



QUEENS' SCHOOL
Dare to Write

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2023:

A FABULOUS NIGHT AT THE GLOBE:



On the 12th of October, the English Department took Year 11 to see 'Macbeth' at the Globe. It was a fantastic evening giving students the opportunity to see the play that we study for GCSE live. There is nothing quite like a Globe production on an autumn evening and this was especially exceptional with its unique portrayal of the witches and their 'supernatural soliciting.' A thoroughly enjoyable experience was had by all. A huge thank you to Ms Jacobs for organising yet another successful trip.

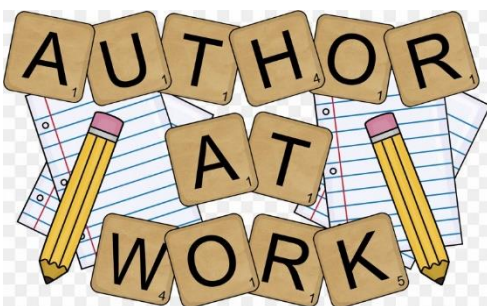
BOOK REVIEWS AND CLUB:

September saw the re-launch of the English Department's book review competition. This year the competition will be both inter-form and inter-house. Just as last year, there will be exciting prizes for the most reviews submitted by each form in Years 7, 8 and 9 and a prize for the individual who submits the most impressive reviews. We are incredibly excited to see which house will come out as our first group of champion readers. Congratulations to 7SN for being the top form so far!



If you are interested in reading or talking about books, Mrs Hodgson will be running a Tuesday Book Club after school in the library for Year 7s from 3.15pm.

WRITING CLUBS:



We have also launched two new creative clubs on a Thursday after school. One for GCSE students in Year 10 and 11 in room 14 with Miss Grimston and one for Sixth Form students in room 13a with Mr Owen. This is a great opportunity to expand your creative writing skills covering a range of different forms of writing including plays, film/television scripts as well as stories in a variety of genres.



VOCABULOUS:

We are also running our Vocabulous programme again this year with Year 7. Students are encouraged to watch a range of videos to help them learn root words based on their Latin and Greek origins. Inspired by the gods, students work their way through a variety of levels to develop their ability to recognise new vocabulary from their roots. Congratulations to 7FR our top performing Year 7 form so far. Follow English@Queens' on X to see our weekly word of the week.



HOMEWORK CLUBS

If any students are struggling with home learning, they can join us at homework club in room 10 every week.

Key Stage 3: Wednesday 3pm-3.45pm

Key Stage 4: Thursday 3pm – 3.45pm

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 September and October below. If you would like to find regular recommendations, then follow us on X: English@Queens'. You can also find further book recommendations on the Queens' School website: <https://www.queens.herts.sch.uk/students/lrc/reading-lists/>



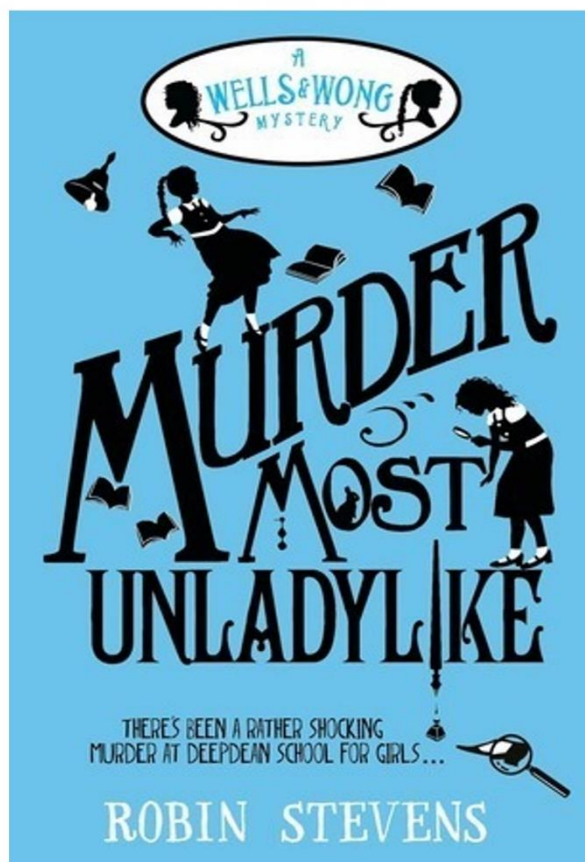
SEPTEMBER RECOMMENDED READ –YOUNG ADULT

'MURDER MOST UNLADYLIKE'

Robin Stevens

When Daisy Wells and Hazel Wong set up their very own secret detective agency at Deepdean School for Girls, they never imagine that their first case will be a murder! However, when Hazel discovers the body of Science Mistress, Miss Bell, abandoned in the gym, they are compelled to take on their first deadly case. Yet when the body then mysteriously vanishes, no one will believe them that a terrible murder has taken place and that, worst still, the murderer might still be at the school. It is therefore down to Daisy and Hazel to discover the truth about the awful assassination whilst all the time finding out more of the dark secrets of the Deepdean inhabitants. Full of colourful characters, Stevens has created two intriguing Nancy Drews in this interesting if slightly derivative narrative.

Despite the murderous plot at the heart of the novel, it is a light-hearted, fun adventure. Set in a 1930s English boarding school, the novel is a cross between 'Malory Towers', Agatha Christie and Sherlock Holmes. Combining intrepid and determined female leads compelled by an intellectual and moral curiosity to discover the truth and cleverly plotted clues that lead to the discovery of the perpetrator, Stevens has created a really engaging story full of subtle and unexpected turns. This is the first of nine novels in this hugely popular series that is appropriate for students from Year 7 onwards and available in the Queens' Library.



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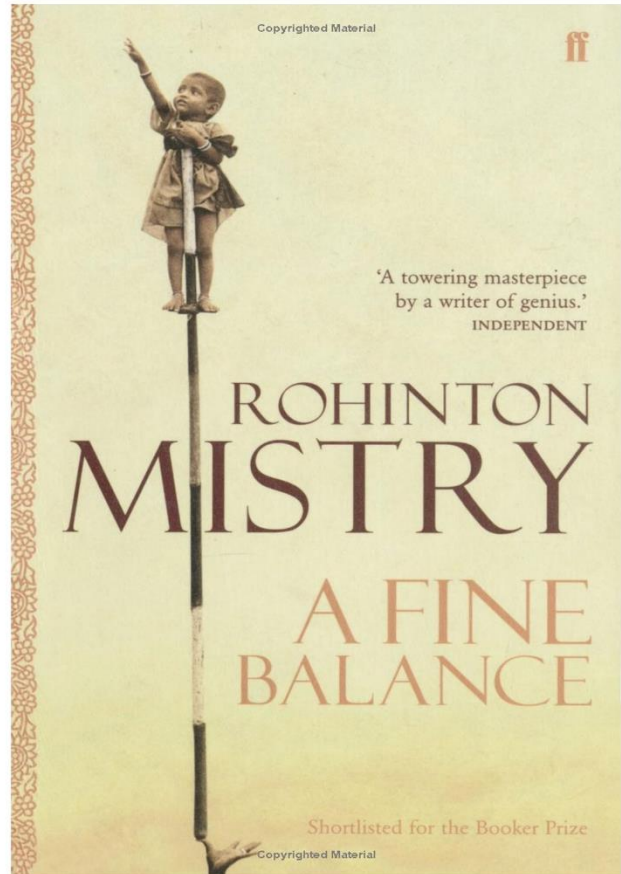
SEPTEMBER RECOMMENDED READ –YOUNG ADULT

'A FINE BALANCE'

Rohinton Mistry

Recommended as part of the Big Jubilee Read, this might be the most exceptional novel I have read all year. Set primarily in 1970s and 80s India during the tumultuous Emergency period, the narrative follows four central characters from diverse backgrounds: Dina, a woman from a wealthy family who is determined to assert her independence, Ishvar and Om Darji who are considered untouchables in their village, and Maneek Kohlah, a young student from an idyllic town in the Kashmir Valley. All four find their lives thrust together in the chaotic world of Mumbai where they struggle with their own demons and the need to survive.

Mistry has created a multitudinous cast of charismatic individuals worthy of any Dickensian novel. Full of scintillating poetic depictions that evoke the beauty of India, Mistry also viscerally conveys the horrors of poverty, corruption and abuse that dominate. Told with compassion and insight, this is not a novel for the faint hearted given the tragedies and suffering that Mistry depicts befalling even the most benevolent of individuals. More harrowing than even 'A Little Life', Mistry has created an unforgettable portrayal of the exigencies and misery of life for the most vulnerable. Nonetheless, through his characters, he offers a celebration of family, love, and friendship despite the utter hopelessness of the situations in which they find themselves. A truly brilliant epic novel!



OCTOBER RECOMMENDED READ –YOUNG ADULT

'THE CATS WE MEET ALONG THE WAY'

Nadia Mikail

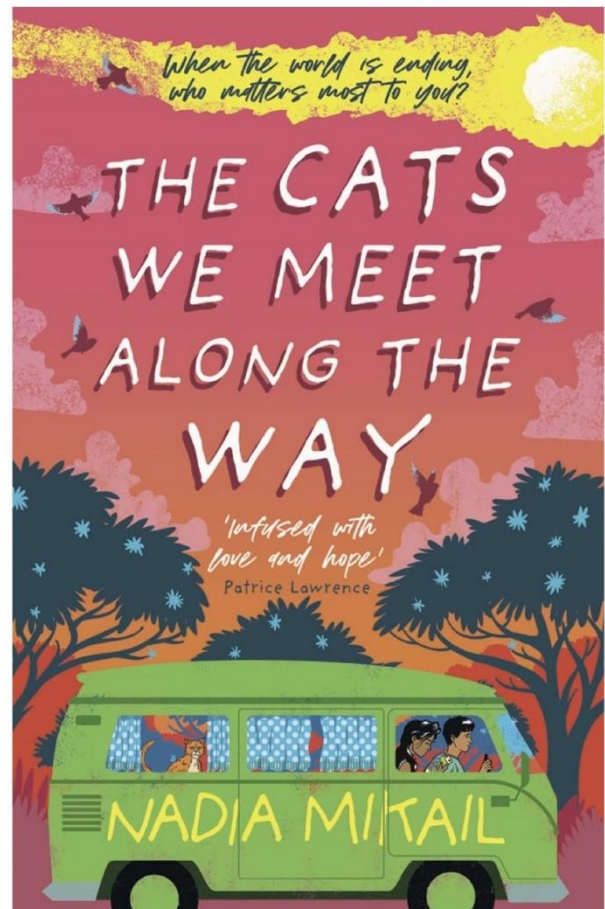
When everyone believes that the world could end, Aisha and her family decide that they must take one final road trip to find Aisha's sister, June, who left them three years earlier. Together with her boyfriend, Walter, and his parents they set off on a journey of a lifetime with the devoted Fleabag, their adopted cat.

As the makeshift family travel across their native Malaysia in search of the missing sister, they find the ability to not only revisit familiar places but also memories and the stories of the past rise up around them bringing both tears and laughter.

Mikail takes the reader on not only a literal journey, but a metaphorical one as the characters begin to discover who they are and confront their feelings of loss, abandonment, and love. However, as they journey into the past, they also discover that they can find new hope in the future and the world that may still be.

This is a unique story from a new young adult voice. It explores not only loss and trauma in a subtle way suitable for younger readers, but also the importance of family, friendship, and healing. It is novel not only full of colourful characters, but descriptive detail that brings the vibrant landscape of Malaysia to life.

A moving and original novel that many young readers will thoroughly enjoy.



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OCTOBER RECOMMENDED READ –YOUNG ADULT

‘THE QUEEN’S GAMBIT’

Walter Tevis

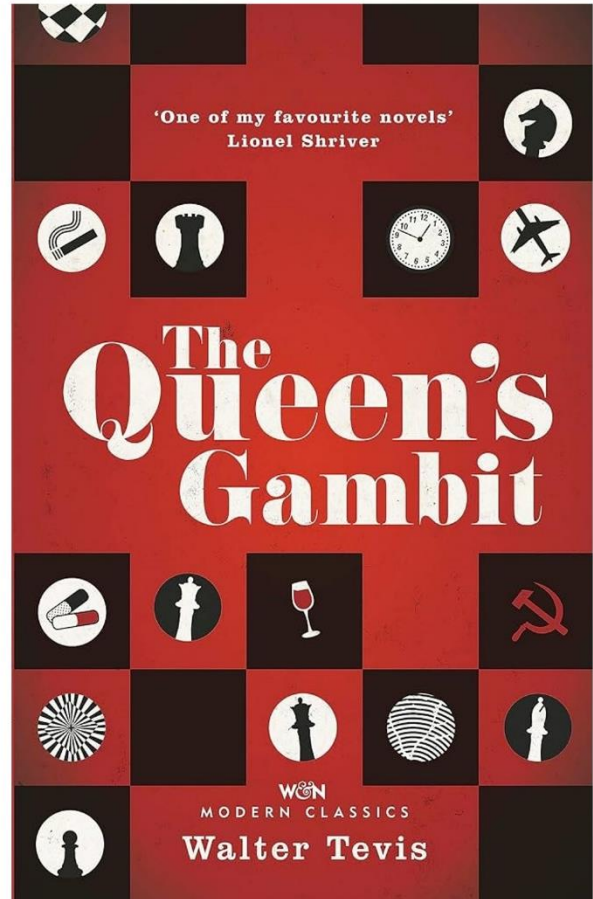
Already a well-received Netflix series, ‘The Queen’s Gambit’ offers a unique insight into the world of chess. Set in 1950s/60s America, the narrative follows Beth Harmon from abandoned orphan to brilliant chess champion.

An absolute protegee, Beth finds herself by the vagaries of life including the pressure to win and the addictions that hound her as she obsessively seeks victory against the Russian elite of the chess world. Driven by ambition and her brilliant mind, Beth is at once heroic and indomitable but flawed and haunted.

Despite its unusual subject matter, this is a novel full of vivacious characters that contains a propulsive plot. Tevis has a wonderful ability to make every chess game seem like a strategic battle of wits that completely grips the reader.

Written in 1983, ‘The Queen’s Gambit’, with its focus on a single woman battling against a male dominated world and its concern with issues surrounding mental health, is a novel that is perhaps even more relevant today than it was thirty years ago. ‘The Queen’s Gambit’ has rightly become a cult classic with its perceptive feminist overtones and insight into an exclusive world that is far from black and white in its complexity.

Whilst the TV series is incredibly faithful to the novel, I would strongly recommend this to anyone interested in resilient female characters and bildungsroman style narratives.



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