



Langtonian.

# Contents

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>School News</b>	<b>4</b>
Head Students' Introduction	4
Student Union	5
Feminist Society	6
The LGBTQ+ Society	7
Jazz Night	8
Inter-House Music	10
<b>Research Projects</b>	<b>12</b>
Red Island 2023: Hypotheses, Secondary Research and Laying Foundations	12
Perceived Parental Relationship Quality and Media Influences on Perceptions of Love	15
Skylarks: Sing to Beat Parkinson's	18
<b>Essays</b>	<b>21</b>
Lula: Liberator or Liability	21
How Will 'Levelling Up' Impact Canterbury?	26
OPINION: Sharing is caring: Why it's time for socialism in the UK	28
OPINION: Labour's Victory in 2024 is All But Assured	31
<b>Recipes</b>	<b>35</b>
Katsu Curry	35
Summer Soup	40
<b>Briefly Skimmed</b>	<b>42</b>
Book Reviews	42

Album Recommendations	47
<b>Poetry, Verse, and Dogrel</b>	<b>48</b>
Butcher, Baker, Cornershop Faker	48
Meringues	50
Plebgate	51
<b>Taylor's Corner</b>	<b>53</b>
‘Discuss Shakespeare’s presentation of Lady Macbeth in the play Macbeth’	53
‘Wishful Thinking’	54
Against Abstractitis	55
<b>Crossword</b>	<b>57</b>

# Editorial

Welcome to Langtonian 6! This issue, there is a brand new team behind the Langtonian: Pascal Sleigh, Eve-Kaede Kelly, and Henry Gill-Pratt, (all in year 12). Following in the footsteps of Jacob Fisher and Niccy Busuttil has been no easy task, but a fun one nonetheless. Already, we have wrestled with bizarre submissions, finding worthy material, and working the Gestetner Cyclograph hidden away in a cupboard.

Tasked by Mr Moffat with the challenge of orienting the paper towards school news, we have settled for the following compromise: the first half may be considered the affairs of the school (research projects, events, and society news); the second half is an amalgamation of various pieces, all produced by members of the school (essays, reviews, poetry, etc). We hope that this trial works well, providing informative and entertaining reading to whomever picks up our paper.

Our final task must be to thank everyone who has put work into this issue of the Langtonian: Jacob Fisher for teaching us how to do this whole thing, Aidan Page for the cover illustration, Henry Colley and Josh Hudson-Tyremen for additional editorial help, Dr Taylor for his facilitation, Mr Moffat for his support, and lastly, everybody who has provided material for the paper.

Happy reading!  
Your Editors

# School News

## Head Students' Introduction

Lara Modi, Sam Stretch, Bella Rowe, and Oscar Cameron are the new Head Students for Simon Langton! We are all very passionate about changing the school for the better and projecting the voices of those who feel they haven't been heard.

Here is an introduction to our ideas: we hope to provide a better environment for people to be themselves, and for their concerns to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, we want to make the school have inspiration and change from student experiences, specifically hoping to change the direction of communication and representation in school. We all have a shared experience in this school, so it is vital for us to consider how everyone feels in the situations across the school community. All of us take pride in combating prejudicial ideas and hope to make the school feel more like a safe space. Here are the messages from each of us:

Lara - I am a curious and creative person. I study French, Philosophy and Geography which means I practically live in the Addis building, so you'll know where to find me!

Sam - I am an outgoing and optimistic person who is studying Maths, Biology and Psychology. I think green tote bags are a good description of my personality and how to spot me.

Bella - I'm a sporty and sociable person studying Economics, History and Biology. I hope to be a friendly face around school, you can find me still looking lost wandering round the site!

Oscar - I am a driven person who is always happy to help! I study Further Maths, Geography and Spanish and if you're trying to spot me look for someone wearing orange!

We look forward to supporting the school in every way possible!

Thank you,  
Your Head Students!

## **Student Union**

Pascal Sleigh

Early next academic year, the Student Union will be looking to recruit new members. To give people some time to think about this, here is what the Student Union is for:

In short, the Student Union is the focal point of the student voice in the school. If there is an issue that students have, they come to us, so that we can discuss with Teachers about how to overcome it. This process, however, should work both ways (although it hasn't always been the case). This coming year, we hope to have a better dialogue with teachers; we also would like them to come to us for student views on various things in the school, and involve us more in decision making.

If you feel as though you want to be part of this, please put yourself forward when the time comes, particularly if you wouldn't usually consider yourself for this role.

## **Feminist Society**

### The Feminist Society

After a series of experiences with sexism, we felt that the culture of misogyny wasn't being effectively addressed within the school. We felt that action needed to be taken to begin to change the culture of normalised sexism within the school.

From this, we worked to develop a series of open conversations with students around sexism in our school, trying to attach emotion to this issue. This is because we felt as though many younger students have not heard women's perspective on sexism first-hand.

We encouraged all girls in the sixth form to get involved by either sharing their own experiences, or directly joining these conversations.

We have carried out a number of talks, which have, so far, been largely successful; our peers have found it useful to have a space to have these conversations, and some have used it to reflect on their own views. Some meetings have been challenging, especially due to the vulnerability of the situation; however, we feel that we are creating a positive impact on the school culture so far. We recently celebrated International Women's Day by giving presentations to the younger years on inspirational and powerful women. As well as this, we held a non-uniform day for charity; all the money raised went to a women's shelter in Canterbury.

We aim to continue the open conversations with our peers next year, as well as expanding these to younger years, so that we can have a wider impact. We would like to continue to work with the student union to further promote feminism as a positive idea within the school. Our work will also include many charity events, as well as educating about these projects. Additionally, we hope to run fun events across all school years to engage and encourage open conversations about feminism.

We would love to involve as many people from across the school in feminist society, so if you feel passionate about these issues, or are simply curious, please come and join us at one of our weekly meetings (Thursday form time in the Addis meeting room).

## **The LGBTQ+ Society**

Mrs Langley

For around a year in school now, we have had a weekly lunch club for members of the LGBTQ+ community, and allies who want to demonstrate their support. Early on, we devised rules so that each and every member feels safe and included. These rules centre around respect and confidentiality – a kind of ‘what happens in the lunchclub, stays in the lunchclub’. Any issues that might be deemed as unsafe, are discussed privately with the student in the context of safeguarding.

One week we run a social club, so members can chat, play games and eat cake (sometimes)! Everyone is generally

very supportive of each other, and it's a place where members can speak freely.

On alternate weeks we run a more formal discussion group. We always try to be as student-led as possible, so anything the students want to talk about is up for discussion! Recently we've talked about our plans for the Pride weekend, and we've spoken about LGBTQ+ representation in gaming, TV and film, music, and sport. We had some interesting discussions around human rights during the time of the World Cup in Qatar, and recently discussions about transphobic incidents in both this country and the USA. Our mission statement is that every member of the LGBTQ+ community at The Langton deserves to feel safe, to feel supported, and to thrive.

If students wish to join our friendly, supportive group, please email Mrs Langley at [tlangley@thelangton.kent.sch.uk](mailto:tlangley@thelangton.kent.sch.uk)

## **Jazz Night**

Luke Stalley

Having been asked to quickly scrawl out an article in my usual style of writing with the aim to impart the most information I remember in the most weirdly personal style- as is the custom of the Langtonian. Therefore, I have aimed to write this article as quickly as possible with my limited memory of the events in question I am writing about. So have fun reading!

If I recall correctly, the jazz concert was on the 24th of March earlier this year and took place in the hall. The jazz

concert is an excellent event for many reasons; however, I believe that the singular importance of the jazz concert is the substantial difference in abilities between fledgling jazz players and professional jazz musicians. I myself was honoured to play alongside the professionals this concert at the end of the first half, due to the very weird absence of other saxophone players. The rest of the concert provided me with an opportunity to view a mixture of different ensembles playing a variety of different music at different levels and some extremely brave solo performers indeed!

The jazz concert is never complete without a large volume of tables and a lot of alcohol for the parents in the audience as well as other drinks and nibbles. This contributes to a very traditional jazz club atmosphere and having our very own “Ronnie Scots” is definitely something to be proud of! Having been to a jazz club myself (in NYC as a matter of fact), it is indeed a completely different atmosphere to a conventional classical music performance hall or a church/cathedral. In previous years, the drama department’s A1 has been used as our venue for performances, however, there comes a point where the jazz concert is so popular that we simply need more room. Another thing that was particularly amazing about this jazz concert compared to previous ones simply was just how many people came forward to perform – the whole concert lasted several hours!

Right, I have to move on now the editors have a word limit for me and I’ll be crucified if I go over it. (*I don’t know what you’re talking about - Ed.*) The jazz concert was great – end of story.

## Inter-House Music

Luke Stalley, Year 12

Another notable musical event, which the year 7-9s are much more likely to know about, and should remember (I'd be worried if they didn't) is Inter-House Music 2023. I have been assured by the editors of The Langtonian not to be unduly critical, so I shall hold my tongue from the evisceration of other houses' performances (Hardman is still indisputably the best and should have won). Sorry, the editors made me do that, they really are like modern day totalitarians aren't they? (*Completely untrue - Ed.*) Case in point.

The biggest controversy of house music arguably was the 1-point difference between first and second place, and at the risk of sounding biased, the absolute injustice of the ensemble decision in favour of Mackenzie instead of Hardman's clearly sonically superior act. Regardless, the afternoon was in good spirits and having music vibrate out of the sports hall is a beautiful sight to see. For those unfamiliar with Inter-House music, there are three categories for each house to compete for, with a winner in each individual category and an overall winner. The three categories consist of solo performance (the most nerve racking one), ensemble performance and house song.

The solo performance is up to one year 7-10 soloist to perform at their highest standard to the entirety of KS3 and their teachers, music department staff, and affiliated musicians, as well as anyone who is free at that time and just happens to want to come along – as I said, most nerve racking! This was deservedly won by Atticus Grumett from

Mackenzie who played The Way It Is by Bruce Hornsby on the piano which earned 19 points out of 20.

The ensemble performance is up to a group of musicians from years 7-10 to perform to the very best of their ability again to the same audience. However, there were unfortunately some problems with many ensembles – some personnel were missing which led a few musicians to stand in on their behalf – with varying degrees of success. Ultimately, Mackenzie won again performing Lose Yourself by Eminem to a heavily head bopping crowd (I have a video of this).

Finally, the house song, performed by all those in KS3 singing accompanied by a band with an arrangement of a song from a musical – as house music's theme this year is musicals. Who knows what it will be next year?? Hardman House won this category, with an outstanding ensemble and choir performance and an arrangement arranged by me (it is up to you whether you thought my arrangement was any good).

At the end of the day, Inter House Music was triumph, building on the success of the previous year and hopefully leading on to even more accomplished performances and friendly spirited competition in the years to come. (*Well, at least that's another few pages filled - Ed.*)

# Research Projects

## Red Island 2023: Hypotheses, Secondary Research and Laying Foundations

Mr Haste

The parliamentary constituency of Canterbury has changed from being a safe seat to a marginal seat, a Conservative-held seat to a Labour-held seat. We have been investigating the reasons for these significant and consequential changes.

Nationally, the media conversation about the 2019 general election focused on the fall of Labour's Red Wall. However, while the Red Wall was collapsing, small chunks of what Ed Davey has subsequently christened 'the Blue Wall' were beginning to crumble. Canterbury, Portsmouth South and Bristol North are the only non-London constituencies that turned blue-to-red in 2017 and also saw a strengthened Labour majority in 2019. For many commentators, the 2017 result was a shock.



Iain Dale     
@IainDale

If you want a good laugh, click on YouGov's constituency prediction page. [yougov.co.uk/uk-general-election-2017](https://yougov.co.uk/uk-general-election-2017). Canterbury is going Labour Lol!

1:25 PM · Jun 5, 2017

463 Retweets 308 Quote Tweets 487 Likes

But the strengthening of Labour's majority in Canterbury in 2019 is also very interesting and under-explored by political commentators.

We have three hypotheses. The first is that students have a pivotal role to play in deciding who Canterbury's MP is. We are testing the theory that students voted in greater numbers in 2017 and 2019. Attached to this is the likelihood that university students were much less likely to vote Liberal Democrat and more likely to vote Labour than the 2015 university student population. We are also testing the hypothesis that Rosie Duffield's criticism of the May and Johnson governments' Brexit plans helped attract support for Labour from remain voters. Lastly, we are investigating the impact of migration from London to Canterbury on the increase of support for Labour here.

This is the first academic year that the Red Island project has been running. Over the course of the year, we've met with senior academics, a pollster from YouGov, and a Liberal Democrat general election candidate. Professor Matthew Goodwin, author of *Values, Voice and Virtue* (2023) talked to us about political volatility. Dr Andy Wroe (University of Kent) and Dr Susan Kenyon (Christ Church University) advised us on how to conduct effective quantitative research. Guy Voizey shared his experiences of running as a Liberal Democrat in 2005 and 2010, during which time the Liberal Democrat vote share increased.

Our objectives for this year have been to develop our understanding of UK elections and voting behaviour, and hone our hypotheses. The secondary research we've conducted has largely involved reading academic papers on the 2015, 2017 and 2019 elections. Many of the post-2019

studies have focused on Labour's decline, but there are many fascinating references to a wider realignment taking place in UK politics (Cutts et al., 2020) that allude to Labour's increased popularity amongst a professional managerial graduate class in metropolitan areas (Goodwin, 2023). We've also explored the rise of age as an increasingly important dividing line in British politics (McDonnell and Curtis, 2019). Not only is this research potentially illuminating for people trying to understand what is happening in Canterbury, but could also suggest that the recent Canterbury results signify further future Conservative vulnerabilities in areas with growing numbers of students, young middle-class white collar workers, and graduates.

At the Langton Symposium, we will be discussing our theories, reflecting on key themes in the academic literature, and presenting survey data that we have collected so far.

#### Works Cited:

Cutts, David, et al. "Brexit, the 2019 General Election and the Realignment of British Politics." *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 91, no. 1, 19 Feb. 2020, pp. 7–23.

Goodwin, Matthew. *Values, Voice and Virtue*. Random House, 30 Mar. 2023.

McDonnell, Adam, and Chris Curtis. "How Britain Voted in the 2019 General Election." YouGov, YouGov, 17 Dec. 2019, [yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2019/12/17/how-britain-voted-2019-general-election](https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2019/12/17/how-britain-voted-2019-general-election).

## **Perceived Parental Relationship Quality and Media Influences on Perceptions of Love**

Jessie Calver, Zhane Reynolds, Severine Smith, Shilka Sony, Sam Stretch

The Psychology department at Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys has researched perceived parental relationship quality and media influences on perceptions of love. Perceptions of parental relationship quality have been shown to be highly influential on a child's understanding of love and relationships (Sarrazin and Cyr, 2007). Attachment research highlights that parents provide the basis for the development of relationship competence with the knowledge of what high-quality intimate relationships look like in adulthood (Kumar and Mattanah, 2016). Traditional media (film and TV) and social media have also been researched to have an influential effect on our perceptions of love. For example, research into films has shown that particular genres, such as romance, can influence people's perceptions of love (Todd, 2014) as well as suggesting that some film viewing cultivates unrealistic expectations about love (Galloway, 2013). Similar correlations have been found between social media and perceptions on love (Ulanova, 2020). Finally, extreme love beliefs are defined as having unrealistic perceptions of what love should be, feel and look like (Doran, 2014). Existing literature shows that individuals who are perfectionists endorse in extreme love beliefs (Flett, 2001), characterised by an intense, extremely emotional form of love that is fuelled by fears of rejection (Tennov, 1979).

Literature assessing whether media (social media and traditional media; film/TV) and perceptions of parental relationship quality on extreme love beliefs has not been researched to the best of our knowledge, and this is the foundation of our rationale.

The first result showed a significant difference between perception of parents and media on love beliefs, whereby participants believed parents have more influence on our love beliefs. The second result showed a significant positive correlation between social media consumption and extreme love beliefs, whereby the more social media consumed, the more extreme the love beliefs endorsed. More specifically there was a strong significant relationship between the usage of the social media platforms TikTok and Facebook, and intense and obsessive beliefs about how love should be. In other words, the more participants consumed TikTok and/or Facebook, the more extreme their love beliefs.

In contrast, traditional media consumption (film and TV) showed a non-significant correlation with extreme love beliefs suggesting that social media is more influential in determining a person's beliefs on love. Moreover, when understanding the breakdown of media genres, there is no significant correlation of any genre with extreme love beliefs, further suggesting that films and television may have little to no influence on people's beliefs in relation to love.

Future research considerations involve measuring different channels of media, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime. This is a limitation of our current study as our measure of social media included different channels, such as Instagram and TikTok for example, whereas our measure of traditional media included different genres such as

Documentaries and Soaps. One advantage of our research is that it has addressed a potential gap in the literature, by researching the influence of parental relationship quality, media (social media and traditional media) and love beliefs.

## References

- Doron, G. & Derby, D. (2017). Assessment and Treatment of Relationship-Related OCD Symptoms (ROCD) A Modular Approach. In J. S., Abramowitz, D. McKay, D. & E. A., Storch (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of obsessive compulsive disorders* (1 st ed., pp. 547-564). John Wiley & Sons.
- Flett, G. L., Hewitt, P. L., Shapiro, B. & Rayman, J. (2001). Perfectionism, beliefs, and adjustment in dating relationships. *Current Psychology*, 20(4), 289-311. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-001-1013-4>
- Galloway, L. F. E. (2013). Does movie viewing cultivate unrealistic expectations about love and marriage? [Master's thesis, University of Nevada]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Kumar, S. A. & Mattanah, J. F. (2016). Parental attachment, romantic competence, relationship satisfaction, and psychosocial adjustment in emerging adulthood. *Personal Relationships*, 23(4), 801-817. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12161>
- Sarrazin, J. & Cyr, F. (2007). Parental conflicts and their damaging effects on children. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 47(1-2), 77-93. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J087v47n01\\_05](https://doi.org/10.1300/J087v47n01_05)

- Tennov, D. (1979). Love and limerence: The experience of being in love. Stein and Day
- Todd, E. (2013). Passionate Love and Popular Cinema: Romance and Film Genre. Palgrave Macmillan. DOI 10.1057/9781137295385
- Ulanova, E. (2020). The Influence of Social Media on Modern Romantic Relationships: A Literary Analysis of New Media Studies. [Master's thesis, Harvard University]. <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.10704.74247>

## **Skylarks: Sing to Beat Parkinson's**

Mrs Renshaw-Kidd

Sing to Beat Parkinson's (under the umbrella of the charity Canterbury Cantata Trust) provides singing groups for people with Parkinson's, as well as their family and friends. The first group (Skylarks) was founded in 2010 by Roger Clayton and Grenville Hancox to enable People with Parkinson's to better express themselves, and to relieve some of the symptoms they experience. The group has gone from strength to strength and has now expanded to various groups around the country.

How the Langton got involved!:

We are proud to announce that in 2021 The Langton Music Department took over the leadership of the Canterbury Skylarks, welcoming the members into our Tong Centre on a fortnightly basis for an hour of singing, movement and fun. We believe that this idea of bringing the community into part of the school curriculum day does not happen anywhere else in the world. Mrs Renshaw-Kidd (Director of Music) leads the

sessions, with students (musicians, dancers, scientists, anyone who is interested) taking part in the activities alongside the Skylarks. As the students become more confident and begin to understand the benefits of singing and movement on the symptoms of Parkinson's, they have the opportunity to take over the leadership, trying out their own songs, exercises and activities. It is our hope that, in the future, our students will be part of developing a published methodology for Singing with Parkinson's.

The Science – Why singing?

Parkinson's disease symptoms mainly result from low or falling levels of dopamine. It happens when cells that produce dopamine die in the brain. Dopamine plays a role in sending messages to the part of the brain that controls movement and coordination. As well as activating a range of networks associated with movement, listening, planning, memory, and language, singing triggers the release of the feel-good neurotransmitter dopamine. Scientists believe the benefits of singing can be triggered by both singing and thinking about singing.

Why should I get involved?

The bonds, empathy and relationships that are built through this regular interaction between the students and members of Skylarks are heart-warming and, we believe, that they are absolutely integral to the future of humankind. It is our hope that Langton students will not only develop their altruistic outlook and an understanding of how music can be used to relieve the symptoms of various physical and mental health

conditions, but will see the power in bridging generational gaps and caring for each other through singing. We believe that our future musicians and medical professionals alike should understand the benefit of music on so many aspects of healthcare.

# Essays

## **Lula: Liberator or Liability**

Henry Gill-Pratt, Year 12

Brazilian politics is, to put it lightly, an absolute nightmare. This falls in line with the worryingly persistent trend in South America of dysfunctional and objectively corrupt democratic systems, but to leave it at that is at best ignorant, at worst dangerous - one would be foolish to ignore South American and Brazilian politics. With a GDP of, when adjusted for Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), almost \$4 trillion, Brazil's interests and political future affects the UK's Agricultural, Engineering, Financial and Pharmaceutical industries to name but a few. If Brazil were to default on their numerous loans or suffer a bad recession, the West would likely suffer some serious repercussions. In the fiercely contested 2022 Brazilian presidential election between Jair Bolsonaro and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (Lula), Lula narrowly edged Bolsonaro to the presidency, winning a razor-thin 50.9% of the vote. This will change economic, environmental and international policy relating to Brazil substantially and in turn affect the world's economy. The man behind it all, Lula, may well be the most Marmite figure in the entirety of Brazil so, how, we ask, did he come to power? And what kind of a leader might he be?

From 1964 - 1985 Brazil was locked in a US-backed Military dictatorship 'Ditadura Militar Brasileira' intent on violent restrictions of freedoms to speech and political opposition. The list of Human Rights abuses and crimes

against humanity committed under this regime deserves an entirely separate article (for example, the mass grave of 1,049 murdered political dissidents and thousands of torture episodes outlined by the groundbreaking Nunca Mais report, outlining nearly 17,000 victims of human rights abuses). Step into this scene a 32-year-old metalworker and trade unionist who, in 1978, led a major series of metalwork strikes against record-high inflation and the Government's attempted fixing of economic figures.

These strikes were Lula's political christening. They brought him renown in the press and a reputation as a hard-bargaining passionate negotiator in his role as the president of the Sao Bernardo steelworkers union. His strike actions in 1978 eventually resulted in him receiving a month of imprisonment, his first of many controversial dealings with labour, district and supreme courts. His subsequent post-dictatorship formation of the worker's party in 1980 saw him become arguably the most popular left-wing progressive in the entirety of Brazil, arguing for extensive land reform, and, more controversially, defaulting on external debt. This represents an entirely different ideology and personality to the leader we see take power in 2002. The systemic reinvention of his image and personality from his first run in 1989 to his win in 2002 (over this period he lost 3 consecutive elections) was aimed at changing his impression on the Brazilian people as a radical left-wing candidate towards a more moderate centre-left Tony Blair-like figure. To achieve this he published a letter to the Brazilian people meant to calm economists' and business owners' fears of a possible hard-line socialist Lula presidency. To further this aim he chose Jose Alencar as his running mate, a well-known business centre-right tycoon.

The scene was set for the 2002 Presidential election, in which the newly reinvented leader won a landslide 61.27% of the vote. It must be noted that in all 3 elections, Lula had contested, and no candidate had received more than 55% of the vote. The caveat to this is the disarray of the opposition PSDB party, with high-level corruption and disagreement within the party meaning this election dominance can be taken with a pinch of salt.

In 2002, Lula inherited a worrying but not unmanageable 12.5% inflation rate and an economy ranked as one of the most unequal in the world. The Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) found in 2001 that 3 times as many people were classified as poor in Brazil than comparable countries with similar GDP per capita levels. This was largely eliminated under Lula's Bolsa Familia - a wide-ranging set of family-based tax credits; this, on top of large funding increases to healthcare and education, reduced poverty by 27% in Brazil in his first term alone.

This period of economic prosperity is where the basis of conflict over Lula lies though, the primary source of funding for these welfare increases was a booming commodities market, state-owned giants such as Petrobras (the biggest company in Latin America) as well as the steel/rubber industry funded these increases. However, Petrobras is often the main area of media scrutiny; there are serious and relatively well-founded accusations that Lula and other top officials took bribes amounting to hundreds of millions from Petrobras executives. On top of this, \$2-13 billion dollars were embezzled from Petrobras funds, making it the largest corruption investigation in the entirety of Brazilian history, ending in the impeachment of Lula's

successor and 159 convictions. Lula would later receive a 9-year sentence (later rescinded) for his alleged role in the scandal. To understand if Lula was truly guilty, we have to take a much more in-depth look at the scandal and allegations themselves.

The problem with this scandal is the sheer scale of documents and variance of allegations. It is highly likely that Lula knew and collaborated in bribes received by his party from a company called Odebrecht; he is accused of accepting \$1.2 million in bribes for renovations to his beachfront house. However, the legitimacy of these claims could be brought into question through the fact the lead judge on Lula's case was a man called Sergio Moro, a well-known backer of Jair Bolsonaro, the right-wing President at the time, who would have had to compete with Lula in any future election. Add onto this the fact that Sergio Moro in 2018 became Bolsonaro's minister for Justice and Public Security. Because of this fact and several other conflicts of interest, the supreme court in 2021 decided a 3-2 verdict to overturn Lula's conviction and let him run for the 2022 presidential election which he then won. The overturning of Lula's conviction may seem to point to his innocence, however even this overturning wasn't without its controversies; the very Justice who cast the deciding vote was in fact an ardent backer of Lulas Workers party and had been appointed by Dilma Rousseff in 2015 after years of Backing her Presidency as a way to carry on Lulas reforms. Even looking at the specific wording of the annulling of his sentence, it laments any evidence of his innocence, but instead focuses on him being sentenced in a state where the crime wasn't committed and the impartiality of the Judges. To put it bluntly, his innocence was never proved by the courts.

The momentous scale of this issue has reigned supreme over the country's politics for years now, and to be brutally honest there is no clear answer or neat conclusion to the legitimacy of the accusations. Furthermore, this was certainly not the first time Lula had been charged with corruption. In 2005, the then-attorney general of Brazil charged Lula and other colleagues with corruption in the Mensalao scandal. The web of political alliances, corruption and brutally polarised politics that Brazil has spun itself stands out as ticking all the marks of a highly dysfunctional and factional political system, and sadly this problem is likely to worsen further. As pointed out by the recent riots and stormings in the capital, presidential palace, and congress building after Lula came to power, Brazil is past the point of political apathy, or calm, for that matter.

Liberator or Liability is the question, and the answer, much like Brazil's politics is incredibly complex and agonisingly partisan, this is a topic that is hard to make objective and opinions usually fall strictly on political lines, there are serious conflicts of interest and corruption claims that would have brought down any western politician in a matter of minutes. Alternatively, Lula is one of the very few Politicians with no formal qualifications, and an upbringing that gives him the claim to the alluring 'man of the people' title. He left office in 2010 with an 80% approval rating, the stuff of dreams for any politician, and a territory often occupied by dictators and cults of personality. This issue to many may seem trivial or foreign, but it may be quite the opposite because of what this entire saga is indicating. This level of political polarisation is becoming more common in the USA, France, South Korea, Israel, Italy, Hungary and more. Each has a strong right- and left-wing faction at each

other's throats constantly, and the damage it is doing to democracy's reputation is untold. How is one meant to bestow the supposed virtues of democracy to Russian and Chinese citizens, when if we take even a glance at the flaws and uncertainty of some countries' democracies it may well be enough to drive people, arms wide open, to the relative monotony and stability of a dictatorship? The Economist's research team (EIU) found that 55% of the world is now living in an authoritarian or hybrid regime. For so long the benefits of Democracy have supposedly sold themselves, but, now more than ever, democracy needs a good salesman and a working model.

## **How Will 'Levelling Up' Impact Canterbury?**

Beren Breeze, Year 12

A major issue that faces the UK is the severe disparity of wealth between the regions that make up the country. If Britain is to fight back against the forces that are pushing the nation into decline (such as Brexit and the Cost of Living Crisis), then it is clear that we must make better use of the whole country and remove regional inequality.

As a solution to this issue the Conservative party put forward the idea of "Levelling Up" in their 2019 General Election manifesto. It proved popular with the public, and helped the party to achieve an 80 seat majority in the House of Commons - the largest since 2001. In the following years, £4.8 billion was allotted to the so-called Levelling Up Fund. The money would be distributed through three competitive rounds in which local authorities would bid for financial

support for infrastructure that would ‘have a visible impact on people and their communities’, according to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Despite Canterbury’s position in the South East, - a comparatively wealthy region with the highest average level of household income outside of London (Office for National Statistics) - in January 2023 the city received £19.9 million from the fund after being successful in the second round of the process with their bid titled “Connected Canterbury: Unlocking the Tales of England”.

The spending of the money allotted to Canterbury will mostly go towards the invigoration of the historic sites such as Canterbury Castle. The currently unused and dilapidated area will become a beacon of greenery that should attract locals and tourists alike. A ‘green walkway’ will also be created along the city walls. This aims to enhance the history entrenched within the city through the use of landscape architecture.

The Levelling Up scheme has faced criticism from those that argue that the £4.8 billion could have been spent better. Data analysis by the Daily Express suggested that the most deprived 10% of local authorities in the UK received a smaller share of the fund than they would have received if the money was distributed equally to all councils.

It has also been argued that the selection process featured a high level of bias. Conservative constituencies received £1.21 billion which greatly exceeded the £471 million given to Labour constituencies. However, Canterbury has been a Labour constituency since 2017, so why did it receive almost £20 million? A reason for this could be that our city is aesthetically inferior to those that it is analogous to,

such as York. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak described a benefit of the Levelling Up programme would be making ‘people feel enormous pride in the places that they call home’. Perhaps the reinvigoration of areas such as the city walls, and Canterbury Castle will counteract the damage that the decrepit highstreet and ‘60’s architecture does to the city’s reputation.

Another reason for Canterbury’s successful bid is that it is an attempt by the government to attract voters to return to their tradition of voting for the Conservatives. It is clear that having a Labour MP in the South East has made the Tories very uncomfortable. Canterbury was seen as a safe Conservative seat, so therefore its decision to replace Julian Brazier (who had held the seat since 1987) with Rosie Duffield worried the party.

## **OPINION: Sharing is caring: Why it’s time for socialism in the UK**

Reuben Fisher, Year 12

13 years of conservative rule – whether it be under one-nation Cameron, or neo-liberal, anti-spend, anti-woke Truss, our leaders have broken Britain, both economically and personally. It’s time for the Tories and Labour to move out of the way and let real change in the door.

Remember reception? “Sharing is caring”, the mantra we all learn as we embrace 13 years of education on our horizon. Inherently, as humans we all empathise with left-wing social ideas, which promote prosperity for all, not the elite, the working class, or just the individual. We gather at every level in community or political or friendship groups and

want the best for all, demonstrating at a basic level why it's better for all of us to work together for the mutual good. Yet, we're told in our day to day lives (by the Mail or similar) that socialism is an evil which must be defeated. The example of Cuba is given, almost without thought, as why socialism will never work. It leaves the poor, supposedly, poorer and malnourished, and the leader corrupt and dictatorial. However, we don't ever see a socialist state given a chance. A real socialist state would not be a dictatorship and instead a democratic, productive and thriving state which leaves no one behind, and gives opportunity and prosperity to every individual, with an arm of support extended to all from the support of all.

In the UK, we had for a long time a functional welfare state. Whilst seen by many as a drain for ordinary people to the hands of the selfish and lazy, benefits in their real form allowed a stepping stone back to work which allowed the least fortunate to survive and bounce back. The NHS was once not on its knees, and in the hands of multinational health insurance shareholders. People were, for a time, better off, given opportunity and given support when needed, allowing them to be more productive and put more into the British economy. The 1950s and 60s are a good example of welfare of the past delivered for people. Unemployment at an all time low, NHS funded purely with tax-payer money, rather than with the aid of the private sector, as it is today, and contributions covered protections for impoverished families – bringing them out of poverty and back to work. This 'golden era' – an example of democratic socialist policies at their best, has been broken down and sold off to private companies. Years of Tories, from Thatcher to Johnson, and years of

lax-Labour politicians – Blair, for example - have undermined the idea of real state support, with sugar-coated right-wing policies such as de-investment, deregulation and denationalisation. More assets than ever of the NHS are owned by private companies. Children starve in half-terms with no free meals. The elderly freeze in their homes with broken boilers and empty wallets. Shareholders of Shell bathe in billion dollar profits.

Despite the ‘slap in the face’ approach the working class has endured in recent times regarding welfare, many seem scared of the word socialism. Many look back to the cold war, the Soviets perhaps, and don’t gather that this wasn’t socialism in its true form. They don’t see a flourishing and looked after society, they see Orwell’s 1984. The Cambridge dictionary describes socialism as: “the set of beliefs that states that all people are equal and should share equally in a country’s money, or the political systems based on these beliefs”. Based on these beliefs, if people are equal under socialism, they get equal power. This is where democracy comes in – the two are not incompatible, but rather inseparable. The best way to describe the idea of a ‘socialist society’ would be to apply British values – tolerance, kindness, prosperity - to new economic policy. While they get dismissed as major reform, and too big to be realistic, bringing the power of money back into public hands through democratically elected government and tax on unnecessary wealth is the only way to bring life back to our communities.

This socialism wouldn’t create a monotone society, instead one where influence and wealth - currently hoarded in billionaires to the tune of Elon Musk - gives power to people to embrace individual creativity in local businesses, or interest

groups and throughout communities. Equal wealth which allows people to seek their aspirations and prosper, but also come together to drive change and voice their opinions.

Describing an ideal society like this is easy, but real change takes effort and will. We are already seeing massive opinion swings against the Conservative party; for example, in late 2022, Labour had a 53% vote share according to pollsters. Currently, Labour isn't offering a real return to the 'golden years' though, shying away from scary words like 'socialism' to convince the few disheartened Tories to change their minds. The public is on socialism's side, we just need to push harder for the change we want.

## **OPINION: Labour's Victory in 2024 is All But Assured**

Fin Lello, Year 12

The Conservatives have been in power now for 13 years, and their position in the polls are historically weak compared to Starmer's Labour. There are similarities between the situation now and the situation before 1997. The history of general elections has mainly taught us that when a party loses economic credibility, they lose the next election. This was shown in 1997, as John Major lost economic credibility and was up against a young new Tony Blair. However, is it justifiable to say that the Labour party will win a landslide victory, and bring an end to Conservative government.

The Conservative party since 2019 have been caught up in various sleazes, and in 2022 went through three Prime Ministers, which has resulted in dismal poll ratings and the

public being sick of the Tory psychodrama. If today's polls were tomorrow's election results, about two-thirds of the Tory MPs would lose their seats. These statistics do put a Labour landslide in sight. Katy Balls, editor of the Spectator, stated that Rishi Sunak is 'held back from the luggage left by Boris Johnson and Liz Truss'. Boris Johnson arguably did not compose himself well over Covid-19, having parties in No.10, and seeing record-breaking numbers of resignations which showed the Conservatives as disorganised and unfit to run the country. Things would soon get worse, as Liz Truss became Prime Minister in September, which further ruined the Conservative reputation as Trussonomics put the UK in economic turmoil. These factors must surely mean that the Labour party will win like they did in 1997?

Contrary to what this suggests, I'm convinced that the next election will be a lot closer than people, especially those who support the Labour party, think. In 1997, New Labour, led by Tony Blair, wiped the Tories off the planet after their 18 years of control. The Conservatives had been in charge for such a long time that they had understandably run out of electoral and financial steam, so voters chose New Labour who were much more central compared to their previous look under Neil Kinnock. But Keir Starmer is not Tony Blair. Blair was inspirational, revolutionised British politics, and was likeable before 1997, but this is completely different to Starmer's look now. In fact, the Conservatives are being helped by Keir Starmer's poor look to the public. It may seem like the Conservatives are down and out, but the Labour party are just as unprepared, so it's a big job for Starmer.

At the beginning of the year, Rishi Sunak gave out 5 promises, which - if he delivers by 2024 - would put him in a

strong position. Current and predicted inflation rates are a big threat, one which Sunak has promised to halve; this would resolve the economic situation to some extent. At the time of writing, the annual rate of inflation has fallen from 10.5% to 10%, which is an improvement, but there is still a long way to go, which will be tough for Sunak, but not impossible. If the Conservatives can demonstrate by 2024 that they are a safe pair of hands economically, it would be more of a repeat of 1992 with John Major. The most important thing for the Tories right now is to keep an efficient and effective government that is united to fix the countries battle-wounds from Covid-19 and Trussonomics, as well as lowering immigration and showing the many positives of Brexit which people fail to see.

Under the premiership of Liz Truss, the markets were spooked with her ‘mini budget’, which lost the Conservatives economic credibility, and does help the argument that Labour will win the next election. However, I see Rishi Sunak as a safe pair of hands economically, which is what our country is in need of at this moment. This is because he has restored some economic balance in our country. The autumn budget that was set out by Rishi Sunak and Jeremy Hunt reversed almost all of Lizz Truss’ economic policies especially with taxes (some conservatives are not pleased about it, as it does go past their core conservative values). Nevertheless, this has relieved the UK economy. Throughout electoral history in the UK, it has been proven that people vote with their wallets, which is why, if a party has lost economic credibility, it means that the electorate will likely vote for the opposite party (except for those who are loyal members and supporters). At this moment, Rishi Sunak is demonstrating economic

credibility, and if he does manage to halve inflation, it could prove devastating for the Labour Party, causing Starmer's path to No.10 to muddy.

Overall, it is, in my opinion, ridiculous to assume that the Labour party will win a landslide victory under Keir Starmer. The Tories still have time to win over the polls and cover up the issues made by Johnson and Truss. In my opinion, the 2024 general election is looking more like 1992, due to the fact that the Labour leader is not the inspirational figure Tony Blair was in 97, but more of a woke, left-wing leader, which even Tony Blair has criticised him for. If Sunak delivers on his 5 promises, then it puts the Tories in a strong position, and may trump anything Keir Starmer has up his sleeves.

# Recipes

## **Katsu Curry**

Eve-Kaede Kelly

We all have our rituals before big events in our lives; actors, musicians and sportspeople have their habits before any performance, and it makes sense that we should too. With exams around for many, it is likely that you will all be following your own personal rituals too; the day before exams you might choose to fall asleep at a certain time, maybe you'll bring an item associated with good luck into the exam hall, especially if it makes you feel more comfortable when going into your tests (and doesn't violate one of the many regulations you have to meet when sitting them, meaning if you have a comfort watch or opaque water bottle, you're out of luck). Following tradition is a perfectly good thing to do.

Growing up, one of my rituals before exams was eating shobu meshi, meaning good luck meals in Japanese. Shobu meshi is a modern tradition often followed by Japanese students the night before taking a major exam (such as a school or college entrance exam) but it's a phenomenon that transcends cultural boundaries; I remember in my old school our head of year told us that before an exam we should eat bananas for breakfast. He told us that just by eating one banana before every exam, our exam results could improve by 3%. I'm not sure how true that necessarily was, but you're all free to prove me wrong.

Amongst the popular shobumeshi eaten in Japan, the most common include rice balls (omusubi, connected to the phrase “en wo musubu” which means “to make a connection”) and weiner sausages (since it sounds similar to “winner”), but by far the most popular shobumeshi has to be any form of katsu.

The most popular katsu meal in this country has to be the famous chicken katsu curry (and I can see why). The word “katsu” is a homonym in Japanese for the word to win, so in eating this, many students hope “to win” their exams.

Some tips for making your curry prior to making it- try to make sure your vegetables are in relatively uniform size, apart from the carrots, since they usually take a long time to cook. For your carrots, I would suggest using the rangiri cutting technique, achieved by rotating the carrot as you go down it cutting, so that your carrots all come out in a triangular-ish shape.

To make Katsu for a family you’re going to need:

Curry:

- Vegetable oil
- A white onion
- 1 clove of minced garlic
- Two small potatoes cut into 2cm blocks (if you want to freeze the curry to eat in later batches, exclude the potatoes since they’ll go mushy if you reheat them)
- A katsu curry stock block/roux (I’d recommend the S&B golden curry stock, since it’s the most authentic curry stock in this country. I believe you can find it in

Sainsbury's and Starry Mart if you're looking for it in Canterbury)

- A couple of carrots- cut these using the rangiri method, by rotating
- Chicken stock (I recommend chicken bouillon powder, around a teaspoon)
- A tablespoon of cornstarch
- Salted butter
- 1 tsp grated ginger (optional)

Rice to serve with- preferably Japanese sticky rice

Then for the chicken katsu itself:

- Chicken breast
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper (basically a couple of twists of the pepper shaker, you don't need to be so specific with this one)
- 2 tablespoons of all purpose flour
- 1 egg
- Around 200g of panko (or just enough to cover your chicken breast when you need it)
- Enough vegetable oil to fry it

1. In a large pot, fry your onions until they start going see-through- this should take around 2 minutes- however if you want extra flavour, I'd suggest properly cooking your onions through, so I'd suggest browning your onions.
2. After this, add your minced garlic and ginger, tomato paste and cook until it begins to smell

3. Add your potatoes, carrots and stir fry them until they begin to soften, then add just enough water to barely cover the contents of the pots- if you add too much water the curry will be too thin, so make sure it's just enough to cover the ingredients, but not submerge them. This method stops your curry from being too thin, since the ingredients release moisture as they are cooked.
4. In your water, quickly add some chicken bouillon powder, then cover your pot and simmer on medium-low heat for 15 minutes. You should stir every so often- if you added too much water to begin with, it's probably best to leave it uncovered. I wouldn't add too much chicken stock because the curry roux is quite salty and you don't want the curry to be too salty.
5. After all the vegetables have softened, put one block of roux in a ladle along with some of the liquid in the pot into the ladle, then mix the water and roux together until your curry turns brown- then allow your curry to simmer for ten minutes over a low heat, stirring occasionally.

#### The Katsu:

For this process, since it requires using a sharp knife and hot oil, please make sure you have a parent with you to either watch or help you with this process, since it is quite difficult, especially if you aren't experienced with cutting meat or frying.

1. Using a sharp knife, lay your chicken breast flat on a cutting board, and cut the chicken breast down the middle from the top to the bottom, before cutting the entire way through, stop and spread the two halves apart, then turning your knife parallel to the cutting board, slice your chicken from the centre to the left/right side (depending on whether you're left or right handed). Then once again, stop before you cut through it, and open this flap of chicken, flip and repeat the process with the other side.
2. Cut the chicken down the centre to have two pieces of chicken
3. Using the back of your knife, pound the chicken to an even thickness- around half an inch thick.
4. Season both sides of your chicken with salt and pepper
5. Prepare three trays to dip your chicken to coat it- one for your flour, one for the panko and another for the egg.
6. In the egg tray, make sure to whisk the egg
7. Coat your chicken with flour first, then shake off the excess, then in the beaten egg
8. Finally coat your chicken in the panko, make sure you really press the panko in so it doesn't fall off too much while frying
9. Begin to heat your oil in a pan over a medium heat- you need to make sure your oil is about 1 ½ inches deep- you don't need to submerge your katsu in oil
10. To check whether your oil is ready to fry, the most common method of checking is either through dipping a wooden chopstick into the oil, or maybe a

crumb of panko in- if there is a bubbling around it as you put the chopstick in, then chances are it's ready to deep fry. If you have a thermometer, then the best temperature to fry in is 170°C

11. Fry one piece of chicken at a time, in order not to overcrowd the pot, turning your chicken every so often until you deep fry until both sides are golden brown
12. When you take the cutlet from the pot, allow some of the oil to drip off and place on some kitchen paper, to absorb some of the oil
13. As you go on, try to take the crumbs in the oil out with a fine-mesh skimmer before you add the next piece of chicken, so the oil doesn't go dark and have burnt bits in.

Finally, assemble your dish by putting your rice and curry in a bowl, with your katsu chicken, cut into bite-sized pieces, and you have the perfect good luck meal for your upcoming exams.

## **Summer Soup**

Pascal Sleigh, year 12

*(Since Eve has put in, what seems to be, a fantastic recipe, I thought I'd try my hand at writing down something for those who follow a vegan or vegetarian diet. -Ed.)*

This soup, which is ideally served cold with ice cubes, is a quick and delicious recipe. As with any soup, the ratios of

ingredients can be easily changed, or even substituted entirely.  
Serve with white bread and olive oil.

Ingredients:

- 400g can of butter beans (lima beans)
- A whole white onion
- Petit pois
- Mint
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 cube vegetable stock
- 2 tsp turmeric
- A lettuce
- Vegetable oil to sauté with
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Water
- Ice cubes

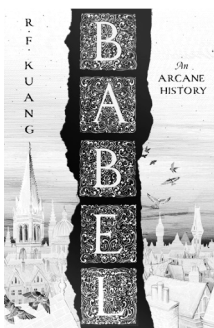
Method:

1. Cut the onion finely and add to a deep pan with some vegetable oil. Sauté (fry on a low heat, such that the onion becomes translucent without browning).
2. Then add finely chopped garlic
3. Add the turmeric, salt, and pepper
4. Finely chop the lettuce, before adding the drained beans to the pan
5. Add vegetable stock and water
6. Heat until the soup has boiled for a couple of minutes, and then take it off the heat
7. Leave to cool, then add ice and serve

# Briefly Skimmed

## Book Reviews

Henry Colley, year 12



### **BABEL, or the Necessity of Violence An Arcane History of the Oxford Translators' Revolution**

By R. F. Kuang

Genre: Fantasy/Dark Academia  
(and Historical Fantasy? If that exists?)  
Rating: 3.5/5

*“That's just what translation is, I think. That's all speaking is. Listening to the other and trying to see past your own biases to glimpse what they're trying to say. Showing yourself to the world, and hoping someone else understands.”*

- R. F. Kuang, Babel

You might expect a book with three titles, one of which begins ‘an arcane history’, to be a sprawling epic of fantasy worldbuilding which is barely readable without an in-universe encyclopaedia. I certainly did, and if anything I was pleasantly surprised to find that it wasn’t.

Despite the scale of events that take place in Babel, the narrative manages to focus on just one small group of 4 university students from varying cultural backgrounds, all of

whom have been scooped up by various rich British men wearing tailcoats, taught an array of different languages during their teens, and whisked off to the Oxford Institute of Translation, nicknamed Babel by the university scholars.

By spending almost the entire novel focused on these characters, Kuang is able to keep the sprawling narrative in check, while telling a more focused, human story of university life and friendships. The different countries each of these characters come from lead to the book being full of a wide range of languages, themes, and cultures, which almost feel underexplored simply because there's so much else happening alongside them.

However, the book takes plenty of time to explore Oxford and its scholars, and in particular the ignorance of such an intellectual institution to the atrocities being committed by the Empire they fund. The pacing seems slow at first, but the gentle pressure of everything happening in the background starts to build, and Babel's importance in supporting it all becomes ever more apparent. I'm avoiding spoilers here, so I won't go into too much detail, but suffice to say that this slow build works very well, even if it does make the middle section of the book a little more difficult to get through.

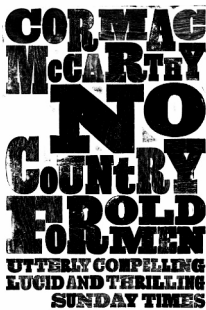
Kuang also interweaves an ingenious magic system into the book, by which a pair of words inscribed on a silver bar have a specific effect depending on their etymology of connotations. This adds some extra interest to the worldbuilding, while also providing a very practical display of the inequality and corruption present in this quasi-factual British Empire: there is a clear disparity between the access to silver bars in Britain and its colonies. While this may sound

like a slightly clunky method of exploring the novel's themes, it actually worked surprisingly well, and helped to give the book the fantasy element which might otherwise have felt undercooked.

I should say that this book isn't perfect; by the end, several characters feel more like plot points than actual people, but the plot is good enough to carry the narrative through the final act, and keep it entertaining at the same time. The ending didn't quite live up to my expectations, but it was still brilliant, and perfectly ties together the themes of the novel.

This book will especially appeal to anyone with an interest in History and English, and be prepared for excerpts of Mandarin, Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, Latin, Greek, and many more. This is to be expected from a book about an institute of translation, but Kuang keeps these infrequent enough that it doesn't get overwhelming.

At the end of the day, *Babel* is a novel about the terrifying, horrific impacts of Imperialism, but the human viewpoint through which it tells this story makes it much more interesting and readable. The subtitle 'An Arcane History' feels slightly misleading, as the actual perspective feels more like that of a YA novel than a sweeping historical epic, but the events of the narrative speak for themselves. The strongest areas of the novel are certainly its worldbuilding and the presentation of its complex themes, but every element of it is still delivered brilliantly by Kuang. A must read for anyone who's a fan of dark academia or R.F. Kuang herself, and I'd definitely recommend it to anyone who even finds the premise slightly interesting.



## NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN

By Cormac McCarthy

Genre: Crime/Thriller

Rating: 4/5

*"Somewhere in the world is the most invincible man. Just as somewhere is the most vulnerable."*

- Cormac McCarthy, No Country for Old Men

As with any Cormac McCarthy book, No Country for Old Men was not quite what I was expecting. To clarify, what I was expecting was a somewhat classic, Clint Eastwood-style Western about a man on the run avoiding bullets as he careens his way to a climactic shootout. I picked up this book hoping for a lighter read, but found in it almost the exact opposite.

No Country for Old Men is as incessantly brutal as it is brilliantly written. The book simply does not give you time to process or breathe, and yet is still very difficult to put down; McCarthy's script-esque writing style is as punchy as ever, translating brilliantly onto the story he is telling. The lack of detail occasionally makes it hard to be exactly sure of which character the narrative is currently following, although there are enough pointers to resolve these moments pretty quickly.

It also helps that the characters we do follow are absolutely brilliantly realised, despite the lack of description. McCarthy has always been an expert at building character

purely through dialogue and action, and this is no exception. Anton Chigurh provides a perfect antagonist, blankly massacring his way through the plot, while Llewelyn Moss, arguably the closest thing this book has to a main character, is brilliantly written as a man doing what he can in the face of people far more powerful than him.

If I had one criticism of the book, it would be that several key events happen, for want of a better word, ‘off-screen’, never truly explored or explained in any detail. Again, I’m avoiding spoilers here, but this was somewhat frustrating on my first read, and I felt deprived of key plot points. However, having finished the novel, this technique works surprisingly well at emphasising the unpredictability of the situation surrounding the characters, and the scenes McCarthy does choose to include are made all the more potent.

This might be why I don’t quite feel able to give the book a full five stars - some parts of the narrative felt ever so slightly rushed because of McCarthy’s dialogue-based style, and this made me feel as if I needed just a little more detail to be truly invested in every scene. However, this was only minor, and the narrative speaks for itself.

Obviously, I would especially recommend this to any fans of Cormac McCarthy’s work, and to anyone who enjoys a crime novel. Just be prepared for something different from the usual, with a plot which is utterly ceaseless and refuses to let you rest. Of course, this is also a great read for fans of the Coen brothers film adaptation, featuring an absolutely terrifying performance from Javier Bardem. Anyone with an interest in recent American history or literature will probably find something to enjoy here too, but the book takes very little

time to appreciate its setting; the characters are too busy trying not to die.

At its core, *No Country for Old Men* is a book about events spiralling out of control, told through the eyes of the characters who get swept up in this chaos. The narrative is a constant but steady escalation towards the inevitable, with every event overshadowed by the shadowy figure of Anton Chigurh slowly forging his way forwards towards his targets. Most of the plot can be summarised by a conversation between two police officers partway through the book. One asks: “It's a mess, aint it Sheriff?”, and the other responds simply: “If it aint, it'll do till a mess gets here.” McCarthy certainly delivers on that promise.

Next Issue - *The Paper Menagerie* by Ken Liu, *Mischief Acts* by Zoe Gilbert

## **Album Recommendations**

*Almanac Behind*

Daniel Bachman, 2022

Reviewed by Pascal Sleight, year 12

Acclaimed by the Wire magazine as one of the best albums of 2022, this instrumental album is a sonic exploration of what the effects of climate change mean to us, using folk influences such as drones and banjo, experimental sampling of weather events, and electronic chaos. As a listener, you are simultaneously chilled by the disorientating timbres, and cradled by the open sound of quartal harmony. At 40 minutes

long, this album is at the highly accessible end of the genre of ambient music. I would highly suggest putting aside time to focus on listening to the album front to back. Can you spot the anagram?

*Fruit Bats*

Absolute Loser, 2016

Reviewed by Henry Colley

Relaxed, reflective rock-folk vibes which aren't nearly as depressing as the title might suggest. Electric guitar and drums provide the core of the songs, but the vocals and lyrics really shine out. *Humbug Mountain Song* and *My Sweet Midwest* are absolute highlights.

## Poetry, Verse, and Dogrel

### **Butcher, Baker, Cornershop Faker**

Alice Stevens, year 12

I was only small when the first shop closed,  
door left ajar as we all filed out, the smell of yeast and bread  
and dedication lost to the wind

Carried on loose wings, limping, chased by the hawks of  
business.

And I searched for its hiding place, for the sanctuaries of  
passion and childhood tastes

Looking for that policeman who handed me the donut, still  
glazed and warm,

or the picnic box which held my baby memories, tightly  
wrapped,

or the taste of early mornings and earlier nights

In hot chocolate warmed by Mum, held in a flask, dented  
bruises warping the metal-

Still warm to the touch, though old and battered, burning with  
cocoa.

Cocoa sold by Michael at the end of the road with the wide  
smile but narrowing coffers, the milk delivered by  
Rachel, glass rattling as she drove past, but her  
pockets always free from the clink of metal.

Yet that smell is gone now. Dead, I'm sure.

Shot cold in the cities long ago, now lost to the towns and  
villages, and we're all witnesses.

The last witnesses. Like Judas, but instead knowing Jesus  
won't rise again.

Because Michael stacks shelves in Tesco's now and Rachel  
works for Sainsbury's.

## Meringues

Pascal Sleigh, year 12

*Defence and Security Equipment International, ExCeL  
London, 2023*

It can be hard to remove the yolk  
When making meringue; floating in the gelatinous white  
Bits of shell are left behind, on which I choke.

With the butt of a teaspoon I attempted to poke,  
Guide the bits of grit with spite.  
It can be hard to remove the yolk.

At DSEI I take out my meringues, one of which has broke  
And stuck to the lid of my tupperware, and as I bite  
Bits of shell are left behind, on which I choke.

I dislike my work, I'm an average bloke;  
I just work, though it's not just work. I don't fight.  
It can be hard to remove the yoke.

In Kiev and Myanmar and Ethiopia and Afghanistan, through  
the smoke,  
The sun shines too bright.  
Bits of shell are left behind, on which I choke.

A week ago, I awoke,  
Shot up in the dead of night.  
It can be hard to remove the yolk;  
Bits of shell are left behind, on which I choke.

## **Plebgate**

Anon

In Westminster's halls, a scandal did brew,  
A controversy, fresh and new.  
It had a name, "Plebgate" they called,  
And its impact, still enthrals.

It started with an altercation,  
Involving an MP, high of station  
And police officers who were tasked,  
To guard the gates, where he had passed.

Words were said, tempers flared,  
What exactly was shared,  
Remains a mystery, even now,  
Amidst the allegations and the row.

The press was quick to seize the news,  
And the story, they did abuse,  
Making headlines, day by day,  
Till for some, the truth was hard to say.

Amidst the twist and turns of fate,  
The scandal grew to national debate.  
It rocked the nation, left it reeling,  
And left many questioning their feelings.

For "Plebgate" was more than a scandal;  
It was a sign of a nation's mishandle,

Of power, lies, privilege and corruption,  
And a failure to uphold trust and instruction.

So let us learn from “Plebgate” past  
And ensure that privilege and power never lasts.  
When we see corruption and deceit,  
We must fight back, not retreat.



Mr Evans

# Taylor's Corner

*(Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here - Ed.)*

## **'Discuss Shakespeare's presentation of Lady Macbeth in the play Macbeth'**

In this essay I intend to discuss Shakespeare's presentation of Lady Macbeth in the play Macbeth a tragic event that was written in the Jacobean period.

Lady Macbeth's breasts are made of milk and she wants spirits to tend her mortal thoughts. To do this Shakespeare makes her stand on some battlements where she screams about being a man. The connotations of milk are: milk, milky and babies.

Lady Macbeth goes mad in the play but first there is a banquet. At which Banquo a ghost steals chairs. He has bloody locks. Lady Macbeth is the man in the relationship but she was definitely female. Some people think she's the fourth witch but she doesn't have a beard so this is impossible.

When Lady Macbeth does the big speech she uses dramatic and powerful imagery.

Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a powerful independent woman who bosses Macbeth around and calls him a cat. She also puts drugs in people's possets plus she acts all nice when King Duncan comes to her house but then helps to shank him. The connotations of Duncan are dead.

Lady Macbeth leaves the play the way she entered it: raving naked and possibly mad. The Doctor cannot work her out and the gentlewoman just repeats what she said. Which

involves beds, blood, wives and murky. The connotations of madness are that Lady Mcbth goes mad, although who can blame her living in Inverness.

In conclusion, Shakespeare presents Lady Mcbth as: murky, milky, Scottish and dead.

B. Smartt, 10B0

*(I feel this whole article deserves a [sic] in about size 25 font - Ed.)*

## **‘Wishful Thinking’**

An asteroid will pass within 3,500km of Earth's surface on Friday - the fourth closest asteroid to skim past the planet since records began. Here's all you need to know about this special space event and how you can watch it live.

🕒 Thursday 26 January 2023 12:35, UK

No. Nooooooooooooo.

Nooooooooo. Please. Please hit us.

By C. Neville, 7B

## **Against Abstractitis**

‘It need hardly be said that shortness is a merit in words’

‘abstractitis’ – when ‘a writer uses abstract words because his [sic] words are cloudy’

- Fowler’s Modern English Usage, 1965

‘never use a long word where a short one will do’

– George Orwell, ‘Politics and The English Language’, 1946

‘Say what you mean; mean what you say’ is a fairly level-headed dictum, in my view. It has brevity, pithiness and simplicity in its favour, and would seem to be intended to inculcate or promote a purposeful and pragmatic stylistic dogma: to wit, that one ought to aim at direct and unmediated expression of a singular and irreducible mental construct in order to facilitate immediate apprehension of that idea in, or by the mind of, its intended addressee. Admirable in its clarity, forthright in its assertion of the sound doctrine of plain speaking, and, furthermore, a self-exemplifying model of its own intended outcome, this octosyllabic wisdom, rendered in maximally coherent and rugged Anglo-Saxon, should be our constant guide, our literary vade mecum, as we practise the craft of fictive and imaginative composition, or as we

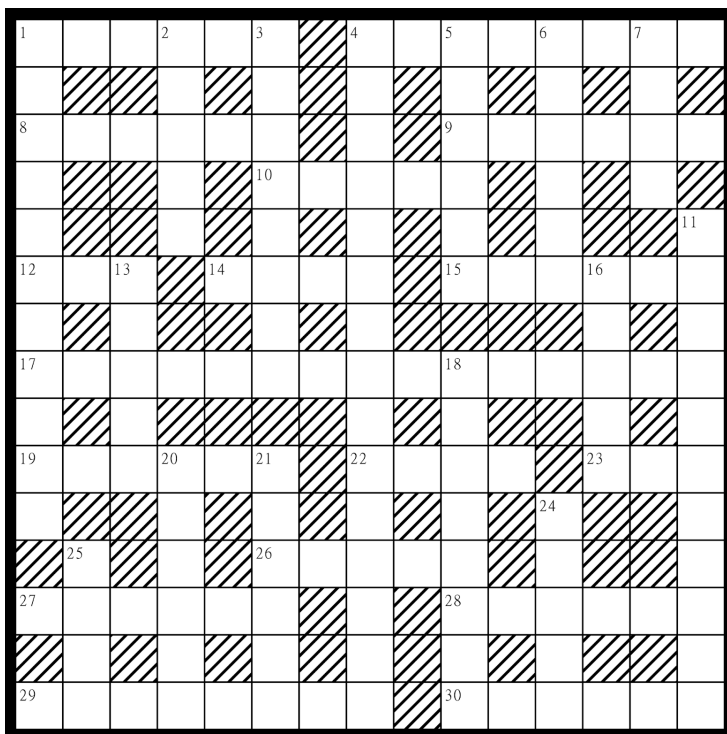
endeavour to perfect the art of journalistic and non-fictional prose. I close with the reflection that the daily toil of delivering the English curriculum in the school would be a less arduous and irksome affair were more of my peers to adopt – nay embrace – the advice proffered by such luminaries as Messrs. Fowler and Orwell, both of blessed memory, whose conviction that ‘saying what one means’ should be our primary and overriding objective would go some way to making the life of the humble English master a less soul-destroying and spiritually corrosive experience.

HW Fowler, Aged 12, 7B

Taylor’s Corner is continued on page 94.

# Crossword

Pascal Sleigh, year 12



## Across

- 1 Picture formed of small tiles (6)
- 4 A quality of being enough (8)
- 8 A momentary glance (6)
- 9 Confuse (6)
- 10 Type of bean native to the Amazon (5)

- 12 Recede (3)
- 14 Accessible (4)
- 15 Operator of grinding apparatus (6)
- 17 People opposed to the UK's current socio-economic system (15)
- 19 Termination (6)
- 22 A chemical element (4)
- 23 Yes (archaic) (3)
- 26 Cuban drum (5)
- 27 Disprove (6)
- 28 Paste made from sesame seeds (6)
- 29 People that play low-pitched instruments (8)
- 30 Reddish pink (6)

## **Down**

- 1 Pretends to be something else (11)
- 2 An appendage (5)
- 3 Legume sometimes known as gram (8)
- 4 Machines used to control humidity and temperature (15)
- 5 Preserve (6)
- 6 Release (a fabric?) (6)
- 7 Sanguine (4)
- 11 To take a definite form (11)
- 13 Restrained (5)
- 16 A young girl (5)
- 18 Fragrant (8)
- 20 Problems (6)
- 21 Small, mostly carnivorous lizards (6)
- 24 To feel extreme repugnance towards (5)
- 25 Sixth letter of the greek alphabet (4)



Mr Evans