

Le Rond-Point

Nuclear Winter



A short word from the editors of the Rond-Point:

Welcome to the winter edition of the Rond-Point! We focused on cold things in this edition, and our writers took that and ran, finding a diversity of topics from literature to nuclear war to tell you about. We also of course have our classic book corner and crossword, as well as our newly classic music recommendations - feel free to listen to a song or two as you browse. Thanks for reading, and happy late new year!

Matin

Je m'éblouis
d'infini

Giuseppe Ungaretti

CREDITS:

Couverture: Maïa Jacob

Illustrations: Daphne Delenclos
Romain Vidaković
Maïa Jacob

Composition: Eduardo Pavone

Relecture: Aster Delarue

Appel aux élèves de Seconde et de Première avides d'écriture - nous avons besoin de vous!

Écrivez-nous à lerondpoint@eleve.lyceefrançais.org.uk pour rejoindre l'équipe (auteurs anglais et français bienvenus)

Sommaire:

- 4 Shakespeare, the Ultimate Summer Girlie
- 6 War on the Horizon?
- 9 Le Harcèlement Scolaire
- 10 Pride Recommendations
- 13 Poetry Corner
- 14 Colour Corner
- 16 Yggdrasil and the Nine Realms of Norse Mythology
- 18 The Mari Lwyd
- 20 Winter is coming, so is Valentine's day!!!
- 22 Winter Chill playlist
- 23 Winter's Fangs
- 24 Coldssword





Shakespeare :

The Ultimate Summer Girtie

Are you searching for a cosy watch in the cold winter months?

Do you want something comforting to read tucked up as it snows outside your window? Well sadly for us both, Shakespeare is not the place to find that warmth. He is however perfect if you're searching for that melancholic vibe to set the scene for the next two months. Whether it be in his own plays or thanks to his heritage, the Globe, let me show you true winter spirit through England's best-known playwright.

Shakespeare's winter focuses on the death we often associate with the season, the finality that comes with the bare trees and the biting cold. For him, winter is the destruction of the joy and folly summer creates, present in plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. When *Sonnet 5* compares the seasons to the passing of time in a man's life, winter represents the final years of life. Winter, like death, is bare and weak but inevitable, a result of the fleeting nature of both beauty and life. Winter is very clearly not Shakespeare's favourite time of the year, considering in both his poems and his plays he compares any melancholy to winter. Even when reading *As You Like It*, a play famous for its jolliness, Act 2 brings up winter just to highlight the little cruelty any of the characters displays.

The most obvious example of how Shakespeare presents winter is his play *The Winter's Tale*. The title refers to stories that would be told to pass away the long winter afternoons, which you can still do today with the books recommended by my colleague in the book corner.

The play begins with the tragic tale of the jealous King Leontes, who accuses his wife and best friend of having an affair. Because of this he loses everyone he loves. His best friend is exiled, his wife Hermione dies and he banishes their newborn daughter Perdita to live with shepherds. The play is still a comedy, so it takes a happier turn halfway through - I won't be spoiling the play so if you want to know more about this twist I recommend reading it or watching a production of it (or you could look it up, I won't hold it against you). The dichotomy between these two halves of the play shows the relationship Shakespeare believed to exist between a bitter winter in the first half and a joyful, festive summer in the second. The stormy cold setting at the start mirrors the cold of Leontes' heart, becoming yet another example of Shakespeare using winter to evoke cruelty and pain.

Aside from the gloomy settings and metaphors found in Shakespearean literature, if you don't fancy trying to decipher sonnets and old English, why not get into the winter spirit by visiting the Globe, Shakespeare's famous theatre on the South Bank. Most shows take place inside, in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, between November and March. This smaller playhouse is just next to the Globe and just as atmospheric, although unlike the Globe it's not a specific reconstruction of a venue: it's based on similar playhouses from the 17th century, most notably the one used by Shakespeare himself, Blackfriars playhouse. The green oak room is a perfect refuge from the biting winds Shakespeare loathed (see you could be just like him!), and it even includes beeswax candles and a painted ceiling. In fact, it's London's only candlelit theatre (look at that, foreshadowing myself). The Playhouse will soon be hosting *Ghost*, an exploration of family secrets through the loss of the father; *The Duchess of Malfi*, once again a look at family and forbidden love, but now centred on the control

of women; and finally the Shakespearean classic *Othello*.

But if you are willing to brave the cold, there are a few things to do in the Globe at the moment. None are Shakespeare plays, to honour his legacy of winter hating. A musical version of *Hansel and Gretel* written by Simon Armitage is still running, and you can go on various guided tours introducing you to the secrets of the theatre. Just as nice though, and much cheaper, is including the Globe in your list of sights to see if you're ever walking down the South Bank. And hey, if you're really trying to recreate the aesthetic of a struggling author writing furiously with only an open fire as the wind rages against his windows, why not buy the ends of the beeswax candles used to light the globe and the playhouse. They're cheap because they're technically rubbish, but they do look really cool.

Now that Christmas is over, it's time to do as Shakespeare would and accept joyless January.



WAR ON THE HORIZON?

The war in Ukraine may have pushed WW3 further away. How?



With the start, or rather further escalation, of the war in Ukraine on the 20th of February came fears of the propagation of war and even of a potential nuclear escalation, mainly from Russia. Many feel less safe than they did 2 years prior and some believe that a war erupting at any second is no longer a fear of a foregone era. Yet there is good reason to believe that this line of thought is misguided.

It is generally accepted that the main potential flash-point for a third world war would be the island of Taiwan. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has made it a party goal to invade, occupy and eventually integrate these islands into mainland China ever since the Republic of China (ROC) fled to them. The main problem with this has historically been, and still is, the United States. The issue for China is that US domination of the seas during the Cold War and US hegemony after the end of the Cold War meant that China, had they attempted to invade Taiwan, would have been absolutely curbed by US forces, even though the US is around 7600 miles away from Taiwan, because that's simply how dominant the United States is in military terms. The entire US military is centred around power projection, and they are easily the only nation in the world that has the capacity to launch a large-scale invasion of essentially any country on earth.

In recent years, China has witnessed an economic miracle, and in the face of that the US' power seems to be perhaps slightly shrinking. In Paul Kennedy's book "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers", the author talks about how when a global/regional hegemon is starting to feel its power wane against a new opponent, the result has nearly always been a war that would eventually decide the world order for the coming years. We've seen this multiple times: the rise of Prussia in continental Europe scared France, so France declared war and eventually got curbed by what would become the German Empire. The German Empire then actually started scaring the British as they saw it as a challenge to their naval power, so the British and Germans went to war. The British won, and from 1918 to 1939 Britain remained (arguably) the most powerful country on earth until WW2. Obviously these events have been massively oversimplified for the sake of brevity and there are so many different factors that I'm ignoring to make my point, but the book makes a really convincing case for the fact that if world war three were to happen, it would almost definitely be between the US and China.

Every time a hegemon sensed itself losing power, it started behaving more erratically, electing more extreme officials and asserting itself more militarily on the world stage. A country will almost always lose hegemony when it is no longer the greatest economic power, and as such the falling power will start relying more on hard power (the military) instead of soft power (influence and trading). The problem with this is that the rising power, with its bigger economy, will eventually have more to spend on the military, so the gap between both countries will begin to decrease quickly. The case is double with the US and China, since China, being a dictatorship, can allow itself to spend much more money during peacetime on the army than any democracy could feasibly do before being elected out of office, because democracies have to respect the will of the people and the people won't be very happy if granny Joannette just died at the hospital because her car swerved off the road due to a pothole and all the funding for the hospital is going to the army instead.

The US, when the book was written, was a prime example for this: a 2011 forecast by Goldman Sachs estimated that the Chinese economy would most likely overtake the US' by 2026, and would be 1.5 times as large by 2048. China has been growing at insane speeds for decades, and its military has as well. The fact is that the US' military is centred around power projection, hence their heavy investment into their bluewater (deep sea) navy and their air force. China, on the other hand, only needs to concentrate their budget on dominating the South China sea and capturing Taiwan. So, China is going to overtake the US and maybe war, right?

This is where it gets interesting. About a year ago, the Economist published an article talking about the possibility of "peak China": the idea that China, due to demographic and economic challenges, might start to slow down and maybe even NOT overtake the US. In 1987, Italy experienced something that is now called "Il sorpasso", wherein its economy briefly overtook the UK's and by some figures even France's, but then stagnated and fell back down. This is what a lot of forecasts are saying will happen in China: their economy would briefly surpass the US' and then stay below it for a while (if not forever, depending on how well China handles its demographic crisis). In recent months new figures have shown China is very much slowing down, and suddenly the concept of "peak China " is actually beginning to

become a lot more credible than before, so much so that this may even entail what I, as a widely known and respected academic, am now dubbing a “counter fall”. China, knowing that it may never be able to surpass the US in economic terms, may calculate that the best time to take Taiwan would be when it is closest to parity with the US, or within the next few years.

Which brings us back to Ukraine. China previously thought that taking Taiwan would be relatively easy and wouldn't take too long due to their numeric superiority, and that fighting the US and its allies would be the hard part. The Ukraine war has shown us that modern-day conflict is so incredibly biased towards a well-prepared defending belligerent that Russia, whose army was supposedly meant to be on-par with the US', remains bogged down and is actively losing men and equipment to the war. And this is against Ukraine, which has only started to prepare itself in 2014, is relatively poor and has had rampant corruption to boot.

Now let's take Taiwan. Essentially the entire existence of Taiwan has been based around being able to defend itself at all cost against China. It has some of the most advanced military weaponry in the world, and is, per capita, richer than China. On top of all that, it is an island, and as such it has heavily invested in its capacity to defend itself from naval attacks. China would struggle to get on the islands, never mind conquer them and fight the US, UK, Japan, and other allies that would most likely send troops or ships to fight off this Chinese invasion. This not only means that China is deterred from attacking Taiwan in the short term, but in the long term may not even have the capability to do so. As such, the advent of the war in Ukraine shows us that modern day warfare is a lot harder to conduct when you're not the attacker. The war in Ukraine may then not bring us closer to completing the trilogy, but instead may be the main reason for which we never see large-scale war the likes of which our grandfathers and great grandfathers have.

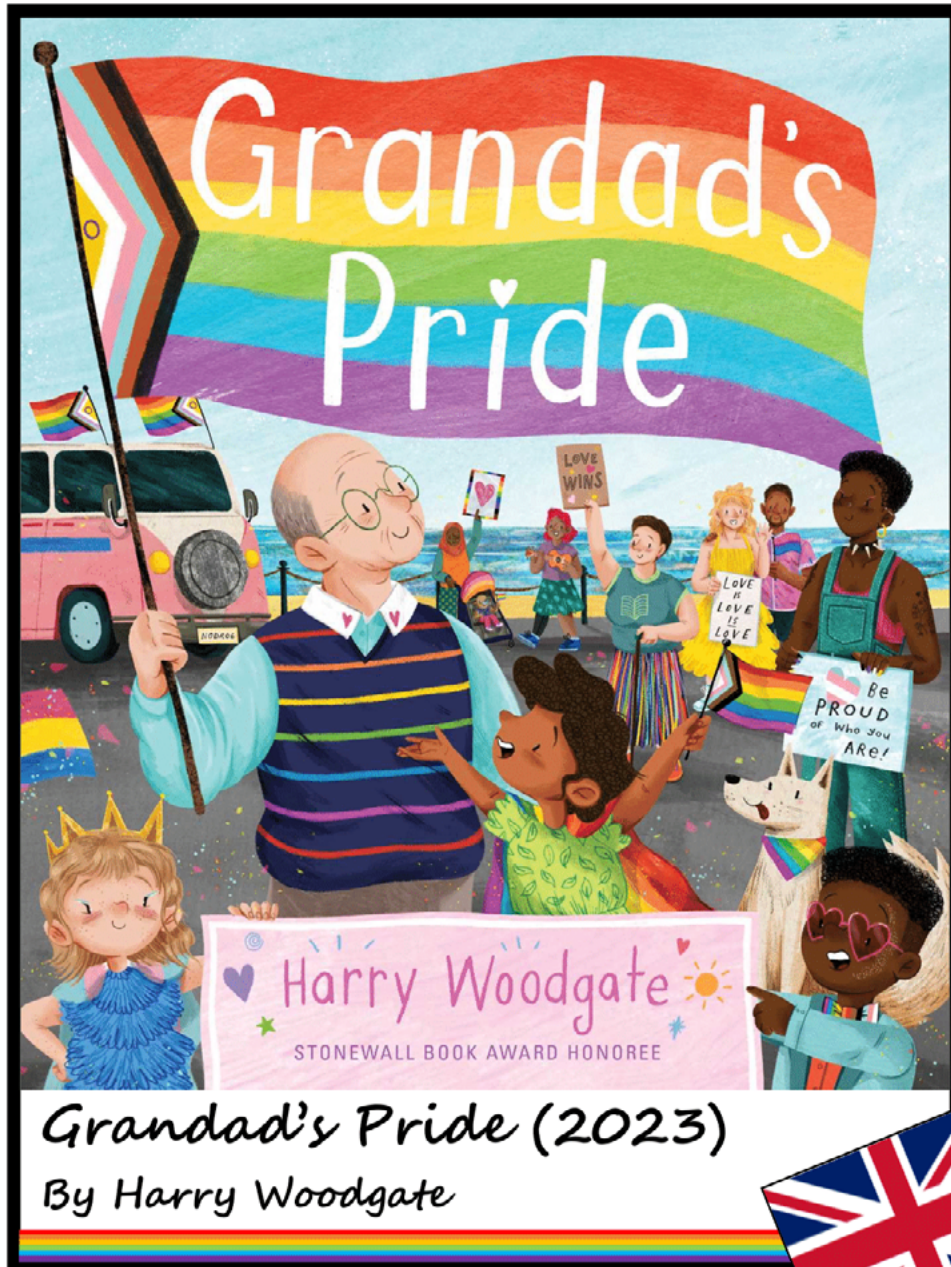


La Communauté du LFCG Engagée dans la Lutte Contre le Harcèlement Scolaire:

Dans le cadre de la journée (en France) et de la semaine (en Angleterre) de lutte contre le harcèlement scolaire, la communauté du LFCG poursuit sa démarche et ses actions. Plusieurs actions menées au cours du mois de novembre (conférence, stands, ateliers...) visant à sensibiliser les élèves et à ouvrir le dialogue afin de les faire réfléchir ensemble - et à succès! Cela a non seulement renforcé le sentiment d'unité au sein de notre école mais a également suscité une réflexion continue sur la manière dont chacun peut contribuer à un environnement sans harcèlement, et la participation active des élèves a été très fructueuse. Ces actions ont permis de renforcer l'empathie au sein du lycée et d'introduire l'équipe PHARE, nouvellement instaurée: cette équipe est composée de professeurs, mais aussi de personnel administratif et de membres de l'infirmerie, et a pour but de s'occuper de la santé mentale des élèves. C'est vers eux qu'il faut se tourner pour signaler des cas possibles de harcèlement, que vous en soyez victime ou simple témoin.

Cette période est à présent passée, mais la lutte contre le harcèlement ne s'arrête évidemment pas là: notre école reste déterminée à promouvoir le respect et l'inclusion, et à fabriquer pour tous ses membres une communauté de coopération afin que notre éducation ait lieu dans les meilleures conditions possibles.





Fiction, slice of life

"Milly can't wait to spend a summer at Grandad's cottage by the sea, and is even more excited when she discovers Grandad and Gramps' Pride flag in the attic. Grandad insists he's too old to go to the London celebrations, especially now Gramps isn't around any more, but Milly has an idea to get the local community together and bring Pride to Grandad"



PRIDE and no prejudice Series of the month



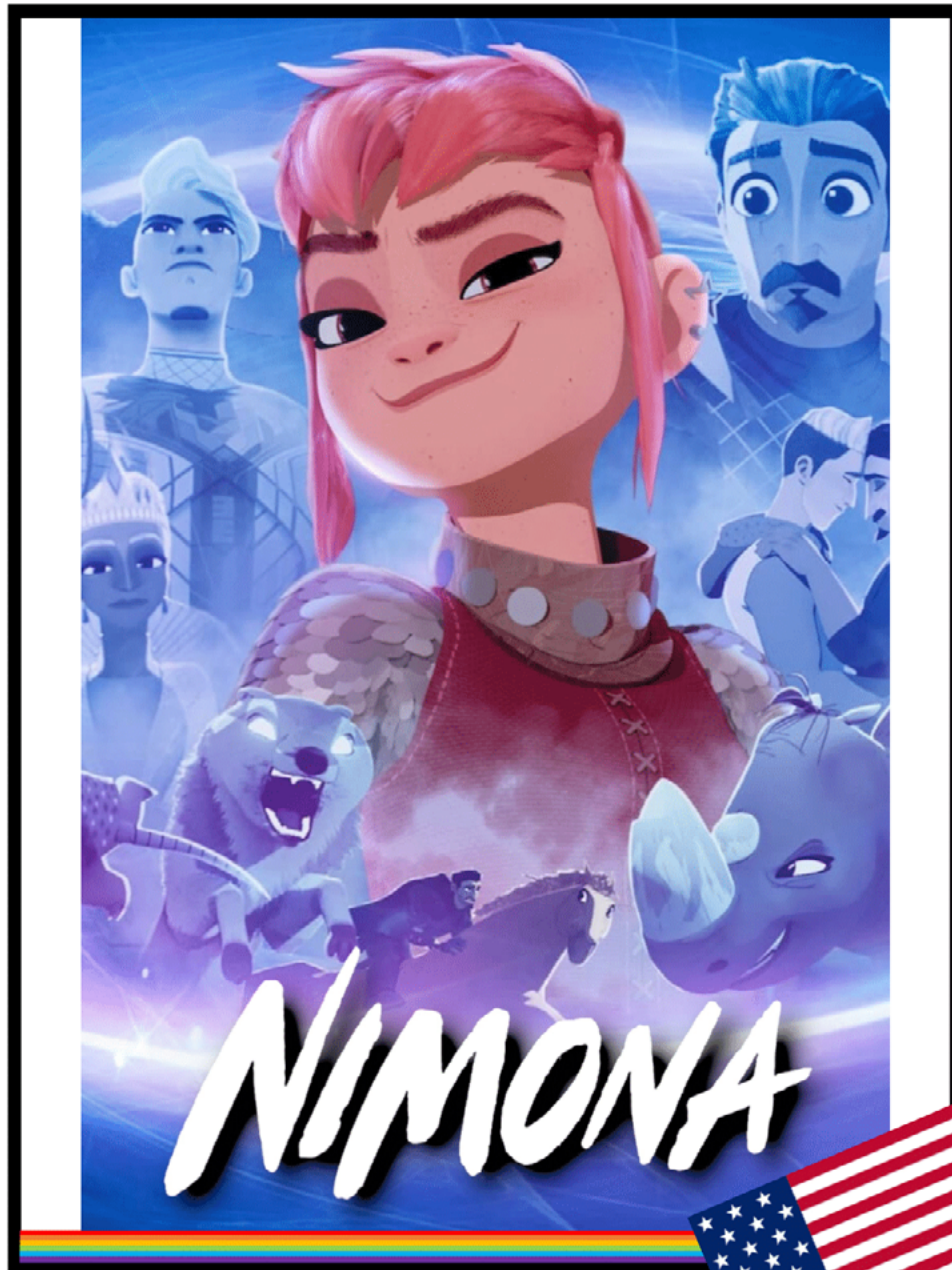
Heartstopper (2022-)

Fiction, coming of age, drama, comedy

In this heart-warming series based on a best-selling graphic novel, we follow Charlie, a shy introverted teen, and Nick, star rugby player, and friends as they navigate discovering who they are and coming-out.



PRIDE Film of the month
and no prejudice



Nimona (2023)

Fiction, fantasy, action

"A knight framed for a tragic crime teams with a scrappy, shape-shifting teen to prove his innocence. But what if she's the monster he's sworn to destroy?"



Poetry Corner

We had one page too many so here is a free poem on the editing team. This one is by Victor Hugo in his collection of poetry "Les Contemplations". This comes after his aptly named "Réponse à un acte d'accusation" wherein he defends his revolutionnary use of French where my favourite lines are obviously:

«Oui, je suis ce Danton ! je suis ce Robespierre !
J'ai, contre le mot noble à la longue rapière,
Insurgé le vocable ignoble, son valet,
Et j'ai, sur Dangeau mort, égorgé Richelet.
Oui, c'est vrai ce sont là quelques-uns de mes crimes.
J'ai pris et démoli la bastille des rimes.»

Hugo elevates the word itself in the poem that I'll put under here by quoting the Bible, Virgil, Dante and many other poets and artists. It is one of my favourite poems ever written, but since we're unfortunately constrained by page space you'll get the end. I hope you enjoy.

Suite

[..]

Quand, aux jours où la terre entr'ouvrait sa corolle,
Le premier homme dit la première parole,
Le mot né de sa lèvre, et que tout entendit,
Rencontra dans les cieux la lumière, et lui dit :
« Ma sœur !
« Envole-toi ! plane ! sois éternelle !
Allume l'astre ! emplis à jamais la prunelle !
Échauffe éthers, azurs, sphères, globes ardents ;
Éclaire le dehors, j'éclaire le dedans.
Tu vas être une vie, et je vais être l'autre.
Sois la langue de feu, ma sœur, je suis l'apôtre.
Surgis, efface l'ombre, éblouis l'horizon,
Sois l'aube ; je te vau, car je suis la raison ;
À toi les yeux, à moi les fronts. Ô ma sœur blonde,
Sous le réseau Clarté tu vas saisir le monde ;
Avec tes rayons d'or tu vas lier entre eux
Les terres, les soleils, les fleurs, les flots vitreux,

Les champs, les cieux ; et moi, je vais lier les bouches ;
Et sur l'homme, emporté par mille essors farouches,
Tisser, avec des fils d'harmonie et de jour,
Pour prendre tous les cœurs, l'immense toile Amour.
J'existais avant l'âme, Adam n'est pas mon père.
J'étais même avant toi ; tu n'aurais pu, lumière,
Sortir sans moi du gouffre où tout rampe enchaîné ;
Mon nom est Fiat lux, et je suis ton aîné ! »

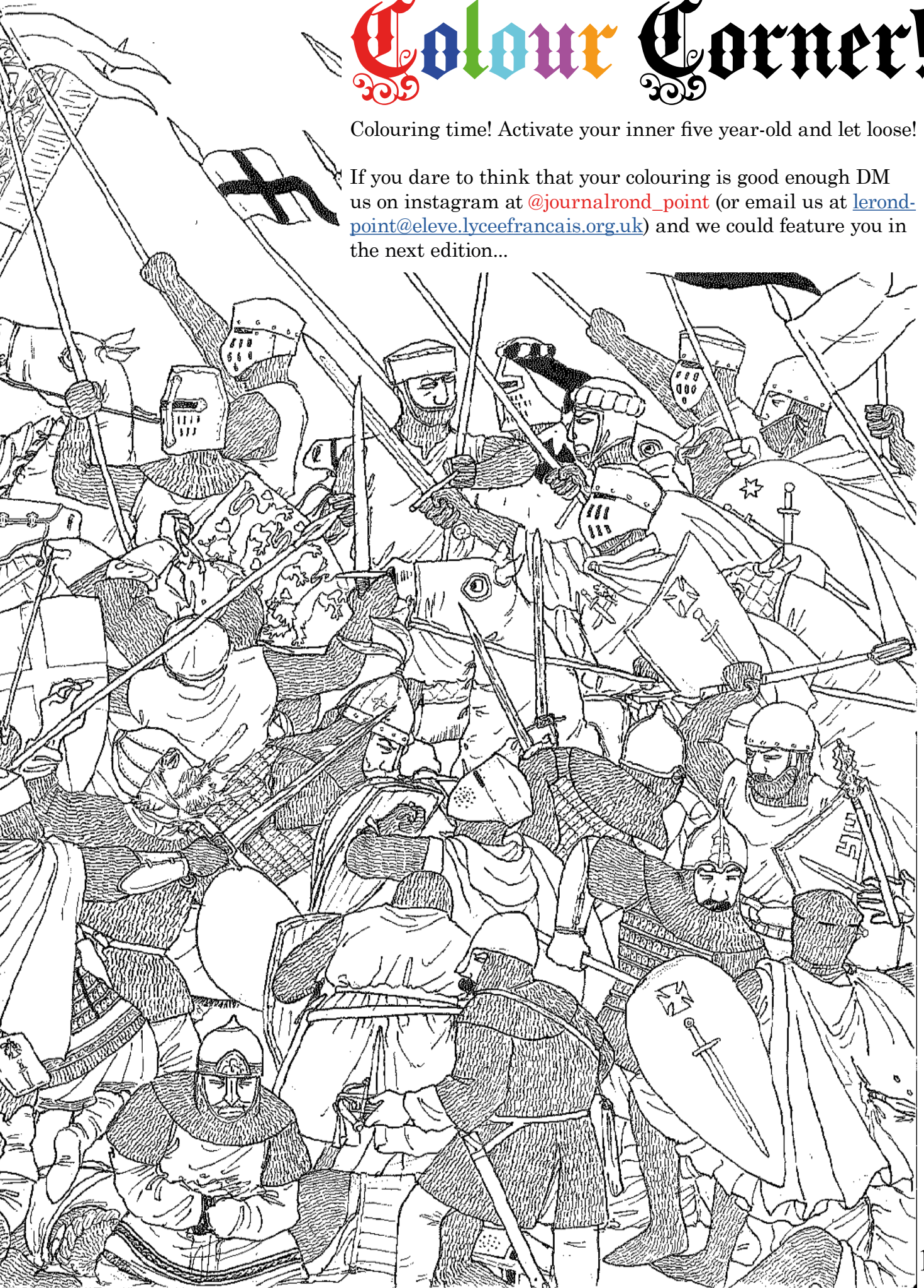
Oui, tout-puissant. Tel est le mot. Fou qui s'en joue !
Quand l'erreur fait un nœud dans l'homme, il le dénoue.
Il est foudre dans l'ombre et ver dans le fruit mûr.
Il sort d'une trompette, il tremble sur un mur,
Et Balthazar chancelle, et Jéricho s'écroule.
Il s'incorpore au peuple, étant lui-même foule.
Il est vie, esprit, germe, ouragan, vertu, feu ;
Car le mot, c'est le Verbe, et le Verbe, c'est Dieu. *Victor Hugo*



Colour Corner!

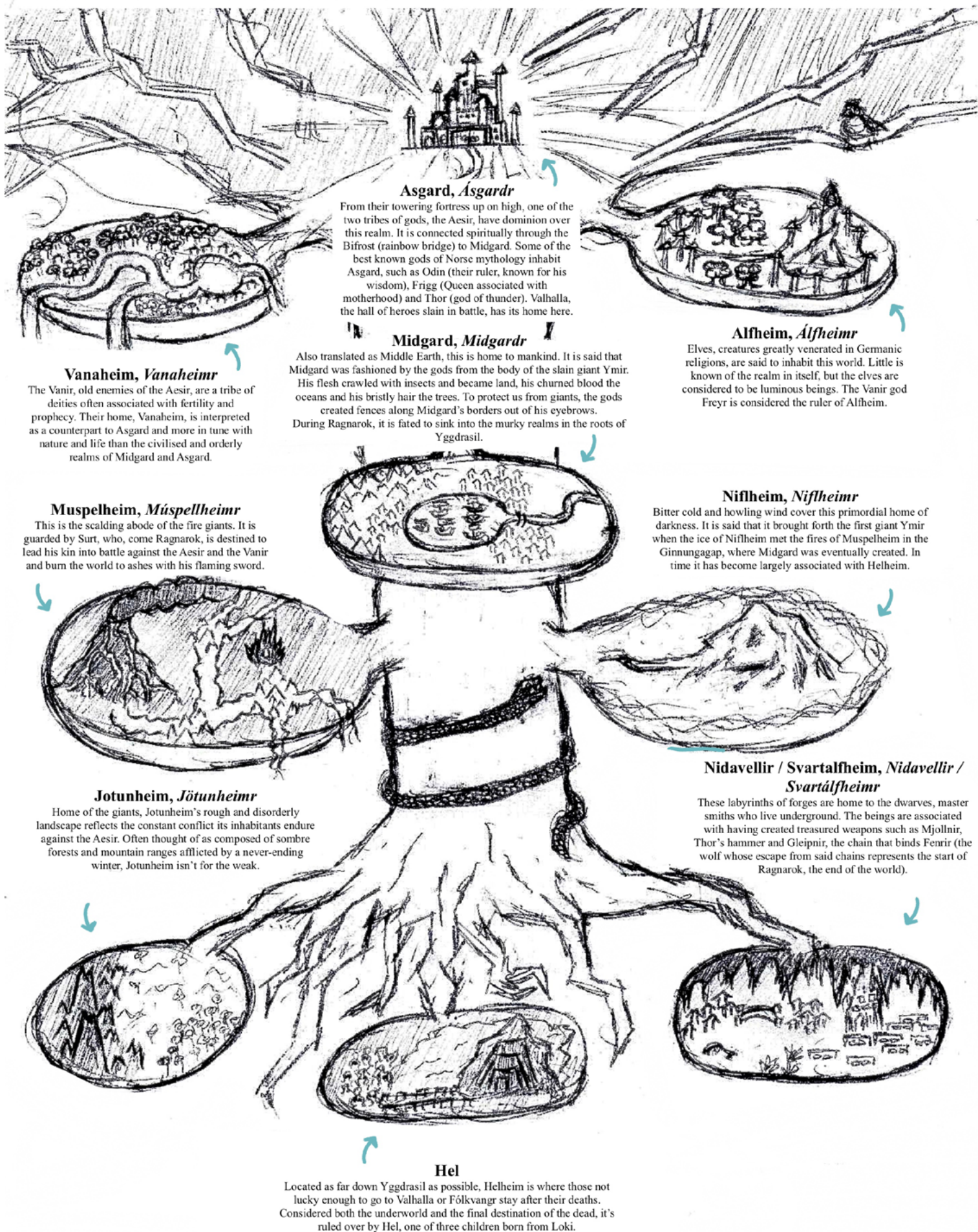
Colouring time! Activate your inner five year-old and let loose!

If you dare to think that your colouring is good enough DM us on instagram at [@journalrond_point](https://www.instagram.com/journalrond_point) (or email us at lerond-point@eleve.lyceefrançais.org.uk) and we could feature you in the next edition...



YGGDRASIL (THE WORLD TREE)

AND THE NINE REALMS OF NORSE MYTHOLOGY



Asgard, *Asgardr*

From their towering fortress up on high, one of the two tribes of gods, the Aesir, have dominion over this realm. It is connected spiritually through the Bifrost (rainbow bridge) to Midgard. Some of the best known gods of Norse mythology inhabit Asgard, such as Odin (their ruler, known for his wisdom), Frigg (Queen associated with motherhood) and Thor (god of thunder). Valhalla, the hall of heroes slain in battle, has its home here.

Midgard, *Midgardr*

Also translated as Middle Earth, this is home to mankind. It is said that Midgard was fashioned by the gods from the body of the slain giant Ymir. His flesh crawled with insects and became land, his churned blood the oceans and his bristly hair the trees. To protect us from giants, the gods created fences along Midgard's borders out of his eyebrows. During Ragnarok, it is fated to sink into the murky realms in the roots of Yggdrasil.

Alfheim, *Álfheimr*

Elves, creatures greatly venerated in Germanic religions, are said to inhabit this world. Little is known of the realm in itself, but the elves are considered to be luminous beings. The Vanir god Freyr is considered the ruler of Alfheim.

Vanaheim, *Vanaheimr*

The Vanir, old enemies of the Aesir, are a tribe of deities often associated with fertility and prophecy. Their home, Vanaheim, is interpreted as a counterpart to Asgard and more in tune with nature and life than the civilised and orderly realms of Midgard and Asgard.

Muspelheim, *Múspellheimr*

This is the scalding abode of the fire giants. It is guarded by Surt, who, come Ragnarok, is destined to lead his kin into battle against the Aesir and the Vanir and burn the world to ashes with his flaming sword.

Niflheim, *Niflheimr*

Bitter cold and howling wind cover this primordial home of darkness. It is said that it brought forth the first giant Ymir when the ice of Niflheim met the fires of Muspelheim in the Ginnungagap, where Midgard was eventually created. In time it has become largely associated with Helheim.

Jotunheim, *Jötunheimr*

Home of the giants, Jotunheim's rough and disorderly landscape reflects the constant conflict its inhabitants endure against the Aesir. Often thought of as composed of sombre forests and mountain ranges afflicted by a never-ending winter, Jotunheim isn't for the weak.

Nidavellir / Svartalfheim, *Nidavellir / Svartálfheimr*

These labyrinths of forges are home to the dwarves, master smiths who live underground. The beings are associated with having created treasured weapons such as Mjollnir, Thor's hammer and Gleipnir, the chain that binds Fenrir (the wolf whose escape from said chains represents the start of Ragnarok, the end of the world).

Hel

Located as far down Yggdrasil as possible, Helheim is where those not lucky enough to go to Valhalla or Fólkvangr stay after their deaths. Considered both the underworld and the final destination of the dead, it's ruled over by Hel, one of three children born from Loki.

Disclaimer : Keep in mind that there are plenty of interpretations of Norse mythology; this is a basic and (we hope) informative introduction.

Media we recommend:

Despite Marvel's best efforts, we think there are some beautifully done retellings of Norse mythology which are fantastic introductions to the lore.



Neil Gaiman's **Norse Mythology**

Master storyteller and author of *The Sandman* comics, *Coraline* and *Good Omens*, Gaiman delves into complex mythological lore through short but quick-to-read chapters. He explores deities and worlds and ends the book with Ragnarok, the prophesied end of the world. If you're a fan of his dry humour but highly readable style, this book will have you hooked. Compact, creative and informative: the stories will stay with you.



Rick Riordan's **Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard**

Aimed at younger readers (we estimate 10-14, 6eme to 4eme) but accessible to all. You will recognise Riordan as the author of *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, a successful series inspired by Greek mythology: the author is highly experienced in creating beautiful, comprehensible narratives centered around mythology. Homeless 16 year old Magnus Chase (cousin to PJO's Annabeth Chase) is killed and ascends to Valhalla, where he has to battle and quest to prevent Ragnarok. If you enjoyed *Percy Jackson* or are feeling nostalgic, this series is a fun and light read.



Santa Monica Studio's **God of War and God of War Ragnarok**

From 2018 onwards, the video game franchise *God of War* shifted from focusing on Greek mythology to Norse mythology. The 2018 game focuses on the father-son relationship between the two protagonists, and it explores themes of power and responsibility, the consequences of growing up in a broken family, and the lengths parents will go through to protect their children. Players will encounter deities such as Baldur, Freya, and Thor's sons Magni and Modi, and experience most of the nine realms alongside the conflicts that plague them. It takes 25-30 hours to complete and is available on Steam and Playstation.

The 2022 sequel, *God of War Ragnarök*, focuses on the previously mentioned Ragnarok, as the title suggests. Players get to explore all of the nine realms this time, and we finally get to encounter the most famous figures, like Odin, Thor, Sif, Freyr, and more notably, Loki and Angrboda. This title explores the struggle for identity felt by Loki as a half-giant half-god, who has to grapple with his desire to explore his giant heritage while also not abandoning his current ties. It's a story about teenage rebellion, the desire for freedom, the thirst for knowledge, the balance between duty and family, the effects of addiction and alcoholism on families and relationships, and most of all how, no matter how hard we try, society will always devolve to violence. It takes 25-30 hours to complete and is currently only available on Playstation consoles, but will one day be made purchasable on Steam.

The Mari Lwyd

*Out in the night the nightmares ride:
And the nightmares' hooves draw near.
Dead men pummel the panes outside,
And the living quake with fear.*

[...]

*A white horse frozen blind,
Hurl'd from a seawave's hollow,
Fostered by spray and wind.
Profane and priestlike thing!*

[...]

*Mari Lwyd, Lwyd Mari
A sacred thing through the night they carry.
Betrayed are the living, betrayed the dead
All are confused by a horse's head*

Vernon Watkins, **Ballad of the Mari Lwyd**



The Mari Lwyd (in Welsh “Y Fari Lwyd”) is a spooky South Welsh tradition that really is the stuff of nightmares — more literally than you might think...

A horse’s skull mounted on a pole carried by a person hidden under a sheet, the Mari Lwyd goes around town on New Year’s Day accompanied by folk characters, most notably Punch & Judy, and sings ballads asking for entry into people’s homes to ask for food. A “rap battle” ensues: if the host wins it, then the Mari Lwyd goes away and moves on to the next house. If they lose, the hobby horse and its troupe must be allowed entry, and wreak havoc upon the house. As one Youtube commenter succinctly puts it, “so basically you rap battle a demonic horse thing so that it doesn’t bust into your house”. However, it’s not exactly rap - there are very specific rules the participants must adhere to, the form and tune are fixed (and must be in Welsh), and the Mari Lwyd is never the one singing, though she may occasionally flash a terrifying glimpse of her teeth or howl to accompany the singer.

Little is known about the origin of this tradition: the etymology of the name is uncertain (it’s likely descended from *llwyd*, which means “grey” in Welsh, though other theories have been proposed). As for the origin of the tradition, it was first recorded in the early 1800s, and though it stopped for a few years in many places, many towns and villages continue to celebrate it and parade the Mari Lwyd around.

The Mari Lwyd is uniquely Welsh, and while it’s been gaining more popularity in recent years, it’s also being seen more as a cryptid or alternative tradition to replace Christmas, when really, it’s just a tradition that’s been happening for years, and that’s centred around fun - and it’s uniquely Welsh. The Mari Lwyd in Swansea this year didn’t include an attempt at breaking into a building (one of many acts of “terror” the Mari commits), and villages have even been reducing the verbal exchanges to a few recited paragraphs, taking away the improvisation of it all.

In the last decade, the tradition of the Mari Lwyd has continued, and the Mari Lwyd is starting to be more well-known outside of Wales. Authors Seanan McGuire and Ursula Vernon met up on Twitter to exchange quips in an unplanned fierce poetry battle — I asked her about it and she said “the exchange was prompted by me being a whimsical little shit who loves the Mari Lwyd, and also loves bothering my friends on social media”. This brought some more attention to the tradition, and its revival continues!

At its heart, the Mari Lwyd is a cheese-loving, sheet-covered Welsh horse head, that’s been around for years, and that has a specific tradition associated with it. It’s meant to be funny (but also spooky) and altogether is a unique celebration that you may not have known about. So go forth and contact us once you’ve found your own horse’s skull!

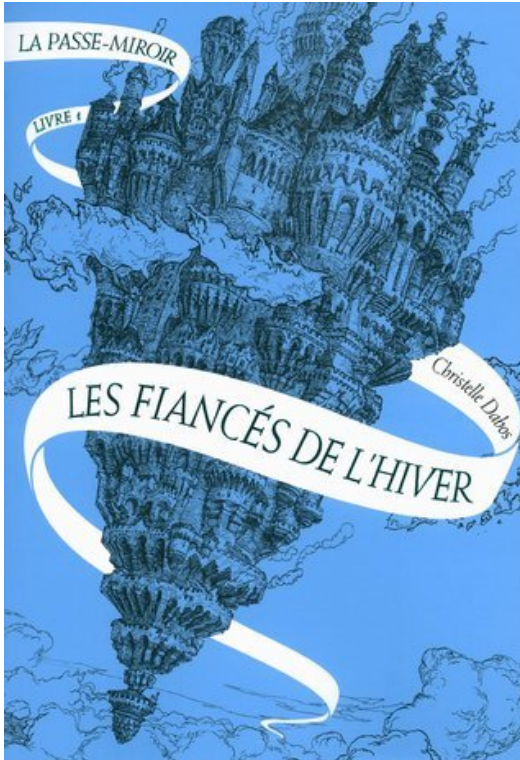


WINTER IS COMING, SO IS VALENTINES DAY!!!

Les Fiancés de l'hiver

Christelle Dabos

530 pages



J'imagine qu'il a beaucoup de lecteurs qui, comme moi, ont envie de lire en français en s'éloignant des classiques, mais qui ont du mal à trouver des livres (pas traduits de l'anglais!) de science fiction ou de fantaisie.

La passe miroir est une série devenue légendaire, et pour une simple et bonne raison, elle est magnifique. Le monde est réfléchi et construit minutieusement par l'autrice: il s'agit d'un futur où la terre est méconnaissable après une déchirure de l'univers donnant naissance à des îles flottantes aux propriétés magiques. De plus les personnages sont originaux et intéressants et les relations entre eux sont subtiles et variées. J'ai lu, comme beaucoup d'autres, ce livre il y a longtemps à l'école, et j'avoue que je n'aurai pas dû. Il y a une telle tendresse qui se construit au fur et à mesure de l'histoire entre les deux personnages qu'il est très facile de mal comprendre jeune, les complexités sont bien mieux appréciées un peu plus tard. Enfin le mystère et le sens de l'enquête sont là, et la prose est splendide!!

Les Misérables

Victor Hugo

1600 pages

Victor Hugo
Les Misérables
TOME I



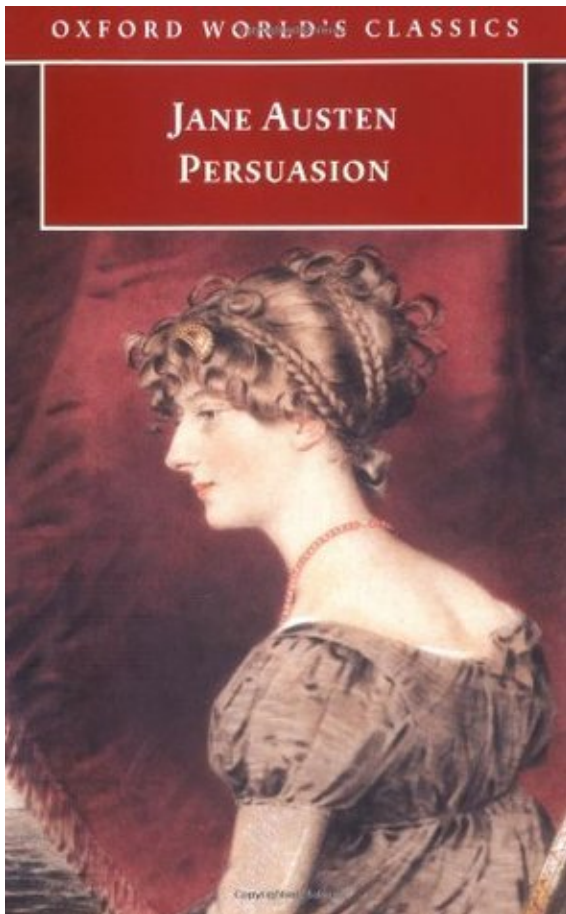
Il fallait bien que je trouve un moment pour recommander ce pavé mythique, et quoi de mieux pour lire un classique de plus de milles pages qu'un temps hivernal londonien déprimant.

Je ne peux rien dire sur ce livre qui n'a pas déjà été dit des centaines de fois, et je n'ose même pas essayer. Ceci est un autre de ces livres qu'on nous a fait lire à l'école, en version abrégée... en tant que collégienne insupportable j'ai évidemment lu l'intégrale, et je pense que ça valait le coup, il y a tellement de détails qu'on ne peut pas apprécier dans l'abrégée, de détours fascinants (ou non) de l'auteur. On s'attache profondément aux personnages dont la psychologie est examiné en long en large et en travers dans ce chef d'oeuvre de la littérature française

Les briques comme Les Misérables font souvent peur, mais en fait on s'y plait. Il y a tellement de choses dans un seul livre qu'il y a forcément des parties qui vont nous plaire plus que d'autres - je recommande de zapper la première partie si vous ne cherchez pas un cours d'histoire sur les guerres napoléoniennes!

Les Classiques de Poche





Persuasion
Jane Austen
250 pages

As a Jane Austen superfan I think that we should nuke sense and sensibility and let Persuasion have its moment. It is so underrated in general, being much more mature and grown up compared to her other books. The flawed main character is endlessly endearing and is forced to come face to face with the man she loved but rejected years ago, having lost precious time and youth.

Okay but actually, this is one of the best classics I've ever read; it is very accessible in terms of language and similarly to a lot of Jane Austen it is filled with juicy gossip. It has, next to pride and prejudice, one of the most romantic endings ever, it will make your heart grow twice its normal size and then make you cry your lonely self to sleep. It not only has swoon worthy lines ("You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone forever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own than when you almost broke it, eight years and a half ago.") but a decent, caring and good man as a main love interest that admits his faults, so rare in the romance genre these days.

Today, tonight, tomorrow
Rachel Lynn Solomon
375 pages



For my last trick it's time for a less 'serious' recommendation, which is still a lot of fun and perfect for this pre valentines day season: this one I read in one sitting with a steaming cup of hot chocolate.

Enemies to lovers is a trope that is becoming slightly overused and is often done very badly, but this one is a massive exception. I was pleasantly surprised by how great this book was,

Rowan and Neil are the two best students of their high school and hence have been engaged in a bitter years long rivalry: all this resentment and jealousy peaks on the last day of school, where they participate in a treasure hunt that spans the entire city of Seattle.

It is a real love letter to the romance genre and Seattle, it has a self conscious future writer, great jewish and class disparity representation with fleshed out characters that don't fit the romance cookie cutter type. It gives a lovely representation of the troubled time between secondary school and university with an era and relationships coming to an end and new ones starting.

Winter chill

OVERVIEW

Highlight



Fairytale of New York
The Pogues
(feat. Kirsty MacColl)

NOV 23, 1987

Songs



Wizards in Winter-
Trans-Siberian
Orchestra



Merry Xmas Everybody-
Slade



Rasputin-
Boney M



Ice Ice Baby-
Vanilla Ice



Minsu Is Confused-
Minsu



Hazy Shade of Winter-
Gerard Way
(feat. Ray Toro)



The Wisp Sings-
Winter Aid



Disillusionment For
The Emotional Type-
You'll Never Get To
Heaven



Who Knows Where
The Time Goes?
- Sandy Denny



Till Then-
Mills Brothers



Autumn Daze-
charlie tophi human



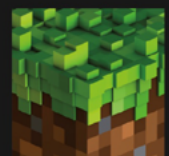
Autumn Leaves-
Bill Evans



Cold as Ice-
Foreigner



Snowflake-
A Million in Vermillion
& Isabella LeVan



Mice On Venus-
C418

Albums



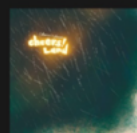
Hollow Knight-
Christopher Larkin



Kaizin-
Eve



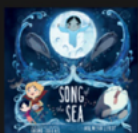
Spiritfarer-
Max LL



Cheers!Land-
The Chairs



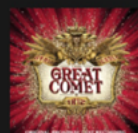
The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust
and the Spiders from Mars-
David Bowie



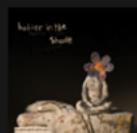
Song of the Sea-
Various Artists



Satie: Gymnopédie-
Aldo Ciccolini



The Great Comet-
Various Artists



Better in the Shade-
Patrick Watson

Winter's Fangs

Cold. Cold. Cold. Freezing. I sunk beneath the surface. My clothes weighed down on me, heavy with water which gnawed at me. The thin light dwindled, bouncing dimly through the tumultuous flows. I clawed towards the surface. Helplessly grasping towards the sky only for it to escape. Swirling just out of reach. Crawling with all my strength, flailing beneath the tide, the water brushed between my fingers. My hands stiff and petrified from the cold, burning as if they were about to burst, reaching towards the fleeting light callously dancing, taunting me. My lungs tightened and my throat gripped by cold fangs. My eyes burned fiercer than ever, crackling like ice. Desperately, I flayed upward, fear slithered and grasped a hold around my heart. But suddenly my head erupted out of the surface and water rushed out of my mouth and nose as I coughed, my lungs almost jumping out at each heave. Taking deep breaths I pushed myself toward the edge of the lake.

I fell upon the blanketed ground, a layer of soft and cruel snow smothering it. I crawled towards the pale forest, a wet trail formed behind me. Darkness wrapped itself around me. I looked up at the sky who smiled grimly, a starless night traced across its horizons. Ashen pellets rained down from the sky. The wind screeched and cackled through the white trees armed with white spears, whipping up snow from the ground and sending it flying in my face. The cold devoured every part of my body and I felt my fingers throb as if a thousand needles pierced them. The only thing protecting me was the thick fur coat which hung over my shoulders, the hood covering my head and the scarf wrapped around my neck like a mane, yet all of them were pushing down upon me, attempting to

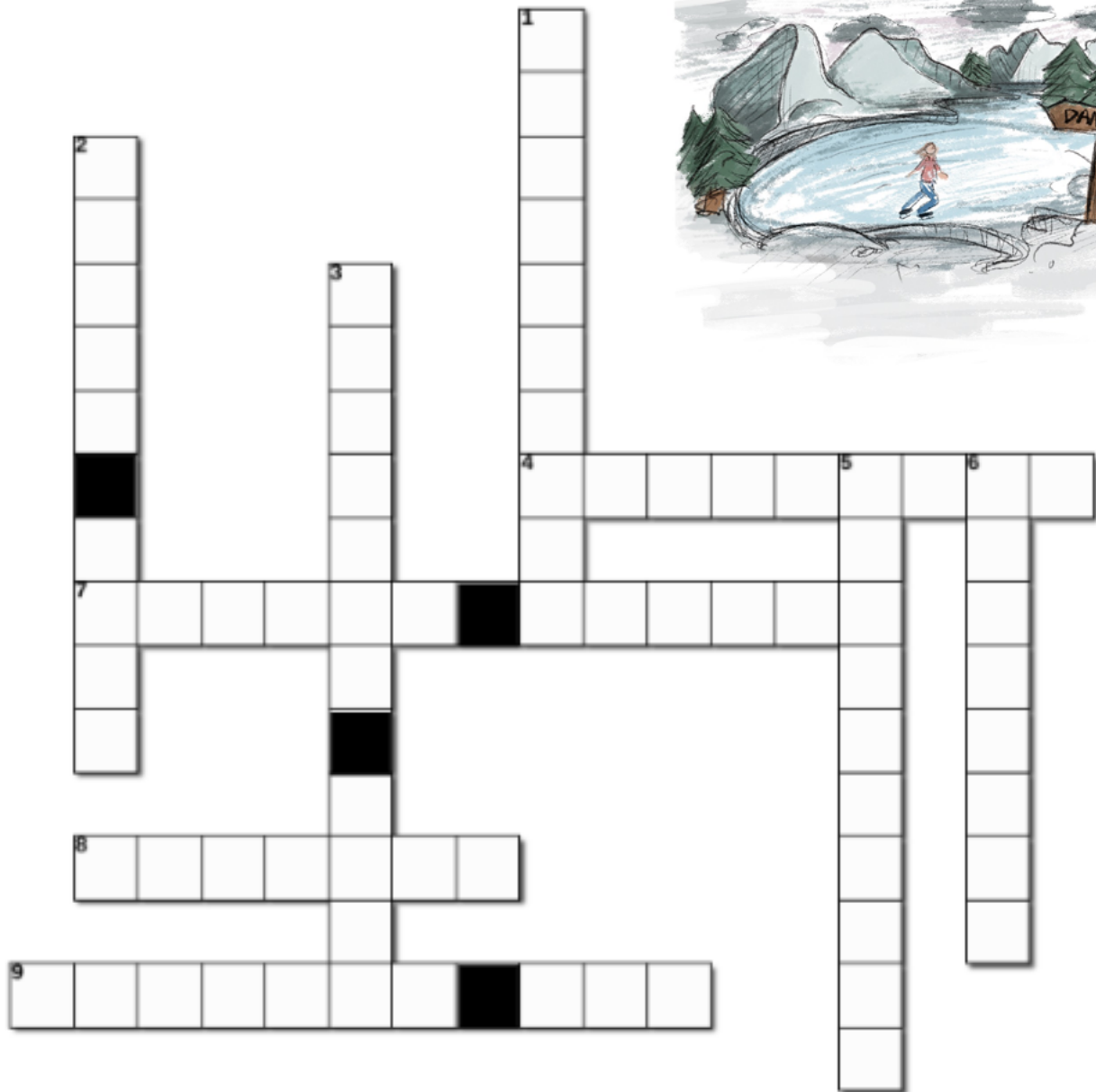
force me to the ground as it poured heavy trails and drops onto the ground leaving marks.

I shivered desperately while on the floor, the coat sticking to my body. I wheezed slowly, every heavy breath forming a hazy cloud who trailed from my mouth and flew behind me. Regaining my breath bit by bit as the cold still bit into my flesh like a hundred ardent fangs.

I got up slowly, my knees still shaking, I moved forward meekly. Yells and wails were heard in the distance alongside strands of smoke burrowing through the sky. I bolted forward, my footsteps crunching onto the snow as prints were left behind. Gaining ground I reached a large paved road hidden between large trees, the cobble left untainted by the ice, however fear had still not freed my heart and it gripped tighter and tighter still. I shivered even more furiously than before, rushing through it to the other side. Clopping sounds in the distance approaching quickly. I crawled, my nails scraping against the frost leaving claw marks behind. I ran. Further and further. I felt my strength wane. After an eternity through this frozen desert I collapsed. My ear burned as it was clasped against the ground, snow crunching into it. The cackling sound echoed through the other. Slowly the darkness grasped my sight, the distant trees disappeared one by one until only the pellets of snow crashing down on me remained visible. My eyes closed slowly. The darkness fully nestled into my eyes. I felt sad, my heart sunk by my thoughts slowly melted one after the other. All that remained were the feelings and the cold.



COLDSSWORD



Across:

- 4. Spooky, nordic equivalent of the arse's head in a shakespeare play
- 7. The "Chad" of countries
- 8. The setting of the Lord of the Rings
- 9. Blandest Ice cream flavour

Down:

- 1. An accurate book title to describe our mental state this month
- 2. Nordic rap duo we never knew we needed
- 3. The next word of the year in geopolitics
- 5. Nordic abode of fireboy
- 6. The biggest rizzlord of the 19th century