; it left me unsatisfied!

Overall, I did really enjoy the play, and it was really creative and imaginative, and I would recommend it to anyone who loves a funny, heart-warming family-friendly play.

WRITTEN BY RAJNI C
YEAR 7

INSIDE THE WORLD OF STAGE MUSICALS: INSIGHTS FROM A PERFORMER

Musicals. The form of stage acting where characters burst into song at the most random of times. Times at which, if it were real life, we'd all need a psychological assessment. If you've ever seen a musical, you'd know any and all logical reasoning left before it begun. Rehearsals aren't safe from judgement either. If you've seen how the ridiculously ugly and busted Jazz shoes look; you'd know what I'm talking about. I think that the first person to ever create a musical saw a play and decided to one up them. I don't know what sort of competition they were in but, hey, they knew what they were doing. Regardless, with many hours of rehearsal, dancing injuries and sore throats from belting our lines your favourite musicals are born!

SPONTANEOUS SONG AND DANCE

I know first-hand the extremities to which the director or writer of a musical will go to ensure that the scene is as dramatic as physically possible. One second my character is in the library reading and the next the overtly dramatic backing track plays. At which point, not only am I screaming and look like I'm about to fall off my block - which are supposedly better than chairs on set?? - but now an acrobat and escapologist have come twirling onto stage. However, somehow it feels just right. The scene would be somewhat empty without it, believe it or not. Expect a well-choreographed number or solo that probably could've been an email, every couple of scenes.

PROPS: THE ART OF USING EVERYDAY OBJECTS ON STAGE

Now the props in a musical can, and most likely will, be super creative and random at the exact same time. Using sticks to form a school gate to symbolise children being trapped in a harsh and cruel school system? - great! Same

children now dancing around the stage with the same sticks, singing about how revolting they are... Perfect!

The best part of bringing a musical to stage is when props haven't been used yet in rehearsal only to be introduced at bizarre times. One moment you have an entire dance memorised. The next you are given a stick. You're not entirely sure what you're doing with it yet, but you're waving it like around like, "Ah yes, what an interesting stick!"

Props can really bring a scene to life. However, it does take skill and finesse to use a prop and not look like an alien from a different planet, unable to use a teaspoon or telephone-- or any prop for that matter! It definitely takes a special person to be able to act, sing, dance and still look natural when using props.



CONCLUSIONS

Musicals are truly great! At the 3 theatre schools I've been to, I'd never had more fun. Even though having to endure an occasional defeat in "Splat!" is absolute torture, the people I've met are some of the funniest I know. I am incredibly grateful to be a performer.

P.S. I still maintain that Jazz shoes should be a crime

WRITTEN BY ELIANA F
YEAR 12

NEW BUILDINGS AND THEIR IMPACT ON WILDLIFE

I have recently been really concerned about the amount of new houses being built in our local area. The increase of buildings destroys lots of animals' homes and sometimes leaves them without a family. I hate this, because I love all animals and, in my opinion, it just isn't fair!

According to Animal Charity Evaluators, habitat destruction is one of the biggest problems for animal well-being, closely followed by pollution and starvation. It is common to hear people justify the destruction of animal habitats by saying, "We need more housing! Some people don't have a house to live in!" but the real reason they don't have anywhere to live is because they can't afford it; the cost of living is too high!

According to The Student Room, there is an estimated 2.25 billion families on this Earth. There are also 2.3 billion houses. So, every family should be given a subsidised house to live in. This means that the surplus of homes can be utilised as hospitals, emergency centres or even small animal sanctuaries.

It is clear that the lack of housing in our society is due to the greed of others. Individuals have been selling their land for financial profit rather than cultivating their land for the benefit of the natural world.

I have recently been taking action against this. When I was in Year Six, there was a field next to our school that was sold to be built on, so I made signs and tied them onto the fence surrounding it. To my surprise and delight, after a couple of months, people started to join in! Please start something like this to help, because I feel passionate about this cause, and I hope you do too.

Relocating animals isn't normally undertaken. However, if it is necessary, they generally have to do it themselves which is dangerous and may involve crossing roads with the risk of being hit by cars. Once, on my walk home, there was a dead squirrel in the road and kids were pointing and laughing at it. We don't know why the squirrel crossed the road but, for all we know, it might still be living happily with its family if it wasn't for new buildings. Sometimes, trees are knocked down to build houses. People sometimes say the trees will be replaced, but an orchard of spindly little trees won't replace a forest of large, protective oak trees for years! Some animals may even be woken from their hibernation with the destruction of trees, which is not appropriate for them if they are about to travel miles to find a new home.

People do have gardens, but most gardens nowadays are packed with artificial grass, rocks and a couple of pot plants. Why not make your garden nicer for wildlife, as another thing you could do, to help make up for damage.

With new houses, our living areas are a lot more cramped. Think of all the long queues at doctors surgeries, schools and other public services. Even if you're not exactly an animal lover, you can't deny the fact that there will be lots of pollution, noise, and no space due to the invasion of newly built houses.

So, the next time you find out that there are new houses being built in your area, be an inspiration. Make signs, email your local council. There is an endless list of things you could do to make it stop. Let's end this together.

WRITTEN BY ANNABELLE C
YEAR 7

REMARKABLE READS

Welcome to Remarkable Reads, the section that celebrates the boundless imagination and talent of our student writers! This space is dedicated to showcasing the creative works of RMGS pupils, from captivating short stories to evocative poetry.

MY UNIVERSE

The sun,
the centre of the universe.
Perched in the middle of everything
warming the cold ocean of nothing.
Separating the days and nights.

The planets,
in perfect unison
floating round the sun
feeding off of the light.
Big and loud
like jocks at a party
tall and mad.

The Earth,
the anomaly within the planets
finding warmth without the sun.
The self-entitled centre of everything.
Refusing help from the other planets
but craving their attention to survive.

The moon,
the nicknamed sun of the night.
Forever reflecting off of the sun,
giving hope to every atom.
A beam of light in a raven's eye.
A call from home.
They don't know that the moon can't
stand alone.

The north star,
smaller than everything
engulfed in a weighted blanket of space.
Destined to burn out
yet standing tall,
overpowering the darkness.
A guide for all who are lost.
Destined to stand alone
yet destined to shine the brightest.
They don't know that the star that they
follow for guidance
is just as lost as them.

The shooting star,
a fleeting glimmer of hope.
Temporary relief in an agonising fate.
Once in a lifetime moment
etched between the lines
of every future thought.
A reminder of what could've been

"My Universe" is a heartfelt and imaginative poem that uses the solar system as an extended metaphor to explore the dynamics of a friendship group. Each stanza introduces a different personality within the circle, comparing each friend to a celestial body. Through vivid imagery and thoughtful symbolism, the poet emphasises the significance of each individual in creating a harmonious universe of camaraderie and support.

WRITTEN BY ISOBEL T
YEAR 10

THE THREE LIONS: A YEAR OF TRIUMPH AND TURMOIL

The England men's football season has come to an end, with victories in both of their games against Greece and Ireland during this international camp. The Three Lions managed to score three goals against Greece and thrashed Ireland 5-0, securing promotion back to Nations League A.

The Three Lions succeeded in their recent Nations League games, winning 3-0 away against Greece and putting five past Ireland in front of a Wembley crowd in their final game of the year. This international camp marked the end of interim coach Lee Carsley's tenure, following Gareth Southgate's resignation as England manager after their Euros final defeat against Spain. Carsley stepped up from the England men's Under-21 team to lead the senior side for the remainder of the year. He achieved success, winning five out of six games and leaving the team top of the table with 15 points, securing automatic promotion back to Nations League A. However, despite their recent wins, have the Three Lions lived up to expectations this year?

Although England entered the year as favorites to win the 2024 Euros, they won only 9 of their 17 matches, making it an underwhelming year for fans. Their first game of the year resulted in a 1-0 loss to Brazil (five-time World Cup winners) in a friendly match. Real Madrid's youngster, Endrick, came on as a substitute for Brazil in the 71st minute and scored the only goal of the game, handing England their first defeat of the year. This disappointing result was followed by a match against Belgium, where England dominated with 63% possession and 19 total shots compared to Belgium's 7. Despite this, a last-minute equalizer from Jude Bellingham ensured the game ended in a dramatic 2-2 draw, avoiding back-to-back defeats. England's disappointing run of

results continued; although they secured a 3-0 win against North Macedonia away, they suffered a 1-0 loss to Iceland in their final game before the Euros campaign began, leaving fans concerned about the team's prospects in the upcoming tournament.

As their Euro 2024 campaign began, England faced Serbia in the group stages and secured their first three points thanks to an early goal from Jude Bellingham in the 13th minute. Bellingham, who enjoyed a stellar first season with Real Madrid, scoring 23 goals and providing 13 assists during the 2023/24 season, was instrumental. However, the rest of the match was underwhelming, with England managing only five total shots. Despite their win, it was not the commanding start fans had hoped for. England's next two group-stage games ended in draws against Denmark and Slovenia, but they still finished top of their group with five points, advancing to the knockout rounds.

In the Round of 16, England faced Slovenia. Another late goal from Bellingham sent the match to extra time, where Harry Kane scored in the 91st minute to secure a 2-1 victory. Their quarter-final clash against Switzerland went to penalties, and England emerged victorious, winning 5-3 in a dramatic shootout. After months of disappointing performances, fans began to enjoy watching their team again. England progressed to a second consecutive Euros final after Ollie Watkins scored a last-minute winner in the semi-finals. However, despite their efforts, England suffered another defeat in the final, losing to a dominant Spain side.

Following England's Euros loss, Gareth Southgate stepped down as manager, and Lee Carsley took over as interim coach. Under Carsley, the Three Lions embarked



on their UEFA Nations League campaign, winning five of six matches and finishing top of their group. Carsley gave opportunities to new players, and his leadership helped England regain promotion to Nations League A. Their final game of the year was a commanding 5-0 win over Ireland at Wembley Stadium, a fitting way to thank the fans for their unwavering support during a year of mixed performances.

WRITTEN BY JAIME H
YEAR 12

WANT TO WRITE
ABOUT SPORT?

the  **Mark**

WEDNESDAY
LUNCH, L6

 **the**  **Mark**

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