



QM Library Newsletter

Issue 5, April 2022 (edited by Sam, Year 12)

IN DEPTH

AFTER THE FIRE

by Will Hill

After the Fire, written by Will Hill, is a phenomenal book. It's a book about a mysterious and ominous cult that's wrapped in secrecy and separate from the world but most importantly, at its very heart is exploitation and evil. To the outsider, we all think that this world is entirely fictional and ridiculous, but to the people inside the cult, whether they wanted to be there or not, we learn that this is "fictional" world is their life and everything they know and understand.

We learn about this world through the protagonist, Moonbeam but at the same time, she's also going through her recovery after being rescued from this so-called sanctuary. Hill brilliantly executes this by constantly flipping between Moonbeam's recovery after the fire and her life in the cult, before the fire, which sounds frustrating and annoying, and you'd be right. However, this is a good type of frustration, the type that makes the tension skyrocket and make you want to read more.

A book about a cult may not seem like your type, but it is so much more than that. It explores so many topics and themes and at its very basis, it's about a heroine fighting an evil God, if that suits your fancy. Read After the Fire, you won't regret it.

Taysir (Year 9)

PEARLS OF WISDOM

from **ANNE OF GREEN GABLES**
by L.M. Montgomery

Isn't it nice to think that tomorrow is a new day with no mistakes in it yet?

from **BEOWULF**
by Anonymous

Gæð a wyrd swa hio scel! (trans: fate goes where she must)

QUICK REVIEWS

EVERYONE YOU HATE IS GOING TO DIE

by Daniel Sloss

Everyone You Hate Is Going to Die is Daniel Sloss's look at life, death, and everything in between, as he offers his musings on love, family, and mental illness. Few books can be described as genuinely laugh-out-loud funny, especially ones which deal with such existential subjects, but Sloss's rather indelicate way of covering these issues, as he does in his other work, makes this book both hilarious and deeply significant; it's no exaggeration to say that my worldview was shaped in part by reading this book, and reflecting upon the compelling arguments that lie beneath the humour.

William (Year 10)

SKYWAKE INVASION

by Jamie Russell

Personally, one of my favourite books from the reading challenge. It's about a girl called Casey who is great at this new game called Skywake. However, when she goes to a tournament in London, she discovers who is really behind the creation of the game. It's a great read, packed with excitement!

Aman (Year 8)

WHAT'S ON?

There are book clubs for the following years:

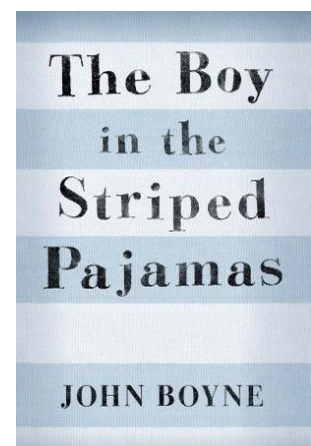
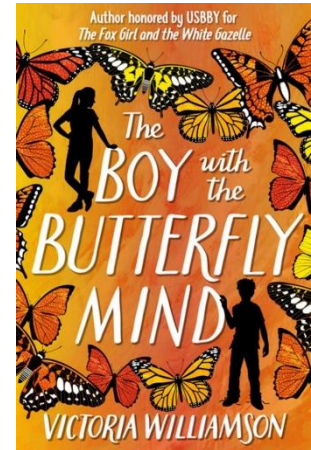
Year 7: Thursday, 13:30, Q3
Year 8: Monday, 13:30, M3
Year 9: Wednesday, 13:30, Q3

Script-reading groups are running:

KS3: Monday, 13:00, M1
KS4/5: Friday, 13:30, Q3

Students in Years 10 to 12 are also welcome to solve language puzzles in M2 each Monday at 13:15.

JUDGING BY COVERS...



April 2022

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

MACBETH

at the Globe Theatre, London

'Warm' is how one student described standing in the yard of the Globe Theatre. The English Department's recent trip to see *Macbeth* in London enjoyed the good weather of an almost proverbially dry March, but the disc of blue sky that stretched a roof above the heads of thirty Year 10 students and assembled staff was only part of the reason for the 'warm' feeling.

The Globe is a reconstruction of an Early Modern playhouse of the kind for which Shakespeare would have written. Twenty-sided, three storeyed, and built out of oak, it embraces its audience and stage in a way that few theatres can. The sun floods through its open roof and yet the thick walls muffle sounds from the river and the city that are only metres away. The imagination, not logic, rules there: wooden pillars are painted to look like Italian marble, doors give the misleading impression of being panelled, a false sky is painted over the stage in bold rivalry with the real heavens overhead. You play *let's pretend* there; you play along with the play there.

The Globe's stage is thrust and the spectators surround it, meaning that the gap that the modern proscenium arch maintains between audience and action effortlessly dissolves in a way that no amount of 'participation' at the Birmingham Rep or another conventional theatre could manage. Exciting things happen in the collective act of make-believe that follows.

While it was unfortunate that two lead roles (Lady Macbeth and King Duncan) had to be read by understudies due to illness, even the experienced eyes of staff were forced to look again at this familiar play. The banquet scene, for example, in which Macbeth is haunted by the ghost of the best friend he betrayed, unexpectedly became an uneasy mix of comedy and terror thanks to an unexpected scream. And the Porter was transformed into the fool from *King Lear*, terrified of the castle doors that are described as hell's gate.

Particularly noteworthy was the Globe's use of dance, sound effects and music. In act one, a jig added much needed relief from tension and cleverly represented the banquet the ill-fated King Duncan attends. And throughout the play, the back of the stage (an area known as the 'discovery space') was draped in grey sheets of metal that muted the colours of the performance and that, when struck, filled the auditorium with the sound of storms.

The behaviour of the students on the return to school was a testament to the power of live theatre. Despite a long day and an early start, they had the energy to sing every song in their memories.

STAFF REVIEWS (KS3)

THE HOBBIT

by J.R.R. Tolkien

'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.' I was 10 years old when I first read that immortal opening line. I remember there being a battered paperback on my step-dad's bookshelf, a golden dragon shining on its cover. The self-same copy still lives, permanently borrowed, on my own shelf.

Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit with a comfortable life of food, friends and no foolishness. One day, Gandalf the wizard sends Bilbo on an adventure with a group of dwarves to retrieve their treasure from the dragon, Smaug. At first, Bilbo is not pleased by this turn of events and wishes to only to be home but, along the way he experiences a great many adventures, including being cooked for a troll's tea, a fight with giant spiders and a daring escape from the palace of the elf-king.

I recently decided to re-read *The Hobbit* and was immediately reminded why it had captured my imagination when I was younger. By the end of the first page, I was transported to the warmth and comfort of Bilbo Baggins' hobbit hole and by the time Bilbo left his house (without a pocket handkerchief) to go adventuring with the dwarves, there was nothing I could think of doing but continuing to read. In fact, I might go and start it again.

Mr Mackenzie (English)

STAFF REVIEWS (KS4)

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR

by George Orwell



Mr Sepede (Physics)

STAFF REVIEWS (KS5)

THE HEART OF THE ATLANTIC

by Ernest Shackleton

The School recently received first edition copies of Ernest Shackleton's diaries, charting the British Antarctic Expedition of 1907-9. Sailing from New Zealand, the expedition was aiming to be the first team of men to reach the South Pole.

It was an absolute privilege to read volume one of the diaries, charting in minute detail the preparation for the expedition and the difficulties they faced once in the world's most southerly and inhospitable continent.

Reading a book that was over 100 years old was a multi-sensory experience and I was fascinated by the detail that Shackleton went into to describe the day-to-day life on the expedition.

The team ultimately failed in its attempt to reach the South Pole, but the endurance of the men was inspirational. It set the standard for human endurance in extreme environments and made Shackleton a household name.

Mr Langton (Headmaster)

SAPIENS

by Yuval Noah Harari

An interesting book that challenges your preconceptions about society and our origins. I didn't agree with all of the points made by the book but it has changed my perception of human behaviour.

Mr Brown (Assistant Head)