



St Catherine's College Book Banter

Summer is nearly here! The dark nights are behind us and the driest April has given way to wet and windy May. With the gradual lifting of Lockdown, public libraries are reopening so get along there and expand your reading horizons!

In this issue, we have Special Guest Star **Mr Bonsor** letting us glimpse his Childhood in Books and some great new reading recommendations for you to try. You have a week off- it's never too soon to catch the reading bug!

Other Ways to Read



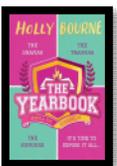
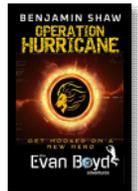
Manga: a very popular form of graphic novel from Japan, usually printed in black and white. They are read from back to front. The American form is read in the more traditional way. The language is as rich and varied as any traditional novel and the stories are exciting and well-developed. They are usually the same size as a typical paperback. They are aimed at adults and children alike.

New Releases this Month



A book for the Climate Warrior! #Sharkgirl by Christian Darkin is a high action thriller featuring computer hacker Celeste who wants to stop the rainforest burning. Hooking up with a gang of like-minded teenage eco-rebels, she finds herself chased by armed killers and fighting great white sharks. Christian Darkin is a documentary maker, Dr Who writer, animator, illustrator and special effects designer.

The first book in a new YA series introduces Evan Boyd, Operation Hurricane: The Evan Boyd Adventures #1 by Benjamin Shaw; a 15-year-old hero who isn't very popular at school and doesn't really like his family much either, until his father disappears. He is then hell bent on discovering the truth about Hurricane and finding his father. A 21st century mix of science-fiction and adventure with an identifiable hero.



The Yearbook, a new release from popular-with-teens novelist Holly Bourne (*Am I Normal yet?*) focusses on the compilation of the Year 11 end of school Yearbook. Paige, an aspiring journalist, is not happy to print the no-so-truthful entries submitted by the school's 'mean girls.' Aided by her friend Elijah, Paige sets out to reveal the real truth.

If you read any of these new titles, please write a review for Book Banter. Reviews of any books you have read are always welcome at Book Banter so if you are delighted or disgusted by a book you have read, please let us know.

My Childhood in Books

This issue, we warmly welcome **Mr Bonsor** to Book Banter. Initially a little reluctant, Mr Bonsor even claimed that he didn't really read as a child! However, after some reflection, he surprised himself by completing a full list, which you can enjoy below.



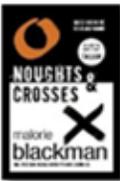
When I was in Year 6 I was lucky enough to have a teacher who loved reading, and story time was a scheduled part of our school day. One of the books he read to us was Wolf Brother by Michelle Paver. A story set 6000 years ago that starts with a young boy seeing his father killed by a bear leads to a quest fuelled by a prophecy of 'The Listener'. This really captured my imagination as a child. I could picture myself running through the woods with a wolf at my side ready to save the world. Alas, the opportunity has not yet presented itself but I'm sure it will some day soon.



The Artemis Fowl series by Eoin Colfer is my favourite series of books ever! I started reading them when I was in Year 8 and continued until the last book was released in 2012, when I was 17. The books are clever and witty and will make you laugh out loud. I enjoyed these books so much that I even went back and re-read all of them as an adult not long ago! Reading about Artemis and his adventures with Captain Holly Short of LEPrecon, after a few years gap, felt like catching up with some old friends I hadn't seen for a while. **Just don't watch the movie!**



Another book read to me by my Year 6 teacher, this time set in the opposite direction in time. Thousands of years in the future cities no longer sit still, instead roaming around looking for other cities to cannibalise for food and supplies. The setting for Mortal Engines by Philip Reeve is London, which has returned to Victorian era culture. I really enjoyed the clash of the old and the new and reading what became of different places that I had been to. (Watch out for pirates if you're ever in Tunbridge Wells!) **Once again, don't watch the movie!**



Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman came to me as a teenager. In it, a world where white people are the historically subjugated race. The book follows a young couple who have a forbidden love affair. He's a Nought, the first white student at her prestigious school. She's a Cross from a wealthy, powerful family. There's a reason Romeo and Juliet has been told 1000 different ways by 1000 different people and this version is top notch. Don't just take my word for it, you'll have seen it in the top 25 books as voted on by secondary students in your world book day lesson!



I can't help but feel like I'm cheating by dipping into the top 25 books again but Northern Lights by Phillip Pullman is too good to leave out! Like many of the books on this list, we see Earth but a slightly different version of it. In this Earth, every person has a dæmon that goes everywhere they do. A dæmon takes on the form of the animal that most represents that person's personality. I like to think mine would be something cool like an eagle or a lion, though I think it's more likely it would be a housecat!



Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck from the top 25 books but a more deserving book I could not think of. I was never really naughty at school, I talked too much and didn't work as hard as I should, but I wasn't that bad. When I found myself in internal exclusion on a beautiful sunny day at the end of Year 10, I didn't know what to do with myself. So I read this book. I hadn't read it in my English lessons so the story was completely fresh to me. I read the whole thing in one sitting; I just couldn't put it down. I could so easily picture the dusty valleys and the river where George and Lenny sat. As an adult, I now understand the culture and the situation that the characters were in, but sitting in that boiling hot room at 15, none of that mattered to me. It was simply a great story. This time, **do watch the movie**. Gary Sinise and John Malkovich are close to perfect as their characters – they're almost as real as they were in my head.

Author Profile

Inspired by Mr Bonsor's choice of *His Dark Materials*, we profile Philip Pullman.



Philip Nicholas Outram Pullman is 74 years old, which may seem quite elderly for someone who writes books read and beloved by teenagers and adults alike. From his fertile mind unfurled the iconic trilogy, *His Dark Materials* featuring Lyra Belacqua, Will Parry and the mysterious Dust. He is also the writer of several other sequels and prequels linked to *His Dark Materials*. In total, he has written more than 11 books as well as plays, comics and articles. He has also won most of the awards for his writing that are possible.

The concept of the daemon was created by Pullman in *Northern Lights*, the first book in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy. Imagine never being lonely. Imagine if everywhere you went, you took an animal that required no feeding, cleaning, or upkeep. He was just your best buddy, along for the ride, always by your side. Such is your daemon, an extension of your soul without whom you will not survive and from whom you cannot stray more than a few metres. It will change shape many times until it becomes fixed as a person grows up. Philip Pullman said that his daemon was a raven.



Before writing full-time, Pullman worked as a teacher and a teacher trainer, which helped form some strong opinions about education and how reading is taught in schools. He dislikes any kind of categorising of books either by age or gender; *"I'm against anything, from age-ranging to pinking and blueing, whose effect is to shut the door in the face of children who might enjoy coming in. No publisher should announce on the cover of any book the sort of readers the book would prefer. Let the readers decide for themselves."*

A champion of reading for pleasure, Pullman has criticised the way books are presented in schools. He has said that Government *"seem to think the function of a book ... is to provide exercises for grammar and it's not, of course. The function of a book or a poem or a story is to delight, to enchant, to beguile."* Anyone can be delighted, enchanted and beguiled by a book- you just have to find the right one!

Competition Time

Everyone has a daemon, an external soul, according to Philip Pullman. Explain what your daemon could be and how and why you think it represents who you are. Send your entries to Ms Preston by June 20th. There will be prizes!



