



Dare to Write

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023:

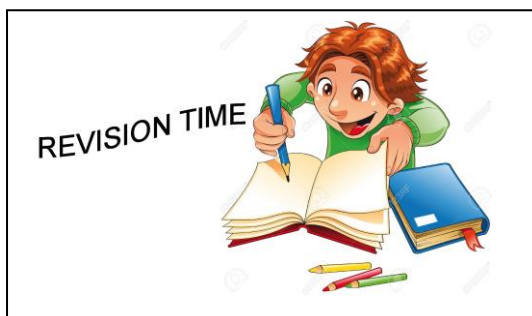
BOOK REVIEW RESULTS:

Reading is at the forefront of everything we do in the English Department and we are fortunate enough to have one of the best school libraries in the country. This term has seen hundreds of book reviews being written as part of our drive to encourage all students not only to read, but to develop a love of literature. Special congratulations go to 7SN for submitting the most book reviews as a form and to Micaela, our top Year 7 reviewer, Nikash, our top Year 8 reviewer and Lasali, our top Year 9 reviewer. Prizes and certificates will be winging their way to you all before the end of term.

If you are interested in reading or talking about books, we continue to run our Tuesday Book Club after school in the library.



YEAR 11 REVISING HARD:

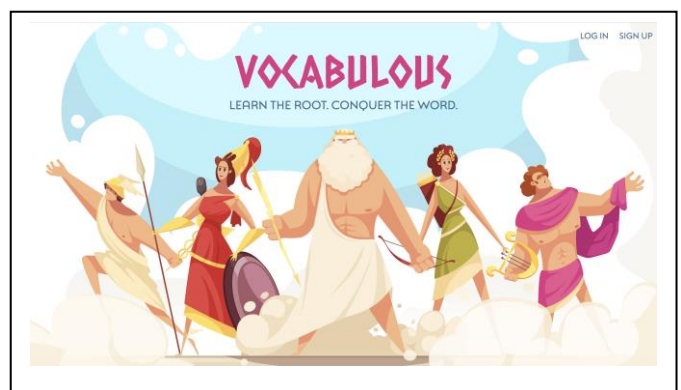


Year 11 have worked incredibly hard in the run up to their mock exams. This has not only included using the revision packs provided by the English Department together with Loom videos, but also attending six different revision sessions online that were offered. A huge thank you to all the English teachers who have run these sessions over the past few weeks.

Also, don't forget to sign up and pay for the performance and workshop of 'Macbeth' running on February 5th if you are in Year 11 as this will be vital revision for the Literature exam.

VOCABULOUS:

Our vocabulary programme also continues to be working incredibly well with some students storming through the levels and really developing their vocabulary proficiency. Particular congratulations must go to Olivia S, Hafsah and Ruby who are the top achievers so far this year and to 7AB our top performing form. Don't forget that you can continue to work up the levels over the Christmas holidays and even try some of the new words you learn on your unsuspecting relatives to see how vocabulous they are as well.



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 November and December 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/>



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**NOVEMBER RECOMMENDED
READ –YOUNG ADULT**

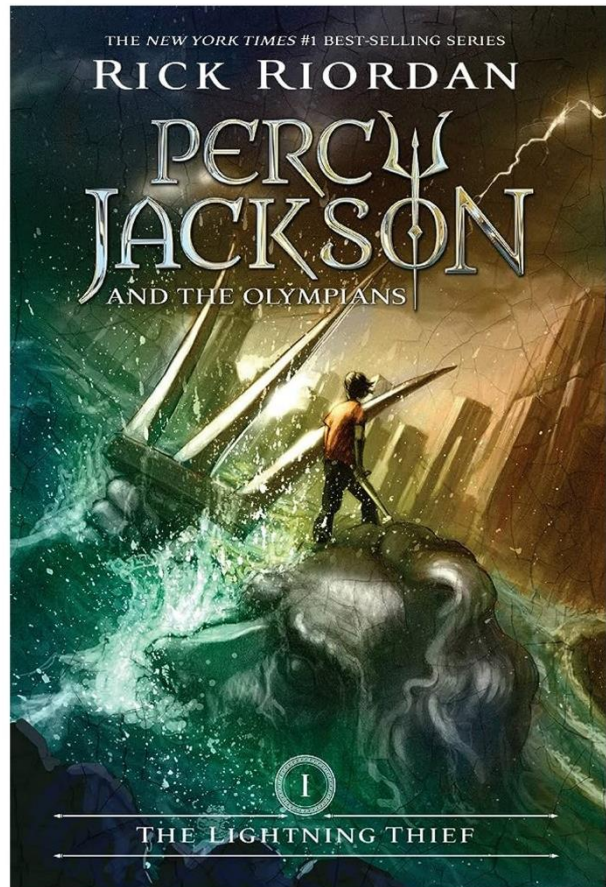
‘PERCY JACKSON AND THE LIGHTNING THIEF’

Rick Riordan

I know that I am a little late to the Percy Party, but what a party it is! This is the first in Rick Riordan’s fantastic series of seven novels that have quickly become a cult classic. Based around the epic stories of Greek mythology, the first in the series introduces us to Percy Jackson - a normal student who finds school increasingly difficult to manage. This is not only because of his dyslexia and ADHD, but because strange, unbelievable things constantly seem to happen to him: he sees things that can’t possibly be there; he overhears his friend and favourite teacher talking about his possible death; he is attacked by shadowy figures that no one else seems affected by.

Finally, his mother recognises that it is time to tell Percy the truth – he is not a mere mortal, but a demigod and the best place for him is therefore Camp Half Blood. This summer camp for young people like Percy becomes both a sanctuary and the beginning of Percy’s first terrifying quest.

This is a smashing adventure story that will especially appeal to students who enjoy Greek mythology and modern quest narratives. As Percy finds himself compelled to search out the source of the missing divine objects, he finds himself drawn into a deadly war between the gods more ancient than the Parthenon itself. However, if Percy wants to not only save his mother, but the world as he knows it, he will need to try to prevent a new war between the gods even if it means sacrificing everything he loves. A superbly compelling narrative with a brilliant cast of characters!



**NOVEMBER RECOMMENDED
READ –ADULT**

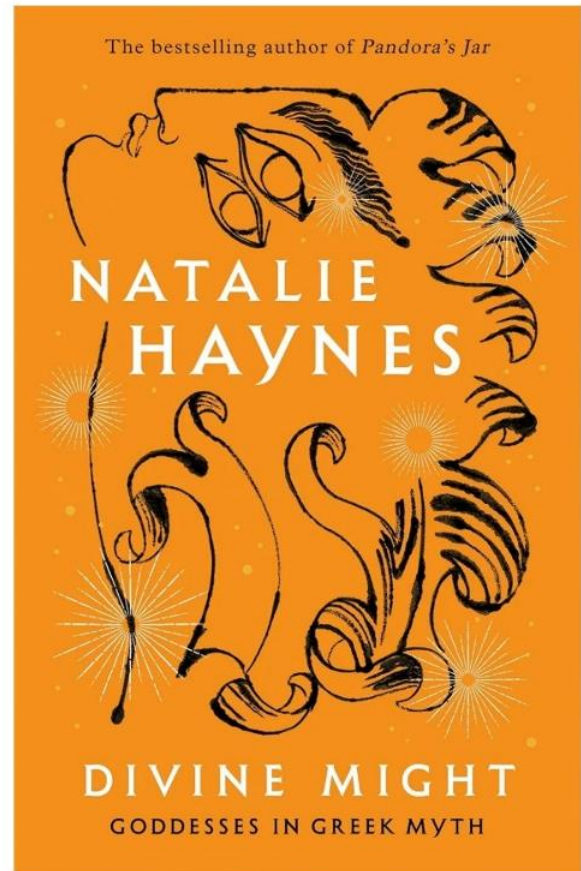
‘DIVINE MIGHT’

Natalie Haynes

Natalie Haynes is one of the greatest modern classicists specialising in bringing the worlds of Greek and Roman mythology to life. She has written several fictional re-tellings of mythological stories as diverse as Jocasta’s narrative and Medusa’s tale. In ‘Divine Might’ published only last month, Haynes does for the goddesses what she did for human female characters in ‘Pandora’s Jar.’ Taking in a panoply of female divinities from the muses to the lesser-known Hestia, Haynes draws on an eclectic range of source material from Attic vases and Ovid’s ‘Metamorphoses’ to Greek tragedy and modern film adaptations to reveal the different ways in which these divine entities have been presented.

With her trade-mark wit and incredible insight, Haynes examines the ways in which these characters have been interpreted by readers, depicted by artists and writers, and misrepresented by modern creators. In sidelining their often more dominant male counterparts, Haynes homes in on the colourful stories in which the female goddesses are involved revealing their vibrant and often terrifyingly powerful personas.

This is a superb exploration of all things related to the central female divine figures of mythology from Demeter to the Furies and perfect for anyone with a passion for the legends of antiquity. Meticulously researched and absolutely compelling in the way in which Haynes re-tells their central stories with humour and flaming colour, this is both a great introduction to the classical world and a fabulous addition to the ever-growing series of works centred around mythology.



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**DECEMBER RECOMMENDED
READ –YOUNG ADULT**

**‘LOCKWOOD & CO. THE SCREAMING STAIRCASE
Jonathan Stroud**

Set in an alternative modern England, in Stroud’s wonderfully haunting world, “the Problem” has inexplicably arisen that causes ghosts to run rampant. As adults cannot see them, they are now reliant on children and teenagers to protect them from the increasing menace posed by these spirits. Whilst most agencies are run by adults, Lockwood & Co is unique: it is headed up by the scintillating Anthony Lockwood who is determined to establish his three-man band consisting of himself, George, and Lucy, as the top agency for ridding London of ghouls, ghosts, and all things ghastly.

However, the road to success is never easy and on one of their first missions together they find themselves caught up not only in a burning building, but with a seemingly impenetrable mystery that must be solved to understand the vengeful nature of Annie Ward and put her to rest for good.

Stroud has created a fabulously engrossing and macabre world where not only do pernicious spirits that come in a range of forms threaten our intrepid adventurers, but malicious mortals prove equally dangerous. This is, in short, a really gripping adventure chock full of mystery, murder and ghostly mayhem.

Moreover, it is only the first in a series of five novels all available in the Queens’ Library. Aimed at slightly older teenagers, I am sure this will appeal to anyone from Year 8 upwards given its propulsive storyline, vivacious characters and, of course, the appeal of the linked Netflix series that many students will be aware of. Enjoy the ghost train – it’s a gripping ride!



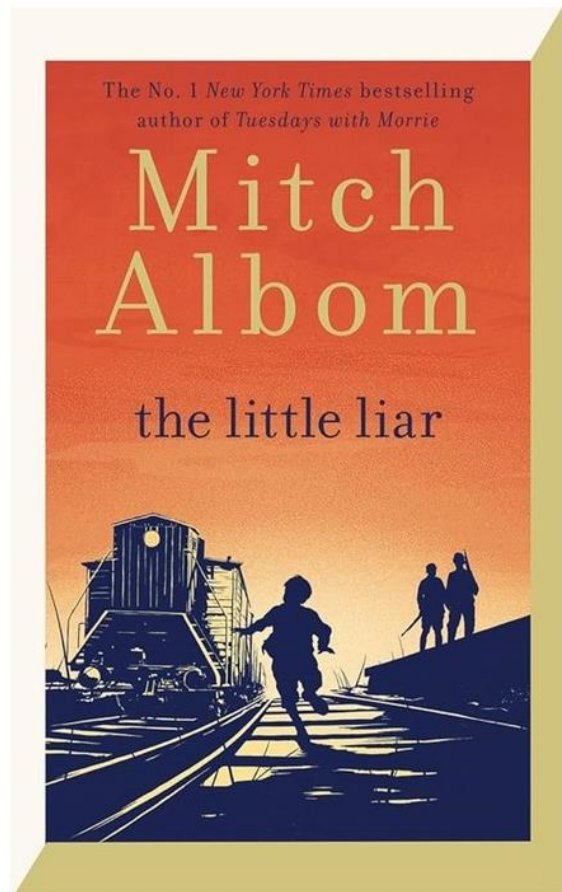
**DECEMBER RECOMMENDED
READ –ADULT**

**‘THE LITTLE LIAR’
Mitch Albom**

Published this month, Mitch Albom’s ‘The Little Liar’ is an exceptional work. Told with his trademark simplicity and compassion, Albom’s narrative follows the fates of four central characters as they navigate the horrors of the Holocaust.

Beginning in the Greek city of Salonika, the narrative centres around Nico, a young boy known for his honesty. However, when he is duped into reassuring the local community that the trains will take them to a new world of safety, his life changes forever and he remains haunted by an onerous sense of culpability that drives him to spend his life atoning for this perceived sin. Simultaneously, we follow the harrowing fortunes of those bound for Auschwitz on these death trains including the Nazi officer in charge. What follows is not only utterly horrifying but reveals in starkly painful detail the suffering and cruelty that so many individuals endured because of the Nazi regime.

Partly narrated by the allegorical figure of Truth, this is a novel that explores not merely the atrocities of an unforgettable period, but the very nature of lies – those we tell ourselves to excuse our behaviour; those we tell to survive; and those we tell to ease the pain of the past. In this way, the novel has echoes of Zusak’s ‘The Book Thief’ in its subtle exploration of human nature and the potential for decency and kindness even in the face of tremendous suffering and risk. However, Albom takes us beyond the period of WWII, adeptly exploring the psychological, social, and emotional ramifications on those who survived. In a manner that recalls Elie Wiesel’s superlative ‘Night’, this is a novel that is deeply moving but perhaps most importantly, reminds us of the need to ‘never forget’ and never allow such horrors to occur again.



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