



# IAN RAMSEY CE ACADEMY

Together to learn, to grow, to serve

# Reading Newsletter



# this MONTH in history

# N O V E M B E R

<u>1</u> 1938 Nicholasa Mohr is born.	<u>2</u> 1950 Bernard Shaw dies.	<u>3</u> 1939 Terrence McNally is born.	<u>4</u> 1918 Wilfred Owen dies.	<u>5</u> 1975 Lionel Trilling dies.	<u>6</u> 1884 William Wells Brown dies.	<u>7</u> 1913 Albert Camus is born.
<u>8</u> 1847 Abraham ("Bram") Stoker is born.	<u>9</u> 1923 James Schuyler is born.	<u>10</u> 1728 Oliver Goldsmith is born.	<u>11</u> 1922 Kurt Vonnegut Jr. is born.	<u>12</u> 1865 Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell dies.	<u>13</u> 1916 Henryk Sienkiewicz dies.	<u>14</u> 1947 P. J. O'Rourke is born.
<u>15</u> 1877 William Hope Hodgson is born.	<u>16</u> 1895 Michael Arlen is born.	<u>17</u> 1992 Audre Lorde dies.	<u>18</u> 1939 Margaret Atwood is born.	<u>19</u> 1911 William Attaway is born.	<u>20</u> 1910 Leo Tolstoy dies.	<u>21</u> 1811 Heinrich von Kleist dies.
<u>22</u> 1963 C. S. Lewis dies.	<u>23</u> 1990 Roald Dahl dies.	<u>24</u> 1713 Laurence Sterne is born.	<u>25</u> 1877 Harley Granville-Barker is born.	<u>26</u> 1905 Emlyn Williams is born.	<u>27</u> 1909 James Agee is born.	<u>28</u> 1757 William Blake is born.
<u>29</u> 1832 Louisa May Alcott is born.	<u>30</u> 1667 Jonathan Swift is born.					

# Welcome

Welcome to our November edition of the Reading Newsletter! I hope you enjoyed our last edition. This month's is packed with even more reading-related information. I hope you enjoy what is included, but if there is anything you want to see that isn't here yet, why not drop the Academy and email and let me know what you would like to be included?

This newsletter is a chance to find out about:

- fiction
- non-fiction
- poetry
- authors and their work
- Vocabulary
- how to help your child with their reading journey
- what's new in reading
- local libraries
- and much more...

So, sit back, grab a cuppa and enjoy our Reading Newsletter.

As always, your support is hugely appreciated,

Mrs Chapman-Jones



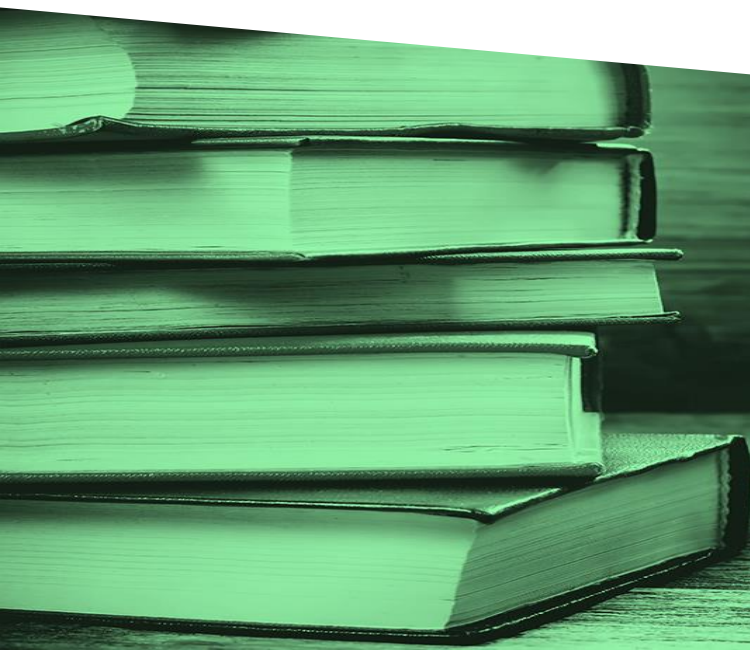
# Author spotlight

## This month's author: Alex Foulkes

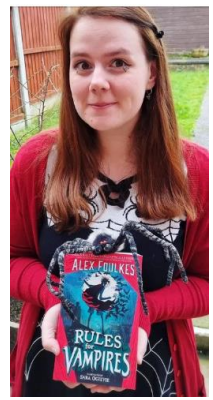
Alex comes from Stoke-on-Trent in the Midlands and has lived in and around the Staffordshire Moorlands all her life. She lives with her boyfriend and their dog, Mac, who is just small enough to sit on the back of a broomstick (very convenient!) She studied English Literature and Creative Writing with the University of Derby and graduated in 2014.

Her passion is writing books for children. When she's not reading and reading and reading, she is writing her very own vampire series: one with chills, thrills and a talking spider! Please check out *Rules for Vampires* and keep an eye on her social media if you would like to know more.

Her background is in schools, where she was an Inclusion Support Assistant and School Librarian for about six years. The perks were getting to read and talk about books and draw things and sing karaoke and dress up.



# Author to academy



Dear everyone at Ian Ramsey,

How chuffed am I to be opening this latest edition of your Reading Newsletter? (The answer is: extremely chuffed, chuffed to bits!)

My name is Alex Foulkes; I'm an author from Stoke-on-Trent and the writer of the *Rules for Vampires* series. I was lucky enough to be back in the North East recently for the Great North Author Tour with Drake the Bookshop. Stockton students always make me feel at home. You guys don't seem to mind my accent either, which is a bonus! It's my pleasure to share a bit of my writing journey with you today... in the hopes that it might inspire you with your reading and writing choices this month!

I've been writing since I was young – and reading since I was even younger! My favourite thing about books is that they allow you to go anywhere and do anything. I heard recently that, when you read a book, the chemical reaction in your brain is the same as what would happen to you if you were actually *in* the adventure. If you read a story about running from a vampire, your brain reacts as though you are *really* running from a vampire!

My life growing up was really normal and quite unexciting. I definitely turned to books as escapism and somewhere to fit in as a bit of a weird kid. I loved my school library, as it was a place I really felt I belonged.

That being said, though I wrote a lot at home and at school, I was never the best. Being The Best is really tough and there were always other kids who were better than me. Even growing up and becoming an adult, I've had a lot of small knockbacks in my life. I didn't get into university on my first try, as I dropped a grade in my German A-level. I didn't pass my driving test on my first try, as I stalled three times on a roundabout in the middle of Burton-on-Trent and then they had to peel me off the steering wheel.



# Author to academy

The thing about me though is that I've never given up. I've always picked myself up and kept going. I think it's because I have this really irritating stubborn streak – but also, when it came to my spark (which is making up worlds and characters!) it was just what I loved to do. Turns out, doing your thing and doing it often, doing what makes you happy... it's a great way to get pretty decent at your hobby. (And maybe yours is writing, and maybe it isn't. Maybe yours is art or music or theatre or making things or sports or technology. We need lots of different kinds of people in this world to make a brilliant future!)

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of September last year, my first book *Rules for Vampires* was released with big London publisher, Simon and Schuster. It absolutely blew my mind and changed my life. I've worked in schools for years (as a teaching assistant and a school librarian) and now, not only do I get to write – but I also get to visit wonderful schools. And writing this letter for you right now is a dream come true for me: imagine, if a mediocre kid from Stoke can grow up and become a real author... what will amazing kids in the North East do? In a wonderful school like Ian Ramsey, taking all the opportunities you can and having loads of fun, getting involved in everything as much as possible... I'm so excited – and especially for the upcoming young writers. I can't wait to read *your* books in the future!

My books, set in the deep, dark Dreadwald, were very inspired by the Staffordshire countryside: rolling hills, wild forests and lots of shadowy places for creatures to lurk in the dark. On my tour, I couldn't help but notice that North Yorkshire is VERY VAMPIRIC indeed! My challenge for you this month is to have a go at drawing inspiration from the beautiful North East and write something really wicked.

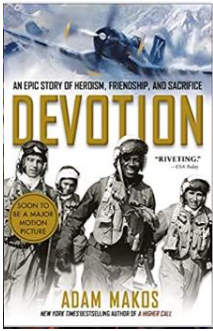
My first imagining of *Rules for Vampires* was a snapshot image of a weird vampire kid running through a deadly forest. I didn't know anything else at this point – I didn't know her name, or where she had come from, where she was going or who her family was. I didn't know what would happen to her in the story. If in doubt: start with a character and build up the rest of your short story or novel opening from there. Good luck! And most importantly: have fun. I believe in you.

With very best vampiric wishes,

Alex

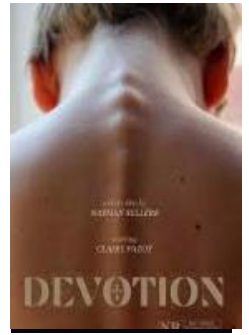


# From page to screen



This month's selection looks at *Devotion: An Epic Story of Heroism, Friendship, and Sacrifice*.

*Devotion* tells the inspirational story of the U.S. Navy's most famous aviation duo, Lieutenant Tom Hudner and Ensign Jesse Brown, and the Marines they fought to defend.



A white New Englander from the country-club scene, Tom passed up Harvard to fly fighters for his country. An African American sharecropper's son from Mississippi, Jesse became the navy's first Black carrier pilot, defending a nation that wouldn't even serve him in a bar.





In the Harvard Library, there are three books suspected to be bound in human skin. One of Harvard Library's books, *Des destinées de l'ame*, is 99.9% certain to have been bound in human skin. It has been sitting in Harvard's Houghton Library since the 1930s.

According to the Guinness World Records, the largest book in the world weighs over 3,000 lb and measures 16.40 ft x 26.44 ft. Unveiled by Mshahed International Group in Dubai, UAE on 27 February 2012, the largest non-published book to date is titled *This the Prophet Mohamed* and is a compilation of stories highlighting the lifetime achievements of Islam's Prophet.

Illiteracy is a constant problem. The sad part is that according to a UNESCO report from 2006 more than 132 million young people are and will remain for the rest of their lives unable to read. It's a pretty tragic statistic because, the benefits of reading are immense.

It has been shown that reading books and engaging in mentally challenging activities, like playing puzzle games, helps slow down the cognitive decline in old age. That results in lower chances of Alzheimer's disease or other age-related neurodegenerative diseases for people who read regularly. A study from the University of California shows that people with a high literacy level are 4 to 5 times less likely to suffer mental declines with old age.





# 2022 Reading Challenge

- A book with more than 500 pages
- A classic romance
- A book that became a movie
- A book published this year
- A book with a number in the title
- A book written by someone under 30
- A book with nonhuman characters
- A funny book
- A book by a female author
- A mystery or thriller
- A book with a one-word title
- A book of short stories
- A book set in a different country
- A nonfiction book
- A popular author's first book
- A book from an author you love that you haven't read yet
- A book a friend recommended
- A Pulitzer Prize-winning book
- A book based on a true story
- A book at the bottom of your to-read list
- A book your mom loves
- A book that scares you
- A book more than 100 years old
- A book based entirely on its cover
- A book you were supposed to read in school but didn't
- A memoir
- A book you can finish in a day
- A book with antonyms in the title
- A book set somewhere you've always wanted to visit
- A book that came out the year you were born
- A book with bad reviews
- A trilogy
- A book from your childhood
- A book with a love triangle
- A book set in the future
- A book set in high school
- A book with a color in the title
- A book that made you cry
- A book with magic
- A graphic novel
- A book by an author you've never read before
- A book you own but have never read
- A book that takes place in your hometown
- A book that was originally written in a different language
- A book set during Christmas
- A book written by an author with your same initials
- A play
- A banned book
- A book based on or turned into a TV show
- A book you started but never finished

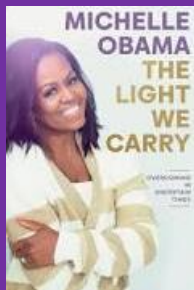
# What's new?

## Non-fiction

### *The Light We Carry* by Michelle Obama

From the former First Lady and author of the global bestseller *Becoming* comes an inspirational volume of personal insight and wisdom, aimed at illuminating the complexities of relationships, communities and identity for everyone.

Obama shares practical wisdom and powerful strategies for staying hopeful and balanced in today's highly uncertain world.



## Fiction

### *The Wilderwoman* by Ruth Emmie Lang

Ohioana Book Award finalist Ruth Emmie Lang returns with a new cast of ordinary characters with extraordinary abilities.

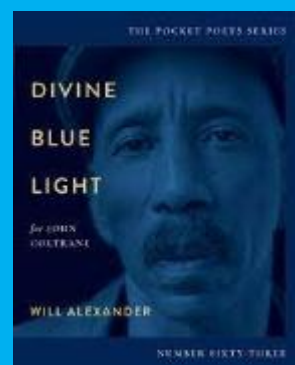
Five years ago, Nora Wilder disappeared. The older of her two daughters, Zadie, should have seen it coming, because she can literally see things coming. But not even her psychic abilities were able to prevent their mother from vanishing one morning.



## Poetry

### *Divine Blue Light (for John Coltrane): Pocket Poets Series No. 63* by Will Alexander

From Will Alexander, finalist for the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, a new collection of poems from the intersection between surrealism and afro-futurism, where C saire meets Sun Ra. *Divine Blue Light* further affirms Alexander's status as one of the most unique and innovative voices in contemporary poetry.

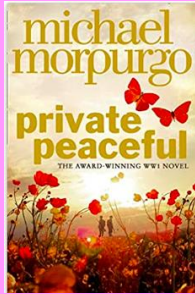


# Pupil Recommendations: Y9



## *Private Peaceful* by Michael Morpurgo

Full of vivid detail and engrossing atmosphere, leading to a dramatic and moving conclusion, *Private Peaceful* is both a compelling love story and a deeply moving account of the First World War.



## *Wranglestone* by Darren Charlton

In a post-apocalyptic America, a community survives in a national park, surrounded by water that keeps the Dead at bay. But when winter comes, there's nothing to stop them from crossing the ice.



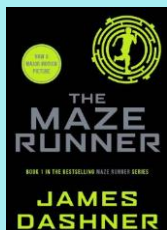
## *Ophelia After All* by Racquel Marie

A teen girl navigates friendship drama, the end of high school, and discovering her queerness in *Ophelia After All*, the hilarious and heartfelt contemporary YA debut by Racquel Marie.



## *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner

When the doors of the lift crank open, the only thing Thomas remembers is his first name. But he's not alone. He's surrounded by boys who welcome him to the Glade - a walled encampment at the centre of a bizarre and terrible stone maze.



## *All The Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven

This brilliant, compelling and heart-breaking book about two teenagers struggling with their lives, who find each other by chance, is full of refreshing honesty as it tackles the very serious issues surrounding mental illness.

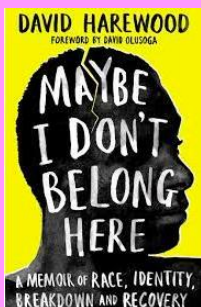


# Staff Recommendations



Miss. Devenny recommends: *Maybe I Don't Belong Here* by David Harewood

I borrowed this audiobook from the library and found it both compelling and upsetting. He raises questions about racism in our society and the impact on the mental health of black people growing up in Britain.



Mx Godfrey recommends: *Legends and Lattes* by Travis Baldree

I loved how this book was like reading a warm hug, a proper cosy fantasy. It showed it was possible to move away from a life of war as long as you were willing to try and open to friendship and offers of unexpected help. The best book I've read so far this year.



Mr. Lupton recommends: *The Girl With All The Gifts* by M. R. Carey

The basic plot comes from the concept that the scarily real ophiocordyceps fungus - which hijacks the bodies of ants and turns them into zombie spore-spreaders - evolves to infect people.



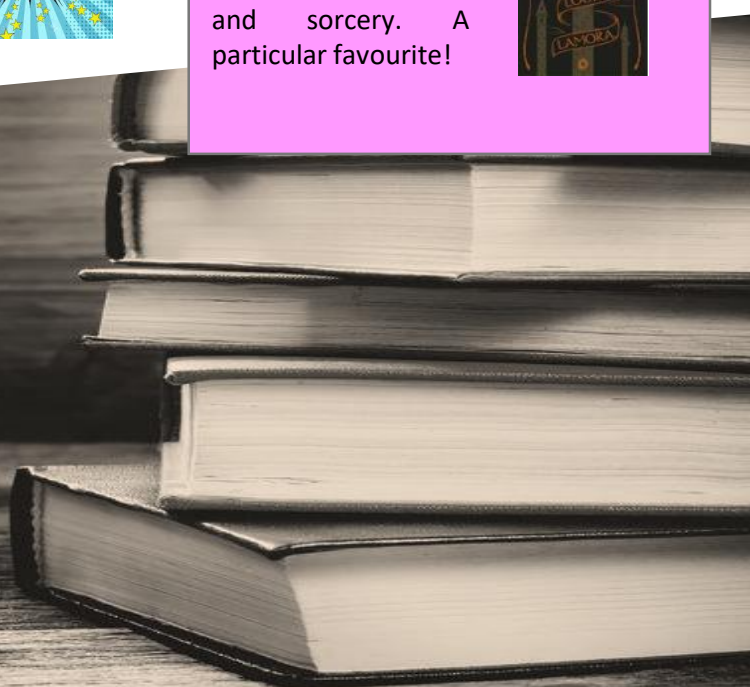
Miss. Bolland recommends: *Roald Dahl: Teller Of The Unexpected* by Matthew Dennison

The biography certainly doesn't paint Dahl in an altogether flattering light, but it is truly interesting to see such an incredibly different side to the man, and it does emphasise how he absolutely secured the 'recipe' for books that entrance children in particular.



Dr. Leatherland recommends: *The Lies of Locke Lamora* by Scott Lynch

A twist on the Robin Hood trope set in a fantasy version of Venice with sharks and sorcery. A particular favourite!



# Local Libraries

## Free e-book Download Link

Quick, simple and so easy to use.

This free e-book site boasts thousands of titles on a wide range of topics, from YA fiction to Science and Technology, there is something for everyone.

Whether you're looking for your next reading recommendation or need some help with your home learning, this site is ideal for all pupils and parents.

All you need is a PC or any device that connects to the internet and you're ready to go!

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# House recommendation: Hild

## House Captain

Miss Bolland recommends:  
*Our House* by Louise Candlish

This was a gift from my mum a couple of years ago and I could not put it down. Fast forward to today and I've rediscovered my love for it. Definitely worth a read! There are plenty of twists and turns and the ending was entirely unexpected!



## House Prefect

Scarlett recommends:  
*The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins

I love the hunger games because it is a great mix of action and thrills, as well as romance. During the book, we follow the character "Katniss Everdeen" and her time in the hunger games arena. Her character is inspiring. She stands for doing what is right and protecting people you love, as well as people you don't even know. It is an overall amazing book, and the sequels are just as good.



## House pupil

Lucy recommends: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

I have started this book as part of my English lessons and I'm really enjoying it! It follows the life of Scout Finch who lives in Maycomb, Alabama and looks at key themes such as prejudice and discrimination.



# First liners



Can you guess the title of the book from the first line?

1. 'As I sit here with one foot on either side of the ledge, looking twelve stories down above the streets of Boston, I can't help but think about suicide.'

2. 'Old Dudley folded into the chair he was gradually molding to his own shape and looked out the window fifteen feet away...'

3. 'This Saturday-an early winter's afternoon on Hampstead Heath-Elise had actually been waiting for someone else. a

4. "You do an awfully good impression of yourself."

5. 'It was love at first sight.'

6. 'First the colours.'

7. Marsh is not swamp.

8. 'They've gone now, and I'm alone at last.'

9. It was nearing midnight and the Prime Minister was sitting alone in his office, reading a long memo that was slipping through his brain...'



# Word of the Month

## Fellowship

(Origin: Greek)

*Fellowship* means friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests. Although it has Greek origins, *fellowship* brings together language from Middle English *felaweschipe*, going back to Old English *fēolagscipe*.

It's first known use dates all the way back to before the twelfth century when people used it refer to companionship. It is also used frequently in Christianity when referring to members of the church coming together as one.





# Reading for Pleasure

Reading is a huge part of our academy. Throughout our school, we have implemented a number of reading strategies that will give pupils access to a wide range of literature both inside and outside the classroom.

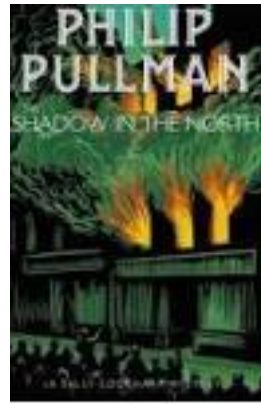
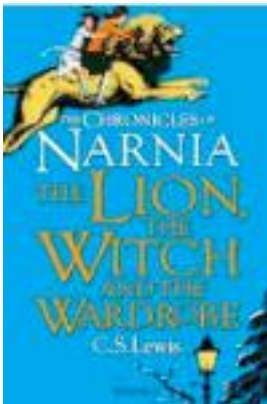
Our *Reading for Pleasure* lessons have been met with fantastic positivity and enthusiasm from our KS3 pupils. Texts have been specifically chosen that link not only to our curriculum, but to our Christian values as well. This year, pupils will enjoy a range of texts such as:

## Year 7

*The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis  
*Once* by Morris Gleitzman

## Year 8

*The Shadow in the North* by Philip Pullman  
*Then* by Morris Gleitzman



# Final Notes

Reading is so important to our Academy. The key aim of our reading drive is to encourage Reading for Pleasure. I leave you with some words of wisdom from Maya Angelou:

**“When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young.”**

MAYA ANGELOU

I hope you've enjoyed reading this month's newsletter. As an Academy, we believe you should never be stuck for reading information and recommendations - visit our dedicated reading section on our website for ideas, competitions recommended lists and more. Click on 'Curriculum' and 'Reading' (or click on this link: <https://ianramsey.org.uk/curriculum/reading/> ) to uncover a world of books and recommendations and challenges including:

- Book recommendations. These change every term and are thematically linked to all the topics covered by each subject that term.
- Reading challenges
- Desert Island Book lists
- Reading quotes
- Recommend a book

I hope you've enjoyed November's newsletter and look forward to sending you December's edition!

\*Answers to First Lines:

1. It Ends With Us by Colleen Hoover
2. The Geranium by Flannery O'Connor
3. The Confession by Jessie Burton
4. Lunar Park by Bret Easton Ellis
5. Catch 22 by Joseph Heller
6. The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
7. Where The Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens
8. Private Peaceful by Michael Morpurgo
9. Harry Potter and the Half- Blood Prince by J.K. Rowling

