

THE MO



HEADS OF THE SCHOOL
2017

C O N T E N T S

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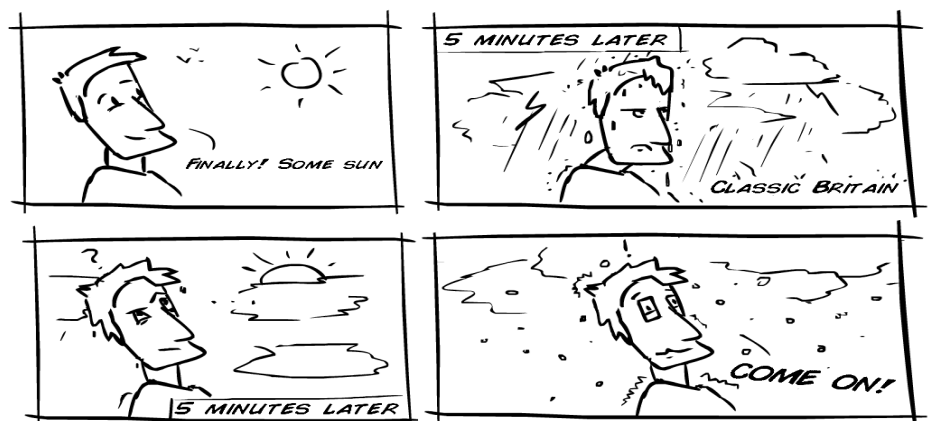


NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Spring has arrived and we're gifted with the sight of blossoming flowers and bright colours as the sun (hopefully) shines down on us. It fills me with a happy optimism that I can wake up and actually see sunshine rather than darkness greeting me. The dull grey mornings always made me want to curl up and go to sleep again. Thankfully, 'The Mo' is here to provide you with something to read out in the brilliant sunshine when you've gotten up to attack the day!

The school is a bustling hub of activity as we prepare for the summer term, bringing together everything that we have been doing over the year to a close. There are students that are preparing to be a year older, whilst others knuckle down and prepare for the terrifying prospect of exams. Anxiety almost certainly begins to pick up as the school year starts to end, but make sure you don't get overwhelmed; remember to spend a moment outside in the rare British sunshine (even if you have hay fever – try your best). It's the little things that make life bright and we mustn't forget to appreciate that.

This edition of 'The Mo' brings to you some thoughts on another life, a professional's opinion on exams and how influential media can truly be on our awareness of what is in the world around us. We hope you enjoy this spring edition of 'The Mo'.







JUGHEAD AND HIS *ASEXUALITY*

Unless you have been living under a rock – or even worse – do not have a Netflix account, you will certainly have heard about *Riverdale*, the new teen show everyone is obsessed with. It follows the mysterious murder of Jason Blossom, the popular boy from a small town's high school. Amongst the many characters that we have grown to love, there's one in particular that stands out—Jughead, who is played by our beloved pin-up, Cole Sprouse. The name rings a bell doesn't it? He also played Cody in the famous *The Suite Life of Zach and Cody*. Or, if you're a really old-school fan – he played Ben, Ross Geller's son, in the iconic TV show *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*

But enough about Cole Sprouse because that is not what I want to discuss. I want to discuss his character: Jughead, and more precisely, his sexuality.

Riverdale's characters are based on the classic *Archie* Comics (which have been around for decades and continue to grow an important and dedicated fan base). Therefore, when these well known characters jumped onto our screens – there is a lot of pressure to meet the high expectations the fans. Many of the characters in the show have done more or less justice to their comic version: Betty is the perfect blonde girl next door, Archie has his notorious ginger locks and Veronica is very hot and a snob. But when it comes to Jughead – yes he is a loner (and yes, he wears the crown hat all the time) and interestingly, he isn't asexual.

In the comics, Jughead comes out as being asexual and the fans loved that about him. If you're confused as to what asexuality is, it's simply a sexual orientation where the person lacks sexual attraction towards anyone and has a very low desire for sexual activity. It is

not the same as celibacy; however, being celibate is a choice, whereas being asexual isn't.

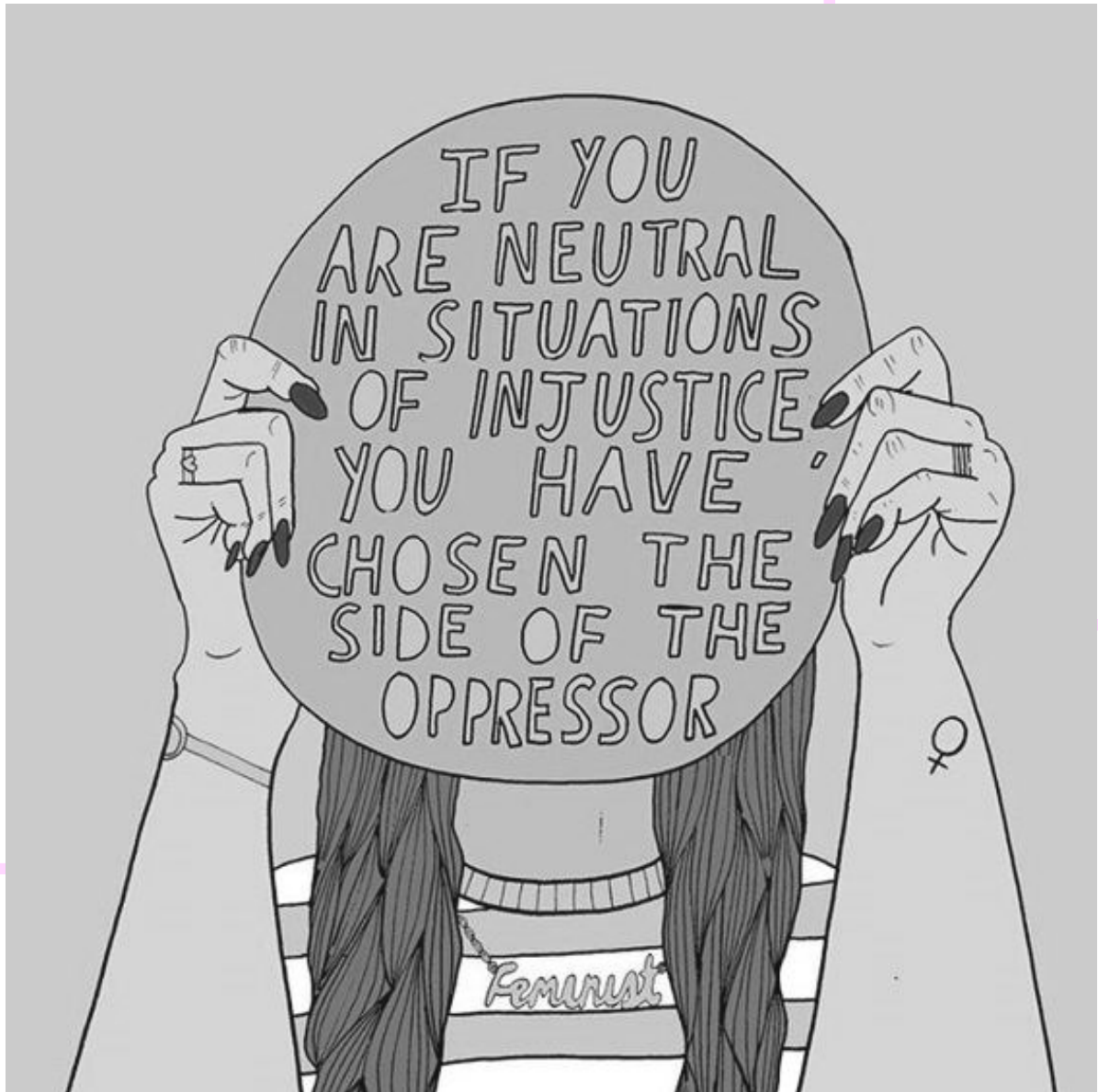
If you are still confused or hadn't even heard of the term 'asexuality', ask yourself "why?" Is it that there is a clear lack of asexual representation in the media? I think so. Which is why fans of *Archie* comics loved the fact that Jughead was a representative for asexuality. However, the show producers of the show clearly didn't; think that Jughead's sexual orientation was something they could be bothered to deal with, and have created an heterosexual love story with Betty Cooper.

I find myself asking "why?" If his sexuality has been explained in the comics as and also widely praised, then why change it?

If people grew up seeing, not only asexuality, but any sexual orientation other than "boy meets girl" in the media, maybe the world would be a more respectful place. Many asexuals describe how for years they thought that they were something **WRONG WITH THEM** – as if they were **BROKEN**. And that is incredibly sad.

On the understanding that nobody is hurt, intimidated or forced, who people like or don't like, and how they choose to explore their own sexuality is no one's business but their own. I appreciate that it might be hard to fully empathise with who a person chooses to fall for (if they choose to fall at all); however, we shouldn't have sexual orientation censored by what the big-bucks producers sell to the production companies. The media have a duty to tackle difficult issues so that we all realise that you may not understand something, but you can be respectful towards it.

WHAT'S IT LIKE



AS A GIRL?

I have been a girl for 18 years, and I have been living with the consequences of my gender for all that time.

When I was five I was told I shouldn't be playing with the toy cars because they were meant for the boys; I should play with the princess dolls or in the miniature kitchen. When I was nine I was told I should start counting the calories and watch what I eat because that's what real girls do. When I was fourteen I was told I shouldn't swear because it is unladylike and when I was sixteen I was told to never walk by myself late at night.

It wasn't until recently that I ever thought about these incidents as being connected; I had never imagined that I was only being told these things because *I am a girl* and society still has a medieval rulebook for how women are expected to behave.

As a girl, when I walk down the street I have caught men staring or pointing me out to their mate; they might have catcalled and then been offended when I ignored them, and then turn to shouting abuse. Every incident made me feel the same; ashamed, isolated, embarrassed. I start thinking that maybe if hadn't worn that skirt, or if I had walked another way home, or if I wasn't wearing make-up then maybe it wouldn't have happened. Why? Because society has inferred that it is *my* fault. Men think they're paying me a compliment and I'm rude when I walk away. Why? Because society has taught *them* that a woman's physical appearance is all that matters and it's okay to comment on it.

In Britain, a woman is raped every 6 minutes, but only 5.7% of reported cases result in the perpetrator's conviction.

In fact, only 15% of victims of sexual violence choose to report the crime to the police, and one third of people believe if a woman is flirting she is partially responsible for being raped.

I could write a novel on gender inequality and the expectations of women, and how they are constantly being used to blame and shame women for the actions of men, but instead I'll say only this: no matter how far we may have come in the name of equality, as long as we are blaming and teaching girls that it is their fault when they are physically or sexually abused, we have a *long* way to go.

When I talked to my friends about the gender inequalities I couldn't help but notice a huge divide between the males and females. My female friends listed hundreds of things from: feeling insecure about wearing certain clothes in public, to feeling angry and devalued by the wage gap. Every one of them was able to share an experience where they had been made to feel ashamed and belittled. When I asked them why they hadn't re-

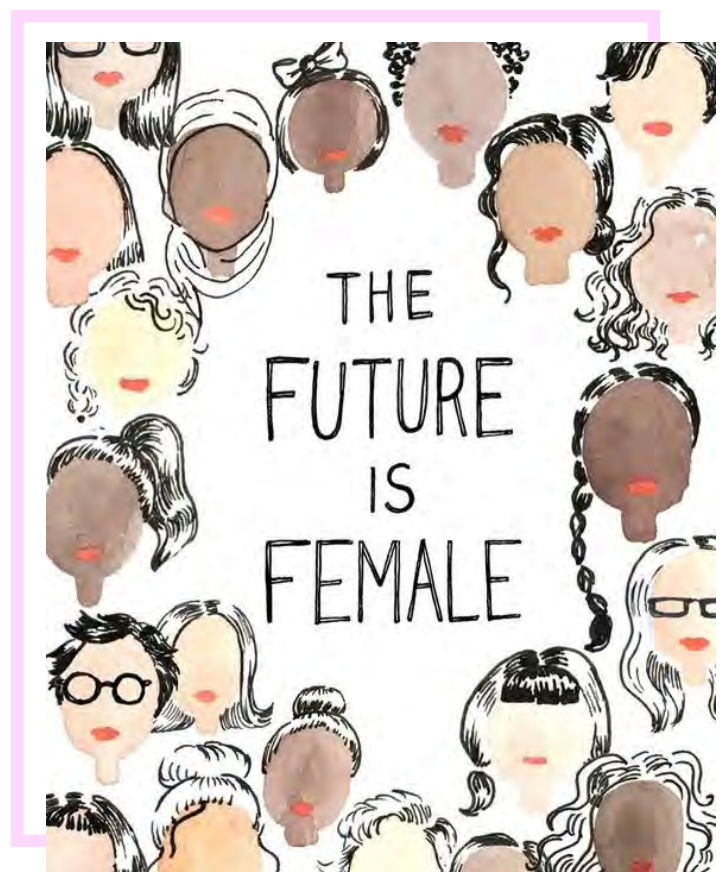
ported it they shrugged and said "it's normal". Normal? My male friends didn't say any of this. They shrugged too but instead they said, "things are pretty equal now."

As a feminist, I believe the biggest barrier to change is public ignorance. Many women don't realise that what they experience everyday is sexism because it is normal. Many men don't even notice that society is inherently misogynistic because it isn't happening to them. Before we can begin to bridge the gap between men and women, we must first accept that it exists.

To begin with I was angry with my male friends. I couldn't fathom how they had reached this conclusion when women make up half the world's population and yet represent 70% of the world's poor. When everyday, 39,000 girls are forced into early marriages (that's 27 girls a minute), and when one in four women are physically or sexually abused after the age of 16. Then I realised, I could reel off statistics until I was blue in the face, but I couldn't make them see what I see because what happens to women just doesn't happen to men.

Of course, this isn't to say that this is the opinion held by all men; there are many male feminists who do understand the struggles women face. Men have a vital role to play in this battle, and it isn't as detractors or naysayers, but as allies, agents of change, and beneficiaries.

The battle for gender equality isn't a battle against men, it is about people against prejudice, and we will not win unless everyone, regardless of gender, is with us.





Hominem Pride.

It's a strange thing to realise that right now in the world over seven billion people are breathing, moving and living in the world. Right now there are millions of people waking up looking in the mirror and wondering whether today is going to be a good day or a bad one. Wondering whether today will be the day they are going to hate every inch of their existence and loath being with others; or, whether today their smile will stretch and they will loving look on at their life, body, and mind.

Why do we torture ourselves this way? Why do we spend time deciding how the day is going to be?

I get it. I truly do. Even I do it. Sometimes I get up in the morning and I feel like the world is at my command, that I can do anything. Others? The best way to describe them are black days. The kind of smothering black that you can feel sucking you in to its grip. It's natural human instinct to have such different feelings especially since we live in a society that brands us from the moment we are born.

But today I want you to think of word 'pride'. What does it mean to you? Is it a dirty word? Is it a word that brings you shame?

Having pride in yourself is essential for your happiness. It means having positive self-esteem, which can be a battle itself for some. I urge you to take time to have pride in things that are of substance. Take pride in: your personality; take pride in your friends; take pride in your family; take pride in the piece of work, you completed last week and take pride in your body.



While having body confidence is brilliant—this confidence comes from within. It's the logical realisation that everyone is different, that everyone has flaws but everybody has the chance to radiate. I know I am not the stereotypical beauty that would feature on vogue magazine, but I do know that just like everyone else in the world people love me for being me—so why shouldn't I love and take pride in that?

I think it's high time that we stepped back for a second, to give ourselves a break from our fast paced lives and realise that we are all human—we all have flaws but that doesn't mean any one will love you any less. So, when you get up in the morning don't think about what you are going to feel like, or how others might make you feel. Instead, get up in the morning and take pride in your working breathing body. Feel pride in your humanness. Feel pride that you made it through and that you will continue to make it through the next.

A FEW *REASONS* WHY NOT

Warning: Talk of rape, suicide and sexual harassment ahead.

On March 31st, '13 Reasons Why' was released on to our screens and sent the media into chaos. If you haven't seen the show, you must have seen it lurking around your twitter timeline or maybe you've even spotted it as a meme on your instagram? It's true, this show has become a global phenomenon, and despite it being addictive, my question is, is it actually any good ?

13 Reasons Why is a Netflix series that centres on a 17-year-old high school student, Hannah Baker, who commits suicide, leaving behind 13 cassette tapes she wishes to share after her death that explain how 13 different people were instrumental in her decision to take her own life. The thirteen episodes follow a heart wrenching journey of Clay, our main protagonist, going

through the tapes (one by one) with the looming prospect that the next one could be his story. Alongside him, we meet the people of Hannah's past, people who have eventually led her to take her own life.

What this program certainly doesn't do is sugar coat the shocking truths of Hannah's life. When it comes to portraying teen lives, a lot of media, whether that's book or screen come at it with light-hearted fuzziness, or at the very worst a hint that romance and exams might not be all too easy. Which is why when *13 Reasons Why* ripped the bandages off and delved straight into the gritty horrible problems that some teenagers face—it was so well received. It explores how one simple picture can be misconstrued and used to troll a person and utterly destroy them; it shows two horrific rapes

and Hannah's very emotional suicide.

In a world where we like to (and too often) turn a blind eye to 'taboo' subjects and hope for the best, this program certainly reveals the dark flaws of our questionable society and why any type of bullying is never, ever okay. I think that is something we don't always remember, and is that because it just isn't topical or are we just hardened to it?



It cleverly shows how just a few thoughtless words could be the tip of the iceberg for someone, and how that yes, those mean spiteful words do constitute as actually bullying.

My personal experience with this show is that I actually thoroughly enjoyed it; it was shocking, raw and heart breaking. The plot line had the kind of tension that left you with slowly (and quite painfully) unlocking your limbs afterwards; additionally, it also had the right amount of emotional substance that had you grabbing tissues and shoving them to your eyes.

So is there anything wrong with the show? , Well, yes. True, it shows: what real life can be like; it has an original plot (which is always a bonus); it has likeable characters and talented young actors; stylistically it is aesthetically pleasing... but... What is that but?

Although this show may cover controversial topics, it did not display the issue of suicide correctly. Instead of actually helping, or at the very least offering help, it seemed to 'Hollywood' a difficult situation.

It seems to glorify Hannah's suicide, making it seem like death, and leaving messages from

the grave in such a candid manner is the only effective way to send a message and to have your voice heard. Surely, surviving is the best message you can ever give the world.

Moreover, despite being a gritty plotline, in essence it is a rehashed version of the problematic trope "loving the dead girl", and more outrageously, it treats suicide as an act of revenge. Consequently, for some audiences it could be extremely dangerous and therefore the producers should have been duty bound to add more warnings and actively promote helplines for people who are struggling with these issues.

These are just a few of these reasons why I think why not, not to mention the show's "funny" use of suicide images and memes which are completely disrespectful. This is why I am not happy with this show—and that more people should be aware of what young people are really watching—even if the issues doesn't affect you. And please remember there is nothing more isolating than not reaching out to help. It will always be there whether it's from your parents, friends, teachers, your GP or a voice at the end of a helpline. There are a lot of websites and phone lines that are available as well. Remember there is always another way.





The People Behind the Badge

QUESTIONS: CANDELA OB

PHOTOS: CANDELA OB & IZZY BUTT

The role of Head of School is certainly something that many aspire to be. As a prospective Year 6 student visiting the school for Open Evening, the role of Head of School is one that signifies pride. It is a sign of dedication to the school that has been your home for the previous five years and a public symbol of the significance of the student body having a voice. With this in mind, we set about finding out what makes the 2017/18 Heads of House tick.

Why did you decide to go for the role of Head of School? Was there any special fact or motivation that pushed you towards it?

Kate: My dedication to the school was my special motivation; I feel very passionately about it and I believe I have the right energy to share this motivation with the rest of the pupils.

Ross: I wanted to challenge myself; I have always wanted to give back to the school as a thank you for the support I have received throughout my years here; I thought this was a perfect opportunity.

Sophie: From when I was little and started reading, I would always choose a book that had a strong and inspirational female character that was involved not only their school, but her their surroundings. I have always wanted to do something like that myself; I want to be able to know that I had helped to improved the school that I have been attending for so many years.

Sammy: The idea of being a role model has always been attractive, so when I was presented with the opportunity, I didn't hesitate to take it.

Was there anything that put you off going for the role?

K: The public speaking part is kind of intimidating as I am not very good at it, but I also see it as a skill that being Head of School will allow me to develop and improve.

R: I guess the feeling of not wanting to fail is always there but there was nothing in particular that made me question if I wanted to run.

S: The stress that might be involved did make me consider if I really wanted to go for it. I have a lot of things going on such as exams and The Mo, and I was concerned that I wouldn't be able to cope with everything.

SP: The position of Head of School does require a lot of time and dedication; I was scared I wasn't going to be able to manage my time correctly.

Now that you have won the election and are a Head of School - what are you most excited about?

K: I went to our first school Parliament meeting a few days ago and I absolutely loved the atmosphere. There's a real drive to improve the school; I am very excited to go every week.

R: I am excited to start seeing the changes I wanted to bring to the school.

S: As peculiar as it sounds, I am very excited to represent the school itself and everything it represents as I think it's such an honour.

SP: As I said before, the idea of being a role model is extremely exciting to me.

Who is your hero/role model?

K: Kate Bush definitely. She was a singer in the 80s who started writing her own songs when she was a teenager. She is known for having beautiful and meaningful lyrics that reach your heart. She is just an overall extremely cool human and a bonus factor is that we have the same name (lol).

R: Connor McGregor - as he is the perfect example of the fact that hard work pays off.

S: Emma Watson has been a role model since I was very little; as a strong female figure that was not embarrassed to be herself. She has also carried her fame in a very positive way embracing many feminists' movements.

SP: As weird as it might sound, I admire the way Mr Atterton carries himself around, with authority approachability.

What is the best compliment you have ever received and why?

K: A friend once said to me that she loves the fact that I actually listen to her and it made me so happy; I feel being a good listener is so important.

R: I guess it's when people say that I am funny and make them laugh; I like the idea that I can make someone smile and maybe even improve their day.

S: When someone tells me that they are excited to read my book. It's the best feeling ever. I am dedicating so much time and effort into it, it's like my baby.

SP: I can't think of a specific compliment that someone has said to me that stands out, but whenever people compliment my appearance, or the way I carry myself around. I like it because I do put thought into it.

If you could wake up tomorrow and be someone else- who would you be and what would you do?

K: This is going to be extremely nerdy but I would love to be The Doctor in *Doctor Who* because the idea of time travelling is something that fascinates me. How EXTREMELY COOL travelling to the past and the future would be?

R: It would have to be Connor McGregor again. I would do the obvious and transfer some money from his very nice bank account to mine and drive his fast cars around. But I

would also give some of his fortune to charity - as cliché as that sounds.

S: Again, as a *Harry Potter* freak, I would love to be Hermione Granger, specifically in the fourth year as there was no extreme danger to hers but there is the excitement of the Triwizard tournament. Plus, Cedric Diggory is quite pleasing to the eye, so I would love to see him around whilst I'm practising magic and looking cute in my uniform.

SP: As much as it is a childhood dream, I would love to be a footballer for a day. Someone like Dele Alli, and just life that lifestyle.

What question do you hate to answer?

K: I don't understand when people ask me "Why do you not wear makeup?" because I think it is a completely personal choice and I hate that girls are now expected to wear makeup to a point that if you don't, you get asked why, as if you are an absolute weirdo. Don't get me wrong - if you want to wear makeup there is nothing wrong with it at all, I just prefer not to and I don't see why that should be anyone else's business.

R: I don't like when people ask "Are you okay?" purely because I don't think people actually care and they are just being noisy. I mean if I want to share something I will - so do not feel the need to ask me.

S: When adults ask what I want to be or want to do in the future to fill the awkward silences. I give them an immediate answer because I know exactly what I want to do which means there is even more awkward silence as they weren't expecting me to say anything like that.

SP: Anything that is personal really - especially when it comes from people that I know do not actually care and just want the gossip.

Best sandwich?

K: It's actually a panini but my favourite is vegan cheese with some grilled peppers and sun-dried tomatoes - and top it off with vegan pesto. Oh and mushrooms, I love mushrooms. And avocado.

R: Chicken Mayo.

S: Tuna Mayo. I have it possibly every day... which is actually quite bad. But I guess old habits die hard.

SP: Cheese and Ham

What scares/intimidates you the most?

K: I guess what scares me is not being good enough. I believe that the standards for the role of school are very high and I want to achieve those.

R: The responsibility that comes with it I guess. And the fear of failure that has been mentioned previously.

S: The Prize Giving Ceremony, when I am going to have to read in front of so many people. The list of names does terrify me, just because of the pressure of not failing and being embarrassed.

SP: The idea of speaking in front of a lot of people, and not only that but doing it properly so you represent the school to the standard that it should be is always a bit daunting.

What do you think is your greatest strength?**What about your weakness?**

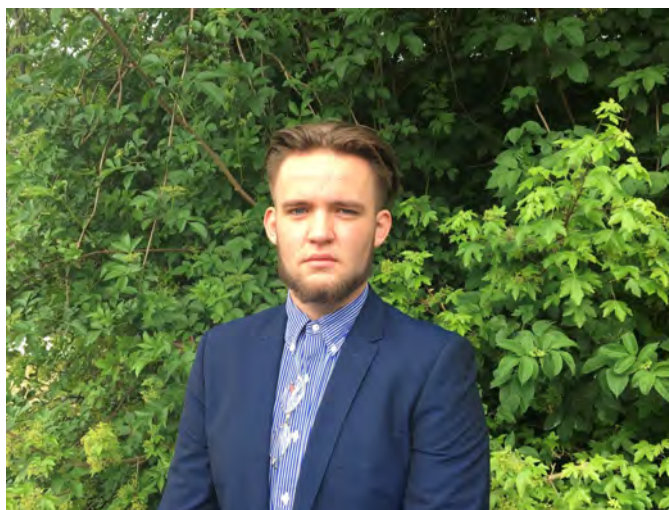
K: My approachability and my friendly attitude towards everyone is something I am very proud of. And as for my greatest weak-

ness, I think it's me being very sensitive; it sometimes lowers my self-confidence and stops me from doing things that I want to do.

R: I'd say my greatest strength is that I am very adaptable and am able to adapt to any situation, no matter how hard or complicated it might seem. And my greatest weakness is that sometimes laziness does get the better of me.

S: I think my ambition is both my greatest strength and weakness. It's a strength as it makes me incredibly determined to do the things I believe in. However, it can also be a weakness due to the fact that it makes me an extreme perfectionist and it seems as if I am never happy with myself and what I do or produce as an individual.

SP: My greatest strength is definitely my confidence, as it allows me to be approach people and be forward at times when others may feel insecure. However, I also feel like that confidence can sometimes come across as arrogance, which is not a nice trait to have.



Creative Writing

spring edition

The last first day of spring

It was that time of year again. The first day of spring. When start flowers bloom and temperatures rise. A lonely spirit lay supine on a hill, towering over a small yet busy town. She leant her head on the most prominent root of the great willow tree. There was a heart and a few letters carved into the tree in messy handwriting. The lonely spirit grumbled in her sleep, awakening from the sound of footsteps.

She was filled with an ineffable joy; she rose and stretched as a girl trod up the hill. The lonely spirit paused, rapt by the girl's beauty. She nervously cleared her throat and watched as the girl reached the top and laid a blanket on the hill. She sat down and rested the picnic basket beside her. She pulled out a framed photo of the spirit and the girl. She looked up at the tree and smiled at their initials scrawled on it.

"Hey Amber," she said softly to the ghost. Amber nodded and looked away remembering how much she loved her voice.

"Hey Lillian," she whispered, despite knowing she couldn't hear her. Amber glanced at the photo and smiled briefly before looking up at Lillian's face. She grimaced as the soft ache returned to her chest. Her heart thumped in her chest with the strength of Thor's hammer. She was thrown back to reality by Lillian's mellifluous voice. She was already talking about what has happened recently. About their friends and Amber's family and how they're coping with her sudden death. Amber nodded as Lillian spoke. She watched as she wept softly. Amber felt her heart clench – she hated knowing she was causing her continual pain but she couldn't do anything to soothe her grief. Still, she reached out and hugged the weeping girl.

"Sorry about that Amber, it's been three years now and it still makes me cry every time," Lillian said quietly trying to laugh it off. She wiped her tears and continued talking with a sad smile plastered on her face.

They spoke for countless hours. Well, Amber listened

and Lillian spoke. The sky was now doused in darkness; the midnight sun shone, accompanied by small twinkling stars, as they lay against the willow tree in a wordless silence.

Lillian spoke, "I'm finishing my last year of college Amber." She sat up and looked at the photograph. "And I'm going to university." Amber rose suddenly; there weren't any universities in the town. That meant Lillian was leaving. "I don't know if I'll be able to spend a day here every year after college." A single droplet of despair fell onto the blanket. It was swiftly followed by another and another. Amber paced, she wasn't ready to let Lillian go. She was trapped on this godforsaken hill. Alone for every day of the year except for the first day of spring when Lillian visits. Lillian sniffled as Amber knelt in front of her. "I just couldn't imagine going away to university without telling you how I felt and how I still feel. Amber, I was in love with you. And I still am. I'm sorry I didn't tell you before. I was going to but then you suddenly... you left." Lillian broke out into a hard painful sob. Amber cried also. She helplessly embraced her. Lillian froze and looked up at Amber. She was faintly visible. "Amber," Lillian whispered breathlessly. She looked back at her, realising she could see her. She hoped with all of her being that Lillian could hear her. "Lillian I love you!" she screamed. She hoped that she would at least be able to read her lips. Lillian smiled continued to cry. They embraced again and cried for many reasons. Because they were in love. Or because Amber was dead. Or because Lillian was leaving and this would be the last time they would ever see each other again.

They continued until the sun peaked above the horizon. Amber was fading. Lillian watched helplessly and relished in their final embrace. Amber could finally leave. It was bittersweet. She had dealt with the unfinished business that was keeping her imprisoned on the hill. Lillian held Amber for as long as she could. She could feel Amber's presence become weaker. Lillian slumped forward onto the blanket; suddenly there wasn't anyone to support her. Amber was gone.

Different Faces of Nature

Nature is all around us; it is a part of our everyday lives. As a result, many of us take it for granted. You notice the trees in the local park, but do you really see them? What might seem like a dull, lifeless plant may be, on closer observation, bursting with bright colours and fascinating creatures that you didn't even know existed.

I was walking through the school grounds, a place I've seen more times than I can remember. I was amazed to find that, when I took the time to look, the outside world held more beauty than I could have ever believed. I discovered that things I had always viewed as plain and uninteresting actually had a fascinating elegance. Even a simple oak tree was made up of fascinating features. From patterns in the bark to the splashes of colour dotted around the branches, each aspect had its own unique magnificence. I was even more awe-struck to find the amazing variety between different plants – no two were ever the same. Each minute detail was important to the

overall image.

It wasn't just the bright, colourful plants that fascinated me. Even the simplest parts of nature held their own beauty, and that was exactly what it was – simplicity. In these basic, uncomplicated designs by nature – which I had previously viewed as bland and boring – I found the most curious appearances. Their ability to have such splendour without almost any detail made me view nature with a new respect.

Nature has an ability to mesmerise those who are eager enough to stop and observe. It creates a beauty that we could never attempt to recreate. It only takes a dash of inspiration to see the outside world in a different light, to draw attention to new perspectives that we had never noticed before. Whether it's taking a closer look at the different colours in a flower or exploring inside the web of branches in a tree, it doesn't take much to see nature in a new way, and I'm sure you will be as amazed as I was with what you find.

Signs of Spring

Do you ever feel that after weeks of typical British weather: the rain, the wind, the bleak skies, that even an increase of just a couple of degrees can make it feel like summer has arrived at last? It is the eternal hope that the dark days are over and the relief of sunshine and warmth is here that inspires to find the resilience to endure the last of the winter season. To put it simply, we know that the end is in sight!

However, winter is here: the birds, bugs and beasts have settled down for a long slumber. The days are short, the nights are long, and petrichor hangs permanently in the air. Everyone's desperate for a little more warmth; huddled together, wrapped in all sorts of hats, scarves and mittens, all dreaming of sunshine.

Today I was dressed just the same, simultaneously hoping to catch a glimpse of natural beauty amid gales of wind and rain without being blown away by storm Doris. I spotted many objects that caught my attention and inspired me - a worm racing through blades of green grass; a windswept daisy resiliently clinging to the earth, tips tinged pink; brilliant yellow daffodil and milky snow-drop heads shaking violently in the wind as they fight their way through the bitter cold: all signs that the bleak winter is finally coming to an end, and that spring is so very nearly here. Nevertheless, nothing truly excited me until at about 10:00am, when the dark, brooding clouds parted for the



first time, and the sun's rays beamed at me from where I stood, finally enveloping me in warmth. Like little children we animatedly pointed and yelled at the sun as it peered through the barring clouds to greet us. I was reminded greatly of a worm I had spotted earlier that same day, tunnelling through soil to eventually poke its head out of the ground. All around me, people stopped to gaze merrily at the sky to appreciate this small miracle we had anticipated for months. And in that moment, I finally felt that we had endured the hard winter, and the sun had come to reward us.

THE WORDS OF AN



EXAM VETERAN

Exams. The dreaded word that every student fears and every student cowers from (perhaps not all, but a fair few). It is cruel, but it is necessary and as a seasoned veteran, I feel I am experienced enough to try and pass on some wise wisdom so you at least have some idea of what to do (and what not to do) when end-of-year tests, GCSEs, AS or A-levels roll around.

Tip #1: Identify what you need to revise

Seems silly, but if you have masses upon masses of subjects to revise, you need to break it down so you can see what you may not be as strong at rather than trudging through the revision guide in the hopes that the knowledge will diffuse into your brain.

Tip #2: Revision timetable?

Personally, revision timetables don't work for me, but for some, it does. This is something that is entirely dependent on how the person learns, so if a revision timetable doesn't work for you, don't do it. If you're not entirely sure whether you should use a revision timetable, at least try it. A revision timetable will help you order your revision in a way that allows you to cover what is needed in a set period of time, and it's also a handy marker that notifies you whether you are, or are not, on track.

Tip #3: Revise EARLY

I have heard these words many times, and I am somewhat surprised that I am also repeating this despite ignoring the wise words of my elders. Starting early doesn't mean reading a chapter in September and continuing that until your exams, starting revision early can also mean doing one or two flash-cards or making a little revision booklet that you can later use. Revision doesn't need to be done in a chunk (something that I am learning) and can be broken down into manageable sizes.

Tip #4: Be prepared!

When it gets to revision – aside from what I've mentioned before about sorting out subject lists – you want to make sure that when you sit down to revise, you won't get up again to go for a walk in search of that yellow highlighter that is *crucial* to your learning. When you sit down to begin your revision, make sure you have everything that you could possibly need in that time. That includes some small snacks, a drink and any stationery that you will need.

Tip #5: I claim this space for my own!

Of course, a key part for prepping for your exams is having the right space to work in. At home, you don't want to revise on your bed because it doesn't set the right atmosphere. Try to keep your bed separate from revision. Work at a desk to have that working environment where you can tune in and be productive and also have that peace which is crucial to getting things done. However, sometimes a change in scenery will be needed and you can instead take a trip to your local library to find a silent corner to do some work.

Tip #6: Breaks

Breaks are that period of peace during your study time where you don't need to think about the equation of a line or the inference of whatever quote has been plaguing you. Breaks will help you break up your revision into smaller parts and also give you some incentive into completing your work. If it helps, have a timer set for perhaps a 10 minute break before switching it back to 15 minutes of work once your break is over.

For those that are thinking along the lines of "But I'll lose my motivation to go back to work!" while it's true that there is a risk that you will never look back again at your work, you don't want to burn yourself out when you're working. You have to make sure that you are retaining some information, and cramming every possible thing in your revision guide or textbook isn't necessarily going to help that.

Tip #7: To colour or not to colour, that is the question

You may have come across the idea that there are kinaesthetic, visual and auditory learners. You will probably fall into at least one of these categories and identifying what one you may be can be a lot of help in aiding your revision. Tailor your learning to you so it can help you. It may be a lot of work in the beginning, but it does pay off in the end. Try a variety of ways to revise: cue cards, posters, mind maps, notes – to name a few; and you will eventually find the one that works for you. As it gets closer to the time of your exams, it may be a good idea to find some past papers to work on so you get an idea of how questions can be phrased in the exams.

Tip #8: Incorporation is key

You may get frustrated when teachers assign you homework when you have an exam in two weeks, and it's only natural. You've already got a bucket-load of things to get through, and on top of that, you also have this! First, breathe. Your teachers are only doing what they think can help you. Treat that bit of homework as some revision, and take some time out from that subject when you're supposed to do it. For those that have a timetable, unfortunately that might mean some re-jigging in terms of what you have planned, but sometimes sacrifices need to be made.

Tip #9: Friends that study together, try not to procrastinate together

Revising independently is a great thing to be able to master as you are able to motivate yourself to do the work that is needed to be done, but sometimes you need that little extra motivation from friends. It's important when I stress this, but if you and your friends are getting together to revise, actually revise and *try* not to procrastinate. This way, when you've set up your little study group, you will have some people to ask questions to if you get stuck, or even have a partner to help quiz you on various topics.

APRIL:



THE JESTER OF THE
YEAR

We usually greet the start of the month with the playful (and unorthodox) “pinch, punch, first day of the month” ritual, hoping that we can beat your friends to the punch (literally) and protect yourself from that same ritual by uttering the words “no returns”. But the first day of the fourth month is marked by a name.

April Fools’ Day.

Most will be familiar with this day, but funnily enough, this celebration isn’t actually a recognised public holiday – despite what the default Apple calendar tries to imply.

But as well as the traditions that surround this humorous honorary holiday, I am more curious about the origins of April Fools’ Day. Annoyingly, there isn’t much about the true origins of April Fools’ but there is enough speculation about what should have inspired such a strange day, including a 16th-century pope!

Renewal Festivals

One feasible explanation is that April Fools’ could have been inspired by various festivals that signify the end of the cold winter and the beginning of bright spring. One festival that crops up most prominently is the Ancient Roman festival of Hilaria (which sounds eerily similar to hilarious—which makes me roar!).

Hilaria was a festival that celebrated the mother of the gods, where there would be processions to honour her. But to keep it a festival that was light-hearted and fun, there were also games and pranks that took place – another thing that celebrated the goddess. As well as games and pranks, masquerades were also prominent in Hilaria where anyone and everyone could dress up as someone or something to imitate.

The King Jester

Another, and perhaps more appropriate and entertaining tale or theory, involves the jesters of Rome.

According to historians, during the Constantine

period a group of court jesters challenged Constantine and said that they could do a better job of running the empire. So, to amuse them, Constantine allowed one jester called Kugel to be king for a day. Unsurprisingly, jesters didn’t make good kings and Kugel issued a proclamation calling for the day to be filled with trickery and absurdity. The custom became a yearly occurrence and that eventually became April Fools’ Day.

The Pope?

My personal favourite that I have managed to uncover is that April Fools’ was created due to a pope! The idea that a pope could have even had a hand in the origins of April Fools’ provides a pleasant contrast that can keep you amused and with a grin on your face.

Pope Gregory XIII didn’t like the Julian calendar, and in 1582, he finally had enough. His solution to dealing with his hated calendar was ordering a new calendar – the Gregorian calendar (which we use now) – to replace the old one. This meant the New Year would now be celebrated on January 1 rather than on or around April 1st..

Despite getting the word out that New Year’s needed to be celebrated on January 1, there were still some that celebrated on April 1 and they were deemed “foolish” and were ridiculed. Thus April Fools’ was born.

The origin stories of April Fools’ is almost as silly as the day itself. It only makes sense that there is one day in the year where there is justified shenanigans to brighten our feelings and mark the approach of the sunnier months.

Maybe next time April Fools’ Day rolls around, whilst we ready ourselves for (half) a day of pranking, tricks and laughter, we can also remember that we wouldn’t have this day was it not for the Romans’ penchant of having festivals for almost anything and Pope Gregory’s dislike of the Julian calendar.



Penniwell's Riding Centre *for the Disabled*



Penniwell's is an RDA centre in Elstree that provides disabled people the opportunity to learn to ride in order to benefit their health and well-being. The centre provides riding and stable management sessions, giving these people a sense of freedom through riding and just being around the horses that they don't get from other aspects of their lives. Many of them can't live independently, they can't drive a car, and they can't participate in many day to day activities. Horse riding allows them to achieve personal goals and pushes them to expand their capabilities as well as making unique connections to a horse, vastly improving confidence and communication skills. Many riders even take part in competition at Regional, National, and International level within the RDA and Para Dressage.

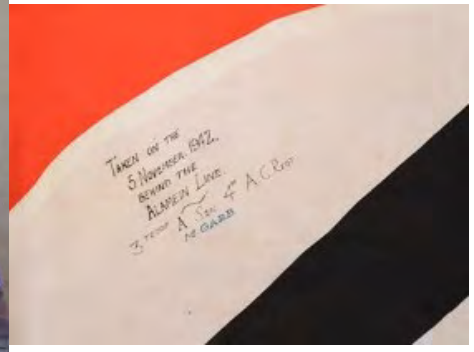
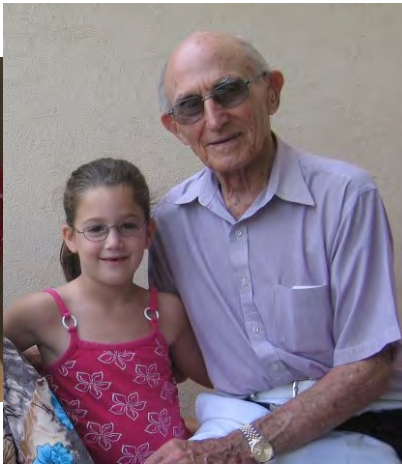
However, Penniwell's is unable to provide this life-changing service without their talented team of staff and volunteers. I have been volunteering with them for over four years now and it has always been a privilege to assist with the continuous development of the disabled clients, watching them as they are allowed to gain the freedom that a horse brings. As a volunteer you aid the riders in their lessons and help on the yard, caring for the horses and preparing them for the lessons. Not only does volunteering provide the riders with a therapeutic and unique chance to embrace their abilities, it greatly improves your own skills and gives your CV and university application something more than your academic achievements. Without Penniwell's, there is no way I would have been accepted by any universities to pursue my chosen career (Veterinary Physiotherapy).

Being a member of the Penniwell's team im-

proves so many skills; responsibility, teamwork, communication, and confidence. Everyone involved is kind, considerate, and happy to help you with any issues you may have. With so many of our existing volunteers heading off to university this year, we are desperately searching for some new faces. Don't feel daunted if you have no experience working with horses or the disabled as you are able to learn on the job - everyone is happy to answer any questions! Equally, if you already have some experience then you will never fail to learn new things and benefit from your time with us! Just a few hours a week would be greatly appreciated as we can't help our riders without volunteers, and you get something back!

To get involved visit the website www.penniwellsrda.com and print out an application form. Alternatively, find me around school and I will be happy to answer any further questions! -T.H





Holocaust Remembrance Day 2017

Many know the truths (or at least some of the truths) of the Holocaust; however, few actually spend time in remembrance. Why is this? It is so fundamentally important for us to talk about what happened in our history, even if it did not directly affect us.

Did you even know that Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah) 2017 in Israel started on the evening of Sunday 23 April and ended on the evening of Monday 24 April?

As well as relaxing and shopping over the summer I also went to Israel over the summer, I to spend time with my family and friends. However, the most memorable part of my trip was when my grandparents took my sister and I to Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Centre in Jerusalem. This museum holds extra meaning to me because towards the end of the main museum is a small dedication to my great grandfather, Marius Garb.

Marius, my great grandfather, was enlisted at the beginning of the war and was sent to fight in the Western Desert of North Africa. He was a member of the 4th Armoured Division of the South African Forces and participated in the battle of El Alamein. When the enemy lines were broken and the German army pulled back, he found a Nazi flag that was left abandoned in a German jeep and inscribed on it were the words: *'Taken on November 5, 1942, behind El Alamein lines'*.

This flag is displayed in the museum along with Mauris' picture.

Another emotional part of visiting the museum was the Children's Memorial, which is hollowed out from an underground cavern. This memorial is a tribute to the approximate 1.5 million Jewish children who were murdered during the Holocaust. Memorial candles are reflected in the dark and sombre space which gives the impression of millions of stars eternally shining for the children. As I walked through the memorial, I was overcome with emotion and wondered if any of these children could have been my ancestors. The names of the murdered children, their ages and nationalities can be heard as you walk through the memorial, along with some remaining images of the children.

The website for Yad Vashem is <http://www.yadvashem.org/>, which is in English and gives a lot more detail and facts than I could ever give. I strongly recommend visiting the museum if you ever get the chance to.





Philosophical Ramblings

Reincarnation

Philosophical Quote

“Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.” Gautama Buddha

It's now spring, and everywhere we turn, we will see new life; so why not go with a philosophy that is equally fitting, which suggests a new beginning after every end; reincarnation.

Reincarnation is the idea that when we die part of us lives on and enters a different biological body in a form of rebirth. This basic principle has found its way into many religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism; however other roots on reincarnation can also be found with philosophers such as Plato and Socrates, who believed the soul and body are two separate entities which can work in tandem with each other. However, I would like to mainly focus on the Buddhist idea of reincarnation which originated from Gautama Buddha.

The Buddhist idea of reincarnation suggests that when we die our consciousness goes from one state to another, and continues to do so until one reaches Nirvana (a place of ultimate enlightenment). The form that this state takes depends on our Karma, which is essentially our good and bad deeds. For example, if you

were to steal from your mother to buy a McDonald's Big Mac, then you would receive bad Karma as stealing is seen as wrong; however if you were to give your mum your money for her to buy a Big Mac, you would receive good Karma as charity is seen as right. Karma can then apply to what happens to you in your life, but when referring to reincarnation the level of your good to bad Karma decides what form you'll take in the next life. If you have a lot of good Karma then you might come back into the world as an important figure for humanity, but if you have a lot of bad Karma then you might be reduced to lesser animals such as snakes and frogs. This idea essentially suggests that all living things are connected through reincarnation, and should be respected no matter how insignificant they might seem (even wasps, #hate wasps).

Obviously, evidence for reincarnation is scarce or likely invalid, but a study done by Dr Ian Stevenson, former Professor of Psychiatry at the University Of Virginia School Of Medicine, conducted a study using 210 children who stated they remember things from a previous life. Out of these children, Stevenson found that 35% of them had the same birthmarks/birth defects that the recognised previous life owner also had. These birthmarks were also rare types such as hairless areas, puckered skin, and areas of increased or little pigmentation. The statements the children made on their previous lives also proved to be beyond their normal knowledge and unmistakably part of that previous life. This all suggests that some form of reincarnation may exist and may even affect our physical bodies as well as what's internal.

In my opinion, I would suggest taking these studies with a grain of salt as many studies formed around something so beyond us have variables that can never be understood or predicted, let alone the fact it bases parts of itself on memory, which we all know from forgetting where we put our keys, is terrible at recalling events. That being said, the ideas behind reincarnation are good ones suggesting that we should spread good intent in our lives. Ultimately, I don't think it matters whether it's proven or not, it spreads a good message which I think we can all take away from. So I hope this rambling made you at least curious about reincarnation, and that this spring gives you all some good Karma.