



THE HERMITAGE QUARTERLY

ISSUE 1 - SPRING 2026

Welcome to the first edition of our student-led newsletter—created by students, for students!

In this issue, our writers share articles on topics that inspire and interest them, alongside beautiful spring photography by **Kaylin D (Year 10)**, capturing the season at its best. We hope you enjoy reading!

Chloe R (Year 9) – Mary Poppins- A Peek Behind The Scenes!

Thursday 12th March - Audition

Today was my audition! I was so excited that I could barely concentrate in class today... which was not helpful because I had a science assessment! The audition was after school in Drama, and about 15 people were there. The first thing we did was learn the first 10 steps of a section of 'Supercalafragilisticexpialidocious', which is a huge dance scene that involves the entire cast! It was the section when we spell out the word with actions for each letter. After that, we all said which part we'd most like to have. I said I'd like to be Mary Poppins! There were two other Mary candidates as well. We all sang two songs as a group- 'Practically Perfect', which Mary sings, and 'Jolly Holiday', which Bert sings. Then the three hopeful Marys sang 'Practically Perfect' in front Mrs. Robson and Miss Wray, along with a Jane and a Michael. I went last, and sang with Jasmine as Michael and Scarlet as Jane. I think it went pretty well! I was also asked to do 'Jolly Holiday' as Jane, with Olivia as Bert and my brother Michael as Michael! Last of all, practised the opening of the show. I'm so excited for it to start!

Friday 13th March - Callback

Friday 13th turned out to be a very lucky day for me... because I got a callback for Mary! Emily and Emma, the other Marys from last night's audition, got called back as well. At lunchtime we all went to Music 1 and sang 'Practically Perfect' again, this time for Miss Gillin and Mrs. McMullen. I think I did well, but there's a harmony at the end which I could NOT do by myself... yikes! I was honestly pretty surprised that I got called back so quickly, and I'm really happy because it was the first callback I've ever done! I really, really hope I get the part... I can't wait to find out next week!



Tuesday 17th March- Cast meeting

Today we had a full-cast meeting after school, when we learned the opening scene (with alternating Marys, Berts and Banks family members) and Mrs. Robson told us about some of her plans for the show. One of the most important things was the rule about rehearsal attendance- if you miss 3 rehearsals (unless you're off school sick), you get taken out of the show! I'm going to make sure that does NOT happen to me. The cast reveal will be after school on Friday... I'm really nervous but also excited!

Friday 20th March - Cast reveal

I was really, really, REALLY excited to finally get my part today! It turns out I'm the understudy for Mrs. Correy, the energetic lady who owns a magical Talking Shop (played by Khloe), which means that I'll stand in for her if she can't make it to any rehearsals or shows. We're also doing a show for the Year 7s with the understudy cast, so I'll get to play her then! In case you're wondering, Emily and Olivia in Year 9 are Mary and Bert, and Nancy and Faith in Year 7 are Jane and Michael.

Tuesday 24th March - Jolly Holiday

Tonight, we blocked the 'Jolly Holiday' scene, which basically means we know what everyone's doing in it (to some extent). Everyone has a different part in this song, and I'm playing a lady with a pram. BUT when Mary Poppins makes everything colourful, I'll have a toy penguin in the pram! It was actually my idea to add this, because it's one of the only things I remember from the time I watched the show when I was 4! The dance ensemble (which I'm not in, but one of my friends is) does a dance routine during this song, and so far it's looking great!

Check back in the Summer edition to catch up with Chloe's Mary Poppins journey!

George H (Year 9) – A Morning in Spring

After a long winter of quiet huddles in the evergreens, the air has finally shifted. It's no longer the sharp, biting cold that demands puffed-out feathers; it's a soft, damp warmth that smells of thawed earth and possibility.

Before the sun even clears the horizon, the bird chirps for its mates.



Ava T-B (Year 12) - Review of 'Compass and Blade' by Rachel Greenlaw (age 14+)

This age 14-rated fantasy story is a delight to read. It's all about the mythical creatures of the seas and we see a young girl explore her past as she craves to see her future.

She can't wait to finally feel like she belongs and, on the way, meets many longtime friends. If you like adventure-based stories with a bit of romance this is the book for you! I know I loved this book when I read 'Compass and Blade'.

It is part of a sequel, but I would argue it could be read as a stand-alone. There were parts where I felt like not finishing the book but don't let that deter you. Her writing is easy to follow and her way of telling this story is spectacular! Overall, I give this book a 3-star rating and can't wait to read the next book in the series which is called 'Shadow and Tide' where we find out what happens next on the protagonist's journey.



Skarlett H (Year 7) - Extract from a book series called 'The Naughtiest Girl'

"You'll have to go to school, Elizabeth," said Mrs Allen. "I think your governess is quite right. You are spoilt and naughty, and although Daddy and I were going to leave you here with Miss Scott when we went away, I think it would be better for you to go to school."

Elizabeth stared at her Mum in dismay.

"What, leave her home? And her pony and her dog? Go and be with lots of children she would most certainly hate? Oh no, she wouldn't go."

"I'll be good with Miss Scott," she said.

"You've said this before," said her mother. "Miss Scott says she can't stay with you longer Elizabeth, is it true that you put earwigs in her bed last night?"

Elizabeth giggled, "Yes," she said. "Miss Scott was so frightened of them, it's silly to be afraid of earwigs, isn't it?"

"It is much sillier to put them in somebody's bed" said Mrs Allen sternly.

Aiya S (Year 8) – Book review: Holly Jackson, *Five Survive* (recommended age 14+)

One RV, One sniper, Six secrets: can all six 'friends' survive?

Holly Jackson, the author of the popular series *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* delivers even more heartbreak in the gripping thriller, *Five Survive*. This novel follows six friends on a road trip in an RV during spring break. Their 'fun' trio quickly transpires into a horror filled disaster!! One 'wrong turn' that leaves them stranded while there is an active sniper shooting at them. The sniper won't let them leave until one gives up a secret.

This story's narration and focus is, for the majority of the time, on Red: the main character. Her struggles, thoughts and how she deals with tensions rising in the RV.

As the night continues, the friends (Red Kenny, Arthur Gotti, Maddy Lavoy, Oliver Lavoy, and Reyna) begin to lose trust in another resulting in drastic actions.

The fast pace of this story leaves you on the edge of your seat, wanting more. The events in this gripping thriller take place over one night making the short chapters and numerous plot twist even more intense.

Overall, this book keep you hooked constantly leaving you unable to put it down.

Hannah C (Year 8) – *The Power of Reading*

In a world filled with screens and distractions, a single book still has the power to open a new world for its reader. You probably think that's an exaggeration, however you might be surprised by the sense of tranquillity and peace that can linger after 20 minutes of allowing yourself to get lost in a novel. Even with overwhelming feelings due to work or school, it is beneficial to let yourself escape to a different world, leaving your worries behind and give yourself time to reset. Additionally, as reading doesn't only support mental health, cracking open a book can also help deepen knowledge on topics you are already passionate about or improve current competencies such as vocab. Soon you'll be counting down the hours until you can immerse yourself in that new world that's right for you and retreat from your mundane way of life, evolve from your average terminology and into a new world. And to think, all you have to do is pick that abandoned book of your shelf and all improvements will follow swiftly.

Matthew C (Year 12) - Review of '*The Yellow Wallpaper*' by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (age 14+)

The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Review: 7/10

I originally planned to use this as one of my main coursework books, as it is a great read that can be completed in such little time, being only 25 pages long. The story follows a woman who is psychologically trapped by in a room filled with the same, repetitive wallpaper reflective of her societal surroundings in the late 19th century. She is eventually driven to the point of insanity, as despite everything around her she cannot focus on anything else at all.

While it does contain a lot of deep and symbolic meanings, the book is a very easy read and copies of the book are often accompanied with multiple other short stories written and published by the author, Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

This short story was overall very enjoyable and while simplistic in how it is written, there isn't really anything that I can criticise overall, as its style is very poetic, differentiating from the average read.

If you want an easy read that is different from a novel/novella, you'll probably like this.



Feeling inspired? How about starting with '*Five Survive*' by Holly Jackson (14+), '*The Naturals*' by Jennifer Lynn Barnes (14+) or a Suzanne Collins favourite, '*The Hunger Games*' (12+)

Like what you have read? Want to join us for the next edition?

Please come and see Mr Oakes-Priestley in En3