



QUEENS' SCHOOL
Dare to Write

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER MARCH 2024:

A WONDERFUL WORLD BOOK DAY



World Book Day remains a very special day of celebration at Queens' and this March 7th was no different. We ran a whole range of events to get students enthused with all things related to reading. Ms Jacobs created a Mad Hatter's Luncheon tea party for our top readers in Year 7; Miss Grimston ran a form quiz competition; Mrs Greatrex and Ms Goetsch have run a special library book café throughout the month of March giving students an opportunity to taste a range of books in a whole plethora of exciting genres. However, perhaps most thrilling of all were the English department and library's endeavours to impress their

students with their wild and wacky World Book Day costumes. Can you guess the literary characters? It was a fantastic day celebrating all things linked to the brilliant world of books.

A BRILLIANT TRIP TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM

On March 12th, we were lucky enough to make our very first GCSE Classics trip organised by Ms Jacobs and accompanied by Miss Wood and the inaugural group of wonderful students. We had a fascinating lecture about the Parthenon marbles and Panathenaic frieze which are all artefacts we study as part of the fascinating Classics course. We also had the opportunity to see the astounding Bassae Frieze as well as an array of other classic artefacts. It really was an eye-opening and enthralling trip with hopefully many more such excursions to come.



A REAL AUTHOR!:

On February 29th, we were also fortunate enough to be visited by the charismatic and inspiring author Sarah Hagger-Holt. She not only ran an excellent workshop with a group of Year 8 students but followed this with a superb assembly to Year 7 about how to become a writer and what inspired her own works. It was a great day for all our budding Key Stage 3 writers, and we are very grateful for the support and funding of the QPA in helping us put on this important event.



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Daring to be *Great* by pursuing our values of Scholarship, Tenacity, Altruism and Respect



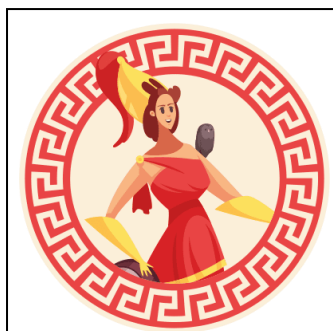
YEAR 9 OPTIONS EVENING:

The 12th of March also saw the department in full force at Year 9 options evening explaining to our budding GCSE students what a GCSE in Classical Civilisation involves. We had a huge amount of interest and there are clearly some real ancient historians and mythological experts in our current Year 9. If you would like to find out more about the GCSE Classical Civilisation course, please speak to Miss Wood or visit our website:

<https://sites.google.com/queens.herts.sch.uk/classical-civilisation-gcse/home>



VOCABULOUS:



Vocabulous continues to be hugely popular and successful with our Year 7 students. The aim of the programme is to help students recognise root words and understand morphology so they are then able to work out more complex vocabulary based on this essential knowledge independently. Every Year 7 pupil has access to the programme. Well done to 7TC for being our top performing form so far!

YEAR 10 AND 11 MOCK EXAMS

This term has also been incredibly busy with both Year 10 and Year 11 mocks. Teachers and students have worked immensely hard to prepare for and mark these papers to ensure that students achieve the very best results possible and receive high quality, personalised feedback. We now have a whole series of Loom revision videos available for students to watch on every element of the course that they can access from their google classrooms. Please encourage students to use these as much as possible in the run up to those final GCSE exams.

NEXT HALF-TERM?

We will be running more online revision sessions on a Tuesday from 4pm for Year 11 students to help them prepare for their final exams. We also can't wait for our trip to 'Hadestown'!

WHAT SHALL I READ?

Every month, the English department offer a Key Stage 3 and adult recommended read of the month. You will find our recommendations for March below. If you would like to find regular recommendations, then follow us on twitter: English@Queens'. You can also find further book recommendations on the Queens' School website:

<https://www.queens.herts.sch.uk/students/lrc/reading-lists/>



MARCH RECOMMENDED READ – YOUNG ADULT

'GLOBAL'

Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin

This is my first ever graphic novel, and I loved it! Beautifully illustrated and told with subtlety and sensitivity, Colfer, Donkin and Rigano have created a fantastically moving and evocative work of fiction. It addresses the poignant issue of global warming considering its impact on communities, individuals, and the natural world.

The novel has a dual narrative: the first is set in Nova Scotia, Canada where the effect of the melting icecaps is so acutely felt by people and animals alike. However, when a bear comes close to the village, Yuki, is determined to prevent it from being shot by proving it is a protected species – the grolar bear (a terrifying cross between a grizzly and polar bear created by climate change – an amazing fact that I had no idea existed)! Setting out with her faithful friend, the husky Lockjaw, Yuki quickly finds herself in trouble in the ever-changing tundra.

The second story is set in the Bay of Bengal in a small fishing village. However, here too, despite the very different landscape, the effects of climate change are acutely felt as cyclones and changing weather patterns batter the coastline and threaten the family's lives and livelihoods.

Told in wonderfully, colourful illustrations, this is a novel that both humanises and globalises the impact of climate change making it comprehensible and emotionally engaging for readers of all ages. I will definitely be reading more graphic novels in the future so watch this space!



MARCH RECOMMENDED READ – ADULT

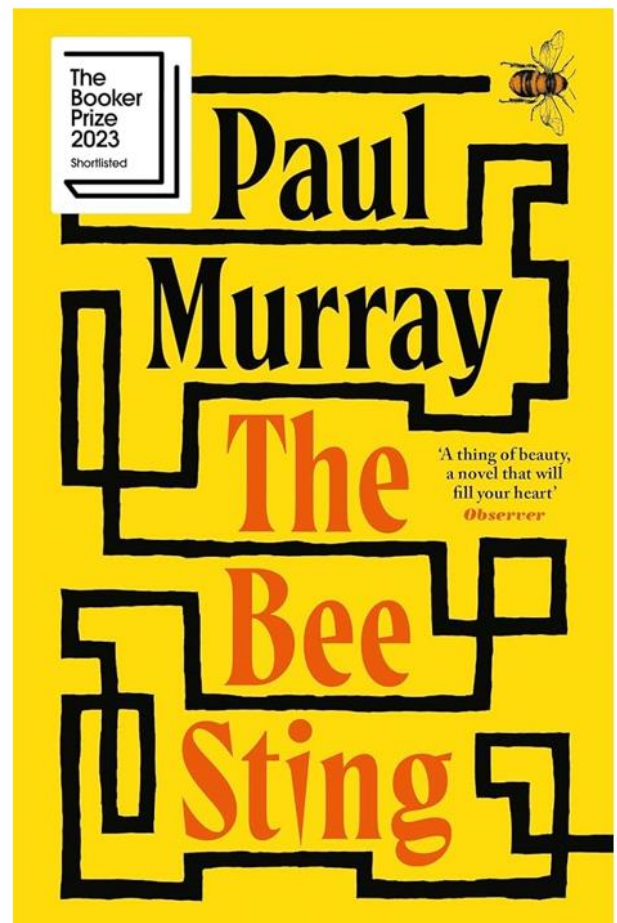
'THE BEE STING'

Paul Murray

Shortlisted for the 2023 Booker Prize, 'The Bee Sting' is a tour de force exploring the painful nature of family and the damaging weight of history. Ostensibly, the Barnes family are an affluent and ideal family living in their house on the hill and presiding over a successful business empire. However, the financial crash of the late noughties quickly begins to expose the dysfunction and grief that quivers beneath their veneer of respectability.

Murray simultaneously charts the painful demise of the family as well as the fateful events that led to the impasse in which they now find themselves. Told from the perspective of each of the main protagonists, the reader is given a unique insight into their understanding of the family's collapse often revealing both the trauma that lies within and the way we construct stories to assuage, explain and justify our decisions whilst maintaining a visage, like Imelda's symbolic wedding veil, to hide the truth.

Told with a propulsive sense of tragic inevitability, the novel is at once a thriller, family saga and psychological study rolled into one. Murray's clever use of flashbacks slowly expose the truth of each of his characters stripping them back to their origins to reveal how the enormity of their collapse is possible. Cleverly structured, and compulsively readable despite its 600+ pages, this is a unique evocation of a family slowly destroyed in a mirror of the landscape around them. It is a novel about the secrets and lies we tell ourselves and others that ultimately concludes in one of the most shocking ways imaginable.



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