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Happy reading! – Miss Mullins, Miss Walker, and Miss Henry



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Orpington Library's Younger Teens Reading Group

Do you enjoy reading?
Enjoy talking about books?



Would you like to join the
Younger Teens Reading
Group at Orpington Library?

If you would like to join, please contact us by
email: orpington.library@gll.org

Meetings are once a month on a Monday from
5:30-6:30pm, during term time, for ages 11-
14 years

We look forward to seeing you!

On This Day... Jeff VanderMeer was born 7th July 1968

Jeff VanderMeer (born July 7, 1968) is an American author, editor, literary critic, and creative writing teacher who is best known for writing imaginative and unusual science fiction and fantasy stories. He first became known as a leading writer of the New Weird genre but later gained worldwide recognition through his bestselling Southern Reach series, especially the novel *Annihilation*, which won the prestigious Nebula Award and Shirley Jackson Award and was adapted into a successful Hollywood film directed by Alex Garland. Born in Pennsylvania, VanderMeer spent much of his childhood in Fiji, where his parents worked for the Peace Corps, before returning to the United States. He studied at the University of Florida and later attended the famous Clarion Writers Workshop, where he developed his writing skills. Inspired by the bold and imaginative writing of Angela Carter, VanderMeer began publishing stories while still in high school and became known for creating strange, mysterious worlds that combine science fiction, fantasy, horror, environmental themes, and psychological suspense. His novels, including *Shriek: An Afterword*, *Finch*, *Borne*, *Dead Astronauts*, and *Hummingbird Salamander*, often



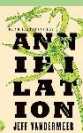
explore humanity's relationship with nature, survival, and transformation. The Southern Reach trilogy follows a secret government agency investigating the mysterious Area X, a place where nature has taken over after an unexplained event, and its unique publication schedule helped all three books become bestsellers. In addition to writing novels, VanderMeer has edited award-winning anthologies with his wife, Ann VanderMeer, including *The New Weird*, *The Weird*, and *The Big Book of Science Fiction*, which introduced readers to important works of speculative fiction. He has also written reviews, judged major literary awards, founded a small publishing press, and taught creative writing to students through workshops and programs for young writers. Critics have praised VanderMeer for creating original stories that are difficult to classify into a single genre, earning him the nickname "King of Weird Fiction." His writing is known for its rich descriptions, thought-provoking ideas, environmental themes, and mysterious atmosphere, making him one of the most influential contemporary authors of speculative fiction. To find out more, click [here](#).

Annihilation #1 Jeff VanderMeer

Area X has been cut off from the rest of the world for decades. Nature has reclaimed the last vestiges of human civilization. The first expedition returned with reports of a pristine, Edenic landscape; the second expedition ended in mass suicide, the third in a hail of gunfire as its members turned on one another. The members of the eleventh expedition returned as shadows of their former selves, and within weeks, all had died of cancer. In *Annihilation*, the first volume of Jeff VanderMeer's Southern Reach Trilogy, we join the twelfth expedition.

Borne #1 by Jeff VanderMeer

In *Borne*, a young woman named Rachel survives as a scavenger in a ruined city half destroyed by drought and conflict. The city is dangerous, littered with discarded experiments from the Company—a biotech firm now derelict—and punished by the unpredictable predations of a giant bear. Rachel ekes out an existence in the shelter of a run-down sanctuary she shares with her partner, Wick, who deals his own homegrown psychoactive biotech. One day, Rachel finds Borne during a scavenging mission and takes him home. Borne as salvage is little more than a green lump—plant or animal?—but exudes a strange charisma. Borne reminds Rachel of the marine life from the island nation of her birth, now lost to rising seas. There is an attachment she resents: in this world any weakness can kill you. Yet, against her instincts—and definitely against Wick's wishes—Rachel keeps Borne. She cannot help herself. Borne, learning to speak, learning about the world, is fun to be with, and in a world so broken that innocence is a precious thing. For Borne makes Rachel see beauty in the desolation around her. She begins to feel a protectiveness she can ill afford.

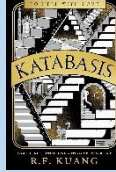


"it's a smile, it's a kiss, it's a sip of wine ... it's summertime!" - Kenny Chesney

NEW

Katabasis by R.F. Kuang

Grad student Alice Law has only ever had one goal: to become the brightest mind in the field of analytic magick. But the only person who can make her dream come true is dead and - inconveniently - in hell. And Alice, along with her biggest rival Peter Murdoch, is going after him. But hell is not as the philosopher's claim, its rules are upside-down, and if she's going to get out of there alive, she and Peter will have to work together. That's if they can agree on anything. Will they triumph or kill each other trying?

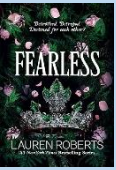


Beyond the Cloud Vol. 1 by Nicke

A boy with a talent for machines and a the mysterious girl whose wings he's fixed will take you past the ordinary. A tale about the longing of young hearts for adventure and friendship.

Fearless #3 by Lauren Roberts

Ordinary-born Paedyn Gray was prepared for a death sentence, not a proposal. After killing the king, marriage to his son, Kitt, was the last thing she—or the kingdom—expected. But with her role as queen, Paedyn would have the chance to unite Ilya and create a kingdom where Ordinaries live alongside Elites without fear. With a decision looming, Paedyn battles between her head, her heart, and the hidden trials she now faces. Through it all, Kai Azer fights to call her his, even if it means defying his king. Are vows strong enough to unite a kingdom? Or will betrayal break them? The choice between sacrifice and self has never been more difficult . . . or deadly.



Beyond the Clouds Vol. 2 by Nicke

Deep in the forest, Theo has finally found the mysterious Doctor, whose medicine might save Mia's life. In exchange, Theo must find what the Doctor desires most and bring it back to him. Theo agrees without thinking, but how will he even figure out this riddle, not to mention find what the Doctor's looking for in this vast, forbidding wood full of fairies and monsters? The clock is ticking as Mia lies in her sickbed, and the unknown enemies who attacked her plot their next move.

Battle Royale by Koushun Takami

(recommended for older readers)

Koushun Takami's notorious high-octane thriller envisions a nightmare scenario: a class of junior high school students is taken to a deserted island where, as part of a ruthless authoritarian program, they are provided arms and forced to kill until only one survivor is left standing. Criticized as violent exploitation when first published in Japan—where it became a runaway best seller—*Battle Royale* is a Lord of the Flies for the 21st century, a potent allegory of what it means to be young and (barely) alive in a dog-eat-dog world.



Beyond the Clouds Vol. 3 by Nicke

Young Theo works as a mechanic, putting his knack for machines to use in the industrialized city where he lives. But when he finds an injured, amnesiac girl with wings, his life changes forever. Her name is Mia, and although Theo's talents make quick work of repairing her injured wing, their quest to find her home will take them beyond the clouds and further than they would ever have imagined.

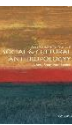
Cultural Communities Week!

Cultural Communities Week is celebrated every second week of July in the Philippines to honour the country's Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs), recognize their important contributions, and promote respect for their rights, traditions, languages, and cultures. It was officially established in 1988 during the presidency of Corazon Aquino, and today it is led by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), which protects indigenous rights and ancestral lands under the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997. Many organizations help support this celebration, including the Cultural Centre of the Philippines, which promotes indigenous arts through performances and exhibits; the National Museum of the Philippines, which preserves important cultural artifacts; the Ayala Foundation, which supports education, livelihoods, and cultural preservation; Globe Telecom, which helps improve digital access and community development; and Bench, which has promoted indigenous-inspired designs through collaborations with local artisans. Indigenous groups such as the T'boli Weavers also play a major role by preserving traditional crafts like the sacred t'nalak weaving, providing both cultural pride and sustainable livelihoods. During Cultural Communities Week, government agencies, schools, businesses, media organizations, and indigenous communities work together to hold cultural performances, educational discussions, workshops, exhibits, and storytelling activities that focus on topics such as indigenous learning, entrepreneurship, spirituality, climate change, and cultural preservation. The Philippines is home to more than 110 indigenous ethnolinguistic groups, each with unique languages, beliefs, customs, and traditions, although many indigenous languages are now endangered. Businesses can celebrate by supporting indigenous farmers and artisans through fair trade and by promoting authentic local products. Students and the public are also encouraged to learn about indigenous history, study native languages, and support indigenous communities. Cultural Communities Week reminds Filipinos that indigenous peoples are an important part of the nation's identity and history, and that protecting their rights, preserving their cultures and languages, and respecting their way of life help create a more inclusive, united, and culturally rich Philippines. To find out more, click [here](#).



Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction by John Monaghan

"If you want to know what anthropology is, look at what anthropologists do," write the authors of *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. This engaging overview of the field combines an accessible account of some of the discipline's guiding principles and methodology with abundant examples and illustrations of anthropologists at work.



On This Day... Ann Radcliffe was born 9th July 1764-1823

Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823) was one of the most important English Gothic novelists and is often called a pioneer of the literature of terror because she helped shape the Gothic novel by combining mystery, suspense, romance, and beautiful descriptions of nature. Born in London as Ann Ward, she married journalist William Radcliffe in 1787, who supported her writing career. Although her novels were set in dramatic places such as castles in France and Italy, she rarely traveled, visiting mainland Europe only once after most of her famous books had already been written. She first published *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) and *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) anonymously, but she became widely famous with *The Romance of the Forest* (1791). Her greatest success came with *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), which tells the story of the orphan Emily St. Aubert as she faces danger, imprisonment, and mysterious events before finally finding freedom and happiness. She followed this with *The Italian* (1797), which featured one of literature's most memorable Gothic villains, the sinister monk Schedoni. Radcliffe earned large amounts of money from these novels and stopped writing fiction while she was still successful, later focusing mainly on poetry, although her later works were less popular. She was known for being very shy and avoided public attention despite her fame. Radcliffe made an important contribution to literature by distinguishing terror from horror: she believed terror created suspense, curiosity, and imagination, while horror relied on shocking scenes of violence and fear. Unlike other Gothic writers, she often explained seemingly supernatural events with logical causes, making her stories mysterious rather than truly supernatural. Her innovative style greatly influenced later Romantic and Gothic writers, including Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Christina Rossetti, and her novels remain important examples of how suspense, imagination, and psychological tension can create powerful and lasting works of literature. To find out more, click [here](#).



The Mysteries of Udolpho by Ann Radcliffe

This was the most popular novel of Radcliffe's time and Radcliffe's portrayal of her heroine's inner life raised the Gothic romance to a new level. The atmosphere of fear and the gripping plot continue to thrill today. This is the story of the orphaned Emily St Aubert who finds herself separated from the man she loves and confined within the Castle of Udolpho by her aunt's new husband, Montoni. Here she must cope with an unwanted suitor, Montoni's threats, and the wild imaginings and terrors which threaten to overwhelm her.



12th July is... New Conversations Day

New Conversations Day, celebrated every year on July 12, encourages people to start meaningful conversations, make new friends, and build stronger connections with others. The day reminds us that communication is an important part of everyday life because it helps people understand different ideas, cultures, and experiences while reducing loneliness and building trust. Whether talking with a new neighbour, a classmate, or someone from a different background, starting a conversation can improve confidence, develop communication skills, and create lasting friendships. Organizations and brands also support the importance of healthy communication in different ways. Starbucks provides welcoming spaces where people can gather and talk, Google offers communication tools such as Gmail and Google Meet that connect people around the world, The Trevor Project creates safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth to seek support through conversation, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) encourages open discussions about mental health, TED inspires people through educational talks that introduce new ideas, and Toastmasters International helps individuals improve their public speaking and leadership skills. The holiday is inspired by the communication principles of Dale Carnegie, author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, who believed that genuine interest in others and active listening are the keys to building strong relationships. Throughout history, books and studies have shown how important conversations are, from learning how to communicate effectively to understanding that adults speak thousands of words every day. Communities and businesses can celebrate New Conversations Day by hosting discussion groups, conversation workshops, networking events, or simple meet-and-greet activities that encourage people to interact in a relaxed environment. Individuals can participate by welcoming a new neighbour, volunteering to spend time talking with lonely people in hospitals or care homes or organizing community conversations to strengthen relationships. The day also highlights interesting facts about communication, such as the importance of body language and tone of voice, the role of etiquette in conversations, and the difference between small talk and more meaningful discussions. Overall, New Conversations Day reminds everyone that a simple conversation can help people learn from one another, overcome misunderstandings, appreciate different perspectives, and create a kinder, more connected community. To find out more, click [here](#).



Conversations with Friends by Sally Rooney

Frances is twenty-one years old, cool-headed and observant. A student in Dublin and an aspiring writer, at night she performs spoken word with her best friend Bobbi, who used to be her girlfriend. When they are interviewed and then befriended by Melissa, a well-known journalist who is married to Nick, an actor, they enter a world of beautiful houses, raucous dinner parties and holidays in Provence, beginning a complex ménage-à-quatre. But when Frances and Nick get unexpectedly closer, the sharply witty and emotion-averse Frances is forced to honestly confront her own vulnerabilities for the first time.



7th July is... International Peace and Love Day!

International Peace & Love Day is celebrated every July 7 to encourage people around the world to spread kindness, understanding, forgiveness, and hope for a more peaceful world. The celebration was inspired by Ringo Starr, the drummer of The Beatles, who began his "Peace and Love" birthday tradition in 2008 by asking people to simply share the message of "peace and love" on his birthday. Since then, millions of people have joined by posting on social media, attending community events, and participating in activities that promote unity and compassion. In 2020, the celebration even moved online with musical performances from famous artists, while astronauts aboard the International Space



Station sent a message of peace to the world. The holiday also recognizes individuals and organizations that work to create a better future, including the United Nations, which promotes international peace and cooperation; the Peace Corps, whose volunteers help communities around the world through education and development projects; Amnesty International, which defends human rights; and Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières), which provides medical care to people affected by wars, disasters, and disease. Businesses such as Ben & Jerry's, TOMS, and Warby Parker also support social causes by promoting equality, helping underserved communities, and encouraging responsible business practices. A major symbol of the day is Nelson Mandela, the former President of South Africa, who became a global example of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation after helping end apartheid and promoting equality, earning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. People celebrate International Peace & Love Day by sending positive messages, practicing forgiveness, volunteering, listening to songs like *Let It Be* and *All You Need Is Love* by The Beatles, and taking actions that encourage understanding instead of conflict. The holiday also teaches interesting facts about peace, such as the dove being a universal symbol of peace, the Roman and Greek goddesses of peace being Pax and Eirene, and the idea that peace creates stability, cooperation, and healthier communities. Overall, International Peace & Love Day reminds people that even small acts of kindness, respect, empathy, and understanding can help build stronger relationships and contribute to a more peaceful and united world. To find out more, click [here](#).

Charlotte's Web by E.B. White

Some Pig. Humble. Radiant. These are the words in Charlotte's Web, high up in Zuckerman's barn. Charlotte's spiderweb tells of her feelings for a little pig named Wilbur, who simply wants a friend. They also express the love of a girl named Fern, who saved Wilbur's life when he was born the runt of his litter. E. B. White's Newbery Honor Book is a tender novel of friendship, love, life, and death that will continue to be enjoyed by generations to come. This edition contains newly colour illustrations by Garth Williams, the acclaimed illustrator of E. B. White's Stuart Little and Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House series, among many other books.

