



QUEENS' SCHOOL *Dare to Write*

ENGLISH AND CLASSICS NEWSLETTER JULY 2025:

YEAR 7 SPELLING BEE

This July, Ms Jacobs 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 Rayan as well as Zara who came second and Amar who was a close runner up. You are officially our super spellers!



EMPATHY DAY



Empathy Day was organised between the library and the English Department. Students were given the opportunity to watch live videos with authors, read short stories and create their own narratives based on what they had read and seen. The aim of the day was to encourage students to think about the feelings of others and to learn how to manage different emotional situations as well as treating others with sympathy and sensitivity. This was our first year celebrating Empathy Day on 12 June with students at Key Stage 3 who thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to consider narratives from different perspectives. A huge thank you to Miss Grimston and Mrs Greatrex for organising the event and sharing

such wonderful resources.

NEWS WISE AT SKY UP

On a very hot Wednesday in July, Ms Jacobs took an amazing group of aspiring Year 7 journalists to the Sky studios to learn about media creation and to get a sneak peek behind the scenes. They participated in a range of workshops to help them develop essential skills such as creativity, communication and collaboration whilst also learning how the media industry works and how to become creators themselves. It was a fantastic and incredibly enlightening experience for them all.



VORACIOUS ABOUT VOCABULOUS



Year 7s have been working on Vocabulous all year and have made astounding progress in terms of completing the different levels and learning root words in order to enhance their vocabulary. Students can still complete work on Vocabulous throughout the summer as the winners and results will be announced at the start of September. At present, it is a closely fought competition between 7AE and 7SW. Who will be the winner of this epic battle?

WHAT SHALL I READ?

We will announce the winners of our book review competition at the start of next academic year. This gives students the opportunity to get reading and submit more reviews over the summer. Summer is the perfect time to read and



there are lots of great summer recommended reading available in the library. However, if you are unsure, why not look back at some of our recommended reads this year?

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 – YOUNG ADULT

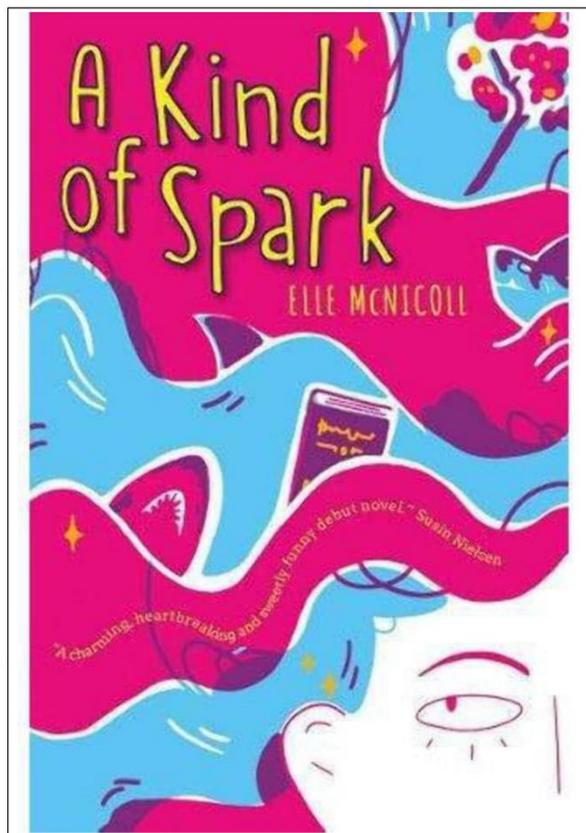
'A KIND OF SPARK'

Elle McNicoll

Winner of the Waterstones best book for younger readers in 2021 and now a BBC drama, 'A Kind of Spark' is an enlightening and original debut novel. McNicoll takes the reader into the world and emotions of Addie, an 11-year-old girl living in a small Scottish town. However, like her sister, Keedie, Addie is autistic and sometimes struggles to manage her emotions, often feeling as if she does not fit in; this makes school much more challenging for her particularly given the lack of understanding she receives from her teacher and fellow students.

When her class are told about the women accused of witchcraft hundreds of years before in her very own village, Addie is determined that they should not go forgotten. Empathising deeply with the way in which these women were persecuted for their differences, Addie tenaciously decides she will ensure that they are memorialised rather than forgotten.

This is a thought-provoking and emotionally engaging read that not only captures some of the struggles experienced by those who are neurodivergent but also revealing a brutal period in Scottish history and the importance of learning acceptance and compassion. Told through the perspicacious voice of the central heroine, Addie, this is the first in a series of books that will be enjoyed by younger and older readers alike.



JUNE RECOMMENDED READ – ADULT

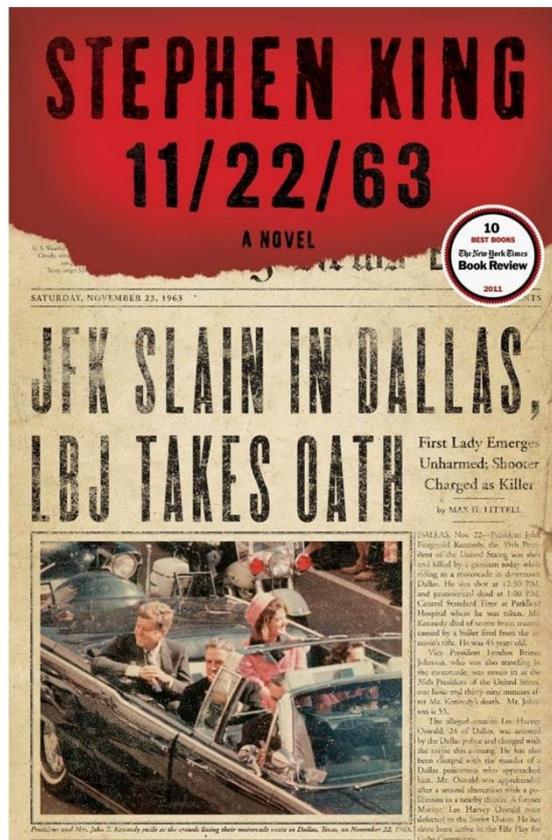
'11.22.63'

STEPHEN KING

With over 60 novels to his name, spanning a multiplicity of genres, King has repeatedly proved himself to be a master storyteller, and this is one of his best. It can be found on the 'New York Times Readers' Best Books of the 21st Century'.

In this compelling narrative, King imagines what you would do if you could go back to a set period in time and potentially change a watershed moment (in this case, the assassination of JFK). This is exactly the position in which Jake Epping, an English teacher, finds himself as he steps through a strange portal back to Lisbon Falls of 1958. However, first, Jake must discover if it is even possible to change the course of history and, even if this is the case, what is he prepared to do to achieve it? To complicate matters even further, the conspiracy theories that surround the infamous assassination are so prevalent that Jake must ensure that he is right about the culprit – Lee Harvey Oswald - or he risks killing an innocent man. Stripped of all modern technology, Jake discovers himself in a time that is at once more innocent and more terrifyingly oppressive.

Meticulously researched and full of subtle political details and insights into the world of 1950s and 60s America, this is an utterly compelling read redolent with King's atmospheric writing. The prose is taut as he weaves clever science fiction tropes, historical details and thriller elements with an engaging personal narrative. Peppered with 'easter egg' allusions to his other works, this is a fast-paced novel that will appeal to anyone interested in historical fiction as well as devoted King fans. Beware though, the ending is not what you would expect!



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





JULY RECOMMENDED READ – YOUNG ADULT

'CARAVAL'

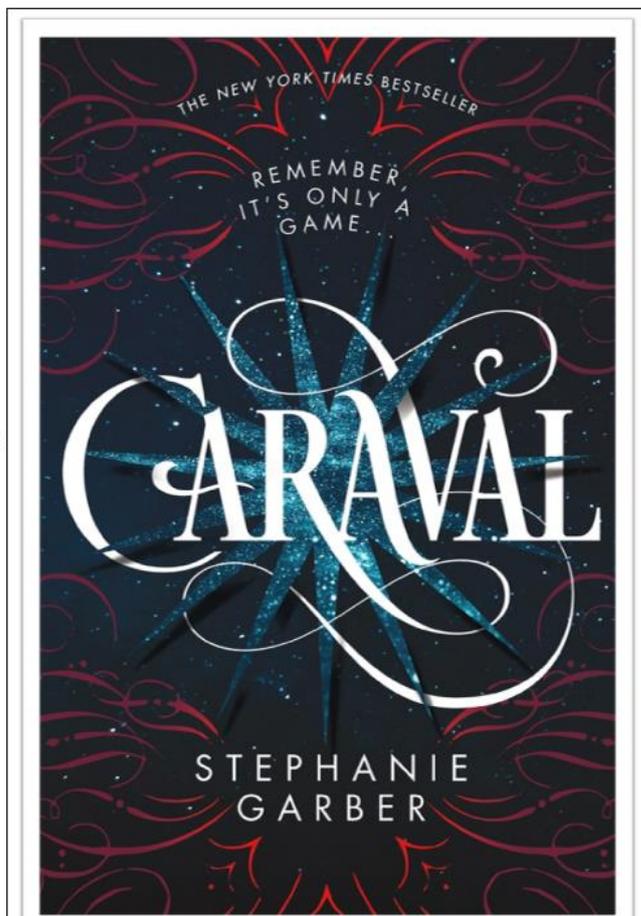
Stephanie Garber

New York Times bestseller 'Caraval' is a novel surrounded in mystery and magic. Garber takes the reader into the game of Caraval, where everything isn't quite what it seems. If you enjoy romance, fantasy and mystery, then this book is perfect for you!

When Scarlett learns she is to marry, she is excited; it's her chance to escape her abusive father and leave her small isle of Trista. However, all her life she has wanted one thing; to visit Caraval and see the magic of Legend she had heard so much about for herself. Scarlett finally gets the chance after Tella, her sister and closest ally, is kidnapped; to get Tella back, Scarlett will have to play the game and win. All she has to do is remember, it's only a game...

An engaging and surprising tale, filled with twists and turns, Caraval explores how to become brave when you have always been voiceless. Through the characters of Scarlett and Tella, we explore the importance of family and how far we will go to save the ones we love. With some romance thrown in, you will become invested in Scarlett's journey to save her sister and decide what she would like her life to truly be like.

Caraval is a trilogy, followed by Legendary and Finale. All are available in the library to borrow; suggested for Year 9 and up.



JULY RECOMMENDED READ – ADULT

'CRYING IN H MART'

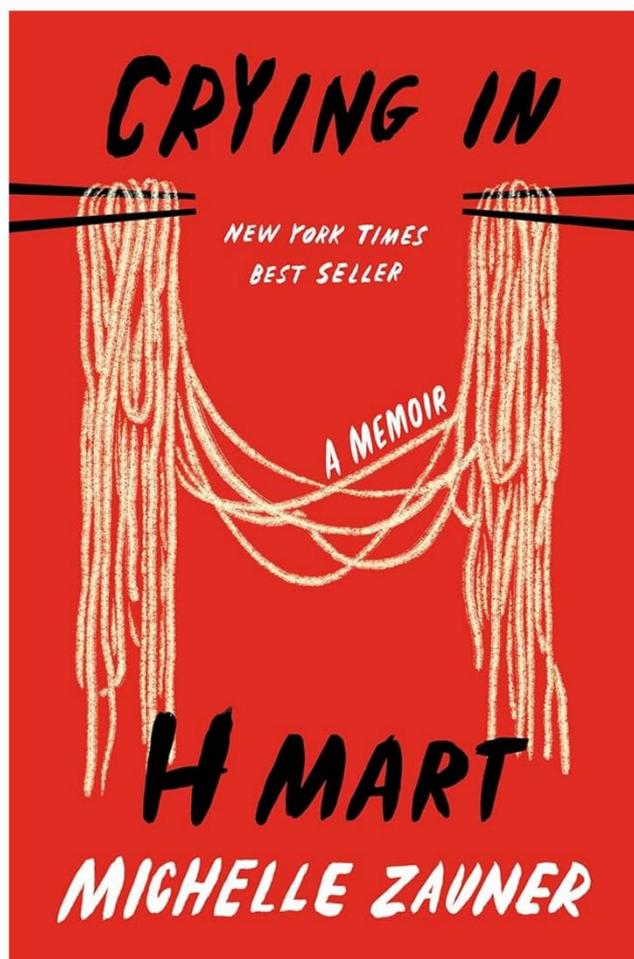
MICHELLE ZAUNER

This is a beautiful and moving memoir that simultaneously explores the difficulties of growing up as a mixed-race young woman and the soul-crushing impact of losing her mother.

Zauner charts the struggles of growing up as the only Asian American student in her school in Oregon and the enormous pressure she feels to live up to her mother's expectations. However, when her mother is diagnosed with cancer, Zauner returns to her childhood home to care for her and reconnect with the past and cultural history from which she has become increasingly distanced. Through a shared love of food, and poignant recollections of their past, particularly their summers spent with family in Seoul, Zauner and her mother discover a new closeness that is both heart-breaking and inspiring.

Told with emotional rawness, 'Crying in H Mart' is a painful examination of mother-daughter relationships, loss and what it means to be multiracial. Despite its devastating content and tragically inevitable conclusion, Zauner manages to infuse her memoir with moments of humour and poetically vivid depictions of the dishes that she learns to cook and that help her reunite with her mother and their shared culture. This is a captivating novel beautifully told from first hand experience where it often feels as if Zauner is laying her heart on the page with incredible bravery and self-perception.

This is not the book to read if you are feeling down, and even if you are not, you will definitely need a box of tissues. Unashamedly personal and full of tender moments, this is a novel that captures her family, her love and most of all, her relationship with her mother.



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