SPRING 2022

The Penguin:

Spring

A Small Debate: **Slow Walkers:**
Love them or hate them!

Why the French hate
'Emily in Paris'

The Disappearing Beach

A letter from the Editors

New year, new editors, new penguin edition. We're so excited to release the spring issue of the Penguin – even if it doesn't feel like the season yet. The team has been working so hard to get this issue out on time and we want to thank them all, especially Ella, our new head of visuals, who has worked tirelessly to make this edition as beautiful as it is. Huge thank you to Ms. Pearce and Mr. White as well for helping guide us in this first term and helping mitigate any issues we had. As the days grow longer and half term is right around the corner, we hope you enjoy our first edition as editors-in-chief – have a wonderful holiday!

Madeleine & Ruby

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Slow Walkers: A Small Debate

My heart is pounding. Sweat is dripping down my brow. My clothes are drenched in my Pret coffee (I'll have to get another in my free period, thank god for my subscription!) This mad dash is my everyday morning reality as I sprint up Trinity Walk in a vain attempt to get through the school doors by 8:28. But as I fly along Finchley Road, my greatest adversary yet approaches. In my rush, I nearly crash into them, almost spilling what is left of my precious coffee. Those fiends of the streets, those plagues upon society. Slow walkers.

Now I wouldn't consider myself a violent person, I'd say I'm pretty easy going. However, slow walkers ignite something in me that is quite indescribable and definitely not good for my blood pressure! And I don't think I am alone in experiencing 'sidewalk rage' (*yes*, this is a real thing).

Slow walkers terrorise the streets. They stumble along, meandering like a toddler taking its first steps, they might even stop to send a text message or tie their shoelace, inevitably in the middle of the pavement, with no regard for the late detention I'm about to get. You are forced to either walk straight into their backs, after which they have the audacity to look aggrieved, or risk life and limb by dashing into the road to get past them (something which, of course, the editors of this magazine do not endorse).

I think my main problem is that I simply can't understand why you would ever walk slowly. Maybe they want to take in the scenic views of Maresfield Gardens? Perhaps they want to breathe in the sweet sweet polluted air coming from Finchley Road?

Either way, getting stuck behind slow walkers is the easiest way to ruin my day.

So a message to all you slow walkers out there, wherever you may be, hiding among us in plain sight...MOVE!

Sincerely, a fast (normal) paced walker

Charlotte Y12

Hellelil & Hildebrand

The Meeting on the Turret Stairs

'Hellelil and Hildebrand, The Meeting on the Turret Stairs' was painted in watercolour by Frederick William Burton in 1864 – a noble woman, Hellelil, stands leaning her forehead to the stone wall of a stairwell in anguish, sharing an intimate moment with her forbidden beloved, a guard and prince named Hildebrand. These star-crossed lovers are based off a medieval Danish ballad that one of Burton's friends translated for him, the story of Hellelil falling for her personal guard and the tragedy the affection caused as her father ordered him to be killed.

The most shocking thing I found about this piece was reading the small description saying that it was painted using watercolour, the intensity of the colours and the shading Burton manages to achieve is reminiscent of oil paints and displays his skill as an artist. He was a part of a movement in the 1800s reviving the use of watercolours, his talent for this shown through the small brushstrokes used over a long period to develop the richness of his colours and then gone over in gouache and glaze as well – adding texture to the chainmail and helmet and enriching the piece.

This – their last moment together – is both tortured and romantic. The famous writer George Eliot describes the longing-filled kiss that Hildebrand is pressing into her elbow: 'the kiss is on the fur-lined sleeve that covers the arm, and the face of the knight is the face of a man to whom the kiss is a sacrament.' The yearning encapsulated within this singular action is moving as this moment of affection is the most important thing to happen in the knight's life. Hellelil's scattering of yellow and white petals over the ground reflects elements of both a wedding and a funeral, denoting the duality of joy in acting on their desire and the impending tragedy to come. In fact, the entire piece feels haunted, Hildebrand's uniform is one often seen on medieval tombs, his surcoat – the garment worn over his chainmail – recalls silk found in Viking graves. It's similar to Romeo and Juliet just missing each other where they lay in her tomb. This piece is a tale of meeting each other before death and the anguish in only being able to kiss the inner arm of your beloved, knowing that you are approaching your death without them.

Hellelil and Hildebrand, The Meeting on the Turret Stairs, Frederick William Burton (1864)

Ruby Y12

Year 11 and '1984'

Why you shouldn't hate the novel

As part of English Literature GCSE, Year 11 has been studying Orwell's '1984'. The book is framed as the pièce de resistance of George Orwell's literary career, a shining beacon of truth in an alarmingly totalitarian post-war Europe. However, despite the novel's success and presence on every English teacher's reading list, some of Year 11 have formed a rather negative and critical view of the novel, an attitude that I will now oppose.

For those who haven't read it, '1984' is about Winston Smith, a man living in a totalitarian world, controlled by the strict dictatorship called the Party and its omniscient leader 'Big Brother'. The dystopian novel explores how Winston finds freedom in a world where even your mind belongs to the Party and how, eventually, the Party does catch up with him. The anti-totalitarian themes of the book served as a direct criticism and warning against communist and fascist states.

To start with, I surveyed 30 people in Year 11, asking them if they held a positive or negative opinion of the book. Unsurprisingly 35% chose negative, with some critiques being that the book was 'confusing', 'dull', and an 'annoying story about a man feeling sorry for himself'. My task of arguing against this now felt even harder.

One reason why I am so passionate about the novel is because of how beautiful the writing is. I think it is incredibly well written with a diverse and broad enough lexicon to keep the reader enthralled. Some passages are so beautifully written that I simply had to stop for a moment to take it all in.

Not to sound too much like an analytical essay, but Orwell's writing is so vivid that it would be impossible not to totally immerse oneself in Winston's world. I felt the soaring peaks of Winston's rebellions and the swooping lows of his defeats.

In fact, the only part of the novel that I did not enjoy was Goldstein's book, although it certainly doesn't diminish Orwell's literary triumphs throughout the rest of the novel.

One thing that simply can't be ignored is the context of when the novel was written. Our current political climate is different to that of Europe after the Second World War. Russia was a communist and totalitarian country, and Germany was divided into two states controlled by different countries

On top of that, the Cold War began in 1947. This conflict, although never involving any actual fighting, threatened the security of people across the world. The themes of political control, loss of individuality and repressed humanity that run through '1984' so closely mirrored the political situation of 1949, when the book was published, that the message of the book

would have been far more effective and more closely relatable to the feelings of the people who would have been reading the novel at the time.

Besides the political context being different, reading '1984' nowadays, as teenagers in a school environment, so greatly dilutes the meaning of the book that I wonder if we absorb any political warning at all. For those of us who don't feel they have any aptitude for English Literature, the lessons seem to seep slowly by, and the focus is more on its inevitable end than on the subject matter. There is also the natural inclination, especially in school, of teenage girls to be highly judgmental and to criticise and complain about anything that doesn't meet their expectations wholly. This is not an admonishment of my peers, and even myself, but is simply a quality of any teenage generation.

"The most clichéd dystopian novel of all time. Students writing 1984 essays experience more pain than Winston in Room 101. Even Orwell would've felt bad for us after reading the 29thessay on how 'hope lies within the proles"

It is also important to shed any belief that the only books worthwhile are books that make you feel happy. The truth is that '1984' is not a pleasant read. Orwell doesn't coddle the reader and lead them to believe that the novel will end in happiness. The book is uncomfortable and gruesome; at times you feel rage, woe and empathy at the gross humiliation inflicted on Winston.

In my opinion, the great success of the novel is that it makes you feel something. I think that if you do not leave a novel feeling anything then the novel has failed. Even if the novel makes you feel enraged by its poor writing and cliched plot you at least learn what makes a book better. A book that makes you feel nothing is a book that essentially contains nothing of value. '1984' teaches you that just because a book is tragic doesn't mean you can't gain anything from it.

There is also the question of how to read, to best absorb meaning; in any novel, the reader and writer work in conjunction to present and interpret meaning. The reader must shed any bias or notion of the self to lose oneself in the writing and the writer must communicate the message successfully to the reader. Reading the book with a condemnatory mindset or feeling that reading is simply a chore means that you lose any enjoyment and deeper meaning. I think '1984' failed to impress Year 11 mostly due to the circumstance where it was read. At heart the book simply became a means to an end, that end being a 9 in an English GCSE. It is not Orwell's or our teachers' fault that Year 11 has not formed positive opinions of the book and instead is because so many people read it against their will. For some, there is no passion in the subject of English Literature as it is a compulsory subject, with students counting down the days to Sixth Form where they will eagerly drop it. It is understandable that many people didn't enjoy '1984' because they didn't choose it themselves.

To conclude, I don't want to say that no Year 11s thought well of the book, 65% did, but to those who do have extremely negative opinions of the book, I trust that if in 10 years you returned to '1984' of your own volition, you would form a much better opinion. There is nothing our generation hates more than being forced to do something, and for many people, they should have gone to '1984' not vice versa. I am pleased that we study '1984' for our exams. I appreciate the exposure to the book and to those who didn't see the point of it, they should certainly reread it. It is a powerful exploration of what happens when a society loses its political freedom

Isabella Y11

Overheard @ SHHS

Everyday thoughts of South Hampstead students

"I get £100 for every 'I' in my report "

"I once spent £40 on truffle pasta"

"Napoleon? Isn't that some kind of ice cream flavour?"

"I've never set foot in Birmingham. It sounds scary."

"I danced so hard I had to be taken to the medical tent"

"Apple pay isn't real money "

"Don't throw the ball too hard, I've just had my nails done"

"Wait, you've never been skiing?"

Winter Fashion Trends

The Christmas holidays are now over and we are in that time period where it's cold and there's no celebration to look forward too. But, this isn't the case for the fashion industry who are still creating new winter looks for all activities. After all, it has been known to snow in February!

All White

It's the cosy jumper season and the time for some fashionable and seasonal trends. The all white trend is an example. However, it adds an elegant simplicity showing that you can still make a statement with the absence of colour. Whoever said that a blank canvas was uninspired hadn't met the fashion industry.

Party Central

After the last year, we are all sick of being stuck indoors, wearing tracksuits and a random t-shirt that's been lying on your floor for 5 days. It's time to change it up. Even though New Year's Eve is over, the party hasn't stopped and designers are still creating 'out there' designs for parties in 2022. And while designers agree that 2022 is the time to cut loose and live fast. They also understand that we still need a period to ease ourselves back into the fast-paced world. Luckily, they've added a few comfortable details to their designs. For example, Prada's sequin dresses come with comforting furry rags and Chanel's glittery mini-dresses come with shaggy coats which imitate thewarm, cosy blanket that you're so used to. All in all, designers have covered everything, so there's no excuses for not seeingyou on the dance floor!

Knit Picking

Who says you can't be fashionable and cozy? If your urge to hibernate has not yet subsided, this trend is for you. Designers completely understand that it's been a hard few months of sitting in your blanket and watching hours of Netflix. However, they'vedecided to spruce up looks by using tonal takes to create intricate knit designs . Now you can feel like you're at home bundled in your knitted blankets whilst you're out and about.

Stylish ski suits

It's ski season and the fashion industry is ready to turn up the heat with these ski-tastic outfits. Whether you're drinking hot chocolate by the fire or hitting the slopes, you're definitely going to be cosy.The fashion industry has produced a full collection of knitted loungewear, padded ski suits and lots of layers. One of my personal favorites is Fendi's Coated canvas-jacquard ski salopettes
Let's get skiing!

The winter selection this year provides clothing for every single seasonal activity from skiing in stylish suits, to cosying up by the fire and even dancing the night away. Which one will you choose?

Keya Y9

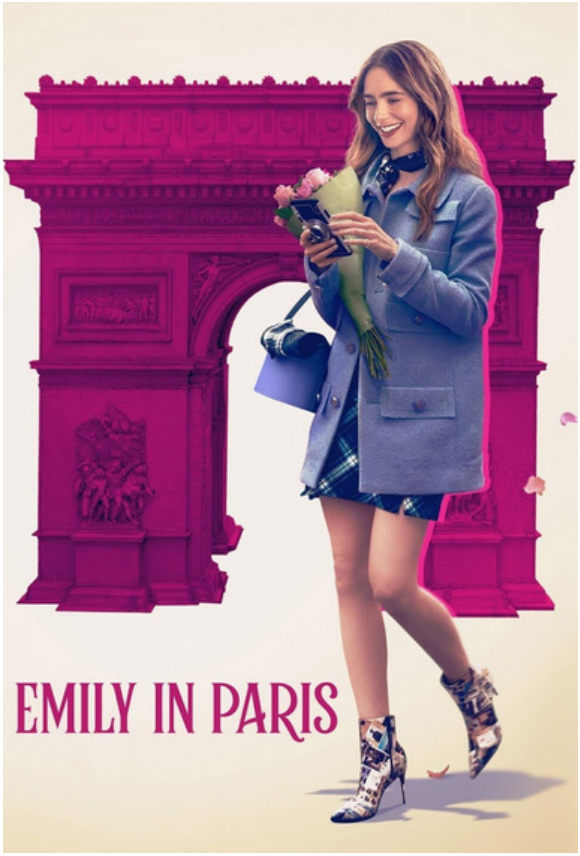
Why the French Hate 'Emily in Paris'

The second season of the Golden Globe-winning series 'Emily in Paris' was released during the holidays to a mixed reaction.

There were fans who binged the show in two days, and then there were others who found the second season lacking. I belong to the former category. However, one large group of people dissatisfied with the hit show was the French. With the first season being branded as 'ridiculous' by young French viewers and containing 'plenty to feel insulted about', it should come as no surprise that the French are once again frustrated by the depiction of themselves, Paris, and most of all the use of berets!

The show centres on Emily Cooper, portrayed by Lilly Collins, an American sent to Paris by her company to work with their newly acquired French firm, Savoir. The catch? She does not speak a word of French. This makes for an entertaining, and definitely cringeworthy, series of adventures in Paris, accompanied by her general butchering of the French language. While many French viewers were happy to see Emily properly attending language classes in the second season - something that was long needed - there have not been many other improvements, leaving viewers describing the second series as 'absurd'.

So, what are the main issues? A frequent complaint is the depiction of Paris. While the so-called 'city of love' is often romanticised in television - think the end of The Devil Wears Prada - the blatant lack of accuracy in the show has left viewers fuming. Often Emily is supposed to be in one area of Paris such as Trocadéro but the editing displays images of Le Marais, half an hour away by metro.



More frustrating is the pink lens through which Paris is viewed, with RGTL Radio complaining, 'the berets, the cocktail dresses and the invariably spotless streets, Parisians will not find it easy to recognise their daily lives'. Despite supposedly being a 'chambre de bonne' (a maid's room of 100 square feet in an attic), Emily's flat is a bigger apartment on the floor below.

But, the French complaints do not end with Paris. The representation of the French also sparked anger, with woman's webzine MadmoiZelle writing that the series, 'reduces the capital's inhabitants to vile snobs sporting Birkin bags who light up a cigarette the minute they're out of the gym'. The use of cigarettes in the series has also received complaints. The characters smoke in the office despite France banning smoking indoors in 2007. Likewise, the depiction of French attitudes towards work has been criticised. Emily's colleagues show up around 11:00 and seem to spend most of their days at long lunches which viewers have argued makes them seem lazy.

The stereotypes in the show have long existed, but their inclusion is still offensive to many people in France. Furthermore, this discussion has ignited debate about how we deal with silly or, at their worst, insulting depictions of us – the British.

The second season introduces a stereotypical English character - he drinks beer, calls people 'love' and 'mate' and is obsessed with football. However, English audiences seem largely unoffended, with one viewer tweeting, 'the most relatable part of Emily in Paris is her pouring her heart out to a British lad and him just responding with "that's mad" '.

So, are the French overreacting?

We asked two members of the SHHS French department - Mme Canevet and Mr Morley- what they thought about the show.

Mme Canevet said that she 'absolutely hated it' and that it was a 'complete cliché. [Emily] doesn't live like a Parisian, as the majority are not super wealthy. Also go to a normal coffee shop, not Café de Flore. Who goes there? Average Parisians don't – I couldn't relate to any of that.'

Mme Canevet agreed with the complaints about Emily's apartment, saying 'normally the toilet is outside the flat!'. But, she also raised the more serious point that the show was damaging to the perception of Parisians within France as well as to Americans travelling abroad. In terms of fashion, Mme Canevet critiqued the show, saying 'What she wears, the clothes she shows up to work in, oh my god! High heels and a beret? No chance.'

Mr Morley was slightly more positive. 'I'm glad I saw it, but did I enjoy it? Not at all. They represent the beauty of the city . . . and I always love[s] seeing a city through film'. However, like Mme Canevet, Mr Morley cited the use of clichés as 'too much' and said the show was 'actually a bit patronising to the viewer' as well as 'heavy handed' in the depiction of Parisians. Commenting on the outfits in the show, Mr Morley continued that 'It's a visual spectacle, if you only listen to the dialogue, it can be pretty dreadful'. However, he did agree that it can, 'come across as a bit OTT' and even likened the use of humour to a pantomime!

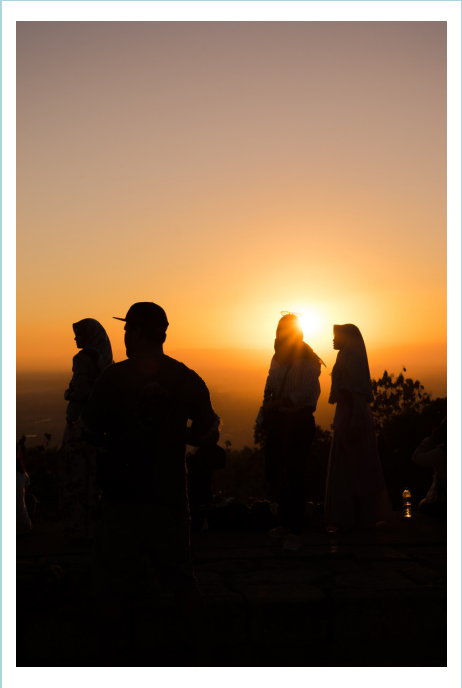
So how can the show improve? Both teachers said that more involvement from people who actually live in Paris would make the show more down to earth as well as cut down on the over-exaggeration. However, if the second season is anything to go by, it will continue with the clichéd characterisation of Parisians, the romanticising of Paris and the inclusion of stereotypes.

Perhaps the best characterisation of how the French feel about the show is a quote from the title character, 'I like Paris, but I'm not really sure Paris likes me.'

Madeleine Y12

Is Religion Outdated?

Religion can be explained as a group of people that share a common set of beliefs, practices, and morals. Many religions have the core belief and worship of a controlling power such as a personal god or another supernatural being. There is evidence that religion was founded over four thousand years ago, but are religions' old traditions and beliefs still applicable to today?



Firstly, it is vital to answer why people join religious groups. Religion provides a source of security to individuals by answering existential questions such as why we die and why we suffer. Religion provides personal comfort in terms of uncertainty and upset, for example, when terror attacks such as 9/11 occurred many people turned to places of worship to pray and find both security and answers to the devastating event. Sociologists such as Emile Durkheim argue that religion is attractive because it allows us as social creatures to connect with like-minded people. Many people may go to churches and other places of worship in order to receive counselling, shelter and help paying taxes. The consolation that religion brings through its way to connect people, help answer difficult questions and support those suffering makes it understandable that 84% of the global population identifies with a religious group.

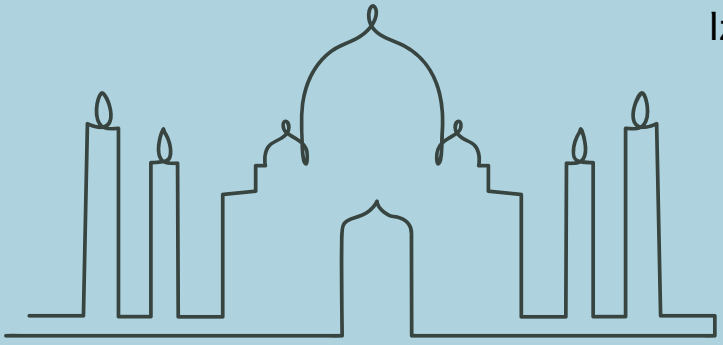
However, as civilisations become more complex so do their systems of belief. Explanations for the existential questions surrounding our purpose, origins and afterlife become more advanced. As we move from religious reasoning to scientific reasoning, religion will eventually die out as science clearly provides more reasonable answers to these questions. There are significant contradictions between science and religion. The Big Bang Theory demonstrates how the universe began as a singularity (a hot, dense point) and underwent rapid expansion, which is still going on today. There is lots of evidence supporting the Big Bang Theory such as Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation, which shows that there is leftover radiation in the universe from the Big Bang and the Doppler Effect,

light has been shifted towards lower frequency and longer wavelength to the red end of the electromagnetic spectrum telling us that the universe is expanding and other galaxies our moving away from our galaxy. This clearly challenges the ideas common in religions such as Christianity that God created the universe.

Conversely, if we disregard these contradictions and instead focus on the core messages of faith and how they can benefit us, religion can still be relevant today. Hinduism has a code of conduct called the 10 Yamas which include key ideas such as Ahimsa meaning nonviolence, Satya meaning truthfulness and Daya meaning compassion. Hinduism also contains practices called the 10 Niyamas which include Dana meaning Charity. Observances such as these are common among religions and teach people how to live morally and mindful lives. If we begin to discount religious history and traditions, it gives the impression that we don't agree with the important lessons one can earn from following the Ten Commandments in Judaism or the Eightfold Path in Buddhism.

Atheism is common among our population; 1.2 billion people have no religious affiliation. One of the key reasons atheism is so popular is because many don't believe in a God or think there is no evidence for God's existence. Another reason for non-belief is the problem of evil, the idea that the extent of evil in the world makes it unlikely that the God of classical theism that has properties of omnibenevolence exists. Despite, the contradictions between science and religion as well as ideas such as the problem of evil, religious morals and beliefs can still be relevant to us today. Being able to surround ourselves with others is vital to us as humans, shown by the increase in loneliness during the pandemic. Uncertain times like these means many turn to faith for a sense of security and comfort.

Izzy Y12



An Interview with Mr Thicknesse

As some of our readers may know, after the departure of Ms Marchant, who we all dearly miss, the Classics department has gained a new teacher, and the Penguin has conducted an interview with him to learn more about the mysterious new Mr Thicknesse.

What did you do before you joined SHHS, such as previous teaching posts/ university?
I took up my first teaching post almost immediately after leaving university: I moved to Monmouth School (in Wales!) to be a Classics teacher and deputy housemaster for three years in the idyllic surroundings of the Wye Valley. I then decided to complete a Master's degree and teach part-time for a year in Oxford, before heading for Brighton College. I taught there for three and a half years, where I was again deputy housemaster and ran girls' cricket!

What's something very high up on your bucket list for life?
At some point I would love to swim the Channel, or else compete in the Fastnet Challenge alongside my brother. Also to be published – either academically or for a novel.

Who would be the one person you'd like to invite to dinner party, dead or alive?
I'd love to invite Hugh Laurie: he was very much my role model growing up, given he was immensely talented in all sorts of areas - as a sportsman, a writer, a musician, an actor etc. Other contenders would be Andy Samberg and Naoise Dolan. In terms of the dead – Seamus Heaney or Virginia Woolf.

What is your favourite film of all time?
I have a handful of these: the dominant theme is a great soundtrack / score. I could watch any of Amadeus, The Mission, The Blues Brothers, Evita and The Commitments again and again and again.

Favourite book?
Atonement, or A Hundred Years of Solitude, or The Reading Cure.

Which Roman Emperor is your favourite?
In all honesty, it's not a crowded field … I'm going to play it safe and say Hadrian as a lover of art and literature and all things Greek!

Which Greek philosopher is your favourite?
Easy - Hypatia: definitely one of the most under-explored women of the ancient world.

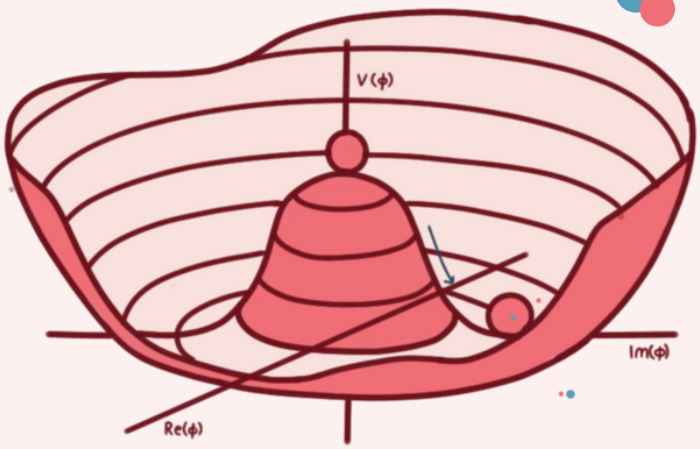
Who do you prefer, Aeschylus, Euripides or Sophocles? (The trio of most famous and successful Ancient Greek Tragedians)
Aeschylus. To write a trilogy that takes the Greeks from the end of the Trojan War to the advent of democracy, while weaving in the best story of family retribution and guilt – he sets out the stall for future generations.

Who do you prefer, Cicero or Catullus? (Two Roman writers, living in the time of Julius Caesar. Cicero was a famous lawyer who made some of the best speeches of all time, and Catullus was a poet who wrote about a multitude of experiences he lived through in Ancient Rome)
Catullus. Funny, very modern, very strange. His range is immense: heartbreak, sparrows, blankets and even self-castration(!), he's one of the very, very best.

Do you prefer History, Philosophy or Literature?
I started off being very much a history kid: I did national essay competitions and never considered anything else until I reach Sixth Form. Then I realised how much I enjoyed reading and analysing books; after I realised that I could keep doing all my A Levels if I applied for Classics at university, I found myself totally in thrall with literary theory. Philosophy was never my strong point: I'm far more of a 'do-er' than a thinker.

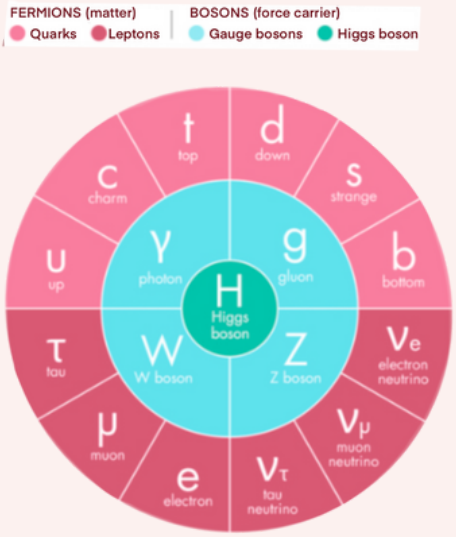
The Higgs Boson

The Higgs boson, sometimes called the Higgs particle, is a particle in the Standard Model which is associated with the Higgs Field, a fundamental field that runs through every corner of the universe, giving particles mass. Everything you can feel and touch is thanks to the Higgs mechanism and all matter is down to the Higgs boson.

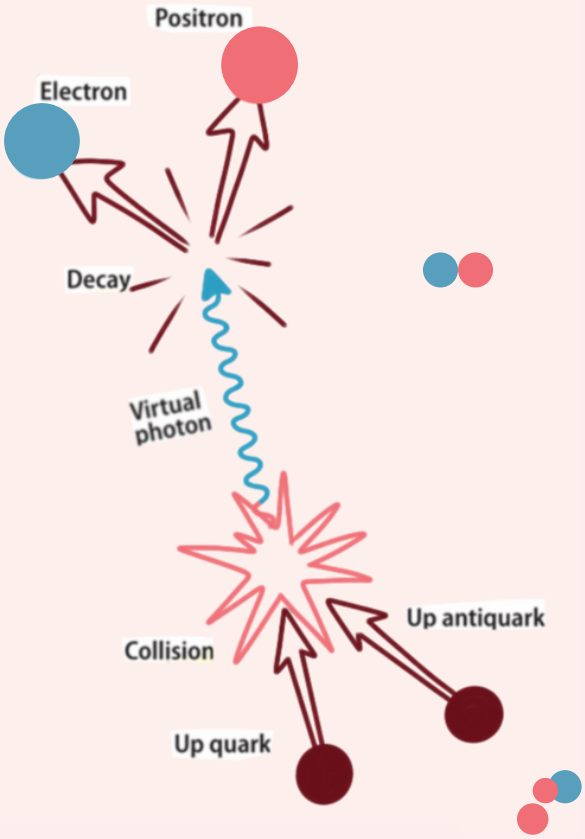


The idea of the Higgs boson was originally thought of to explain the apparent error with the unification theory of the electroweak force – this theory describes electricity, magnetism, light, and some radioactivity, which are all types of the electroweak force – it correctly describes the force and the associated particles, showing it to be right. The Standard Model is based on the fact that physical properties of particles remain unchanged during different operations called the symmetries. This explained the electroweak force, but to keep these same symmetries valid, the W and Z particles would not have a mass. However, we know it has a mass of nearly 100 times that of a photon. In short, a theory was created that scientist knew was right, but for it to be true, it would negate a fundamental fact that they knew for certain. Soon a mechanism was devised that gives mass to the W and Z particle, the Higgs field. Soon the theory was adapted to apply to all elementary particles by three theorists, Robert Brout, François Englerg, and Peter

The Higgs field is everywhere, it can be present in all vacuums. Where most quantum fields do not produce their associated particle in vacuums, due to their 'expectation value' of zero, the Higgs field has a high 'expectation value.'The 'expectation value' describes the anticipated value of the result of an experiment. In this case, the 'expectation value' describes how likely the bosons are to appear. This means that the Higgs field can appear in all vacuums, compared to most quantum fields, with a zero 'expectation value,' that have no bosons appearing in the vacuum. In summary, the Higgs boson is omnipresent in all corners of the universe, giving matter to particles. All fundamental fields have an associated particle, that gives the field a physical manifestation, the Higgs boson is the physical manifestation of the Higgs field, every corner of the universe.

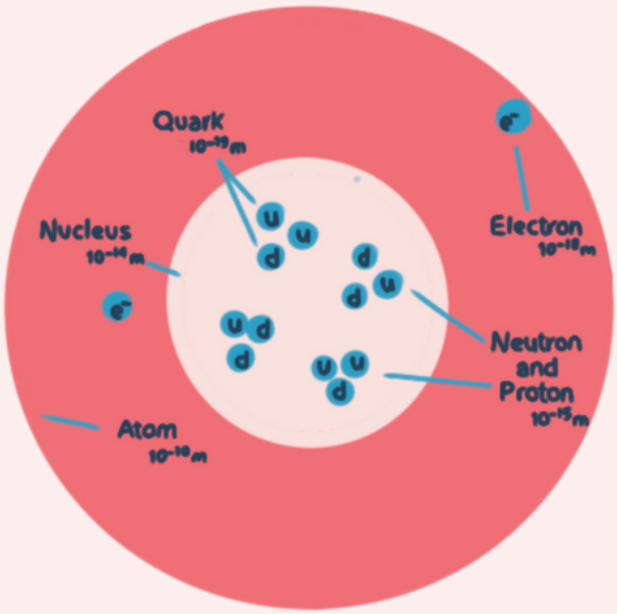


At the very start of the universe, the Higgs boson was not behaving as it does now due to the different energy density. It was higher than the vacuum 'expectation value' of the Higgs field, the symmetries the Standard model could maintain, this meant particles like the W and Z could be massless. As the universe cooled after the Big Bang, the Higgs field grew from zero quickly due to how the universe cooled down. It grew so huge that as particles interacted with it, they gained more and more mass.



The Higgs boson decays to different, less massive, particles quickly due to it being extremely unstable. One of the more 'common' decays is into two photons, whereas a rarer decay is a photon and two leptons. In this, the Higgs boson transforms into a 'virtual photon,' or an 'off-shell photon,' this photon is not actually a regular photon as it has a small, but existent, mass. Photons are particles with no mass, they travel in a stream and make up light. Then, in this instance, the 'virtual proton' transforms into two leptons. Leptons are elementary particles that are some of the building blocks of the universe and cannot be broken down into more particles. For example, electrons, muons, and tau. There are many distinct types of decay the Higgs boson can undergo, each with a different frequency, which are called 'branching fractions,' the particle it turns into is dependent on the mass of the Higgs boson.

The Higgs boson has been revolutionary to quantum physics in many ways: confirming the Standard model, being the only scalar particle to be observed, and providing the solution to the problem of the electroweak force; it has been described as the biggest achievement of a generation. The Higgs boson shows many different pathways into areas of physics in the future – from dark matter and dark energy to quantum physics, the Higgs boson is lighting the way for the future.



Katherine Y8

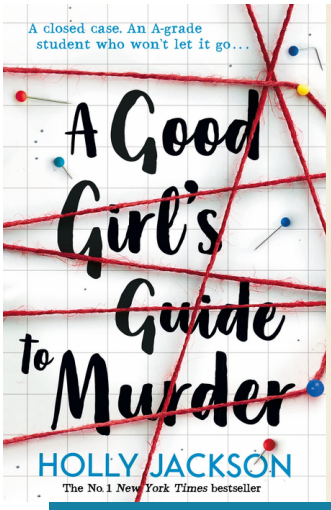
The Disappearing Beach

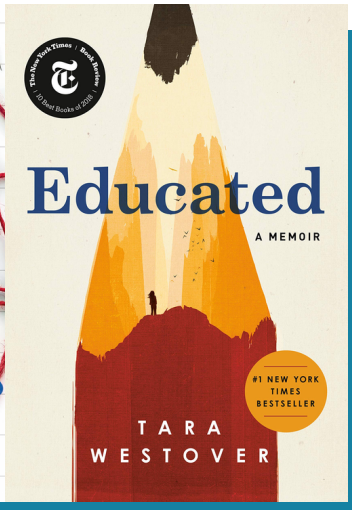
The disappearing Dooagh Beach is situated on Achill Island in County Mayo off the west coast of Ireland. Boasting a population of 2,569 (2011), it is Ireland's biggest island with a bridge connecting it to the mainland. During the spring of 2017, residents were shocked to see sandy shores return to the area, covering the pebbles and stones that had replaced the sand for over three decades, since its disappearance in 1984. Following stormy weather in January 2019, the hundreds of thousands of tonnes of sand, which had been deposited on the shoreline, disappeared again. The storm washed away the 200 metres of sand and replaced it once more with large rocks and boulders. The reappearance of the beach in 2017 caused a spike in tourism with visitor numbers 70% higher, 'busloads' of guests from China and TV crews from across the globe. With 79 extra jobs created in the surrounding area, locals and tourists alike were disheartened to find out that the beach had vanished once again.

Although it may seem magical, there's nothing extraordinary about Achill's disappearing shorelines. Changing coastlines are not uncommon, especially since the island juts out into the Atlantic Ocean. Exposed to the ocean's worst south-westerly winds and giant waves, Achill's coastline is often stirred up from both below and above sea level with drifts that go in both directions, on to the shore and out into the ocean. Strong currents carry sand and pebbles far offshore especially if there happens to be a lack of seaweed to help prevent such natural movement; the sand and pebbles wait offshore for the next freak weather pattern to bring them back to their empty beach. If all these factors combine, which is what happened at Dooagh in 1984, a beach can suddenly disappear.

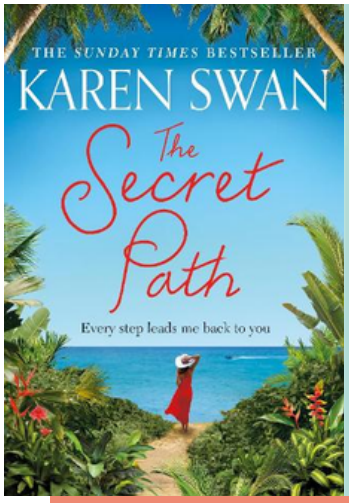
Olivia Y12

Editors' Recommended Reads





Livia



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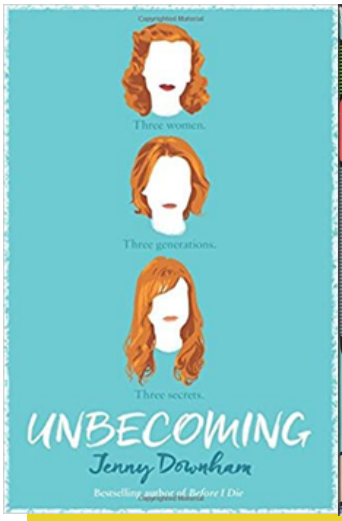

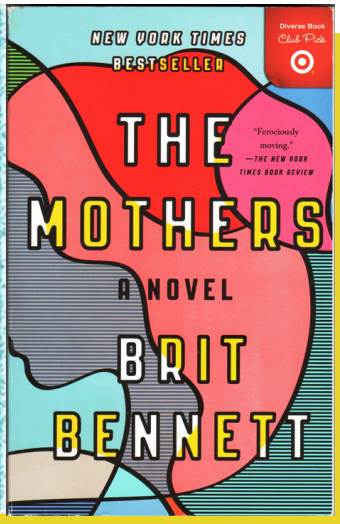

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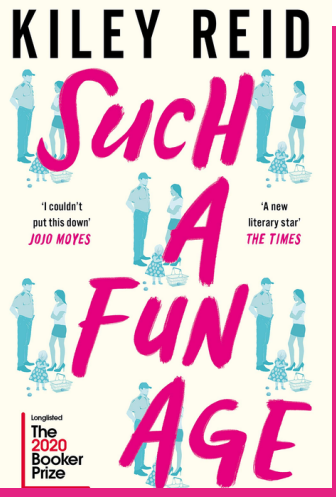

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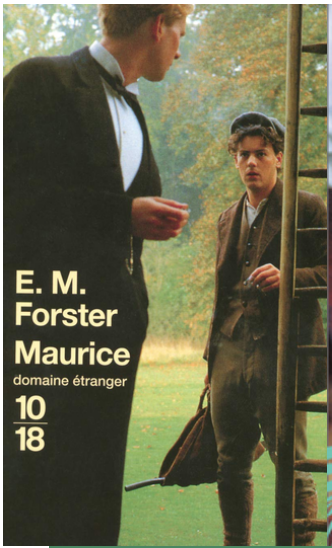
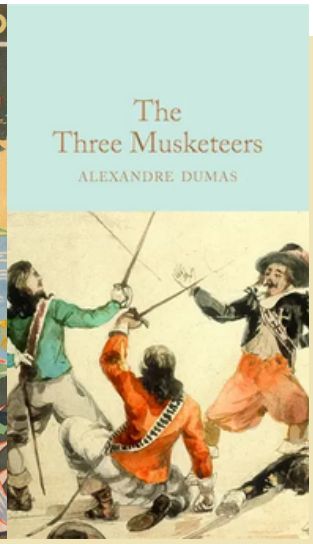


Sasha

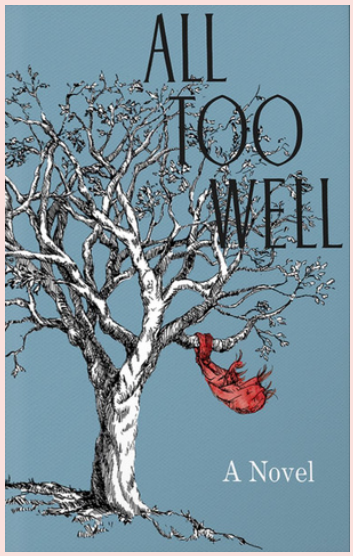


Madeleine

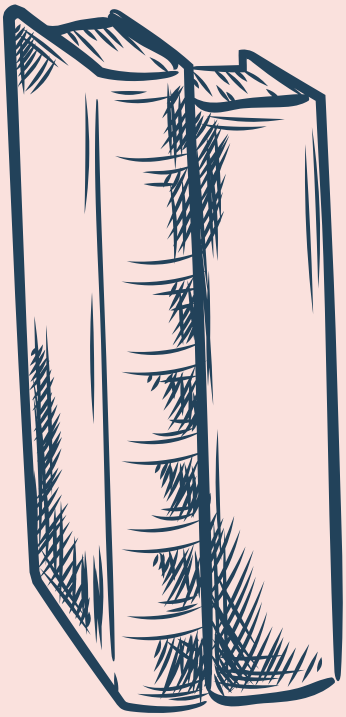
Why I think Taylor Swift would take English Literature A Level

Taylor Swift has recorded nine original albums; won over 50 awards and is said to be the music industry itself. She is a talented singer but, as she has said herself, it is her lyrics that have become her niche. As an avid listener to Taylor Swift and a fan of English Literature, I think that she would have taken the subject if she had done A levels. Her lyrics are what many writers struggle to emulate in the music and literary industry as they have more complexity and thought to them than most. To serve as proof for this I have selected a few lyrics Taylor Swift has written.

'Did the twin flame bruise paint you blue?'- All Too Well 2021 edition.



A twin flame is a singular person that has an extreme spiritual connection with you. It is when your 'energetic cloth grows so big with love' that it splits in two. While you carry one half of that energy, your twin flame carries the other. The fact that Swift thought her ex-lover *Gyllenhaal* was her twin flame and everything then went downhill, it makes sense that her heartbreak described as a 'bruise'. She felt she had been physically pushed away and injured by his abandonment. Furthermore, Taylor also calls to her past lover to ask if he too was hurt and made blue because they are both so interconnected.



'I was so ahead of the curve; the curve became a sphere. Fell behind all my classmates and I ended up here.' - This Is Me Trying.

This line is a metaphor of a curve-something which has a perceivable ending-becoming a sphere, which is limitless. In her documentary, 'Miss Americana', she talks about how she constantly changes her appearance and style of music to meet the expectations of the media. She was so ahead of the curve and was a mover and shaker, winning two Grammys for album of the year. Things then changed, they stopped being two-dimensional and transformed into three, linking to the sphere. She is acknowledging that rather than continuing to be the powerful leader, she was unable to keep up. The entire world changed and left her behind. This is Taylor trying, experimenting in a new genre again; stepping away from pop which has not served her well during her last two 'eras'. She could also be talking about the way she has revisited her old songs in a spherical manner through re-recording them to fully own them, while also making subtle and powerful changes.

'I hope she'll be your beautiful fool... the green light of forgiveness.' - Happiness.

Swift refers to 'The Great Gatsby' in this song and paraphrases one of Daisy's famous lines: 'I hope she'll be a fool- that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.' Here she suggests that it would be better to be a fool than to confront the harmful realities about the world. The 'green light' could not only be alluding to a signal to show Taylor forgives the person 'Happiness'was written about, but by continuing this reference to 'The Great Gatsby'. The green light at the end of Daisy's dock represents Gatsby's yearning for Daisy, a signal that's always just out of reach.

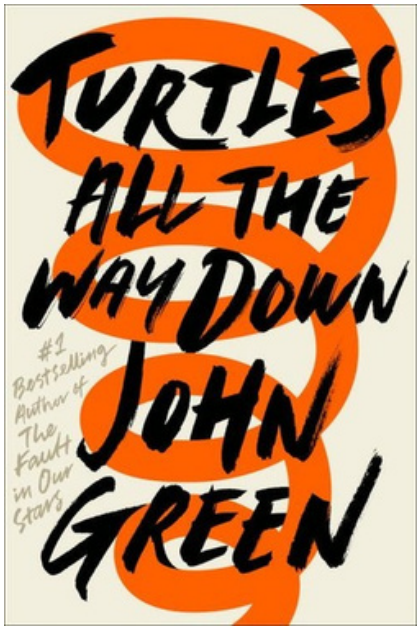
'I'm a mirror ball. I'll show you every version of yourself tonight. I'll get you out on the floor, shimmering, beautiful. And when I break it's in a million pieces.' - Mirrorball.

This extended metaphor refers to multiple qualities of a disco balland therefore mirrors traits that Taylor has. A disco ball is always at the centre of the stage, shining above everything else; but it can also be simply a round object in which we can see ourselves reflected. For Swift's fans, Taylor is their disco ball, she is at the centre of their lives. As well as this, she relates the amount of breakable glass on a mirror ball to being emotionally fragile.

These lyrics showcase Taylor Swift's poetic and technical abilities and while showing her love of English literature itself, due to the references of books in her lyrics. She also references Romeo and Juliet and other literary works in different songs. As well as this, she finds creative ways to link her songs together. Therefore, due to her extraordinary writing capabilities and hobby of reading, I believe Taylor Swift would take English literature A level; I also think she could achieve an A*!

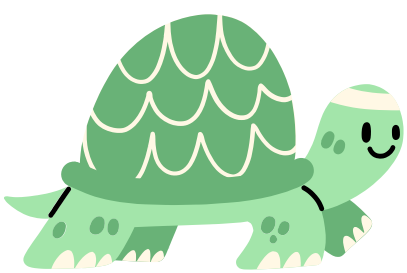
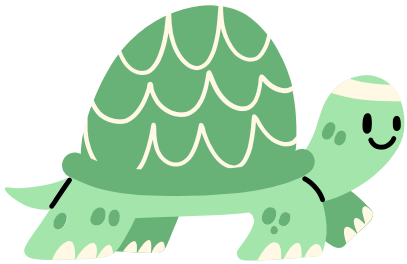
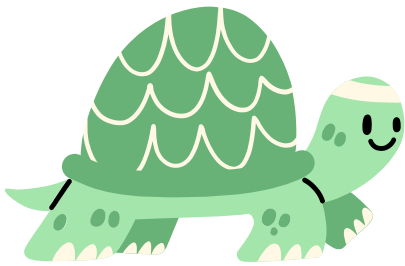
Natasha Y10

‘Turtles All The Way Down’ by John Green



I found myself up far too late during the Christmas holidays, utterly immersed in this book. I definitely want to recommend this to all the other students at school however I think the age at which you are most able to both enjoy and grasp the meaning of this book is Years 8 to 11, or 12-16. Although the language used in the book is quite simple, some of the concepts around mental health are complex and better suited for slightly more mature audiences.

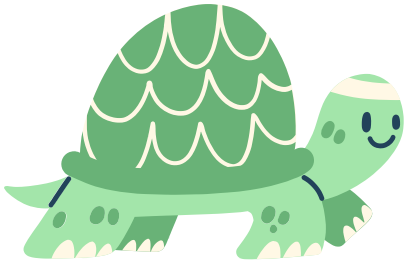
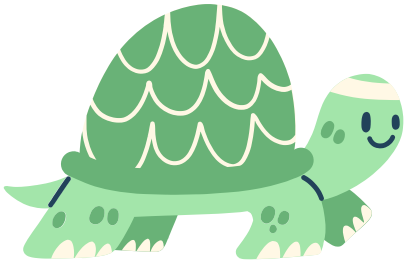
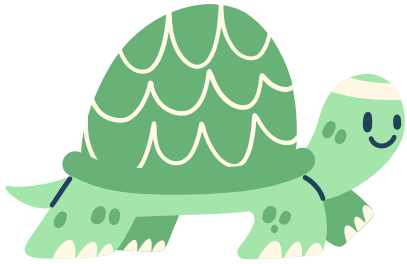
Aza, the protagonist, is a 16 year old living in Indianapolis, who narrates the story from her own perspective. She and her loyal best friend (because it couldn’t be a John Green book without a loyal best friend of course!) try to unpick the mystery surrounding the disappearance of enigmatic billionaire Russell Picket who also happens to be the father of one of Aza’s old friends.

The many comical elements of this story, not even mentioning the soon-to-be-billionaire tuatara (a type of dragon-like reptile), provide light relief to the deeper mental conflicts that Aza is shown to be battling with. Aza narrates the story from her own perspective, which truly enables the reader to understand her spiralling thoughts and gain a deeper connection with the challenges she faces.

'Turtles All The Way Down' manages to be immensely moving even though, for much of the book, the tone remains light and humorous.

Millie Y10

A Series of Relatively Unfortunate Characterisations

A Series of Unfortunate Events is a book series written by Daniel Handler under the pen name 'Lemony Snicket', which has been adapted into a Netflix show, and nothing else of note. We follow the lives of the Baudelaire children - Violet, Klaus, and Sunny, - whose parents died in a terrible fire, and watch their attempts to escape the theatrically 'villainous' Count Olaf and his many schemes to steal their fortune. We also join them in uncovering the mysteries surrounding their parents' untimely death, and the secret organisation that seems to be involved. Both the book series and Netflix adaptation share a key theme of uncertainty; this is seen in the anachronistic setting and costuming, the many mysteries and unanswered questions, and the fluctuating nature of characters' moralities. Another example of this can be seen in the unspecified sexual orientations of the characters. Daniel Handler keeps all attraction quite vague, occasionally mentioning a character's orientation offhandedly or in a way that is unspecific. This can be seen in the lengthy letter, saying, 'I will love you if you marry someone else... anyone Z through A (referring to the initials of everyone she could love), even R. Although sadly I believe it will be quite some time before two women can be allowed to marry.' Daniel Handler claims to include this since he 'grew up in an environment of queerness of every stripe, and (he'd) like to believe (that his) work reflects such a world,' keeping the 'preferences of many of (his) characters non-explicit, as they aren't in real life.'

Handler's positive attitude towards queer representation is relayed in his work, and my favourite example of this is the relationship of Charles and Sir, the owners of a lumber mill. A Series of Unfortunate Events generates quite a lot of humour surrounding English grammar and common phrases, dedicating entire sequences to the difference between the words 'literally' and 'figuratively'. When we first meet the couple in 'The Miserable Mill', a comment from Sir on the relationship between the two men causes Klaus to ask, 'Doesn't "partner" mean "equal"?', to which the narrator monologues, 'Well in fact "partners" can mean several things. It could mean "two people who own a lumber mill together or a cupcakery" (or) now, with the advance of many progressive cultural movements- not to mention certain High Court rulings, it could also mean... "I do all the work he irons my clothes",' implying that they are not partners in a business sense but in a romantic sense. They're gay. Throughout the episodes/chapters, there is a running gag of the misunderstandings surrounding the nature of the couple's relationship, but they're very sweet together. In the book series they are last seen bickering over their business whilst holding hands 'in order not to lose each other', they were 'partners to the very end' – aline that destroys me every time.

Throughout the book, Daniel Handler, as promised, handles queerness rather well, except for one gut wrenching instance. 'Henchperson of Indeterminate Gender' is a member of Count Olaf's acting troupe, essentially functioning as a supervillain's goon. When they are first introduced, they are described as 'neither a man nor a woman' (the intended implication is that they are non-binary) and throughout the books they are dehumanised and mocked for this very trait. Our perfect protagonists find their ambiguity a point of terror, as seen when Violet was frightened because 'you couldn't tell whether this person was a man or a woman', or when they refer to them as 'the creature' and 'it'. Throughout the books, Henchperson does not talk and at one moment holds Klaus in their teeth like an animal. It's very uncomfortable to read.

The Netflix series took a very different approach, thankfully, treating Henchperson as a human, rather than a gender-less monster. From our first glimpse of them we gain a sense of their civilisation, expressing politeness and empathy to the Baudelaires and suggesting that the troupe 'wait patiently' for food. They are further distanced from the characterisation of the book's beastly villain through their humanity, they are defined by morality which causes them to stand out from the other 'villains'. Their philosophical tendencies are initially established in the first episode, when they make a little speech on the patriarchal nature of marriage, in which they use words such as 'juggernaut', and 'hegemonic', which even Google struggles to coherently explain. They later act to undermine gender-normative moments, and in any opportunity will dress femininely, consistently going under the alias 'NurseLukefont' (this also happens in the books but is handled more appropriately in the show.) The series also improves attitudes towards our favourite Henchperson - because what message does it send to have bigoted main characters? A character known as the 'hook handed man', comments, 'We don't care what your name is or what gender you are' and later announces, 'Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, adolescents of all genders'. Many other comments like these are sprinkled throughout the series.

Although there is something off about the only non-binary character and the most supportive individual being villain adjacent, I would still consider it an improvement from the book, and I wouldn't say it detracts too much from how genuinely nice these moments are. Henchperson's arc in the show begins to conclude with a slight existential crisis, as they state in their classic monotone voice, 'I'm starting to question my life choices and frankly so should you'. They pose many other complex questions which are far too long to include before they decide to abandon their life of villainy. In fact, the show gives them a happy ending, meaning they are intended to be viewed as we thought, misguided yet ultimately good.

Despite the disappointments that can be found in the book, it is best not to dwell on them, instead focusing on the positive representation that can be found and other important matters. I still think it is important to discuss the disappointing depiction of the book's Henchperson, in order to truly appreciate how wonderful that aspect of the show is, and how necessary and easy positive non-binary representation can and should be. The show has invested so much effort into the backgrounds and adapting the source materials truthfully, and in a way that still reflects Daniel Handler's intentions, especially regarding Henchperson. Handler has publicly stated that he would want his work to positively represent people and reflect the world's diversity. It still is unfortunate that his book contained such an awful caricature, but it is a series from the 90s, so it is far from surprising (but still far from okay). The show is just a fun time, and I would recommend that you watch it. Overall, the most important thing to take away from this article, other than how truly wonderful the series is, would be the word 'juggernaut'. Just the word itself.

Eléa Y10

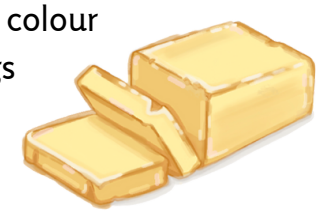
Triple Chocolate Cookies with Lotus

Ingredients

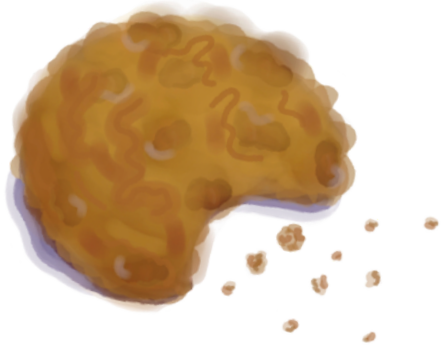
115g butter
200g brown sugar
2 eggs
200g plain flour
1tsp vanilla extract
1/2 tsp baking powder
generous pinch of salt
50g dark chocolate (a bar, chopped up, or chocolate chips)
50g milk chocolate
50g white chocolate
1 jar of lotus spread

Instructions

1. Melt butter in saucepan and cook until it foams and turns dark in colour
2. Combine the browned butter with the sugar, vanilla and eggs
3. Mix until well combined
4. Stir in the flour, salt and baking powder
5. Stir the chocolate into dough
6. I always weigh out my cookies to around 45g each (but that is totally unnecessary!) and place them onto a tray lined with baking parchment
7. Flatten out the cookie dough and place a teaspoon of lotus spread into the middle of it and wrap the dough around the spread
8. Then place them onto a tray lined with baking parchment
9. If you're prepared to be patient, I would highly recommend placing the tray of cookie dough into the fridge overnight as it will make the cookies taste much better
10. If not then just pop them into an oven preheated to 170 fan and cook them for 12-15 minutes
11. Serve them warm from the oven with a delicious hot drink!



Livia Y12



Editors' Recommended Songs

PENGUIN PLAYLIST

Lemon to a Knife Fight

0:50 -2:34