

THE ACADEMY



Student Newspaper, Volume 7

Welcome to the seventh edition of 'The Academy' Student newspaper, which contains articles and writings from a number of SRPA's English Subject Champions. Within this issue you will find original writing from a few familiar Subject Champions, as well as contributions from some of our newer members. Here you will find a range of fantastic book reviews to peruse and consider – perhaps you'll even find a new read in time for the Christmas break! The English Subject Champions have spent a lot of time on this newspaper, so reading it would really support them and their effort! Happy Reading and thank you – Miss Hurk.



Hiding – Continued from previous volumes

By Olivia (Year 8)

In the first two scenes of the play, Bea cooked the family a disastrous meal, and her brothers taunted her for this failed endeavour. They later ridiculed her strange behaviour and phobias, indicating that not all is as it seems with Bea. The parents, Millie and Jamie, began to worry for their daughter...

In scenes three and four, Bea's parents sent her to 'THE CAMP', fearing her different nature. They decided upon Mrs Monori's Special Camp for Teen Girls. Bea arrived at camp and was intimidated by the strict, routine atmosphere.

In scenes five and six Bea met Meiae, and they bonded over their past experiences. They become instant friends. After being called in for IT time at the end of scene five, in scene six, there was a commotion caused by two missing children. At the end of scene six, Bea noticed a story on the news and recognised her parents – they were infamous kidnappers! The Guards forcefully took Bea offstage...

ACT ONE, SCENE SEVEN

[The scene opens inside a plain room. There is only a basic table and three chairs around it. Bea enters the stage and sits down, she is followed by two guards, who also sit.]

Guard 1: What happened at the IT room... Bea? [Leans forward.]

Bea: I was looking at the news. [Guard 1 does a circular motion with their wrists, implying Bea should continue talking.] I saw an article about two kidnappers who had disappeared but had been spotted recently on the High Street. The picture was of my so-called parents.

Guard 2: Okay, but why did you go crazy about it?

Bea: I'm not crazy! I just found out I have been ki-

Guards: [In unison] Yeah, right.

[Guards go off stage laughing. They mutter 'kidnapped' as they go along.]

ACT ONE, SCENE EIGHT

[The scene is set in a dining room full of tables and chairs. A line of Clients (the children) come onstage and one by one they sit down at the tables.]

Meiae: [Stuttering on her words] Wha- how was th- how was it?

Bea: How was what?

Meiae: The... [Whispers] SEC Intervention?

Bea: No one believes me. They think I really am insane. They just laughed when I said I'd been kidnapped!

Meiae: Oh, well, I definitely believe you.

Bea: Thanks.

[Mrs Monori runs offstage desperately.]

Kayde: [Shouts] YEAH!!!!

[All Clients, except Bea and Meiae, run around stage and throw pens and food and push tables offstage forcefully.]

Bea: [Tries to shout over all the Clients] What is happening? Where is Mrs Monori?

[Meiae gets wiped offstage by the crowd and Bea is stuck in the middle of the stage and everyone is running around her.]

Bea: [Singing]

I thought I was just different.

But this has gone way too far.

I can't believe the terrors

How did they persuade me?

They were acting kind of weird, oh why did I not notice?

Now I can see why,

I know.

Oh gosh I know

I know why

I mean,

I've never been to school

I've never gone out shopping

I have never gone outside at all

I know now

I see

I know now

I can see ten thousand days ahead of my life

Stuck in this

Ignorant

Lousy

Traumatizing

Mesmerizing

Little mistaken world

And I'll be stuck in this camp.

Soon I'll lose my life, my sanity,

And my insanity will increase significantly

And maybe I will never

Even know where or what my family is.

But now I know.

[Everyone on stage stops where they are and start clicking to the rhythm.]

Welcome to the place where you will spend all eternity,

Just waiting.

Just waiting.

Waiting for...

What will never come to us

Our freedom

And our normality

We will never be sane humans again.

Bea: [speaking] Now I know...

Clients: We know...

Meiae: Oh, I can't believe...

All: The horrors of what we have seen.

[Blackout. The curtain closes.]

To be continued...



By Hazel (Year 8)

Hazel enjoyed studying *The Gothic* in Year 7 and has continued to enjoy the morbidly fascinating dystopian genre, which she has studied in Year 8. It is from the reading she completed for both of these genres that inspired her to write the following narrative...

The glass door slammed shut against the wall and shattered as the tall woman made a break for the street. Wobbling drunkenly behind her was a man, holding a bloody knife, with stains all over his clothes.

As she ran, the man screamed behind her, "Get back here! I need to show you some discipline!" The young woman thought back to the old, abandoned house, where bodies of four young, vulnerable women lay lifeless on the floor. She couldn't join them.

CRACK!

A bolt of lightning flashed before her and the man appeared, looming intimidatingly over her, knife held just above her heart.

"This'll teach you not to mess with me," he whispered, his beer breath so strong in the woman's face.

He struck down hard.

There was a blood-curdling scream.

Then silence...



Bonfire night: sparks, excitement...

By Lily (Year 8)

The evening begins with music thumping like a drumbeat, shielding the pets. Meanwhile, the family hustle and bustle to try to find their winter clothes.

They step outside, filled with anticipation and excitement, and immediately get the first faint smells of smoke.

As they step into the field, voices are heard from all around as the family try not to lose each other in the massive crowds. Young children walk past holding their mums' hands, overjoyed with the flashing light they just bought. Aromas of hot food fill their noses, and even though they have just eaten a nice, big portion of bangers and mash, they now find themselves craving a freshly cooked, sugary donut.

Eventually, everything dies down as people gather around fire. Embers are spat everywhere until they slowly turn into what looks like twirling ballerinas in the night sky.

Everyone admires the bonfire till the first flash of light, before a loud pop diverts their attention to the painting in the sky. The first pop is always more deafening than anyone can remember and then follows a chorus of oohs and aahs. Electric blues, shimmering golds, and fiery reds explode into flowing cascades of colour.

Bright lights gradually fade, leaving behind an abyss of darkness that swallows the sky. And yet, hearts are full, glowing with love and laughter, memories twinkling brighter than any firework ever could.



By Jamie (Year 12)

The night was cold and mystifying. Every now and then I saw a shooting star burn up and die, ceasing to exist in one final, magical, beautiful, flame. It was September. That eclectic, mesmeric time of year where winter collides with summer to make a canvas of beauty and mystery, which is often incomprehensible. The night sky appeared to crackle in its somehow clear brilliance. It was pitch black, yet it gave me more light than any other time in my life. The trees beckoned down more forcefully upon the earth than they did at day, as though to say that this was when humanity departed, and nature reclaimed its grasp. Occasionally, I would move my head towards the side of a tree, attempting to listen to whatever it had to say.

I've always felt that trees are far more than plants, but living, breathing creatures, who simply exist outside the remit of our colonial, human minds. It's like I've always thought that God, if it does exist, would be a purely telepathic, non-physical creature outside the bounds of our fickle, physical mortality. And, if God were a creature on earth, it would be a tree. God would not be incarnate. We are far too flawed entities to be permitted to be occupied by God. Trees are trees – behemoths –

viridescent – granting the rest of the planet the oxygen it needs to survive.

That night, I could hear the crickets jump, with that little buzzing sound, which is so inarticulately, viscerally satisfying and engaging. It made me feel as though I were surrounded by small friends, ecstatic to see me, jumping their highest leap to reach me. The foxes, usually reticent and insecure, came out in their droves, presumably looking for their next prey, hidden through leagues of farmer's barbed wire, and ordinary men and women's fences.

Many people hate foxes, presumably because they kill their chickens, but I have never been able to hate them. Not since I read a little Roald Dahl.

The river looked so glistening that night, with the stars reflecting upon it, little portals to worlds asking to be jumped in. It wasn't transparent, but translucent, and the water looked like a Van Gogh painting, sparkling, intimate, extraordinary, but underappreciated. The fields, flat and habitual, looked on this night like something out of science fiction. They spread out giving the impression that you had trespassed onto another planet, another world. Perhaps, even, another time. The fields were tinged with a melancholy, all amber and auburn.

What I am describing is one specific night, but it could've been a night like any other.

But, this night, I had ventured out.

In August.

In 1993.

With David.

With Gracie.

I had asked them to meet with me on the fields, 10 miles from the outskirts of the city. It was a long bike ride, and an even longer walk, but they came, nonetheless. I "loved" them both in a strange sort of way. I didn't really love them but I liked them, I appreciated them, I cared for them. And that's the closest I ever get to that emotion.

I stood at the entrance to the fields for what felt like a blink of an eye, but was in reality an hour, ingratiating myself into the aesthetics of the land and nature, and ruminating on my life up to that point, much like what I am doing now. I thought, as I glared up to the melancholy sky above, about my father, my mother, about Gracie, about David, about all the other people who had passed through my life. I felt overcome with grief. Even though my mother, Gracie and David were still there, I felt as though I had already lost them in some strange sort of way. As though, no matter what I did in the future, they would never see me for who I actually was. They would never truly know me.

Truly, truly, truly.

I looked upon the fields, upon nature, and I felt at peace. Completely at peace. I felt as though if I died then, I could die happy because I had stood outside these fields, and seen their extravagant, wondrous nature.

Even though my life had been imperfect, even though I had never truly connected with someone else, even though I was seen as a failure by almost everyone around me, I could die happy in those fields.



BONFIRE COMPETITION ENTRIES:

By Hazel (Year 8)

The smell of burnt wood and toasted marshmallows filled the air as the huge bonfire crackled. The fire was made of swirling reds and oranges and felt cosy and warm, despite the cold chill in the air. Above our heads, the first firework exploded. It was like a great, glittering star and the ones that followed were even greater and brighter. The crowd around us let out amazed "oohs" and "ahhs" as the fireworks continued to explode. After the show, the air smelt strongly of gunpowder; the horrible smell we all forget about yet still don't mind. We simply recall the experience of beautiful, colourful fireworks, a warm, crackling fire and the smell of marshmallows and hotdogs, which is enough to make a night feel magical.

By Lily (Year 8)

A breath between what was and where

Pumpkins cleared, the front door seems bare,
Firework memories linger in the air,
A pause between the rush and cheer,
The softest time of year.

Pyjamas by six, the night draws in,
Kettle hums as hot chocolate season begins,
Socks by the fire, stories flow,
The firelight flickers, soft and low.

The windows mist, the dark feels kind,
A slower pace, a softer mind,
The tree still sleeps, the tinsel waits,
The next season pauses at the gates.

By Blake (Year 8)

As the crowd gathers around the blazing fire, I feel a warm breeze gently gliding across my face. As the smoke from the bonfire stings my eyes, my feet stumble around in the autumn mud, which squelches and oozes, submerging my wellington boots. Cool waves crash against the shore, dotting my face with freezing particles of water.

Glancing across the cliffside, I see the magnificent inferno burning the 10-foot-long branches and logs that had been fed to it by passers-by and children, who have devoted themselves to keeping the fire in its glorious state for the night, since they are bored and want to grill food on a bonfire, not a barbecue.

A delicious scent floats through the air as various families are cooking burgers, sausages and other meats upon the open flames. The wind smells salty and cold, with the undeniable smell of fish and chips ascending the cliffs from the near-by town of Durness. Another, more bitter smell of fire and smoke stains my nose and lingers atop my clothes.

Just out of arm's reach, a constant crackling drifts away from the fire, followed by a low rumble of thunder in the distance. Every now and then, a high-pitched whistle zooms upwards from a group who've isolated themselves for safety as they launch fireworks into the sky, illuminating the fields and islands near us.

As the evening draws to a close, the food is being handed out. I take a grilled sausage and immediately its juices trickle down my chin; its delicate flavour saturates my mouth.

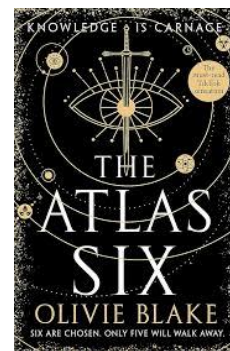


BOOK REVIEWS:

The Atlas Six by Olivie Blake

Rating: ★★★★★

This is a book that follows six young, magical people, who get accepted to a secret society's training year. They enter in what seems like a normal school year, yet they are learning about their emerging powers and the others along the way. Each chapter follows a different character's point of view. Near the end, they find out they need to do something they never thought they would have to do...



The Atlas Six is the first of a trilogy.

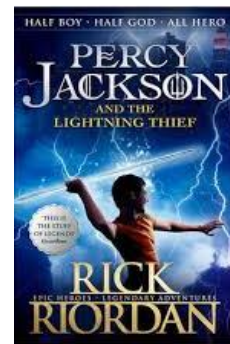
This is a good book with lots of drama but, at first, it took me a little while to understand and feel engrossed. However, the plot is engaging and, overall, this is an entertaining read. I would recommend this to people who enjoy drama, magic, and (in the next two books) reading about the breakdown of a society.

By Hazel (Year 8)

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan

Rating: ★★★★★

I would definitely recommend this book to people who love Ancient Greek mythology. The story is set in New York, with the protagonist being 12-year-old Percy Jackson. He's troubled and goes to a boarding school called Yancy Academy. In this school, he has a Latin teacher named Mr Brunner, who takes the class on a trip to a museum of art. However, in this museum one of the chaperones, Mrs Dodds, turns into a flying beast and tries to kill him. Mr Brunner lends Percy a pen that

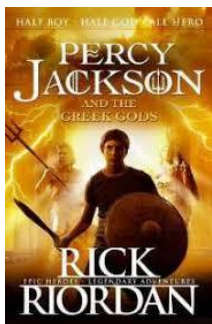


transforms into a magical sword that he uses to defeat her. This is only the start of this amazing book! At times, I found it hard to stop reading due to the incredible plot and fantastic battles. Overall, this is an electrifying book, with hilarious puns and loveable characters embedded within the pages.

By Ethan (Year 9)

Percy Jackson and the Greek Gods by Rick Riordan

Rating: ★★★★★



Percy Jackson and the Greek Gods is a fun, educational novel that recaps the tales of all 12 major Greek Gods through the eyes and words of a teenage boy.

I have rated this novel 4 stars because there are countless funny moments and the overall mood is humorous, with no bitter aspects. Seeing as all short stories

and legends are supposed to have some basis in fact, it is interesting to see how everything leads to modern day society.

However, there are a few flaws with the book. For example, the actual legends aren't written by author Rick Riordan, just retold in a few of the tales, so there could be minor/ major details missing.

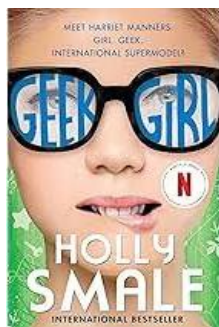
But to those who may believe or find this off-putting, this is, after all my opinion and should not dissuade readers from purchasing and reading such an interesting book.

By Blake (Year 8)

Geek Girl by Holly Smale

Rating: ★★★★★

Geek Girl, by Holly Smale, is a delightful and entertaining novel that's sure to resonate with everyone who's ever felt like they don't quite fit in. Harriet Manners (the loveable and awkward protagonist) has geeky quirks, and her infectious enthusiasm makes the story both relatable and hilarious. From fashion disasters to photo shoots, Harriet's story is a wild and wonderful ride. Smale's writing is witty and engaging and the book's themes of self-acceptance and embracing your individuality are timeless and inspiring.



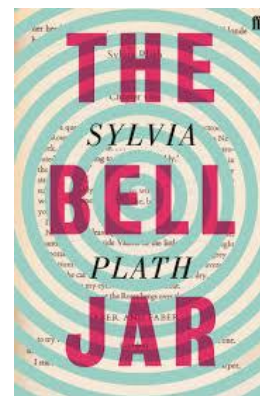
With its light-hearted storyline, Geek Girl is a perfect read for anyone in Year 7 and Year 8 looking for a feel-

good, engaging novel. So, if you're in need of a book that'll make you smile and remind you that it's ok to be a little weird, look no further than Geek Girl.

By Lily (Year 8)

The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath

Recently, I ventured out to a bookstore and got myself a copy of the Bell Jar. It's a book I've had on my reading list for quite a while – a result of its veneration amongst critics. And I'm happy to say, it lived up to this veneration and more.



There is so much one can say about Sylvia Plath and her life – tortured, abused, extraordinary – but I will try to keep this review to merely an overview of her most acclaimed work, despite how intrinsically linked to her life it may be.

What struck me most whilst reading, was how humanising it was. Esther, our protagonist, is anguished, yet she's also very ordinary. Reading the first few chapters, which details her experiences at a fashion internship, and at college, I could see myself and so many more of my acquaintances in Esther. And when she later descends into depression in the latter half of the book, the prose is ever more moving and ever more captivating. She's not alien at all, she's a human all the same, and her insecurities are described movingly and profoundly. This perspective obviously comes from Plath's own endurences and is touching and agonising because of it.

Overall, I would highly recommend this read. In my view, it is one of the most defining and captivating works of the 20th century, with its sympathetic presentation of mental health being revolutionary for the period in which it was written.

By Jamie (Year 12)



WHY IS ENGLISH SO IMPORTANT?

For this volume, I tasked the English Subject Champions (the great supporters of our subject) to share with others their passion for English. It is a question often asked: 'Why does English even matter?' or 'What is the point in studying more English?' So, I thought who better to answer than those in the midst of their studies and who have already found that love and passion for this vital subject. – Miss Hurk

Jamie (Year 12): English is not merely another subject at school, but another world. It is a gateway to every fantasy and every anguish which one could imagine. It is a place of solace from the monotone world, and a place where that world's faults are illuminated.

English changed my very outlook, my very perspective. Every lesson I have ever had of English has been magical and divine, a mesmerising journey into something ubiquitous and far more powerful and enduring than any singular life. Literature bridges time, bridges people, bridges worlds, and all through the most rudimentary power we are bestowed – words.

Hazel (Year 8): English is important because it is a well-spoken language. The subject is important because it teaches people about how to properly write formally, which is helpful in many different ways, write something that is comprehensible, and also sparks an interest in writing in many. The subject also builds reading skills, which are important in many different subjects, even Maths, which mostly uses numbers instead of words.

Olivia (Year 8): English, to me, is important because it gives me imperative life skills for my future. It has also helped me get extraordinarily far on Bribooks, including publishing 5 books that have earned me three awards in the UK. It has also opened my imagination far wider than it had been.

Lily (Year 8): I think English is such an important subject, not just for developing our language skills but also for its broader benefits. It helps us to enhance our communication skills, making it easier to connect with others on a deeper level and can aid in cultivating greater empathy. It also fosters our creativity and imagination, empowering us to dream big and allow us to achieve those dreams. Not to mention, English opens doors to many different career opportunities, equipping us to pursue our passions and ambitions.



SRPA English Subject Champions

Whilst not all English Subject Champions took part in the writing of this newspaper, they have nevertheless attended meetings and contributed to the ongoing promotion of reading and writing across the academy by designing and organising events. It has been fantastic moving into this new academic year to see so many familiar faces in our Subject Champions Meetings, as well as interest from new individuals wishing to join. So, from this very grateful editor, a huge thank you! They are:

- Hazel (Year 8)
- Olivia (Year 8)
- Blake (Year 8)

- Lily (Year 8)
- Ethan (Year 9)
- Liv (Year 12)
- Thomas (Year 12)
- Molly (Year 12)
- Jamie (Year 12)

We will be publishing a student newspaper every full term (again at Easter and the Summer), so if you want to get involved or contribute to the organisation and writing of articles, come and see Miss Hurk in C110 whenever you have a spare moment. There are plenty of new competitions and projects we will be working on into the new year and we would like nothing more than to get as many people involved as possible!

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

ADVERTS:

NEW BOOK ALERT!

Jen has a big confrence in London. Jay HATES London. But with Jen in constant pain, she can't go alone. Now Jay has some very difficult choices. Instead of facing her fears, she decides to build an AI to take her Mother to London. Friends and foes they meet, as AMIE stirs up a treat...

<https://www.bribooks.com/bookstore/anie-by-olivia-batt-rawden>

Olivia Batt Rawden

You already got me 17th and 18th in the UK in seperate leagues for Hiding In Plain Sight!

OUT NOW!

Hiding In Plain Sight- Part 2

Fortunately, the summer book writing camp is over so this book is out for general publication so no rush!
(I recommend reading the first book first though.)

Way better than the first book!
-a very real review

This sequel to the bestselling book, Hiding In Plain Sight, is the epic conclusion to finish it off. Topping it with 117 pages, this part of the major psychological thriller is where we follow Bea back in time to find that the real threat has only just begun. Bea discovers she has inherited a frightening new power from Meiae, who refuses to die, and who has found a new way to cling to life. Wielding this strange ability, Bea finally locates her long-lost biological parents, only to find them caught up in a dark world of betrayal and crime.

Olivia Batt Rawden

