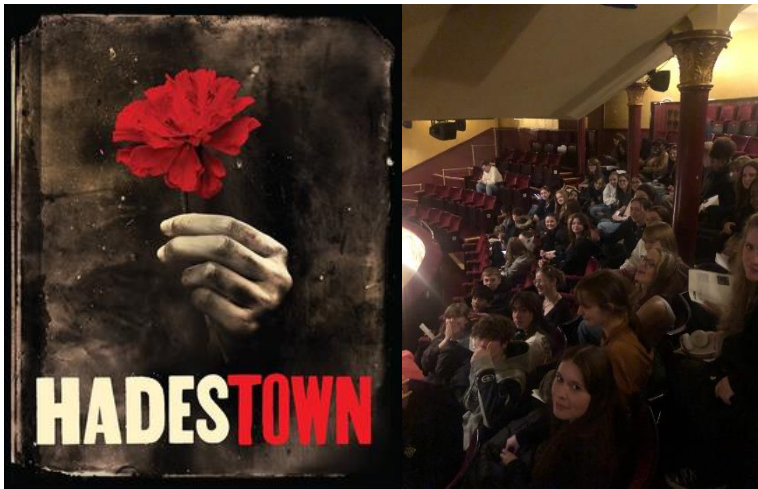




**QUEENS' SCHOOL**  
*Dare to Write*

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER MAY 2024:**

**A MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA**



On April 25<sup>th</sup>, the English and Classics department took a group of nearly 50 students way down, way down under the ground, way down to 'Hadestown'! It was a brilliant evening seeing this musical that is brand new to the West End ably organised by Ms Jacobs. Telling the stories of Hades, Persephone, Orpheus, and Eurydice in an entirely unique way, this was a wonderful opportunity for Classics students to consolidate their knowledge of their 'Journeys to the Underworld' unit as well as to experience the great Greek myths come alive on stage. It truly was a scintillating evening!

**REVISION, REVISION, REVISION**

Our Year 11s and 13s have been working incredibly hard in the run up to their final examinations. Please remember that Miss Wood is running a Googlemeet session the night before every exam at 5pm. You can join using the code Englishrevision. We will also be meeting for croissants, juice, and final words of advice in room 10 the morning before every exam as well.



**SPEAKING AND LISTENING:**

Year 10 students are currently working hard on their GCSE speaking and listening assessments and will be performing over the next two or three weeks. There have been some magnificent speeches on a whole host of interesting topics, and we have all been so impressed with their hard work and articulacy.

**VOCABULOUS AND TOP READERS**

Next half-term is the last opportunity for students to submit their book reviews and complete work on Vocabulous before we announce this year's winners at the start of June. So, keep reading!

**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 April and May 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/>



**QUEENS' SCHOOL**  
*Dare to be Great*

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





## APRIL RECOMMENDED READ – YOUNG ADULT

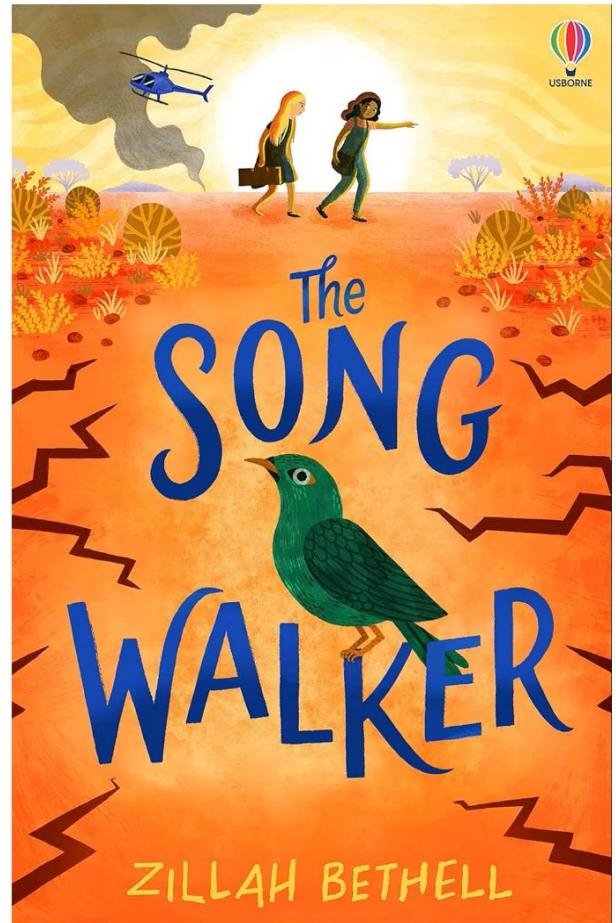
### 'THE SONG WALKER'

Zillah Bethell

Short listed for this year's Yoto Carnegie award, 'The Song Walker' is a thrilling and magical adventure across the middle of the Australian desert. When a young girl awakes in the middle of the outback with nothing but a strange case beside her, she does not think that she will survive. However, then she meets Tarni, who is on a mysterious quest of her own.

Together they begin a formidable walkabout to discover the truths that they are both looking for and, most importantly, to survive. However, each of the girl holds a fearsome secret inside and to get to the truth they must learn to trust one another completely. As the girls face increasing difficulties with the unforgiving environment in which they find themselves, they gradually learn to open-up to one another and discover who they are and why they find themselves together. This is a novel that combines realistic and engaging characterisation and settings with a lovely touch of fantasy and magical realism that is sure to engage young readers in what is a compelling and original story.

Drawing on the history, songs, and culture of Indigenous Australians, Bethell has created a thrilling adventure narrative set in an environment that is as deadly as it is beautiful. It is a tale about the power of friendship, music and the importance of identity and belonging. It would be suitable for anyone from year 7 onwards and particularly for those who are interested in cultural narratives with powerful female protagonists.



## APRIL RECOMMENDED READ – ADULT

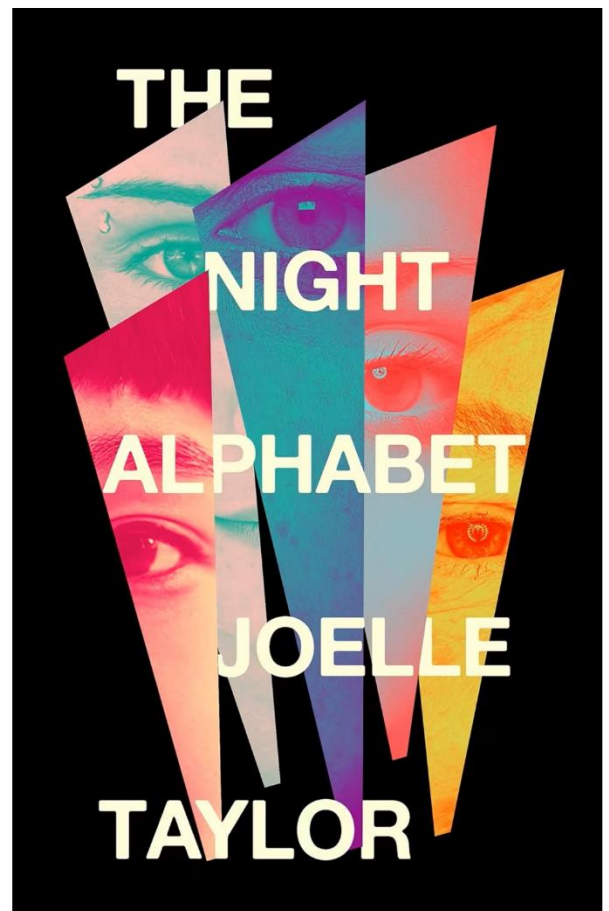
### 'THE NIGHT ALPHABET'

Joelle Taylor

Beautiful, blistering and absolutely brilliant – this is a book like no other you will read and may well become my top novel of 2024. The novel begins with the protagonist, Jones, walking into a tattoo parlor in London of 2233 where she asks the two female artists, to connect her tattoos. This leads Jones to tell the explosive, innovative and often shocking stories behind each of the images that are engraved on her body. However, what she truly needs to do is make these women believe in her narratives and believe in the truth of her own tale.

In many ways, what follows is a series of subtly interconnected short stories that explore a whole array of different worlds from the bleak industrialised environment of the Lancashire coal mines to the brutal world of a London estate in which the gutter girls dwell. Every story is unique often exposing and speaking for the oppressed, repressed, and silenced and peeling back the layers of our supposed civilised society.

Taylor is first and foremost a poet and this is a novel that shows her to be the master of metaphor. Her images are gut punches that expose startling truths whilst she manipulates genre with exceptional skill. This is most definitely an adult novel given the themes it explores particularly related to the exploitation of women. However, it is also truly exceptional – as brutal as it is astonishing as Taylor explores the power of the human voice and the need to speak for those who are silenced – the need to find and be yourself for as Taylor writes: 'How easy it is to fall into yourself. How hard it is to climb out'.



QUEENS' SCHOOL  
Dare to be Great

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





## MAY RECOMMENDED READ – YOUNG ADULT

### 'FRIENDS AND TRAITORS'

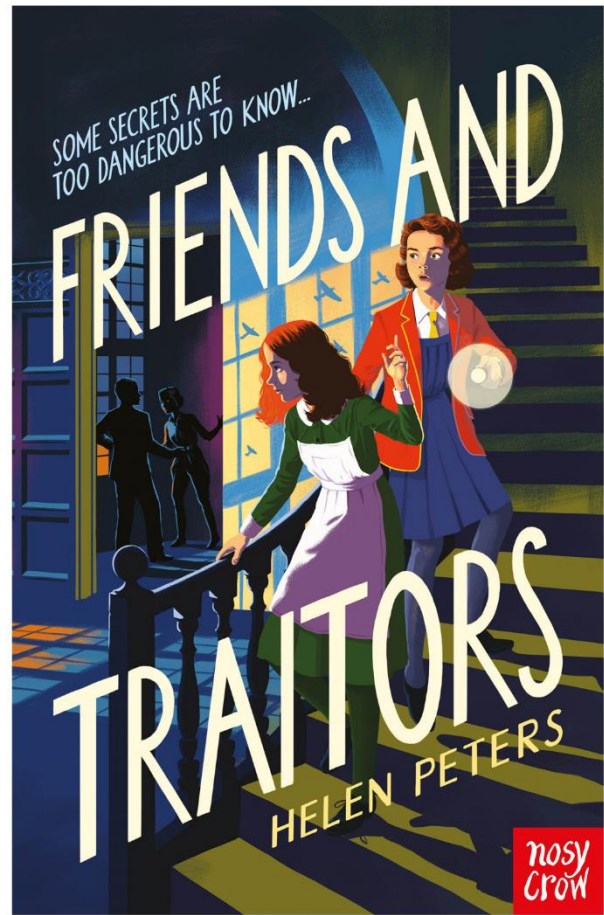
Helen Peters

Not only is Sidney Dashworth the new girl and outsider, but her all girls school has just been relocated to a stately home in the middle of the countryside to avoid the terrible bombings suffered in London as WWII truly gets under way. Finding herself alone, she makes an unlikely friend in Nancy, the new housemaid, who is the only other person who seems able to see the truth.

For whilst everyone else seems completely enamoured with the dashing Earl, Nancy and Sidney are not so sure. Together they decide to play sleuths and find out the truth about the Earl and the possible darkness that lies behind the rich walls of his country abode. Their problem is that, not only will no one believe two girls over one of the most influential men in the military, they have no proof only their intuition and a dark suspicion.

This is a great young adult, historical thriller that combines surprising historical fact and fictional twists and turns to keep the reader engaged. Featuring two fascinating intrepid heroines from very different worlds, Peters has created a compelling narrative with a dramatic conclusion.

This novel reminds me of the 'Murder Most Unladylike' series as it combines traditional features of the detective genre with a modern twist recalling the godmother of all crime fiction – Agatha Christie given its country house setting and use of features like secret passageways and journals. This will definitely be enjoyed by anyone from year 7 upwards with an interest in traditional crime fiction or historical narratives.



## MAY RECOMMENDED READ – ADULT

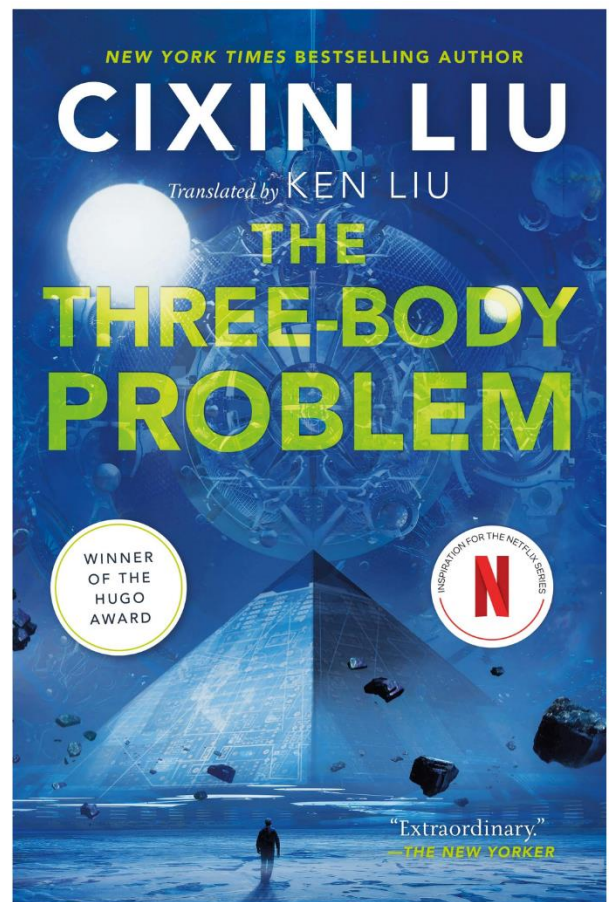
### 'THE THREE BODY PROBLEM'

Cixin Liu

Now a major Netflix series, 'The Three Body Problem' is widely considered one of the best modern Science-Fiction series having won numerous awards including the 2015 Hugo Award for best novel. Set against the backdrop of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Ye Wenjie, who has already witnessed the death of her beloved father, finds herself an outsider and under constant suspicion. However, her astrophysics background means that she is compelled to join the team at Red Coast whose primary, if secret, aim is to search for extra-terrestrial life.

After many years, she finally receives a response – 'Do not answer!' – a desperate warning from a single individual who knows that those on his planet do not seek contact, but an alternative world on which to live even if it means the eradication of the current inhabitants. Broken, bitter and having lost all hope in humanity, Ye Wenjie sends back earth's answer. And so begins a race against time and a race across centuries and planetary systems as humanity begins to prepare for the arrival of the Trisolarans and the Doomsday Battle that will either ensure the end of humanity or its survival.

This is just the beginning – what follows is a brilliantly conceived work of imagination that follows the narratives of a plethora of characters. Some seek to support to the Trisolarans whilst others desperately search for a way to overcome them either voluntarily or with huge reluctance. Utterly compelling, 'The Three Body Problem' is just the first in an epic trilogy. I'm not a science fiction fan, but I've had to race through all three as they are so enthralling – I promise you won't be disappointed!



QUEENS' SCHOOL  
Dare to be Great

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

