

The Mark





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EDITOR'S NOTE

WRITTEN BY RUBY R AND ISLA B

As we write this term's editor's note, we reflect upon the insightful ideas that have made up issue 2. We really hope that our readers enjoy this edition as a range of topics are discussed including our own columns: 'Mark my words' and 'The Bookmark' which we are already starting to love writing every term.

As the second edition has now been completed, we can't help but feel that there has been a sense of rhythm and routine this term as our previous journalists have been enthusiastic with their ideas to write more of their own articles as they are keen to making writing for the mark a part of their school life. Of course, for us, it has also become a big part of our school lives, and we continue to urge our fellow students with a passion for writing to write for our very own school newspaper. It's not just a place for opinions, you can also write creatively as seen by Rajni, Erin and Holly in this edition!

Furthermore, it's always great to hear our journalists' opinions on different subjects. We found Ore's critique of U.S. Vogue a delight to read as her opinions come through passionately and we found Ella-Blue's iPad debate very well researched. It offered interesting statistics and arguments for and against the use of technology at home. This is just to name a couple of the articles in this edition. There is so much more to explore!

We also want to remind everyone that it is important to come to our meetings if you would like to write for the newspaper. Our next editor's briefing is on Wednesday 26th February, we can't wait to see you there! Alternatively, you can contact either of us or Mrs Starr (Istarr@rmet.org) if you would like to get involved.

Happy reading!



SHOULD ANIMALS BE USED FOR TOURISM? AN ETHICAL DEBATE

This is a very controversial subject, and there are many arguments for and against. This article will take you through some of these points and offer an opinion at the end, feel free to draw your own conclusion once you have read it over. However, other countries do have different laws concerning animal welfare so please take that into consideration when reading this article.

Some may argue that animals in captivity are away from their usual habitats and family, which causes depression and loneliness for the animals. Mental health for animals in captivity is so bad that there is a name for the condition; Zoochosis. Symptoms of Zoochosis can be things like swaying, pacing back and forth, biting and vomiting. In fact, 80% of animals in captivity have Zoochosis, letting a living being, who can experience pain and pleasure, suffer through that everyday is extremely unethical and should not be allowed.



However, some may argue that zoos bring awareness to the endangered animals in this world. By bringing more attention to the fact that animals are losing their homes to climate change, it could affect how a person lives their lives. For example, they could start recycling and walking instead of driving everywhere to

limit the amount of carbon dioxide that is in the air. Some zoos also ask for donations to help rehabilitate their animals and save the environment. Just because some zoos treat animals inadequately doesn't mean every zoo is bad. Zoos also breed endangered animals, to increase the population and hopefully bring them back from near extinction. Visiting animals in a zoo can also be very educational for children. Children who learn better by seeing up close how animals look and act can benefit from visiting a zoo.

Despite this, this may be a case where the cons outweigh the pros. Most zoos are run mainly for profit and aren't interested in the welfare of animals, while there are some that care about the conservation of the Earth and natural habitats, it doesn't justify the amount of money made simply from greed. Another study also shows that most of the animals in zoos aren't endangered and most that are promised to return to the wild, are still kept in zoos. In one morbid turn of events, a 2 year old giraffe named Marius was publicly shot and dissected in a Danish zoo, in front of spectators. A petition to save Marius had 27,170 signatures and an offer from Yorkshire Wildlife Park to rehouse the giraffe went ignored. Marius was killed despite the public outcry. Even though this happened over ten years ago, this doesn't discredit what happened.

BIZA stands for the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums who provide safe and stable homes for their animals. They have raised around £24 million a year to go to conservation efforts. This is an example of what a true zoo association should do and this standard should be placed for every single one. Certain laws are also in place for the standards in zoos, so that animals are not mistreated. Some examples of these are; having high standards of animal care, keeping records of all

animals in their care and that zoos must have steps to prevent animals from escaping.

In conclusion, I believe that the cons outweigh the pros, there are too many examples of mistreatment and abuse to justify the good that some associations are doing for the animal community. I think that if zoos were to be kept open, that expenses should be either used to contribute to their own animals welfare or money should be put towards conservation efforts.

WRITTEN BY HOLLY D
YEAR 9



JOIN OUR TEAM!

WE ARE LOOKING FOR
WRITERS OF FICTION AND
NON-FICTION.

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO
WELCOME ARTISTS TO
SUBMIT THEIR WORK.

WEDNESDAY
LUNCH L6

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK AND RMGS'S HOODIE DAY

Children's Mental Health Week is an annual event dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of mental well-being in young people. It encourages open conversations about mental health and promotes ways to support children in managing their emotions.

Place2Be, the organization behind the event, provides mental health support in schools, helping children build resilience and develop healthy coping strategies. Their work ensures that students have access to trained counsellors and a safe space to talk about their feelings.

To support this cause, Rainham Mark Grammar School (RMGS) took part in Hoodie Day on Friday, 7th February. Students and staff wore hoodies and donated money to raise funds for Place2Be, showing solidarity and support for children's mental health. This initiative helped spread awareness while contributing to vital mental health services for young people.

There are many ways to get involved and support children's mental health. You can donate to charities like Place2Be, take part in fundraising events, or simply help raise awareness by talking about the importance of mental well-being. Even small actions, like checking in on friends and promoting kindness, can make a big difference.



If students at RMGS need support with their mental health, they can speak to a member of the safeguarding team or any teacher in the school. The staff are always available to listen.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HOW IT AFFECTS ANIMALS

You may know that I absolutely love animals. The reason for this is because of Archie, a cat who we had to put down last summer because he was extremely ill. Archie was not just a cat. He was special. If it were not for him, I would probably be an ordinary, meat-eating, bug-squashing, toxic human. When I was little, about seven, I was not too keen on cats. So, when Archie was following me around I was very scared. My mum explained that he just wanted some attention, and she sat him on my lap, and I stroked him. From then on, we were best friends, and he would even hug me the same way that humans hug.



That is why I write these articles. And this term, I will be talking about climate change. Did you know that the reason behind Greta Thunberg and her activism is due to a video? After seeing polar bears and arctic hares drowning because of the melting ice, she was unable to speak for three years. She lost ten kilograms in two months. She became an inspiration, a hero and the world is striving to be much better thanks to her.

But her work's not complete. More and more people need to help. I don't use the word "need" often, but we absolutely do need to save the world. It's not fair on the animals. It's our fault, so why should they suffer? How would you feel if the person who sat next to you in class kept



throwing their rubbish and blamed you for their actions? How would it feel to be the victim of their choices?

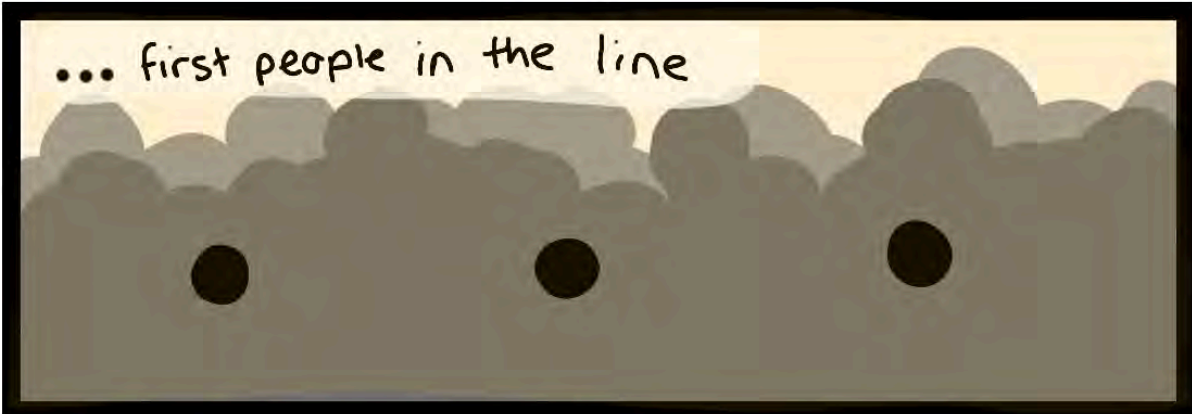
So, how do we begin making a change? The most common advice is to "Turn the light off when you leave the room". So make sure that you do! It's easy! I've now got used to turning lights off where I do it without even thinking!

There are many more things you can do, like turning the TV off at the switch or even eating less meat! I am vegetarian because I love animals and I believe they should be free, not cooped up for their lives. This is a personal choice that I've made but there are many scientifically-backed reasons why you shouldn't eat meat. It decreases your chances of heart failure and helps to maintain a healthier lifestyle.

It can be easy to do your part to help the environment. To aid the helpless animals that we love. We could be one of the last few generations that have a chance of saving the world. You could be the hero. Do your part!

WRITTEN BY ANNABELLE C
YEAR 7

POST-IT NOTES



THE IPAD- PARENTING FRIEND OR GENERATIONAL FOE?

Psychologists are beginning to be concerned as they start to uncover the disastrous effects of early social media usage.

For a good few years now, frazzled parents have turned to the invention of the “iPad” or various other devices that can access social media to keep their children entertained and quiet. However, as this new generation matures, it begs the question: what is this doing to their brains and development? In this article I will be explaining the past, present, and future of this hypnotised generation.

So, in order to explore this issue, we need to look at the source of it. Are Parents at the head of this phenomenon? And I ask: could you really blame them? Everybody agrees that a cranky child or an explosive tantrum is never something you want to be around, especially after a hectic 9-5 where you just want to sink into your bed forever. As we and our standards around gender change, we see many more families without stay-at-home parents, with both parents both brining in an income every day. So, when shifts are over, there is now a whole household who are exhausted from the day and want to make it everybody’s problem. With this new level of exhaustion, we have an unfortunate solution: the glorious iPad.

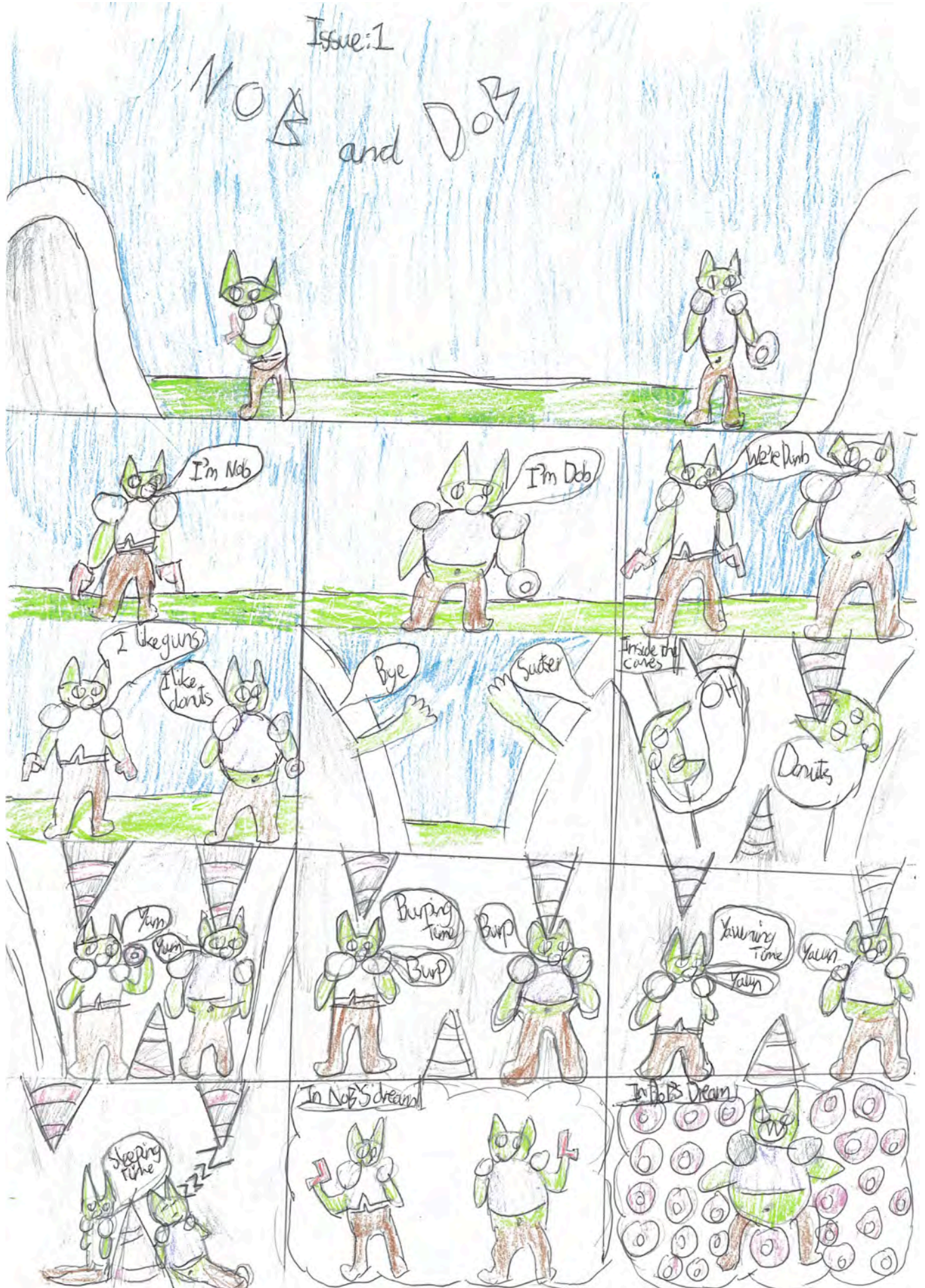
Recently, the CBSE board made a statement that really concerned many: “more children nowadays are spending more time on screen than playing.” Playing has never been senseless activities, it is incredibly important for development of our imagination, creativity, motor skills, social skills, and even coping with stress. Without these skills being developed, our “hero” is turning into the villain. Teachers at primary schools are complaining that their students do not know how to read or write, they cannot grasp basic maths skills, and they cannot handle conflicts

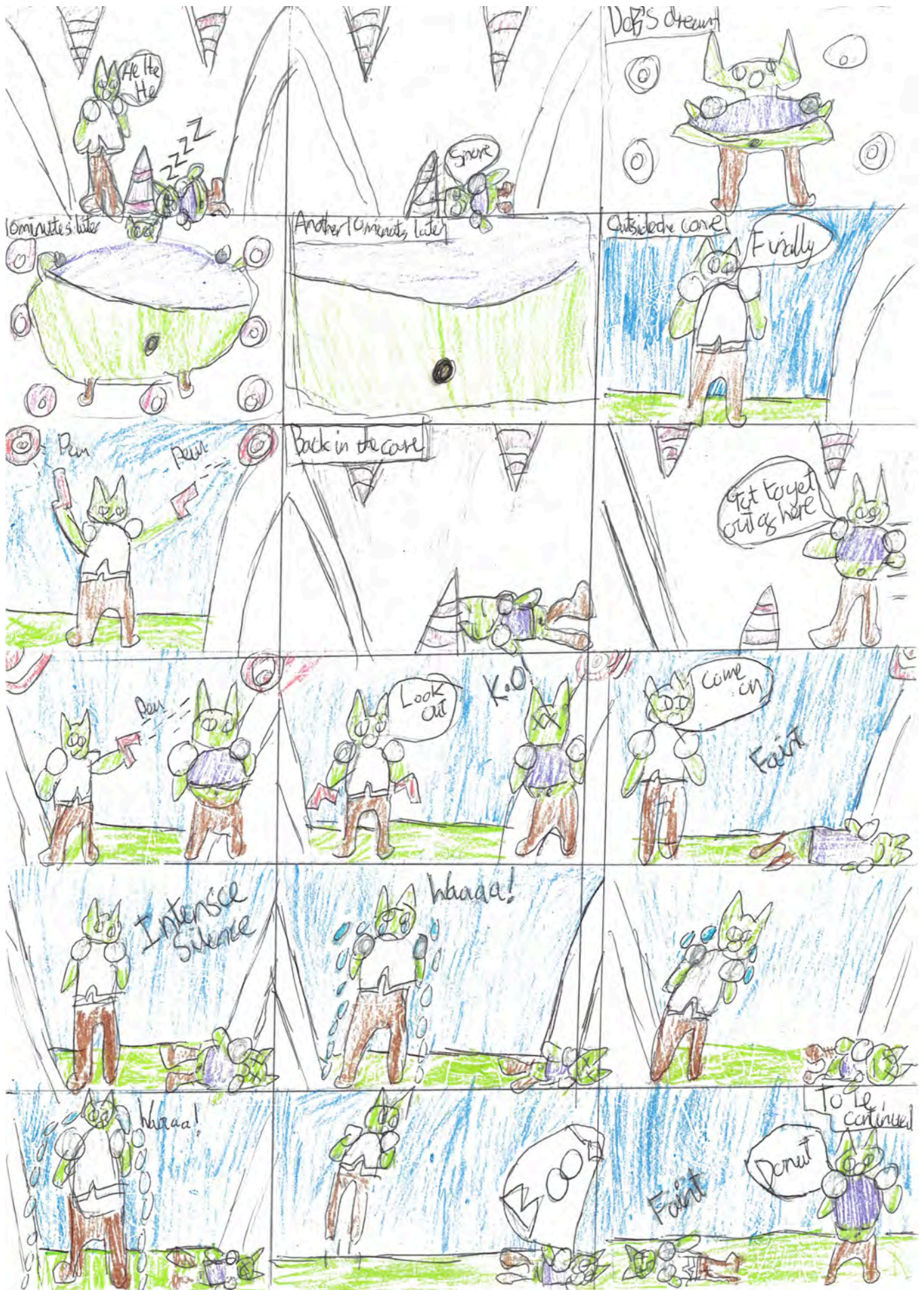
easily or listen to authority. A recent study with 7096 mother-child pairs showed that young children who spent more than 4 hours on their devices were deemed five times more prone to stunted communication skills and twice as vulnerable to compromised fine motor skills.

This effect could be catastrophic if not handled well. If many, many children in the next generation cannot cope with situations that are aversive to their exact wants, they aren’t learning in school, and they struggle with forming bonds, what could this mean for our future? What could become of the outside world, with lesser reactions to anger? Our economy? Even ignoring all of that, what about their brains? Anyone can feel sluggish after a long day of short-form content, some readers may even be suffering with technology addictions right now, so what could possibly be happening in their brains as they develop?

We can’t know that for certain until the future arrives, but we do know it’s up to the caregivers to try and prevent our worst-case scenarios. Enforcing screen time limits, watching what content is being consumed carefully, and not allowing screens in the bedroom have made already great improvements in a child’s mentality. Members of family should also set example by reducing their screentime and engaging with the children more- but this does not solve the possible root of the problem, the 9-5 exhaustion running through homes, so maybe this takes more than screentime caps to solve.

WRITTEN BY ELLA-BLUE C
YEAR 11





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!

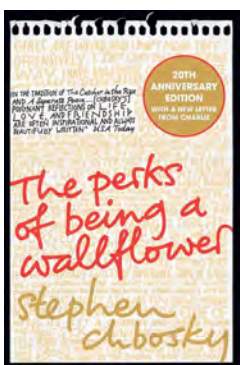


Atmosphere: A Love Story, by Taylor Jenkins Read, is a highly anticipated novel expected to be released on 3rd June 2025 by the number one New York Times bestselling author of *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* and *Daisy Jones & The Six*. Joan Goodwin, a reserved professor of physics and astronomy at Rice University, has always been fascinated by the stars. Her life changes when she sees an ad for women scientists to join NASA’s Space Shuttle Programme. Selected from thousands of applicants in the summer of 1980, she trains at Johnson Space Centre with an excellent group of fellow candidates, forming unexpected friendships and discovering new passions. However, everything changes during mission STS-LR9 in December 1984...

When Gavin Met Stacey and *Everything in Between: A Story of Love and Friendship*, written by the show’s creators and expected to be released on 9th October 2025, is a tell-all about how this remarkable show became a cultural staple. The 90-minute Christmas special was watched by 19.1 million viewers in the first week alone, so this book is expected to receive a large amount of traction. As they share their story of their rejections, hurdles and the challenges they encountered whilst bringing their cherished comedy to life, James Corden and Ruth Jones also delve into the growth of their real-life friendship. Fans will be thrilled to get an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the making of *Gavin & Stacey*, uncovering the untold stories, heartfelt moments, and creative journey that shaped the beloved series. With personal insights from James Corden and Ruth Jones, this book promises to be a must-read for anyone who loves the show and wants to relive the magic all over again.

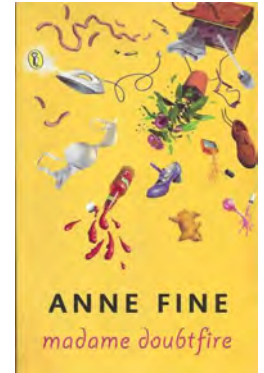


OVERRATED OR UNDERRATED?



Overrated- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky is a YA novel set in the late 1990s which follows an introverted and observant high-schooler named Charlie. This novel is constructed through a series of letters from Charlie to an anonymous ‘friend’. This novel was by no means bad, but it doesn’t live up to the excessive hype which it receives and is one of the few books where I preferred the movie adaptation to the actual novel.

Underrated- Madame Doubtfire by Anne Fine follows three children- Lydia, Christopher and Natali- as they attempt to navigate their way through their parent's divorce. The children bounce from their unreasonable mother (Miranda) to their father (Daniel) who is an unemployed actor. When Miranda looks for a cleaning lady to look after the kids whilst she's at work, Daniel disguises himself as Madame Doubtfire in a desperate ploy to see his children more. In my opinion, this book is overshadowed by the successful film adaptation 'Mrs Doubtfire' and is an amazing book which deserves more recognition.

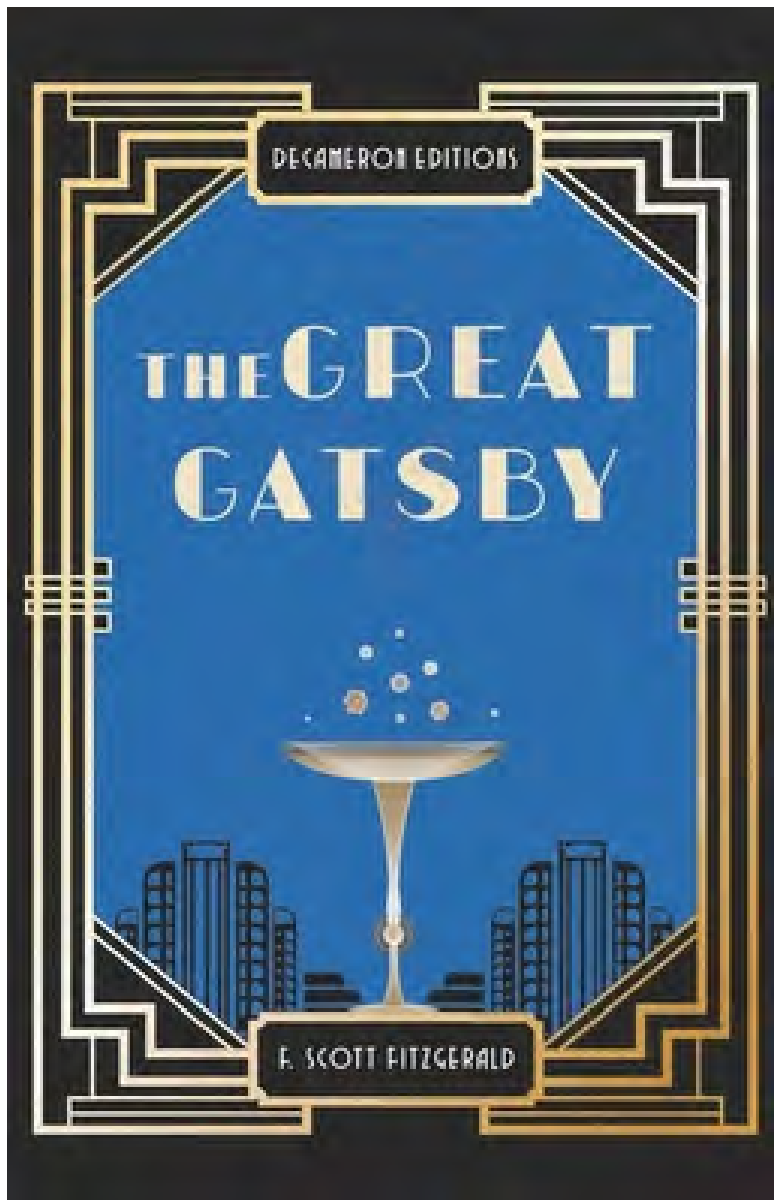


THE NOT-SO-GREAT GATSBY

The Great Gatsby is one of the most critically acclaimed novels and has been hailed by many as the "the greatest of Great American Novels" due to its epic depiction of the Jazz Age and the 'American Dream'.

However, I found this novel incredibly dull and tedious to get through despite it only being 180 pages long. Between the confusing and wordy descriptions and the unlikeable characters, this novel was sheer drudgery without reward, the only enjoyment I got from reading it was the feeling of relief I had when I finished it.

Even a novel as famed and celebrated as The Great Gatsby isn't without its critiques. Some Jewish readers took issue with the characterisation



of Meyer Wolfsheim, a Jewish man and a 'bootlegger' who aided Gatsby in his criminal escapades. A few felt like this depiction of a Jewish man as a 'money-hungry' lawbreaker contributes to the harmful stereotype that Jewish people are avaricious and earn money by deceiving people.

Despite my avid dislike of this piece of literature, there are several people who enjoyed this novel and some vocal ones at that. Tim Dowling claimed that "Similarly to Romeo and

Juliet, Fitzgerald's writing is almost like a work of poetry, with waves of literary brilliance creating a rich and lush rhythm". To compare this dreary novel to the literary masterpieces of Shakespeare is, in my opinion, blasphemy of the highest degree.

Many of the characters, including the titular one, are unlikeable. Their selfishness and superficial nature made it difficult for me, as a reader, to connect or empathise with them.

Fitzgerald's excessive use of symbolism and lyrical writing style made this novel confusing for me to read. Perhaps, if I had studied or analysed this text, I would have had a better appreciation for it. But, as a casual read, this made it obscure and difficult to read in places.

Overall, I found this novel completely dull and boring. The reason I'm being so harsh on this novel is because I had high expectations for it. Not only were my expectations not met, but I also found myself disappointed by the overall experience, as I hadn't enjoyed it as I hoped I would.

WRITTEN BY ISLA B
YEAR 12

BOOK REVIEWS BY KS3 PUPILS

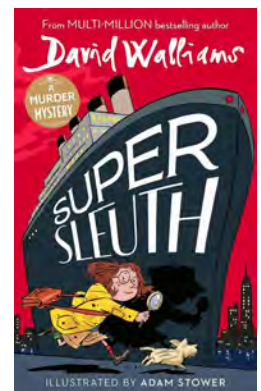


Paddington in Peru- In this book I would really like to go to the secret base in the temple even though it has tons of oranges (I don't like oranges). Only two of the characters frustrated me as one of them was pure evil but the other was just annoying. My favourite character is Paddington because he is really funny. I loved the scenes when he was confused! If I got the chance to audition in the movie, I would love to play the son as he is really smart and creative. I feel that I resemble him and would do a great job of portraying him. Overall, I really liked this book and would recommend it if you would like a nice and easy read.

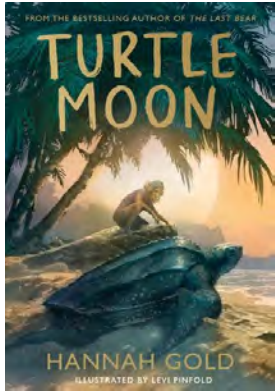
WRITTEN BY DAMIEN L
YEAR 7

Super Sleuth by David Walliams- In this book, I would want to go on the cruise ship since I've never been on one, although I have been to England and New York. I would love to go on the cruise because I really want to see its true size and experience what it's like to sleep in the middle of the ocean.

My favourite character in the book was the dog because his usefulness was very unexpected, which made him much more important and likable to me—especially since I like dogs. Although I enjoyed the book, I would've given it a different title, like 'Murder on the Boat', as I find it more impactful and informative about the story. The plot twist at the end shocked me and also annoyed me, as it revealed that one of the good guys was actually a bad guy in disguise. Overall, I really liked this book and would recommend it to anyone.



WRITTEN BY DAMIEN L
YEAR 7



Turtle Moon by Hannah Gold- If I had to go to a place in the book, I would definitely choose Costa Rica. Based on its description, it sounds really lush and beautiful, with amazing beaches.

My favourite character is Rafi for one main reason—his secret organisation that helps turtles. He is too young to be part of the official organisation, so he started his own. Another reason is his genius invention: he placed a tracker inside a fake turtle egg so that if it got stolen, he could track it.

If this were turned into a movie, I would want to play Rafi, mostly because of how smart he is. Plus, he has a friendly pet sloth who always keeps him company, which would be really cool.

My favourite scene is probably when Rafi and the main character swing on vines from tree to tree to travel faster and get a better view from above.

I would honestly recommend this book to anyone, but especially to people who love turtles, as the story is all about them.

WRITTEN BY DAMIEN L
YEAR 7

Inkdeath by Cornelia Funke- The place I would most want to visit is the Inkworld, as it is the main setting described in the book.

However, there are more reasons why I want to go there. For example, the whole place is magical and vibrant, just as it is portrayed in the story. I would also love to see the fire dancers because they are described as being incredibly skilled.

If this were a movie, I would choose to be Farid, as he can control fire and plays many important roles in the book, even saving people's lives.

My favorite character is probably Farid because, as I mentioned before, he is very powerful. He also has a really cute marten that helps him from time to time.

Overall, I think this book is fantastic, and I would recommend it to anyone.



WRITTEN BY DAMIEN L
YEAR 7

Running Out of Time by Simon Fox- The place I would most like to visit in this book is France, even though it isn't described much. This is because most of the story takes place in England, and since I live there, I wouldn't see much that's new.

My favourite character is Aleksander because he is the main character, and he can basically see into the future, which is incredibly cool and useful. However, like all powers, his comes with a downside—he sometimes sees things happening that he can't prevent.

If this were a movie, I would obviously want to be Aleksander. Not only is he the main character, but he is also the best because of his special abilities. I have a feeling he would be a very popular character if this were a film.

I wouldn't change the book's title, as I think it is already perfect. My overall rating is great, and I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a good read.

WRITTEN BY DAMIEN L
YEAR 7



PERCY JACKSON WRATH OF THE TRIPLE HEADED GODDESS- A BOOK REVIEW

In *Wrath of the Triple Goddess*, Percy Jackson, now a high school senior, is tasked by the goddess Hecate to house-sit her mansion and care for her magical pets over Halloween in exchange for a recommendation letter for college. Joined by his friends Annabeth and Grover, Percy faces challenges including escaped mystical creatures, confrontations with vengeful naiads, and a spectral uprising, all while deepening their bonds and personal growth. Damien L and Josh B (Year 7) give their thoughts about the book!

Josh says: My favourite parts of the story is when Percy and Annabeth are fighting the hordes of undead when most of the campers at camp half-blood show up and get the party started. My other favourite part is when they stand between three doors. Each enchanted door has a knocker with an animal head: one is a horse; one is a lion, and the other is a dog.

Overall, I give this book 5 stars and it is an absolutely must read for fans of Greek mythology.



Damien says: The place I would most like to visit would probably be the goddess's mansion, as it is magical and mysterious. My favourite character is, obviously, Percy since he has been the main character in almost every book. One reason I really loved this book is that I adore Greek mythology—the gods are all really cool and powerful. I didn't have a least favourite character in this book, except for one of the leader ghosts, who had a very short temper and was quite annoying.

I wouldn't give the book a different title, as the current one provides a great short explanation of who we're going to meet.

If this were a movie, I would want to play Grover, as he does some really funny things, and I would love to replicate them and have a good laugh.

I found the author's writing style really easy to read, making it a nice, light read for me.

I would recommend it to anyone, especially those who enjoy mythology.

WRITTEN BY JOSH B & DAMIEN L
YEAR 7

THE WAY TO IMPROVE VOGUE U.S? FIRE ANNA WINTOUR: HOW VOGUE U.S HAS LOST ITS CREATIVE SPARK

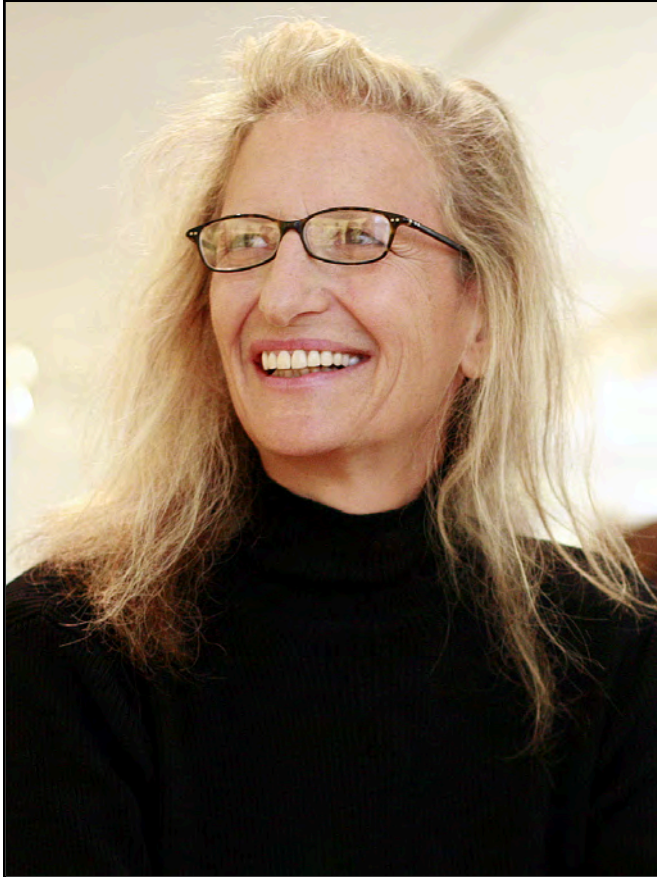
Vogue. What is your first association with the word? Is it the song by Madonna? Or do you think of Voguing? Or do you think of the magazine? Vogue is the most influential fashion magazine in the world and often when people think of, they think of Vogue US. However, in recent years, Vogue has had a problem, a problem with being boring. And I blame Vogue US editor-in-chief, Anna Wintour.

I love Vogue. It has a special place in my heart due to it's influence in the fashion industry, Vogue US also has a place in my heart but it's not special, it's just there. Vogue US seems to struggle with 2 things: photography and colour. Recently, Anna Wintour has been consistently hiring this one photographer called Annie Leibovitz. I don't get it. She handled 4/14 covers in 2024, though that doesn't seem like much, she was the only photographer to photograph multiple Vogue US covers last year. However, I liked 0/4 of them. Her photography is coincidentally characterised by two things I do not care for, realism and intimacy. I believe that recently, realism has just become an excuse to be bland. If I wanted realism, I would just look out my window and if I was desperate to experience it maybe I would stand outside but I don't want to pay for realism on a Vogue cover, in my eyes that's just another term for 'wasting my money'. And in photography, I don't always care for intimacy. We don't need intimacy because we do not know each other in that manner, I need to discover a form of photography that prioritises being strangers because I don't know how



long I can survive on boring, close-up shots. It's not like Annie Leibovitz is untalented, it's just that she has a talent that I personally do not appreciate. If I were going to pick a photographer that I believe would do an excellent job at a Vogue US cover, I would pick Cho Gi-Seok. He does close-up photos that feel fresh and interesting, a good example is the cover of Kali Uchis' album 'Red Moon in Venus', it only features Kali Uchis from the shoulders up but there is so much to look at and even without the props, the colours are incredibly pleasing. Colours. The lack of colour, not only in Vogue US but in the aesthetics that trend, scares me. Why are companies so afraid of utilising colour and if something has colour, why is it always dull and toned down? A good comparison is the May and December issues in 2024. The December issue is much more pleasing to look at due to the composition and especially the colours, the background is mint green, the floor is a light blue, the dress is a darker shade of blue and hot pink and to top it all off the model is wearing bright red lipstick.

I'm not saying that for a cover to be interesting it must have an array of colours, but I like that it's not a simple beige or grey, the UK is grey enough why would I want to see it in the media I consume? In comparison, The May issue consists of a background of greenery and the focus being a fabric rose which is in the centre, the problem is the colours feel dull, it's as if the saturation has been turned down alongside the exposure. However, the main difference between the two issues is that the December issue had Marc Jacobs playing the role of Editor-in-chief, he knew how to bring something new to the table, something Vogue US has struggled with for some time.



Annie Leibovitz

So, who do I believe to be a suitable replacement as Editor-in-Chief at Vogue U.S? Margaret Zhang, former Editor-in-Chief at Vogue China. Though last year she stepped down from that position, her 2021-2024 run at the Vogue China will be something I will never forget. I don't care if I have to beg on my knees to have her come to Vogue US just so I can keep my sanity. I will do it. One of my favourite covers that was published during her time at Vogue China was the September 2023 issue, I think it actually changed my life. The composition, the colours, the concept, it's all perfect. She also plays favourites when it comes to photographers because she constantly used Leslie Zhang during her time at Vogue, but I think it's fine to play favourites if I like the outcome, which is why I think Anna Wintour should not be allowed to do anything of the sort until Annie Leibovitz retires.

WRITTEN BY ORE F
YEAR 12



JOIN THE MARK!
WEDNESDAY LUNCH
IN L6

**CONTACT MRS STARR WITH ANY
ENQUIRIES AT LSTARR@RMET.ORG**

A REFLECTION ON POETRY LIVE

Unlike others in my classes, poetry has always been a favourite of mine. I've always kept my head low while others complained, "...not power and conflict!" in almost every lesson on the topic. I keep my mouth shut while people discuss the irrelevance and meaningless interpretations of poetry that they seem to take as pure waffle. And I always half-heartedly nod when people tell me how difficult they find poetry. I'd be too embarrassed to disagree.

I like poetry. Actually I love poetry. It is literature in such a movingly beautiful and often abstract sense. I adore the sense of freedom that poetry brings, expressing such spiritually and emotionally complex ideas that simple sentences, novels, and essays, couldn't quite depict. It is a form of art not only made to admire, but to send a message to the world. That is why I was especially excited to see poetry live.

During our trip, after Carol Ann Duffy marched upon the stage in her all-black robe and unwilling expression- she spoke of something regarding poetry that resonated with me very deeply. She said that: Without a reader, poetry is dead.

I heard a few snickers at the monotonous delivery of this line, but I felt inspired. I could tell this woman was a poet. In fact, she was an artist. She wore an expressionless face and carried herself with an attitude I could only describe as depressing (in the most fascinating way). She acted like a woman with many dark and mysterious stories that were yet to be shared. Reading from the sheet in front of her with such dark sunken eyes and

holding her arms at her side as if they were weighted down- yes. This woman was a poet.

Then, when the talk turned to her artworks, we watched her demeanour shift. The weights on her arms and body had been lifted and she began to morph into a woman with nothing but burning passion for her work. The way she described and talked about her poetry it seemed like a spark had been set in her mind; I could almost see the caramel flame burning behind her eyes. Listening to her speak about her mother and her memories, and what inspired each one of her poems, was so mesmerising to me. Being able to see a writer as more than just words on a page on a desk... And each poem she read was more captivating than the last. Warming her pearls. The raw and passionate desire that she captured using metaphors and history mixed with a subtle rhyme and rhythm moved me in ways difficult to describe. I loved hearing of her inspirations, aspirations, and dreams. Understanding in a deeper way her intentional messages behind each of her poems. It was truly awe-inspiring.

'War photographer' has been one of my favourite poems to learn, so hearing the background of such a heart wrenching piece of literature, from the artist herself, was incredibly eye opening. Particularly at a time in the world where conflict is growing, and war photographers are becoming increasingly relevant. Knowing that children, and mothers and fathers and cousins and friends are being slaughtered day by day in ways so unimaginable to fortunate people like ourselves. Knowing that corruption and



conflict are uncontrollable, and that there is nothing I or anybody else can do. All we have is photos and articles, that, as described in the poem, we listlessly read between “the bath and pre-lunch beers.”

Another poet that I admired at poetry live was Imtiaz Dharker. Her poem ‘Tissue’ is known among students as impossible to compare or analyse, the poem everybody’s got the least annotations for; however, I’ve always seen the delicate beauty within it. The adoration for the earth within her words. Upon entering the stage, I perceived her to be a mystical lady who seemed to float along the ground, with her dark, voluminous skirt. It carried her frail frame like a belt of clouds. Echoing through the hall, her words filled the theatre with compelling awe and wonder for the world, despite her sweetly soft-spoken voice. Dharker described how she found her inspiration within culture and even just conversations that shed overheard in the streets. Her poems are fabricated from a mix of the vibrant colours of the globe, and also the powerful, more frightful parts.

I felt myself resonating with this as travel has always been my thing. The thing that I imagine in my day, that gets me to sleep and that dazzles me in my dreams. The power of the earth. Of animals or of humanity or religion. I love how she seems to capture it all within her poetry.





I truly adore that poetry can lead us to think as deeply as this, to guide reflection on our lives and decisions, and the moral and ethical problems within our society. Poetry was designed to lead these controversial discussions. As a lot of the poets expressed during Poetry Live, their works are not only writing on pages. Instead, poetry is a reflection for the people who resonate and relate, who feel their voice usually unheard, can be taken and screamed back onto paper, for hope the rest of the world can hear. Poetry is a way to express love, hatred, and humanity. It is part of life. And most certainly a beautiful part.

It is certain to me that indeed, without a reader poetry is dead.

WRITTEN BY A STUDENT IN
YEAR 11



The English Department at Poetry Live

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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.

ACADEMIC COMPETITION- WHY THE DESIRE TO WIN SHOULDN'T BE AN INFATUATION

Almost anything can be made into a competition, whether it's an exam, a sport or even struggles in a workplace- but winning isn't everything and we should learn to look beyond competition to actually see the value in the things we already have.

Firstly, as someone who isn't very competitive, I question why some people are more competitive than others and what makes people so competitive in the first place. Scientifically speaking, hyper-competitiveness consists of a neurotic need to win at any cost to maintain a sense of self-worth or power, conveying the idea that it can often root from insecurity. These traits are instilled upon us at such a young age with events like sports day for example, where children as young as 4 and 5 are being made to compete against those who are meant to be their friends and if you win, you get a prize. This teaches us that you will always be rewarded for your wins, but never your losses even if you tried your hardest. As children, we learn from these experiences which leads us to grow up still thinking that winning is the most important outcome in order to be happy, but we shouldn't ever have a consistent need to be the best at everything. It's impossible. Even in times of healthy competition, overly competitive people can become overwhelmed and completely obsessed with the idea of winning which can seem frustrating for the people around them that simply wanted a more optimistic approach to competition.

However, I wonder if there is such thing

as healthy competition; a term we often hear throughout our lives that is usually implied to have good connotations. A definition of this can be 'when people are motivated in order to meet their opponent' implying that the idea of being better than someone else should motivate you but I don't think that this is necessarily healthy. By calling it healthy, it implies the competition would be beneficial in some kind of way, though surely believing yourself to be better than someone else seems somewhat egotistical. In a school environment, competition is very prominent due to teacher-set tasks and tests which on surface level, may seem like a good idea but this can actually affect students in various negative ways. It enforces an element of embarrassment on the student if they don't obtain the result that they were hoping for which is unfair because no student should feel that way when they have tried their best. It can be very difficult to pick yourself up after experiences like this in class which can make you feel purposeless and confused at your own ability. This competition can eventually end up having the complete opposite effect to its intended purpose as a student could choose to stop feeling motivated to save themselves from the embarrassment that they have previously suffered. It can also push you to take on too many roles and tasks, resulting in falling short of your goals, once again, inflicting damage to self-esteem. Now, I am not saying that we shouldn't have tests because without a doubt, they are a vital part of schooling to help you learn

and progress, but I think sharing these results or asking you to compete in certain tasks in front of the whole class is wrong. This can be seen as public shaming, and it can make you feel less worthy than other members in the class, ultimately leading you to have a more anxious and defensive mindset.

Additionally, having mental competitions with others is just as detrimental. Competing shouldn't be consuming which it often can be in your own mind because there's no escaping the thoughts and feelings that you have. Comparing yourself to others academically will never make you realise how great the extent of your ability is. I truly believe you can achieve your academic goals if you really set your mind to it so why should we let the idea of not being as good as someone else get in the way? Often, these thoughts can come from inner struggles that people think you're inferior to them but in reality, most people are too worried about themselves to even think about that and if they do form opinions on you, remember that people's opinions are just tiny fragments of their brains. Why would you want to care about tiny fragments of people's brains? Fortunately, there is ways that you can stop feeling this way, for example, doing everything to the best of your ability regardless of what others are doing but not forgetting to take the time to enjoy yourself by doing something you like to take your mind off the things that are out of your control. This can remind you that you can be happy without the weight of competition on your shoulders and that there really isn't any need to compare yourself. It may take some time to start believing in yourself but once you do, the feeling of not being in a competition with someone else is freeing.

Competition is everywhere, and you can never escape it because it is, and always will be a part of life but it shouldn't completely overcome us to the point where our own mindsets are altered because nothing is that important. Our lives will move on and it's important to know that our wins and losses are only temporary so we shouldn't worry about too much competition.

MORE ABOUT LAW

"More About Law," written by Arthur P., explores current legal issues, breaking down their significance and real-world impact. With sharp analysis and clear explanations, the column evaluates how effectively these laws serve the public and adapt to societal needs.

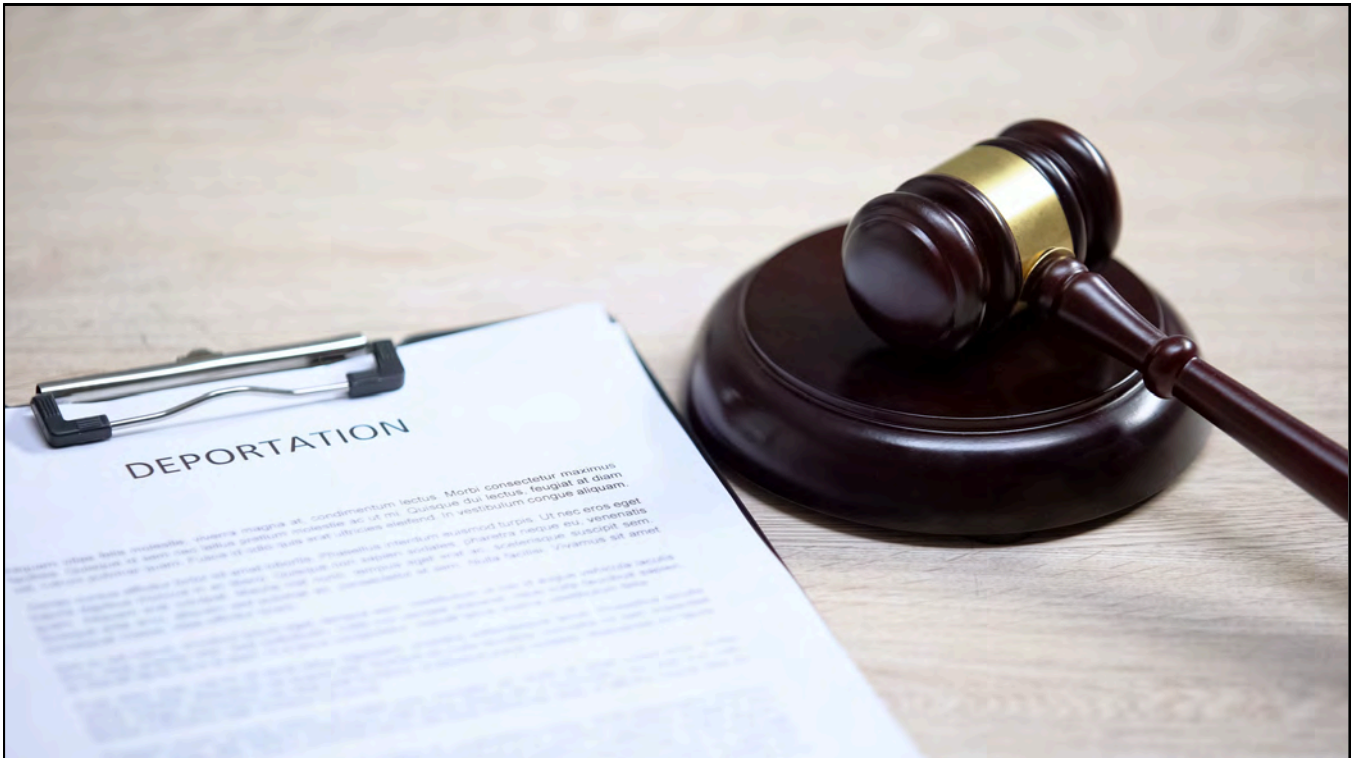
DEPORTATION LAW

To begin this term's issue of 'More about Law', I am going to provide you with a short overview on deportation and how it comes about. For instance, if you are living within a country (host state), but are of a differing nationality, committing a crime with an offence of over 12 months in prison, this places you in danger of becoming deported to a destination state (most commonly the criminals' country of origin). The initial claim for deportation is decided once or after the convict has received their charge, and it must be in order to peruse a 'legitimate aim'.

Nevertheless, through the use of Article 8, the criminal may be able to avoid this

deportation altogether by claiming that their family, friendship, emotional ties and private life are too significant for them to be removed from their host country; this right is subject to country; this right is subject to restrictions that are 'in accordance with law', deeming that they are necessary in a democratic society. As I am sure you'll agree, as a whole this is extremely vague, providing a lot of grey areas upon the value of a deportation claim, proving this section of the law to be doubted by many.

Not only is this concept particularly vague, but there are also hints of the law



being crafted meticulously in order to aid the prosecutor in their aims to deport the individual. For instance, the law states that there must be more than an emotional dependency upon family or friends, therefore extremely shortening the range of people referenced to within Article 8. As an example, an 80-year-old woman, living by herself, but with family and friends living within her community, may struggle to be viewed as having a significant family or friendship relationship within her host country; the lack of financial relations becoming more significant. Personally, I believe this outlook upon the matter to be unjust and unfair with the individual's mental attachment to others being reduced to almost nothing. This perception upon the law may deem deportation to be viewed as punitive (a punishment), which as a technicality is illegal: it should only be viewed as a way to ensure safety and to remove disruption within the host country. This concept is extremely important when considering that deportation may only take place once the individual has carried out their time in prison; thus, raising the question, is it morally right to remove someone from a country even after their justice system has been used against them? Is the justice system efficient or

successful enough if a country deems deportation to be necessary once someone has gone through it? This then raises challenges against the governments of said countries, perhaps a hidden motive believing immigrants to no longer be their responsibility once they have committed a crime; then the opinion-based factor of whether or not this is fair on the destination state in question, especially if they have had no effect on the individual previously.

These undecided and voided sections of deportation law strike me as very peculiar. Of course, there are deeper and more detailed explanations upon the matter, but on a surface level it seems to be extremely one-sided, as if the law was made in order to benefit a specific side of the cases. Some, like me, may believe deportation to be a double punishment upon individuals, especially if they have previously carried out their decided prison sentence; this overview proves the law to be hypocritical, especially as it claims to not be punitive. Although this is extremely frustrating, I believe that this is also what makes law so fascinating; the future is so undecided that law itself can often seem unjust, possibly in need of being changed in the future.

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.

THE HIDDEN BEAUTY

If you asked me about nature today,
I would bring you to the shore, and show you the waves.
Maybe they brawl with the land and wish to consume
Or perhaps the two just dance to the rhythm of the moon.
One glimpse and people seem to forget
The life and homes that are so in-depth
Sit down and stare at this concealed wonderland
And imagine the fish and turtles that are underhand
And you'd begin to see the true beauty that it hides.

If you'd asked me about nature yesterday,
I'd show you the environment that paved our way
Of human civilization, built from scratch.
Came only from a greenery patch
From skyscraper trees that continue to grow
To the saplings and seeds we've learnt to sow
But it's so much more extraordinary
The difference in tree and bush and berry
And you'd begin to see the true beauty that it hides.

Ask me about nature, late at night
When the foxes creep and the owls take flight
I'd show you the stars as the sun has been relinquished
Their alluring sheen never to be distinguished
Obscured from view, the planets swirl and spin in silence
The torrid sun being their guidance
The moon whose benign glow illuminates
Even the smallest river, its vision dominates.
And you'd begin to see the true beauty that it hides.

If you ask me about nature tomorrow
I'd show you the pain and sorrow
Of the animals whose environment we've destroyed
Their homes that were trees and bushes, now devoid
Of safety and food, they scamper in panic.
While we sit there, cutting and burning, completely manic.
Tearing and clawing at everything in our path
Nothing can escape our starved wrath
And you'd begin to see the true horror that we hide.

WRITTEN BY HOLLY D
YEAR 9

LOKI AND FRIGG- A RE-CREATIVE PIECE OF WRITING

Inspired by the Norse mythological story of 'Loki and the deadly mistletoe', Rajni C has written a re-creative revenge myth that details Frigg's revenge on Loki for what he did to her husband, Balder.

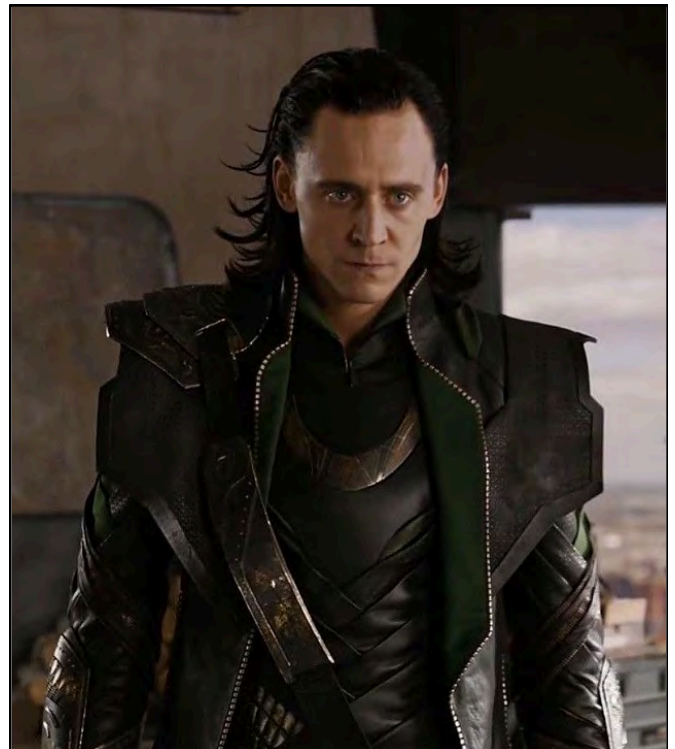
Frigg and Loki were known throughout Asgard for many different things. Loki for his carefree ways and infamous sense of humour, and Frigg for her kind and understanding soul; along with her sympathy and generosity. So, it came to a surprise to the Asgardians when the two were arguing ferociously. The shouts pierced the cheery mood and brought sadness to all of the townspeople.

Silence fell like a cloak as the town surrendered to the night's darkness. Loki—vexed—plotted away, sure on the revenge on Frigg. Hermod—weapon less and go of the skies—was his perfect minion. Loki's devious mind began its scheming; he would get Hermod to curse Frigg.

The town was tossed into a terrific glow of sunlight. The plan was afoot. Loki sauntered over to Hermod's room and let himself in. He embraced Hermod like a brother and perched on one of the many plush sofas. Hours later, Loki's "Phase 1" was complete. Glowing with pride he strutted from the god's room, proud of the day's work



The big moment had arrived. Hermod had asked Queen Betara (Ruler of Curses) and she had agreed. Bertara always took deep pleasure in making others suffer. The



curse was insanely evil. Even Zeus himself feared it. Betara uttered the sacred words and... nothing happened...

Suddenly, the kind goddess yelped and jumped out of her seat. An unwelcome shiver fled down her spine. Her hand prickled with fright, and she peered over it... Red, hot flames roared and danced on her innocent hand. Her scream broke every window in the Great Hall. Frigg stopped dead and her body collapsed to the floor with a thud. Her once beautiful body had turned to gold dust!

Loki yelled and clutched his throat, scratching aggressively, he too turned to dust, but not gold. Black, dirty and revolting. Just like Loki's soul.

WRITTEN BY RAJNI C
YEAR 7

EPILOGUE

Put the book down now. It is imperative that you do so, this tragedy's ending is far too ghoulish and horrific for a reader such as yourself. Fine, if you insist, but don't blame me if you gain not a wink of sleep tonight.

I was walking home from my evening job in a bar that's a few miles away from where I live. I paused for a moment, I inhaled slowly, yet deeply, to savour the sweet scent of icy grass and frozen autumn leaves crumpled on the earth. Though, was soon disrupted by the overpowering stench of smoke billowing from the fireplaces warming the home of families clutching their hot water bottles to their stomachs.

I carried on walking for a while. Suddenly, my legs began to quiver like jelly on a tray, I threw my body to the nearest lamp post assuring that I wouldn't slip over the glossy iced pathway. The towering trees above me rustled violently in the ferocious swarming winds. Unexpectedly, the lamppost that I was leant against flickered then immediately turned off. Each one, as far as the eye could see did the same, extinguishing every speck of light. I was left, accompanied only by the dark. Instantly, I heard a muffled voice in the



“You should have killed me when you had the chance...”

It was as if this mystery voice was talking in the winds. I was confused—at least I think I was. My head was perfectly in place; however, my mind was elsewhere. Trapped by the devil. I briefly noticed a familiar silhouette in the window of the house opposite. Leading to it, a trail of pure fresh blood. Indescribably, my throat began to tighten and as if I was shot in the stomach, I collapsed in a heap on the blood-coated floor.

distance, I was unable to make out any of the words that were supposedly said. Therefore, managing to persuade myself that my mind was attempting to scare me of the darkness.

I was vigorously gasping for air yet gave up the instant I realised that all hope had diminished.

The devil had won...

What happened next was indescribable! The world spun around me at what seemed like 100mph, then froze abruptly and the adrenaline winds had miraculously changed to light breezes. The mysterious voice came again, yet much firmer this time;

WRITTEN BY ERIN N
YEAR 8

PHAETON AND HELIOS- FROM ZEUS' PERSPECTIVE



Zeus, feasting like the king he was, guffawed heartily as Hermes tried to fly without his boots—yet again. He peered down the jewelled balcony at the mortal's world and his own. Being under the hard-core stare one could shrivel and die. He saw the undeniable chariot of Helios decorated with diamonds. It zoomed across the sky as fast as a cheetah, taking twists and turns. It seemed out of control almost...

An eerie breeze crept down the corridor, which was strange for a glorious June morning. Zeus shivered despite the warmth of the sun. Something caught his eye, a deep red rose was withering under the chariot of Helios. In the middle of June. Under the illustrious sun. His heart stopped and screamed out at Zeus. Wanting to burst out of his ribcage, his heart hammered so loud, Zeus was surprised his fellow gods didn't hear. A trail of destruction followed the cursed chariot: plants wilted under a lack of sun, crops died, lakes dried up and the villages were drenched in darkness; surrendering to the shadows.

It all happened so fast. He could feel anger rising, sweat trickling down his forehead and he looked at the child with complete utter disgust. Zeus, whose anger was now screaming at him, clutched his thunderbolt in a fit of rage. He hurled it at the troublesome child, taking Phaeton's life.

WRITTEN BY RAJNI C
YEAR 7

OZYMANDIAS



The sun blazed down on the endless desert, making the air shimmer like a dream. Sand stretched in every direction, nothing but waves of golden dust shifting in the wind. My legs ached from walking, my feet sinking with every step. I was sure there was nothing out here but more sand, stretching on forever—until I saw it.

At first, I thought it was just another rock, but as I got closer, I realized it was something else entirely. Two giant stone legs stood in the middle of the desert, cracked and weathered but still towering over the empty land. They had no body, just cut off at the knees as if the rest had been ripped away. The feet were half-buried in the sand, like the earth itself was trying to pull them under.

A few steps away, I saw the face. It lay on its side, partly broken, but I could still make out its expression. The lips were curled into a sneer, like the person it once belonged to thought he was better than everyone else. Deep lines were carved into the stone, showing a man who must have ruled with confidence, maybe even cruelty. The details were still sharp despite all the years that had passed, as if the sculptor had worked hard to make sure this man would never be forgotten. But now, he was just a broken statue in the middle of nowhere.

In front of the ruins, half-covered in sand, was a plaque. I brushed the dust away and read the words carved into the stone: "Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!" I stared at the words for a moment, letting them sink in. Whoever this king was, he must have been powerful, ruling over a huge empire, building cities and monuments, believing his name would last forever. But when I looked up, there was nothing. No cities, no temples, no people—just endless desert. His great empire was gone, and all that was left of him was this broken statue, slowly being swallowed by time.

I stood there for a while, listening to the wind, thinking about how this king had wanted to be remembered. He had expected people to look at his works and feel fear, maybe even jealousy. But now, there was nothing to fear, nothing to admire—only silence and empty land. The desert had taken everything, and one day, even this statue would be gone too.



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