The Berners Review

Issue 3: 12/11/2021

Welcome to the third issue of the Berners Review; your bi-weekly round up of library and learning news.

I get it. You're tired. You're busy. You have matches and prep and revision and coursework and a social life. The last thing you need is another book to add to your 'To Be Read' list. So, this week, we're focusing on bringing joy back to our reading.

Can I convince you that reading isn't just another task on your to-do list? **Potentially.**

What to expect: the magic of short stories, book awards season, a somewhat controversial book review by fellow student Poppy Baines, and more.

Love Reading Again with Short Stories

Since joining the College, I have spoken to many of you about your relationship with reading. What I have found most interesting is that a significant number of you feel as though reading is a **chore** as opposed to a means of **entertainment** or **relaxation** which it is so often marketed as.

Here is what you had to say:

"I read really slowly so I struggle to follow the story."

"I don't have much time to read so I lose interest in a story before I finish it."

"I want to read but it takes a lot of effort- especially when you have to remember all the characters and what has already happened.

How do we combat this? ***One solution: short stories.***

Why short stories?

- They are quicker to finish which brings about a sense of **accomplishment** and **satisfaction.**

- There are usually fewer characters involved so it is **easier to follow** the story.

- The plot is generally quite **simple** with a clear beginning, middle, and end.

- They are a quicker way to try out **new genres and authors** to find what you like to read.

Click **this link** to view a document full of short story recommendations. You can find the best of the College's collection of short stories on display in the Berners Library this week. They will then become a permanent feature on the shelves to the left of the desk.

Too tired? How about an Audiobook?

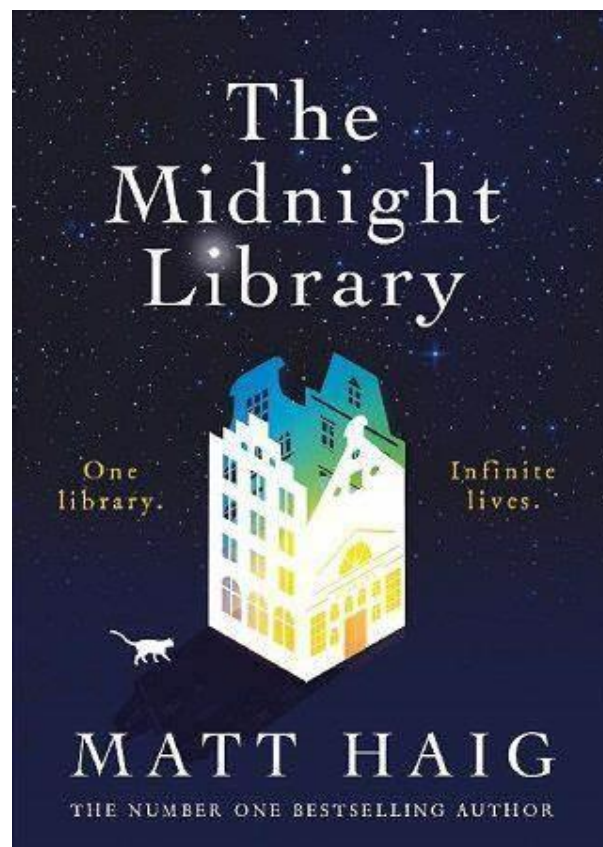*Maykopsky District, Adyghe Oblast* by Richard Smith

Toadstone by Danny Rhodes

Night Train by Georgina Harding

The Body Audit by Rory Gleeson

All the People Were Mean and Bad by Lucy Caldwell

Audiobooks are a great way to fit literature into your day when you just can't bring yourself to pick up a book. Loads of the classics, like those by Dickens, Austen, and Hemingway, are available as audiobooks online for free - just search for them on Youtube! If you just want to see if this format is for you, you can listen to the shortlist of the BBC National Short Story Awards 2021 and much more on BBC Sounds!

Poppy Baines reviews The Midnight Library

Poppy Baines, year 12, details her controversial view of Matt Haig's bestselling novel, *The Midnight Library***:**

"As I had such high hopes for a book so raved and talked about, I really did expect better than what I read. Although the premise of the book is absolutely genius on Matt Haig's part, the result was utterly disappointing. The beginning chapters focused solely on generating sympathy and pity for the life of Nora Seed, our central character, as to be expected in a book set between life and death, the person usually has a depressing and pitiful life to begin with. However, despite this attempt to gain

sympathy and make the main character at least somewhat likeable, she just ended up coming across as self-deprecating and just plain annoying. This opening really set the tone for the rest of the book. As the book progressed Nora's self-deprecating nature only became more and more prominent, which made it that much harder to like her and the book itself. Despite its extremely unpleasant beginning, the book itself did get slightly better towards the end of the midsection, with Nora becoming a slightly more likeable character. However, this was soon ruined by the utterly disappointing end of the book as Nora returned to square one, going back to her previous self and leaving an unpleasant taste in my mouth as I turned the last page. Overall, I would give this book a total of **2 stars** as I feel it was far too highly rated for what it was."
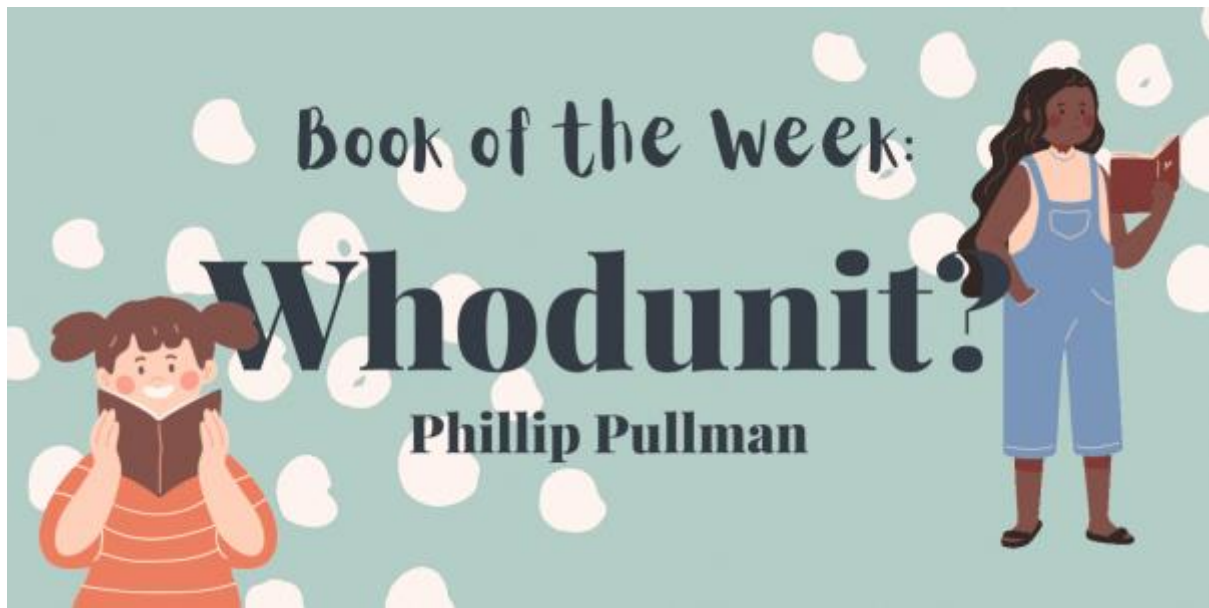
Can BookTok Be Trusted?

There's a side of TikTok for everyone - including the book lover. With over 26.6 billion views on the hashtag, *BookTok*, as it is known, allows us to come together and celebrate the good, bad, and ugly of the literary world.

In this video, Youtuber Jack Edwards reads TikTok's most popular books and asks: 'can BookTok be trusted? Look closely and you will notice the video features Poppy's favourite book ...
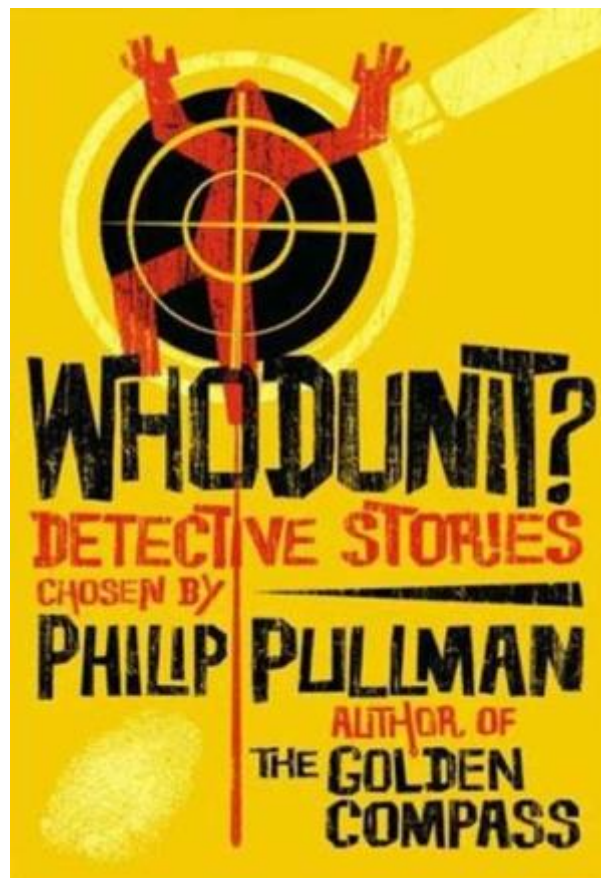
Book of the week:
Whodunit?
Phillip Pullman

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*16 detective stories collected by **Phillip Pullman**- renowned author of* His Dark Materials.

Unexplained disappearances, daring thefts, perplexing mysteries and cold-blooded killers combine to make this collection of classic and contemporary crime fiction a gripping read. here are sixteen

stories about the greatest detectives, by writers including: Agatha Christie, Arthur Conan Doyle, Dashiell Hammett, Ellery Queen, Damon Runyon, and Dorothy L. Slayers.

Nominations for the CILIP Medals Announced

The CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals are awarded annually to an author and illustrator, respectively, for creating an 'outstanding reading experience' for children and young people. Take a look below at the 2022 Carnegie nominations and click here to view those for the Kate Greenaway medal. **What would you choose?**

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Your voice. Your learning. Your library.

The Berners Library has great potential to become a welcoming space for learning and relaxation alike. This step forward starts with you. Fill out **this form** to let us know what you want to see and do here.