

THE COLUMNS

by pupils; for pupils

HSD's Newsletter: Issue 115



Getting closer in to the holiday season and the last few weeks of the winter term, there are many exciting things up and coming. Christmas Celidhs to the carol service, it is a busy time indeed. A huge congratulations to Form 4 who have just completed their first prelims, well done. Thank you once again to all of our fantastic writers who give us a newsletter to actually edit and print, and with that here is Columns Edition 115.

Editors, Megan, Meagan and Roena

THE BFG BOOK REVIEW – LITTLE BOOKIES CORNER

Alastair Forbes

Hello all. Come and sit down with me as I show you a children's book that I recommend to those little bookies who love (or hopefully don't hate) reading. Hopefully, those little and older ones will find this useful, as I will share a weekly book suggestion, so sit down, get a mug of milk out, and let's talk about this week's book: The BFG.

The BFG by Roald Dahl is a children's novel illustrated by Quentin Blake about a little orphan girl called Sophie being stolen by a big giant of a man, the reason being: because she saw him. Stuffing her in the giant's pocket, the giant ran ran! Faster than anything we know of, and jumped into the clouds, to giant country. Can Sophie get away? Can she survive? Or will the giant eat her for dinner? But the fact that his name is the Big Friendly Giant, maybe she could make the best of friends, in this magical world.

The main theme (or the subject) of this book is injustice. Injustice is seen throughout the story from Sophie's mistreatment at the orphanage to the giants eating 'human beans' during the witching hour (although this book is rated 6+ so there is no graphic content don't worry!) Other themes like communication and morality (a person's right or wrong in such as their behaviour) are there in the book as well.

I'll now bring you through some of the characters in this book. Sophie: A young and clever orphan who becomes the BFG's friend, and also one of our main characters. The BFG: A gentle giant who captures and delivers good dreams to children. He's much smaller than the other giants and doesn't eat humans, in fact, he's very friendly. The Other Giants: These are nine cruel, disgusting, nasty (and put in all the harsh words that you can think of) giants who eat humans. Some of them have names like Fleshlumpeater, Bonecruncher, and Childchewer, which are quite creative, flesh-lump eater, bone-cruncher, and child-chewer. The Queen of England: A wise and powerful queen who helps the BFG and Sophie stop the other giants from eating all the children. But we can't end this review without mentioning the Snozzcumber (trust me, you'd rather eat peas instead of that and that's saying something), this green, slimy, spiked food is all that the BFG can eat, and the drink: Frobscottle, is the only flavoursome drink in giant country. You know how the bubbles go up in our fuzzy drinks, making us burp? With Frobscottle in Giant Country, the bubbles go down, so instead of burping, it goes down, leading you to... I'll let you figure it out.

Well, I hope you all have found this article fun, useful, and that it has gotten you inspired to read this great book, a classic if you must! Join me next time when I'll write about another book that I think you'll enjoy.

Want to read more? Try The Twits, Matilda, The Witches. Want something easier? Revolting Rhymes, The Enormous Crocodile, The Magic Finger. Want more of the BFG? Try the movie! Available on BBC iPlayer, ClickView, and DVD.



HIGH SCHOOL OF DUNDEE
PIPE BAND

BURNS SUPPER

Fundraiser

music by
Fìobha Ceilidh Band

SATURDAY | 25TH JAN | 7 PM
INVERCARSE HOTEL, DUNDEE DD2 1PG

£60 PER ADULT, £35 FOR CHILDREN AGED 12 AND UNDER,
DISCOUNTS FOR LARGER PARTIES

(ENTRY FROM 6.30PM)

SCAN QR TO RESERVE YOUR TICKETS



ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TOWARDS PIPE BAND FUNDS

Monster Pylons: Monster Hypocrisy

Meagan Dailly

The UK leads the world in its decarbonisation efforts, lowering carbon emissions by 52% since 1971. Sustaining this leading position has become an obsession with UK governments and ironically the virtue signalling associated with setting arbitrary deadlines is now having a negative effect on the UK's environment. There is no point in lowering emissions if our small island becomes a wasteland of pylons and transmission cables.

I love the British countryside, I have grown up in Angus, Scotland; it is beautiful place and for centuries has been a mixture of untouched wilderness and productive farmland. Now, the British government and British power companies want to desecrate it in the name of "environmental protection".

To meet its climate goals, the government is developing renewable energies to power the populous south of England. However, the majority of renewable energy is generated offshore Scotland at the opposite end of the country. The simple solution proposed by these bureaucrats is to run 230-foot-tall pylons on huge concrete bases through some of the best arable land in the UK, doubling the mileage of power lines and undermining the viability of many family farms.

Now, I am all for saving the environment, and I believe renewable energy is the best way to lower emissions, but this program seems poorly thought through. The British government is openly supporting destroying Scottish farmland when running these new cables offshore is a clear alternative. I have read widely regarding possible solutions and although the power companies say running cables offshore would cost four times as much as ripping up Scottish countryside, their numbers have not been independently scrutinised and their hand is being forced by an arbitrary deadline of 2030. The technology to run cost efficient offshore cables is rapidly developing and coming down in price. Right now, because of its haste, the government's argument is that it must prioritise cheap energy over preserving the Scottish countryside but taking a few more years to incorporate leading edge technology might avoid this false dichotomy, preserving the countryside and at the same time providing the necessary power.

I believe efforts need to be made to raise awareness and created new perspectives regarding an issue which I think the British population is sleepwalking into. You can write to your MP, MSP and the SSEN with your opinion on the subject. More open and robust debate is needed to make sure the people of the UK agree on how much time and money they are prepared to invest on saving the environment and whether fastest is always best.

JIMMY LAI

Jack Mitchell

On Wednesday, the pro-democracy activist and media businessman Jimmy Lai took the stand in court in Hong Kong, testifying in his national security trial that could see him return to prison, and this time for life. He faces one count of conspiracy to publish seditious publications and two counts of foreign collusion under Hong Kong's national security law (NSL), which was put in place in 2020. Mr Lai pleads not guilty to all charges.

Jimmy Lai was born in Guangzhou, in the Republic of China (not the People's Republic which controls the nation now) in 1947 but is a British citizen. Mr Lai reached Hong Kong at the age of 12 as a stowaway on a boat and worked for the equivalent of \$8 a month in a clothing factory. He became the manager of the factory and in 1975, used his annual bonus to buy a bankrupt clothing factory and began producing jumpers. Six years later, he founded the clothing retailer Giordano. He built the company into a continent-spanning behemoth with over 2,400 shops across Asia. In 1996, Jimmy Lai sold the business to go into media and politics.

He bought Next Media, Hong Kong's largest media company, in 2011. As well as this new acquisition, Mr Lai had already set up a liberal, anti-communist newspaper called Apple Daily in 1995 to maintain and support freedom of speech in Hong Kong after the imminent handover took place. It became one of the most-read publications in Hong Kong. This gave Lai a very strong position in Hong Kong with which he spread anti-Chinese Communist Party sentiment, thus making him a target. He has knives and threats left on his drive, he has been rammed by a car, and his home and company headquarters have been firebombed numerous times.

The threat from the government was also realised. Mr Lai was arrested in 2020 for his part in the 2019/2020 democracy protests and for violating the then-brand new national security laws by colluding with foreign forces. He has been in solitary confinement in prison for four years now, for both aforementioned charges and new fraud cases that were brought against him. He now faces life imprisonment in his current trial.

Jimmy Lai has led a successful life in many ways. He has been a very successful businessman and is worth an estimated \$1 billion – assets that have been frozen – but also standing up for the democracy he believes in. His newspaper Apple Daily was shut down in 2021, but before that was the second-biggest in Hong Kong, allowing his dreams and views to be shared with so many others. He has been successful in making the government feel threatened in a way not many do. At 77 years old, four years into a sentence that may be imposed on him until he has drawn his last breath, Jimmy Lai is still the outraged young man who stood up to the CCP after the Tiananmen Square massacre. He is still the determined pro-democracy symbol he became and has been for decades, and he always will be, not just in Hong Kong, but around the world.

Deadpool and Wolverine Review

Charlie Grewar

This summer saw the release of the latest movie instalment in the Marvel cinematic universe, a franchise which according to perceived wisdom, is in decline. Not so says *Deadpool and Wolverine*, the third film in the *Deadpool* series and the first since Disney bought Fox in 2019. The film topped the one billion mark at the box office, beating out last year's 'Barbie' movie and becoming the highest-grossing R-rated film of all time and the twenty-highest-grossing film of all time. Not bad for a franchise which has been described recently as 'burnt out.' Then again, *Deadpool and Wolverine* is hardly the average film in the MCU. With two stellar leads in the form of Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman as *Deadpool* and *Wolverine* respectively and one of Marvel's finest promotional campaigns this film could never have been much other than the huge success it was. It arrived on the streaming site Disney Plus on the 12th of November so, having recently gotten into the MCU and with my little brother safely out of the room, I decided to give it a watch.

(Obviously, this will contain spoilers.)

This was the first R-rated movie I've watched (yeah, I know hahaha, get a life, etc) so I was a bit unsure of what to expect. The result was a large amount of blood and swearing and lots of jokes that are hilariously unprintable. And that was just the cold open. After slaughtering the *Loki* series' TVA soldiers with *Wolverine's* skeleton to 'Bye, bye bye' (don't ask) it's revealed that after the death of *Wolverine* in 2017's 'Logan' the Fox Marvel universe began falling apart leading to the immortal anti-hero *Deadpool* being offered a place in the MCU instead. After being told by rogue TVA top brass Paradox (Matthew MacFayden) that he intends to destroy everything Wade Wilson knows and loves (which consists entirely of nine people) with an appropriately named 'Time Ripper', *Deadpool* proceeds to travel across the multiverse, Marvel's replacement for the infinity stones as the namesake of their current saga, searching for a variant of *wolverine* that won't kill him. After an amusing montage of *wolverines* killing him, *Deadpool* finally finds one who is too apathetic to fight him and drags him to the TVA, where Paradox proceeds to dump both of them in 'the void' a sort of purgatory where the TVA dumps their rubbish. The land is stalked by a who's who of has-been heroes from Fox's Marvel films' including Chris Evans as the Human Torch (not as Captain America to *Deadpool* disappointment), monster hunter *Blade* (Wesley Snipes) and Channing Tatum finally portraying *Gambit* after years of trying to make a movie with him in it, and X-23 from *Logan* (Dafne Keen). A number of antagonists from the *X-Men* movies appear in the entourage of the villainous *Cassandra Nova*, Professor X's twin sister, including *Pyro* (Aaron Stanford) and *Juggernaut* (Aaron Reed). *Nova* (Emma Corrin) can read minds by sticking her fingers in people's heads. Which looks very convincing actually. After being forced to transport our two heroes home with *Dr Strange's* magic ring, she decides to take control of the *Time Ripper* and plans to use it to destroy all other universes, leaving only the void. And she brings an army of *Deadpools* with her. *Wolverine* is ecstatic (by his standards) about the fact that he gets to kill a hundred versions of the man who has just spent most of a movie driving him up the proverbial wall, and finally puts on (drum roll please) his mask! After playing the character for a quarter of a century, Hugh Jackman finally looks exactly like *Wolverine*. The day is saved by *Deadpool* and *Wolverine* holding hands between two columns of energy, or something, and all is well with *Deadpool's* universe and he's even made a new friend. So what's the moral of the story? An educated f#\$ing wish can pay off? Studio buyouts can yield satisfying movies? People will do anything for their friends? Or that Marvel can make shed loads of money from the *X-Men* and will proceed to bleed the IP dry for the next ten years? While the answer seems inevitable, the future for the MCU looks a little brighter now that the merc with the mouth has arrived.



The Life Cycle of Victoria's Secret: A Tale of Glitz, Glamour, and Scandal

Emma Turton

In the 2010s teenage girls would give their right arm just an item of Victoria's Secret clothing, waiting in queues miles long just to get a pair of socks or even a water bottle from their newest collection. During its peak, Victoria's Secret boasted \$8 billion in sales and had an astounding 350 stores across the globe. Yet, not even a decade later would be thrown into the gutter with sales dropping by over 50%, tumbling into almost becoming irrelevant. What happened? What other secrets did Victoria hide behind their glitzy façade? Can they make a comeback?

Victoria's Secret first began due to a case of personal frustration. In the 60s Roy Raymond was trying to be a sweet husband and buy his wife Gaye some new elegant lingerie, but he found the options available were limited, either drab floral nightgowns or over-the-top designs which he felt were unsophisticated. He used this encounter as inspiration to fill this gap he had identified in the market and spent the next decade training and perfecting himself to take on this new role of owning a lingerie company.

Finally, in 1977 he opened the first Victoria's Secret in Palo Alto, California. He named it after the Victorian era in Britain, wanting it to be reminiscent of draping silks, dark and original rugs, and a Victorian Boudoir, evoking propriety whilst containing many secrets beneath. Within its first year the store made over \$500,000, and Raymond expanded the business to open a further five more stores. A catalogue then followed, this catalogue made up 55% of the company's \$7 million annual profits by the end of 1982. However, despite this vast early success, the brand was still displayed as a lingerie shop with a cheap, tacky image and bankruptcy began to loom. That same year, the company was sold to Les Wexner, the head of L Brands, for a low sum of a million dollars. Wexner entirely shifted the company's motives to entirely focusing on women, giving them the most luxurious lingerie at an affordable price. His visions were of new colours, new patterns, new views and designs that promoted sensuality with a slight feel of 'Snob European luxury' as he described it. He even faked the address of the headquarters on the catalogues by using a fake address in London instead of the actual one in Ohio to cement this luxurious image.

By the 90s VS had become one of the largest lingerie retailers in the US, with 350 stores opened nationally and making a reported \$1 billion in sales, they also began to diversify their range, extending it to fit swimwear, perfumes, clothing etc which only further boosted their sales, every teenage girl would've sold their souls for even a simple pair of pyjamas if it was from Victoria's Secret. During this period their catalogue gained a mass, cult following with every cover screaming and indulging in glamour, luxury and class showcasing some of the most famous models within the industry at the time such as Adriana Lima or Gisele. He continued to expand the range, widening to clothing, multiple ranges of lingerie and even a perfume line which features the iconic bombshell which is still high in sales even today.

In 1995 chief marketing officer at L brand Ed Razek launched the first Victoria's Secret Fashion show, a runway to market the numerous products the company sold. For the shows, he and his team handpicked each of the models and in doing so catapulted their careers. These shows

became annual events, featuring extreme craftsmanship, intricate designs, and flamboyant spectacles that were always seen such as large wings, or bedazzled sets for example when Gisele Bündchen wore a fantasy bra worth over 15 million dollars in 2000. The show was even streamed online for the first time in 1999 but crashed due to over 1.5 million people trying to tune in. These shows are still as impactful today, in 2010 over 10 million people streamed the show, the large market was mainly due to teenage girls wanting, yearning, to look like the famous Victoria's Secret models. The shows have even begun to use famous singers on the runway, such as The Weeknd, Taylor Swift, Harry Styles etc on the annual event. Victoria's Secret was one of the only, if not only luxury brands during this period from the early 2000s to the late 2010s.

In the 2000s VS were annually turning out around 7 billion dollars, with hundreds of sales being made daily but by the late 2010s, they would fade into utter irrelevancy. This rapid turn of tables occurred due to not only poor, un-researched data decision-making but also numerous scandals and controversies which didn't let their angel wings fly and begin to falter. For starters the brand continuously chose to not adapt to the market, choosing bright, clashing colours and simple designs over their typically lavish, bejewelled sets with large, extravagant wings which didn't match with consumer wants, causing not only criticism but a drop in sales. Next, people were finally beginning to acknowledge and understand the toxicity of 'diet culture', extreme, unrealistic diets to try to maintain or achieve drastic thinness.

Victoria's Secret models were not only known for their astounding beauty but also for their drastically slim figures along with diets, theorized to be exercising twice a day with no solid food days before shows which had been created by multiple interviews of the models. After years of knowing this spotlight was finally shed on it and the models were now being blamed for promoting anorexia to young women.

There were also reports of the brand being restricted, as they appeared to reject ethnic diversity, their models were mostly if not all under a UK size 6, all white and if they weren't white couldn't wear these natural hair. Ed the model recruiter even said he would refuse to hire any plus size or transgender models in his shows as he felt it didn't fit his fantasy in wish he wanted to create. There have also been numerous sexual misconduct allegations against Ed such as kissing the models, sitting on his lap and even groping one of the models. It also came out that the owner L Werner had connections to Jeffrey Epstein, he even allowed him to be a fake VS recruiter and sexually assault the women. This all came out in the span of a few years and destroyed the reputation of VS. Just 3 million viewers watched the show in 2018, and sales dropped by 50% in the late 2010s.

In 2021 Les Wexner finally stepped down and the board of directors became female occupied dominantly instead of male like before. They have also diversified in not only body type standards but also including transgender models, models of all races, sizes, shapes, heights etc to widen their market. They have also opened up their product range to include lines on maternity and clothing basics. These campaigns are also now more realistic instead of these seemingly, fantasy ads which may have made women feel unworthy as they didn't fit these unattainable standards, now they feel empowered seeing all these different types of women represented. All of this has been working effectively, and their sales have increased by 25% in the last few years.

Recently they have just hosted their 2024 annual fashion show with nearly 30 million across the globe tuning in to watch. It featured various iconic models such as the original angels Gisele and Adriana and even the likes of Kate and Naomi strutting down the runway to a killer soundtrack, aiming to make them feel powerful on their own terms. They also have embraced the abandoned lace and wings once again to make all the models feel sexy but not objectified, this was applauded and sales are continuously rising, can they keep it up?

PROBLEM OF THE WEEK

Haoqi Liu

The problem of the week has now moved to its own Firefly page, which can be found at <https://hsd.fireflycloud.net/senior-years/potw> or by scanning the QR code. The firefly page could have more information depending on the problem!

As always, email solutions to me at liuH@highschoolofdundee.org.uk

The problem from Friday 23rd of November

How many four-digit numbers N are there, such that half of the number N is divisible by 2, a third of N is divisible by 3 and a fifth of N is divisible by 5?

The problem from Friday 29th of November

Four positive numbers p , q , r and s are in increasing order of size. One of the numbers is to be increased by 1 so that the product of the four new numbers is now as small as possible. Which number should be increased?

Have
a good
weekend

The Columns
Team

