



## QUEENS' SCHOOL *Dare to Write*

### ENGLISH AND CLASSICS NEWSLETTER JULY 2024:

#### VOCABULOUS VICTORIES



**Congratulations 7TC – the top Vocabulous form for this year!!**



All students in Year 7 have been working on improving their vocabulary through learning word roots via the fantastic Vocabulous programme. Many students have completed multiple levels and have shown a voracious appetite for all things vocabulary related. As the year comes to an end, we can finally announce our winners. Congratulations to 7TC on being our top performing form. Well done to our three winners – Marianna 7AB, Haydar 7TC and Gahan 7SW. All these students completed every single level and showed real aptitude for learning and applying new vocabulary.

#### YEAR 7 SPELLING BEE

This July, Ms Jacobs also held our annual Year 7 Spelling Bee. We were incredibly impressed by our students' aptitude and knowledge of a range of complex words that they had learned over the course of the year. Congratulations to our winner Dorothea in 7FR and our runner up Ollie in 7AE.



#### YEAR 9 – AN ORIGINAL TAKE ON 'AN INSPECTOR CALLS':

During our activity days in July this year, we also ran two super sessions on 'An Inspector Calls' with Year 9. The students invented their own prequels to the play focusing on the back story of Mr Birling and Mrs Birling. There were some superbly original and often humorous narratives that students then performed using their own play script that explained this interesting relationship. It was not only great fun but gave students a unique insight into some of the key characters in the drama.



#### BRILLIANT BOOK REVIEWS

Reading is at the heart of everything we do in English. We encourage students to not only read daily, but also to complete book reviews on a regular basis. There have been a really impressive number of book reviews completed this year – the most in the last five years! Congratulations to our top reviewers: Micaela 7FD; Mikash 8SN; Lasali 9TM

#### 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 June and July 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/>





**JUNE RECOMMENDED READ –  
ADULT**

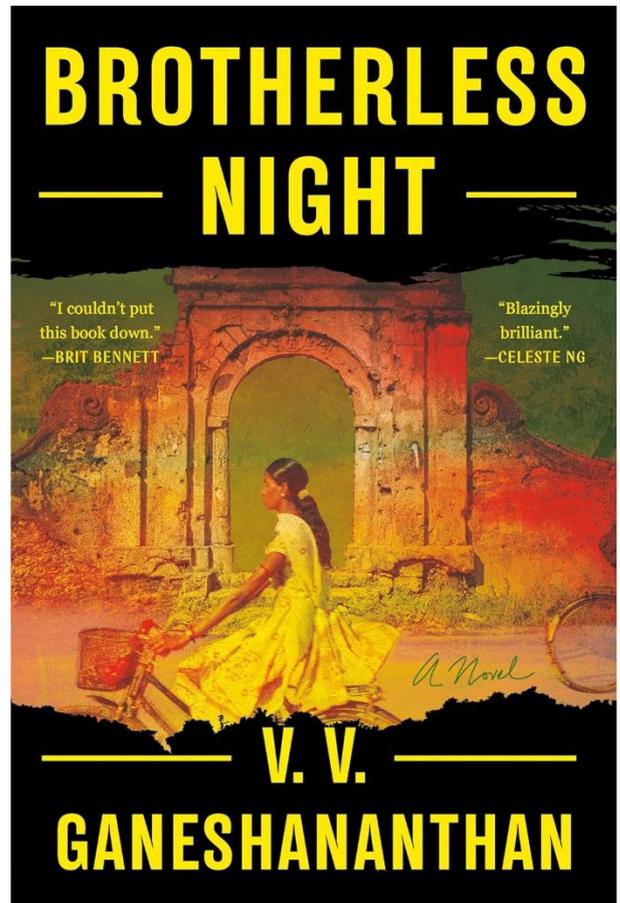
**‘BROTHERLESS NIGHT’**

**V.V.Ganeshanathan**

Nominated for this year’s Women’s Prize for Fiction, in my opinion having now read all six nominees, this should definitely be the winner and by a long way! The primary narrative is set amongst the Tamil community of Jaffna, Sri Lanka in the 1980s told primarily from the perspective of a young woman, Sashi, attempting to train to become a doctor. However, as civil war breaks out, Sashi must come to terms with a new, brutal reality that slowly tears her family apart. As brothers and friends alike either choose or are compelled to join the militant Tamil Tigers, Sashi is forced to decide whose side she is truly on – as a medical student she feels compelled to help all those who are injured even if working under the Tigers, however, as an individual, she cannot help but be horrified by the violence and human violations enacted by all those involved.

Meticulously researched and based on the narratives of particularly the women, who experienced these horrors firsthand, this is a searingly moving account of a period in history that has barely been written about despite its continuing impact. It is a heartrending narrative particularly concerned with the impact on women who attempt to maintain their communities and support the men of their family regardless of the choices they make. However, it is also a novel deeply concerned with narrative itself – the accuracy of who gets to tell the story and the importance of preserving the voices of those who are oppressed and ensuring the truth is not buried with the bodies that disappear.

Brilliant, original and told with compassion, insight and fervour, this is a difficult read but a very important one.



**JUNE RECOMMENDED READ –  
YOUNG ADULT**

**‘THE BOY LOST IN THE MAZE’**

**Joseph Coelho, Kate Milner (illustrator)**

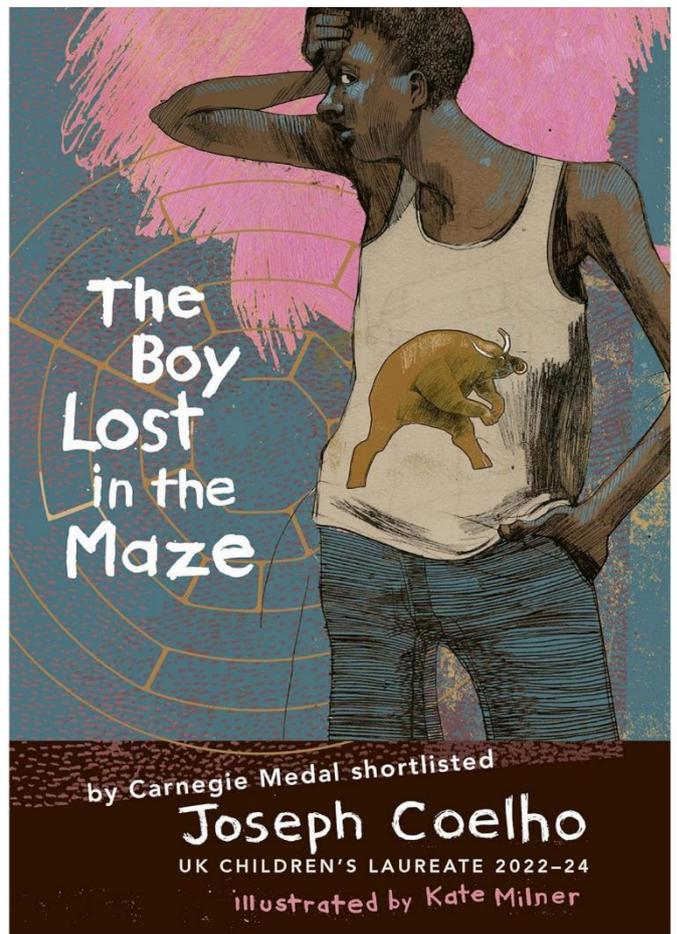
This is a really superb verse novel drawing in original ways on the myths associated with Theseus and his adventures including the Minotaur. Coelho offers us a triple narrative where all three of the stories are cleverly interwoven insightfully reflecting some of the ways in which Greek myths continue to have resonance and meaning today helping us to make sense of problems that plague the human world whether now or in antiquity.

Theo is a teenager studying for his A-Level but also desperate to find the truth about his father and, through this journey, his own identity and place in the world. Yet to do so, he must interpret a whole series of clues and climb through a labyrinthine mystery to discover the man his father is and the man he wants to be.

Theseus too is a fatherless young man desperate to prove himself worthy of a father he has never met. However, he too has a journey to undertake to discern who he is and negotiate the differences between conventional expectations of heroism and masculinity and his own values.

Finally, there is the Minotaur or, to give him his true name, Asterion. He too is ensnared in a labyrinth of his parents’ shame and horror from which he is unable to escape.

Coelho brilliantly draws these three stories together creating not only a compelling and unique narrative from one that is all too familiar but also offers us an insight into the struggles so many young men face in terms of identity and selfhood.



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## JULY RECOMMENDED READ – ADULT

### 'CALIGULA – THE DAMNED EMPERORS'

Simon Turney

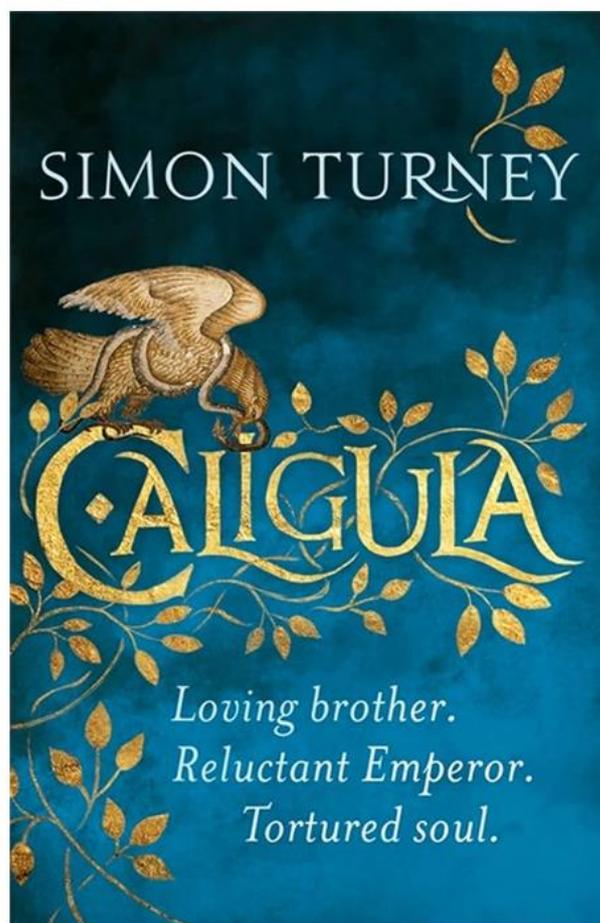
This is the first in Turney's quartet of 'Damned Emperors' – the emperors so terrible they suffered damnatio memoriae (having all evidence of their reign, name and image eradicated by the Romans).

Caligula, (a name that means 'little boots' so called for the miniature caligae that he wore as a child to accompany his father, Germanicus, on military campaign), is the first to come under scrutiny in this superb series. The narrative begins under the reign of, the quite frankly equally 'mad, bad and dangerous', emperor Tiberius who was potentially responsible for the death of Germanicus and certainly for the terrible ends suffered by not only Caligula's mother, Agrippina, but also his two brothers, Drusus and Nero (not *that* one).

Through meticulous research and sifting through the often bias and gossipy historical accounts of the likes of Suetonius and Dio Cassius, Turney exposes what might well be the true nature of Caligula. Told from the perspective of his long suffering and devotedly loyal sister, Livilla, the novel exposes the troubled and traumatic nature of Caligula's childhood and adolescence.

When he finally becomes the emperor, the innocent and tranquil young man has vanished. In his place is a paranoid tyrant desperate to retain power and destroy all remnants of the individuals whom he deems responsible for his loss or who wish to oppose no matter who they are.

This is a compelling narrative, grounded in historical detail and fizzing with realistic and colourful description that bring the fascinating and often precarious world of ancient Rome to life.



## JULY RECOMMENDED READ – YOUNG ADULT

### 'STEADY FOR THIS'

Nathanel Lessore

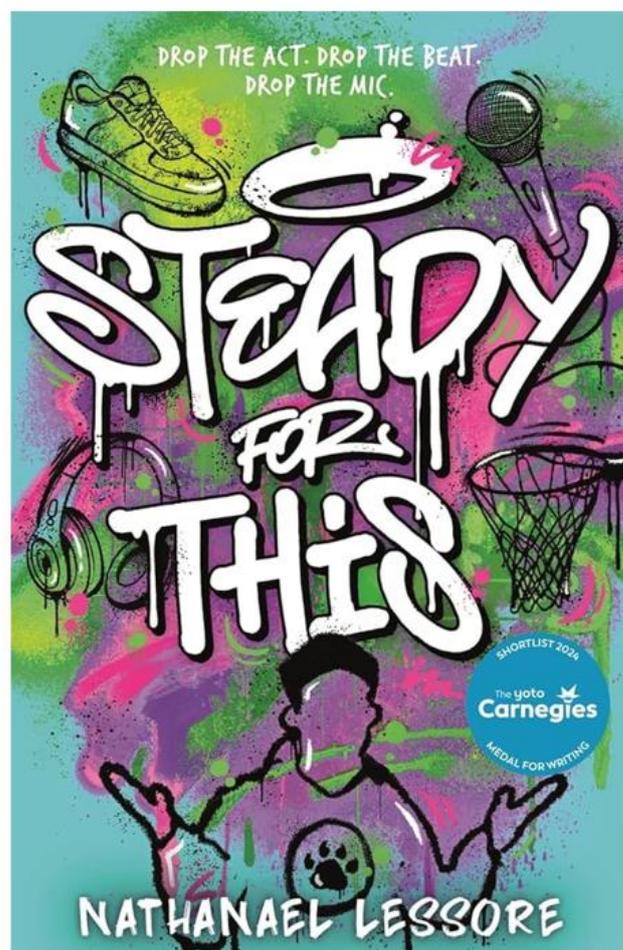
Nominated for this year Yoto Carnegie award, this is a fun novel with a positive message about resilience, friendship and family.

Despite his unflinchingly optimistic outlook, Shaun (aka MC Growls) is confronted by one challenge after another. His family are under threat from eviction, his best friend is no longer coming to school and the girl he adores has openly rejected him whilst an embarrassing viral video has destroyed any credibility he once had.

Nonetheless, Growls is determined to improve his life and save his family; he is determined, in short, to prove himself a superhero. However, the only way that he can see to achieve this is to enter Raptology, a unique rap competition with a £3000 prize that could transform life for his family.

Told from Growls' unique perspective, this is a laugh out loud novel that includes some pitch-perfect punning and word play. Drawing on art, literature and a varied musical catalogue, Lessore vividly captures the world in which he grew up – Peckham, London – and conveys the spirit and resilience of a community who, in times of trouble, are drawn together. Peppered with poetic rap verses, the novel builds to a resounding if slightly predictable climax that fully engages the reader.

This is a great narrative for younger and older readers that will appeal to their naughty sense of humour particularly given the engaging and original protagonist who will completely win you over.



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