

Dec. 2021

East-Asia Issue

phoenix



(East) Asia Issue

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Word of the Board

Daan Reins, Commissioner of External Affairs

Hey y'all!

I wish I could regale you with a story about my travels in Asia, but unfortunately, I have never been (not yet anyway). Instead, I've decided to use my Word from the Board for an Ode to my kimono. I've wanted to own a kimono for at least a few years now. Untraveled and uncultured as I am, there was something of an ethereal appeal to owning a garment that sports such a rich history and is so rare in my country. My girlfriend made me one for my birthday, and it's my favourite item of clothing now. I got to pick the fabric myself; it has flowers and chains on it. She even embroidered it with my (untastefully ironic) street name: D-Rizzle. It's both elegant and tacky as hell, which is why I love it so much. I can't take it out in broad daylight for several good reasons, but that doesn't stop me from wearing it every day. There's something about wearing something so flowy and silky that just feels right. As unconvinced as I am that the internet is a good thing, there are few things cooler to me than the globalization of information. Had I not grown up to be a screen jockey, I would never even have known about the existence of these noble threads. When I get home, I'll take my clothes off for the sole purpose of living my kimono fantasy. It's an experience that I would recommend for just about anyone.

The complexity of Asia

written by Jamie Pilon, edited by Luka van den Berg

For simplicity's sake, this issue of Phoenix is simply called "The Asia Issue", but the broader concept of "Asia" is a complicated one. Take its geography (and the country of Egypt, specifically), for example. The borders between Asia and Africa are commonly accepted to be the Red Sea, the Gulf of Suez, and the Suez Canal. This is interesting because it makes Egypt a transcontinental country: its territories cover more than one continent at the same time. Technically, this should mean that Egypt is both an Asian and an African country. Yet, the whole of Egypt, including the Sinai Peninsula, is usually considered part of the Middle East (also called Western Asia). The answer to the question "what is Asia?" heavily depends on who is doing the defining: a geologist and a professor of Asian Studies will give you two completely different answers. One issue of Phoenix could not possibly discuss all countries usually included in the European geographical classification of Asia, and some of these include countries like Afghanistan, Iran and Butan. However, we have done our best to represent parts of Asia, and are proud to present to you this first issue of the academic year!



Osaka, Japan. by Mohana Zwaga

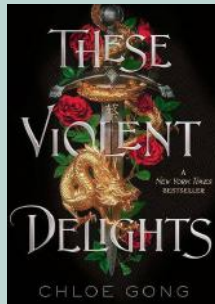
What we're reading



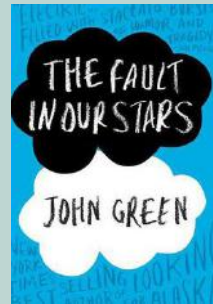
Anna: The Book of Longings by Sue Monk Kidd



Helenie: The Beast Within by Serena Valentino



Zuzia: These Violent Delights by Chloe Gong



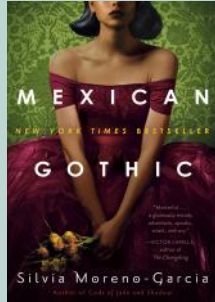
Marit: The Fault in Our Stars by John Green



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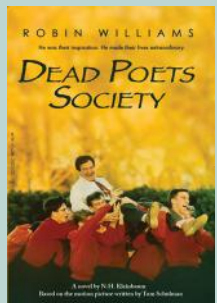
Emilie: The Lost Apothecary by Sarah Penner



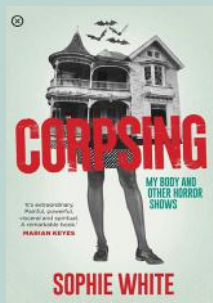
Anna-Maria: Mexican Gothic by Silvia Moreno-Garcia



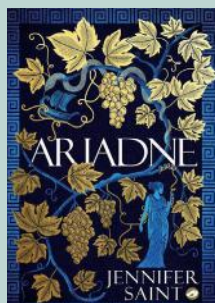
Noa: What Once Was Mine by Liz Braswell



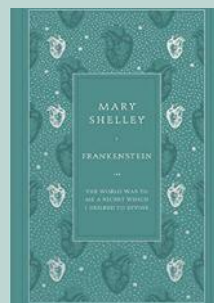
Thijs: Dead Poets Society by N.H. Kleinbaum



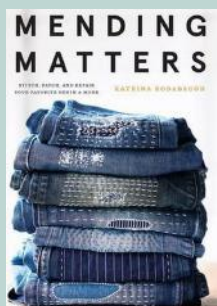
Jamie: Corpsing by Sophie White



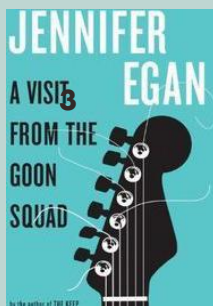
Mohana: Ariadne by Jennifer Saint



Hester: Frankenstein by Mary Shelley



Marijn: Mending Matters by Katarina Rodabaugh



Luka: A Visit From the Goon Squad



Eva: The Secret Garden by Frances Burnett



Julia: Percy Jackson and the Last Olympian



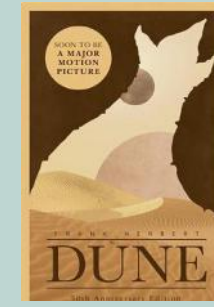
Nina V.: Assassin's Blade by Sarrah J. Maas



Leanne: A Darker Shade of Magic by V.A. Schwab



Elise: De cursus 'Omgaan met teleurstellingen' by Herman Finkers



Nina C.: Dune by Frank Herbert



PHOENIX

Magazine for students of English Language and Culture at Utrecht University.

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PHOENIX

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Thank You

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Meet the team

Harit

EDITOR IN CHIEF



What is your favourite book? The Hunger Games

What is your favourite quote and by whom? "May the odds be ever in your favour" - Hunger Games

What is your favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)

Frappuccino Caramel

What is your guilty pleasure? Badly acted Dutch TV-shows like "Brugklas"

What is your favourite films/series? Below Deck Mediterranean

Mohana

CREATIVE DIRECTOR



What is your favourite book? The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath or The Bear and The Nightingale by Katherine Arden.

What is your favourite quote and by whom?

"I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag of my heart. I am I am I am" - Sylvia Plath.

What is your favourite drink? (non-alcoholic) A cappuccino.

What is your guilty pleasure? Using travel as a coping mechanism.

What is your favourite films/series? Secret life of Bees or Gilmore Girls.

Anna-Maria

EDITOR



Favourite book? Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban by J.K Rowling

Favourite quote?

"Out of the ash I rise with my red hair And I eat men like air" - Sylvia Plath. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)**

Coffee. **What is your guilty pleasure?** No pleasure should be guilty. **Favourite films/series?** Harry Potter (film series)/The Big Bang Theory

Thijs

WRITER/POET



Favourite book? A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens.

Favourite quote? "We two alone will sing like birds i'the cage" King Lear.

Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic) Apple juice.

What is your guilty pleasure? Listening to the soundtracks of The Muppets movies.

Favourite films/series? Fantastic Mr. Fox.



Hester

TREASURER



Favourite book? currently it's Crier's War.

favourite quote? "I cannot do all the good that the world needs. But the world needs all the good that I can do." - Jana Stanfield. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Ginger Ale. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Buying plants. **Favourite films/series?** No time to die.

Anna

EDITOR

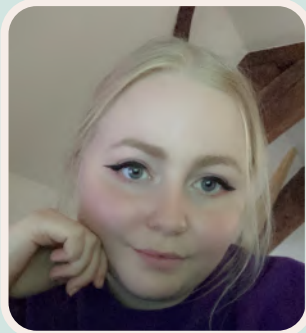


Favourite book? Ministerium der Träume

favourite quote? "you win some, you lose most" - Unknown. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Hot Cocoa. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Any kind of island-trash dating series. **Favourite films/series?** That 70's Show

Emilie

ILLUSTRATOR



Favourite book? Circe by Madeline Miller.

favourite quote? "I have lived a thousand lives lost within the pages of a book. -by Robert Cormier

Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic) Matcha Latte bubble tea
What is your guilty pleasure? Spending 10+ hours playing Sims 4. **Favourite films/series?** The Underworld series

Helenie

WRITER



Favourite book? The Great Gatsby.

favourite quote? We don't say "rising into love." There is in it, the idea of the fall. - Alan Watts. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Water, have you had any today? **What is your guilty pleasure?** Having cake for breakfast. **Favourite films/series?** Inception.

Leanne

SECRETARY



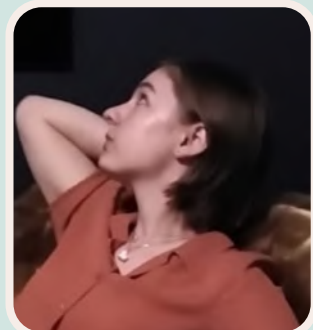
Favourite book? Red, White and Royal Blue.

favourite quote? "I cannot fix on the hour, or the spot, or the look or the words, which laid the foundation. It is too long ago. I was in the middle before I knew that I had begun." - Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice.

Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic) Ice-tea Green.
What is your guilty pleasure? getting excited from glitter and shiny things. **Favourite films/series?** Scrubs.

Elise

ILLUSTRATOR



Favourite book? Never let me go by Kazuo Ishiguro.

favourite quote? "Ik had van Winnie the Pooh gedaan, hoe ging die ook al weer... Iets van " How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard" -Dagmar Nan & Winnie the Pooh. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Green tea. **What is your guilty pleasure?** ? Don't feel guilty about things that make you happy! **Favourite films/series?** New Amsterdam.

Eva

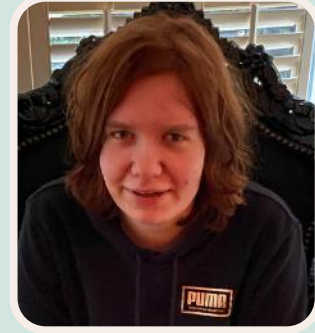
EDITOR



Favourite book? The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo - Taylor Jenkins Reid. **Favourite quote?** “But we’re the greatest, they’ll hang us in the Louvre. Down the back, but who cares? Still the Louvre.” - Lorde. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Iced Tea. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Twilight. **Favourite films/series?** The Queen’s Gambit.

Luka

EDITOR



Favourite book? Persepolis. **Favourite quote?** “Your will can change history! The world will be reshaped into the one you imagine!” - Akane Kurashiki. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Cherry coke. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Replaying kids’ games from my childhood. **Favourite films/series?** Promare.

Fessa

ILLUSTRATOR



Favourite book? The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue by V.E. Schwab. **favourite quote?** “No mourners, no funerals.” **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Hot chocolate with whipped cream. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Rewatching Friends. **Favourite films/series?** Shadow and Bone.

Cecilie

PROMO MEMBER



Favourite book? Comet in Moominland by Tove Jansson. **Favourite quote?** “There’s no point in being grown up if you can’t be childish” - Tove Jansson. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Hyldeblomstsajt! **What is your guilty pleasure?** I watch Moomin whenever I’m sad. (Best thing my dad’s ever suggested!) **Favourite films/series?** Avatar the Last Airbender.

Julia

EDITOR



Favourite book? The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller. **Favourite quote?** “It simply isn’t an adventure worth telling if there aren’t any dragons” - J.R.R. Tolkien. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Cappuccino. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Ordering in after a long day of work. **Favourite films/series?** Stranger Things.

Nina C.

EDITOR



Favourite book? Alias Grace by Margaret Atwood. **favourite quote?** “Behind every great man there is a woman rolling her eyes” - Jim Carrey. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** coffee. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Playing Sims 4. **Favourite films/series?** Brooklyn 99.

WRITER/EDITOR

Jamie



Favourite book? In The Dream House by Carmen Maria Machado. **Favourite quote?** “We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars” - Oscar Wilde. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Water. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Soggy, over-salted McDonald’s chips after a night out. **Favourite films/series?** Star Trek.

WRITER

Noa



Favourite book? The Midnight Library.
favourite quote? “mom I AM a rich man” - Cher
Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic) starbucks iced chai tea latte (#nospon). **What is your guilty pleasure?** bad adam sandler movies. **Favourite films/series?** American Horror Story.

ILLUSTRATOR

Luzia



Favourite book? Good Omens by Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett. **Favourite quote?** “Started making it, had a breakdown.. Bon Appétit!” - James Acaster **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Arizona Green tea. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Tiktok (it’s become a problem) **Favourite films/series?** Derry Girls/Taskmaster.

ILLUSTRATOR

Marijn



Favourite book? Hunger Pangs: True Love Bites, by Joy Demorra. **Favourite quote?** “Since the first grain silo, the first cathedral, the first ship, the first computer. Since the first time we put pen to page—we’ve always made things bigger, quicker, longer lasting, different than us. For a long time, we thought we were building mirrors. But now we know better: We were setting fires.” Austin Walker, Friends At The Table: Twilight Mirage, Episode 0. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Hot chocolate. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Watching multiple playthroughs of the same game because I want to see others experience it. **Favourite films/series?** Spirited Away.

EDITOR

Nina V.



Favourite book? The Secret Garden. **Favourite quote?** “Your Courage was a small coal that you kept swallowing”. By Anne Sexton. **Favourite drink? (non-alcoholic)** Hot Cocoa. **What is your guilty pleasure?** Listening to One Direction. **Favourite films/series?** Me before You.



Tea Time

With Ton Hoenselaars

Interview by Hester Schneider, edited by Marit Vogels

After many years of working at the Shakespeare division at UU, Ton Hoenselaars is retiring. Although he has been invited for Tea Time six years ago, this special occasion called for a new conversation! In a Teams meeting, we discussed Ton's experiences with studying and teaching, and his plans for the near future.

What did you enjoy most about studying in Leiden, looking back at it now?

Perhaps that's obvious, but for me it was reading and writing. You're given the time and opportunity during your student years to submerge yourself in books and ideas and are invited to write about all that. Discovering the Leiden University library was wonderful too, seeing how much was public and so available for me to read. I enjoyed the ability to expand in different directions, so instead of solely focusing on Shakespeare, I followed a course in German and tried to keep my French from getting rusty. I already enjoyed music a great deal at the time, especially opera. When I first moved out, my mother gave me money to buy a desk lamp, but instead, I spent the money on a box of operas by Verdi! Leiden meant hard work, but despite the three essays one had to write each week, it all felt like perfect freedom. I know now that it would never again be like that. Students should perhaps realise and appreciate even more the privilege that they are enjoying!



"UU was quite hesitant at first, as they did not think it was beneficial enough in terms of hours spent and the investment of staff, compared to student credits obtained"

How do you look back on your experience in teaching Shakespeare?

I look upon it – as Claudius says in Hamlet – with an "auspicious and a dropping eye". Looking back makes me happy, but also sad. Teaching has only become more difficult. In the early years, when teaching *The Taming of the Shrew*, I would just grab a copy from my desk and come up with something to teach during my tram ride into work. Now, I spend at least two hours for every seminar to prepare. The most enjoyable teaching, in terms of content and pleasure, has been a series of courses we taught as part of the European Shakespeare programme. With 5 other universities we taught Shakespeare on location, in Prague, Montpellier or Murcia for example. Five students from each university were invited to come. UU was quite hesitant about participating at first. They reckoned it was not beneficial in terms of hours spent and the investment of staff, for 5 students, and 40 ECTS. We did end up doing it off the programme and organised preparatory seminars to prepare the students before going abroad. The enjoyment, the contacts and the prestige for Utrecht were really worth it in the end.

What are you planning to do next?

That's a difficult question. Luckily, in our line of work, you can continue for rather a long time. I still have a number of books I want to write. I've been asked to write one about European Shakespeare, so, the history of Shakespeare and how receptions vary in different countries across Europe. The questions one asks? In the Netherlands, Shakespeare is on the teaching programme everywhere. Is that normal? In other countries, he's even banned – because there may be a critical attitude towards the canon. I also still need to finish another book on Shakespeare in concentration camps, that I haven't gotten around to due to teaching.

It is about how internees, during World War I and World War II used Shakespeare as a means of keeping sane. It is about believing in mankind and culture (or not), and about ways to deal with hardship.

What is your favourite Shakespeare play, and why?

I like them all, and if I choose one, I'm being unfair to the others. However, the play I've worked on most is Henry V. Not for any specific reason, but just because things ended up like that. I have fond memories of being on vacation and visiting the battlefield of Agincourt. This really boosted my interest in the play. The Kenneth Branagh movie that was made in the 1980s also helped. You can do so many things with a single play, and Henry the Fifth just came to fascinate me. It could have also been The Taming of the Shrew, the first Shakespeare play I ever saw performed. It is such a virtuoso piece, eluding every attempt at analysis. We all try and none of us succeeds. But that's the wonderful thing about it, the play continues to ask questions, and that applies to all of Shakespeare's plays and poems.

What question would you have liked to ask Shakespeare, had that been possible?

Although Paul Franssen was the expert on the biographical aspect of Shakespeare's life, a question like this always yields something to think about. But I'd say: "Could you come to class and tell those students that your plays are not autobiographical, or to be read as such?" That is, to get away from the author-oriented obsession. Let us try to be aware of the possibility of a reader-oriented focus, or – in cultural terms – of the fact that perhaps we should not be asking what Shakespeare means but how we make him mean.

After a while of chatting away, we wrapped up the conversation. Thank you again Ton for the time you took for us, we really appreciate it. Hopefully we will see you again in the future!

Is there anything you'd like to say to your students?

I've always enjoyed teaching and working with students, when I was not researching and writing. I'll still be writing, but I'm going to miss the students. Unfortunately, I have to retire. I do not know the date yet because I haven't enquired – that postponement is probably something Freudian. However, to mark the end of my work in Utrecht, I would very much like to do something with the students, as well as my colleagues. I am thinking of a kind of conference for the students, who would all be working in little groups with Shakespeare specialists who started their careers in Utrecht. Perhaps we should have a special session like that preceding my farewell address. I always thought that my inaugural address was one of the loveliest things that happened in Utrecht, and when you retire – as a professor at least – you are expected to give a similar type of lecture, only saying how you look back on the past and envision the future. I'd love to have the students there too, to spend that final day in Utrecht with them.



The Difference between Smaug and Mushu

The History of the Chinese Dragon

Written by Helenie Demier, illustrated by Emilie Wiingreen, edited by Luka van den Berg

We've seen it appear on numerous occasions and in countless shapes and forms: the dragon. Many examples of various breeds can be found in pop culture—the dragon from Shrek, Daenerys' adorable children, Toothless—and most of them are portrayed as malevolent beings, creatures capable of much destruction. This is usually the case with European stories, look at Grendel's mother from Beowulf who is destined to die at the hands of the titular character. Maleficent is evil and looks the part, Smaug has the calm demeanour that aids his unpredictability and scary-factor, and Toothless... Toothless is an exception.

However, these are all European dragons. In Europe, they are the personification of everything bad, their origin found in some lines from the Bible. In China, however, the dragon is a symbol of strength, imperial power, good luck, and much more. This is also the reason why there are so many children born in the Year of the Dragon. The Lung dragon, as that is the breed of the Chinese dragon, is worshipped and adored in this part of the world.

Usually depicted as a red serpent-like being with four legs, the Chinese dragon originates from folktales. These stories can be traced back to the alliance struck between Huang Di—the Yellow Emperor—and Yan Di during the Battle of Banquan around 2500 B.C, the first battle in Chinese history. Yan Di's mother was able to communicate with a dragon, and her son was born because of this connection. Yan Di's relation to the power of the dragons was what led the two allies to victory, and ever since then, it's been a symbol in Chinese culture. Because of this, the Chinese people believed they were the dragon's descendants. During the Han dynasty, starting around 200 B.C., the Emperors believed they actually were dragons. They were the ones that really marked the dragon as a divine being.

Emperors tried to cling to this image of divinity, and so the dragon appeared everywhere, from plates to clothing to furniture. However, this effect only lasted so long. Though the influence of and the connection between the people in power and the dragon has diminished, the dragon still has an active part in modern Chinese culture.

Everyone has seen photos taken during the Chinese New Year of a swirling colorful dragon, carried by quite a few people. It's significant during this holiday specifically because it symbolizes good luck.

The Chinese dragon does not appear as frequently in pop culture as the European one, but it is not completely absent! One of the most famous examples is probably the tiniest dragon you'll ever see—Mushu. He was left out in the live-action adaptation of Mulan, much to everyone's disappointment, but luckily we still get to enjoy his comedic character in the animated version. In the iconic Disney Channel Original Movie *Wendy Wu:*

Homecoming Warrior, the villain Yan-Lo is a dragon manipulating his way through the plot. More recently, *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* features the Great Protector as the guardian of a village.



Shang-Chi: A Legend In The Making!

Written by Anna-Maria Popo. Edited by Nina van Veen

This year Marvel brought us great series and movies that defined the success of Phase IV. But fortunately, Phase IV is not done just yet. One of the movies that deserved the hype is Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings. This movie follows Marvel's formula of fantasy filled with action and adventure as we know it from the previous movies, but it has more than that. The addition of the qinggong fighting style of wuxia fiction, brings back martial arts (getting 2000's flashbacks? – yes, me too!), but also includes Chinese folklore stories, which make Shaun or Shang-Chi a distinct hero in the Marvel universe that has his own promising future in the cinematic world.

Shang-Chi is a refreshing uplift in this phase of the MCU, the entertaining and humoristic tone is what we needed after the emotionally loaded end of Phase III.

Shaun (Simu Liu) is a young man, who avoids his destiny as a great warrior and lives in San Francisco, working with his close friend Kate (Awkwafina). But neither his destiny nor his immortal father Xu Wenwu (Tony Leung Chiu-wai) has stopped looking for him. On their trip, Shaun and Katy encounter his sister Leiko Wu (Fala Chen), who with her amazing fighting skills and badass personality captures us from the first second.

Shang-Chi is a refreshing uplift in this phase of the MCU, the entertaining and humoristic tone is what we needed after the emotionally loaded end of Phase III. The distinct storyline and the brand-new characters will make you anticipate its next movie. Marvel fan or not, Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings is a movie that every action and fantasy lover would enjoy. And a tiny spoiler alert, do not leave after the first credit scene, there's more!

'gods' gift' by Thijs Biezen

*Prometheus' guts
proved themselves Laocoon's snakes;
the godsend they were.*

Illustration by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg



Chinese Astrology

Written by Nina van Veen. Illustrated by Emilie Wiingreen – Edited by Jamie Pilon

Most people have heard of Chinese astrology. If you ask a random person to tell you something about it, their answer would probably be that it has something to do with animals and that there is a dragon involved. Although this is factually correct, there is way more to it than this. In the Chinese calendar, every year is represented by an animal and an element. There are twelve animals and they each occur once every twelve years.

According to Chinese legend, the order of the animal cycle was determined when an Emperor decided there would be a Great Race. The finishing time would establish the order of the twelve animals. Surprisingly, the rat crossed the finish line first, but the legend tells us this was accomplished by cheating. The rat jumped on the ox's shoulder at the start of the race and spent the majority of the race there until he jumped off right before the finish line and won the race. The Ox came in second. The Pig finished last because he stopped for a snack and a nap during the race. Unexpectedly, the Pig has suddenly become the most relatable animal of the twelve. Another interesting thing that can be deduced from the results of the race, is that a rabbit is apparently faster than a dragon. Since the legend doesn't report on cheating for this outcome, we'll just have to believe this is how it is.

“According to Chinese legend, the order of the animal cycle was determined when an Emperor decided there would be a Great Race.”

Here is an overview of the twelve animals in Zodiac, alongside their most recent year and some of the personality traits that are associated with them.

Rat – 2020 – Resourceful, Ambitious, Versatile

Ox – 2021 – Diligent, Determined, Reliable

Tiger – 2010 – Confident, Brave, Thrill-seeking

Rabbit – 2011 – Sensitive, Timid, Artistic

Dragon – 2012 – Outspoken, Energetic, Intelligent

Snake – 2013 – Wise, Clever, Enigmatic

Horse – 2014 – Enthusiastic, Energetic, Independent

Goat – 2015 – Sympathetic, Easygoing, Gentle

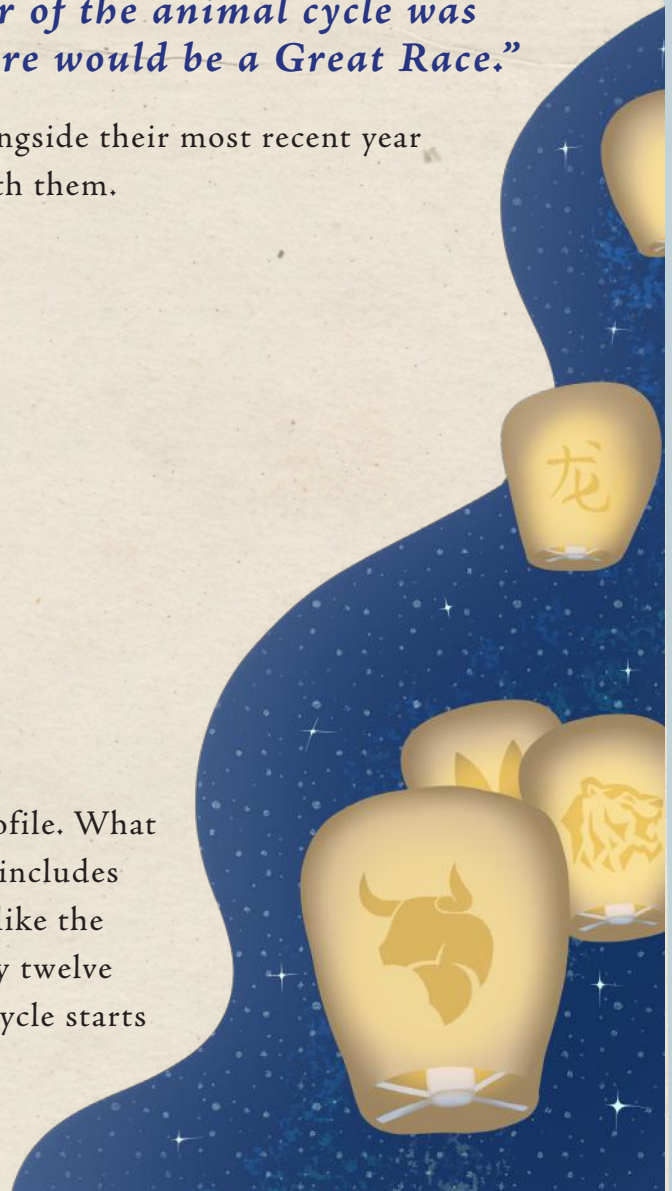
Monkey – 2016 – Intelligent, Optimistic, Sociable

Rooster – 2017 – Loyal, Courageous, Funny

Dog – 2018 – Honest, Trustworthy, Unselfish

Pig – 2019 – Generous, Caring, Diligent

The animals are only one part of the Chinese Zodiac profile. What most people don't know is that the Chinese Zodiac also includes the five elements; metal, water, wood, fire and earth. Unlike the animals, the elements do not change every year, but every twelve years. Every cycle starts with Rat and every time a new cycle starts for the animals, it is accompanied by a new element.



The animals are only one part of the Chinese Zodiac profile. What most people don't know is that the Chinese Zodiac also includes the five elements; metal, water, wood, fire and earth. Unlike the animals, the elements do not change every year, but every twelve years. Every cycle starts with Rat and every time a new cycle starts for the animals, it is accompanied by a new element. The combination of animals and elements creates a sixty-year cycle. This means that for example, a metal Horse occurs only once every sixty years. This makes the chance of you having the exact same zodiac sign as one of your family members very small.

Apart from the twelve-year cycle, the zodiac animals also have a fixed element. This means a zodiac consists of an Animal, a fixed element and an element from the cycle. The elements are fixed to the Animals in the following way:

Wood – Tiger and Rabbit

Fire – Snake and Horse

Earth – Ox, Dragon, Goat and Dog

Metal – Monkey and Rooster

Water – Pig and Rat

Telling someone your Chinese zodiac turns out to be a lot more complicated than saying; 'I am a dragon,' though it's still a very nice thing to be able to say.

Review: Watching Train To Busan. **A Fine Way To Spend Your Sunday Evening**

Written by Nina van Veen. Illustrated by Tessa de Bosschere – Edited by Hester Schneider

As a zombie movie connoisseur, for a while I was convinced that The Walking Dead had killed innovation in the zombie genre. The show was simply so big that "zombie movie" became synonymous with "Walking Dead ripoff", while a good zombie movie has so much more to offer. Train To Busan (2016, dir. Yeon Sang-ho) is one of those movies... kind of, mostly. It takes inspiration from the fast, aggressive zombies of World War Z (2013, dir. Marc Foster). Unfortunately, Train To Busan suffers from the same core problem as World War Z: it lacks heart (although not as much as World War Z). The movie's characters are archetypal to the point of exhaustion. However, Train To Busan accomplishes something that World War Z did not manage: it compensates for a cheap plot with truly suspenseful action, and the setting greatly contributes to this.

South Korea has strict gun regulations, so characters are forced to simply fistfight their way through a horde of zombies in a cramped train compartment. The result is a solid 8/10: thoroughly entertaining from start to finish and worth its runtime of nearly two hours, but not appropriate for those looking for high-brow entertainment with a deep emotional core (although the film is sad, just not in a profound manner). If you're looking for the latter, you should probably watch the BBC miniseries In The Flesh again.



Record Shelf

With Jenny Biersbach

Written by Leanne van Kampen – Photographs by Leanne van Kampen & Jenny Biersbach – Edited by Anna Maria Popo

At 9am on an early Thursday morning, I met up with Jenny, a second-year student who is a major K-Pop fan and K-Pop album collector. We sat down together and had a chat about where it all began, how many albums she owns, and which are her favourites.



When did you begin to start collecting K-Pop albums?

I started listening to K-Pop in December 2016, and I got my first album as a birthday present from high-school friends in February 2017, so it's been about 4,5 years since I've started collecting. That first album I got was a BTS's Wings album, which was the most recent one they'd released back then. It's still my favourite album by BTS and the one that got me into K-Pop.

What is your favourite album?

I have two albums that I'm very attached to. The first Stray Kids album I ever bought, which was a signed version of Miroh. The other album I'm very attached to is a signed Levanter album by Stray Kids, which is signed by my favourite member Changbin.

Who is your favourite artist?

My current, favourite group is Stray Kids, but it used to be BTS when I got first into K-Pop. In June 2019, Stray Kids released a song called 'Side Effects', and I thought "this is the coolest song ever". It's also nice that most of the Stray Kids members are my age, which means I can relate to them more than to BTS.

How many albums do you own?

I have collected 126 albums so far, of which 36 are BTS albums and 26 are Stray Kids albums. Please don't put a price tag on that. There are about 15 groups or artists in my collection, but you can clearly see that with some artists, I put the effort into collecting all their albums, and for some groups I even own all the release versions. I stopped collecting properly when I started uni, because I couldn't afford to spend my pocket money on K-Pop albums anymore, so now I only collect Stray Kids albums. My collecting changed from 'I don't know how many' – a year to about 7 or 8 albums a year, released back then. It's still my favourite album by BTS and the one that got me into K-Pop.



Do you have any recommendations for non-K-Pop listeners?

Yes. I have three albums I want to recommend: Miroh by Stray Kids, The Book of Us: The Demon by Day6, or Before We Begin by Eric Nam. Stray Kids got their first music show win with Miroh, which is very important for K-Pop artists, and I just think that the album is brilliant. I think it shows a lot about their true colours.

What does an album entail?

A K-Pop album is not just a CD, it's a whole experience. The CD is inside a photo book that has about 50-100 pages filled with pictures of the members together and on their own, and the different release versions have different pictures in them. They always contain photo cards that are sometimes shaped like polaroids, but they can also be just full-sized pictures. Some groups put bookmarks in them, or posters, or even paper cut-outs of the group, that you have to put together yourself to form a stand.

What do you like most about K-Pop?

When I first got into K-Pop, it was definitely the dancing, because I dance as well, so the choreography was amazing to me, but later on, I started choosing K-Pop over Western artists because of the variety of shows that they do. They will play games with each other, compete against each other... just seeing them interact, I'm having fun through them. I, also, truly love the K-Pop community and making seemingly random connections with people because of it. Obviously, I like the music, but it's so much more than just the music.



WORD OF THE MONTH

रसास्वाद

(Sanskrit / Hindi) *Rasasvada* /'re-sa:s-'va:d/ Adjective

There is something so majestic about watching the sun set and rise as you look to the horizon, almost like a fresh breath of air you take in the extraordinary view and feel a sense of pure bliss wash over you. There's nothing quite like it, be it the feeling of community when attending a music festival or meeting the native people as you travel to a different country. We often hear about cultural appropriation nowadays, but what is truly beautiful and so incredibly described by the word *rasasvada*, is when you get to experience cultural appreciation, being introduced to a culture by its people and getting the full authentic experience with no prejudice present. Hopefully, as 2022 approaches, we can think of pandemic travel laws as the past and embrace the endless countries and cultures we get to appreciate in the future.

- Selected by Emilie Wiingreen, illustration by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg



Hindu Myth

Written by Hester Schneider — Edited by Marit Vogels — Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are two of the greatest epics in Indian culture, and they have impacted Hindu thinking and their system of belief significantly. Although there has been some debate over whether the two epics are mythology or history, the majority seems to agree that Ramayana and Mahabharata are based on historical events and are therefore considered “itihasa”. Written in Sanskrit, the epics create moral ideals for followers to aspire to. Love, devotion, and wit are such morals that are represented in the legend of Savitri and Satyavan.

Savitri is so beautiful and pure that no man asks for her hand in marriage, as they are intimidated. Therefore, Savitri sets out on a pilgrimage to find a husband herself. She meets Satyavan, and the two fall in love. Once Savitri returns to her father, Sage Narada warns them that Savitri has made a bad choice, as he prophesises that her beloved Satyavan will die in exactly one year.



Happily married, Savitri and Satyavan live in the forest peacefully, until the prophesied day arrives. Servants of Yama, the God of Death, come to take him, but Savitri prevents them from doing so. As a result, Yama himself visits them. He claims Satyavan’s soul, but Savitri is persistent and makes her way after them. Yama tries to convince her to go back, but overcome by her wisdom, he instead offers to grant her any wish, except for the life of Satyavan. However, after having fulfilled some wishes, Savitri asks for a hundred children. This creates a dilemma, as Yama realises this would indirectly grant the life of Satyavan. Savitri’s dedication and purity convinces him to offer her one more wish, but in doing so he omits the words “except for the life of Satyavan”. And thus, the two lovers are reunited by virtue of Savitri’s love and devotion.

BOLLYWOOD MOVIE RECOMMENDATIONS

Mahabharat (1965) - movie based on Indian myth and the epic poem of the same name.

Thappad - The drama confronts the patriarchy, and what happens when a woman refuses to submit to it.

Queen (2014) - Queen is the story of a 24-year-old woman (Kangana Ranau) who, upon being dumped by her fiancé, goes on a honeymoon by herself. The 2014 feel-good movie is about a love affair, of sorts—between a woman and the big world.

Article 15 - unflinching look at India’s still-present caste system. The crime drama, which is loosely based on a true story, follows a police officer reluctantly investigating the disappearance of three young women from a lower caste.

Mongolian Myth

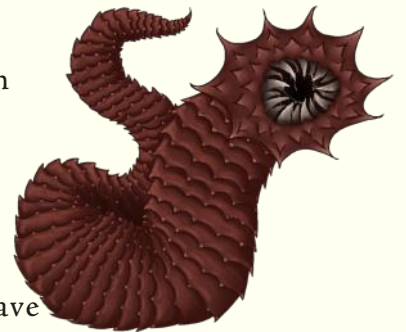
Written by Anna Preindl — Illustration by Tessa de Bosschere — Edited by Anna Maria Popo, Illustrated by Tessa de Bosschere

Myths about the mystery of creation and a haunting death worm are some of the long-told Mongolian mythological stories, at which we are going to take a closer look. As in many mythologies of other cultures, creation myths are a significant pillar of Mongolian myth. Generally, large parts of myths are intertwined with Buddhist beliefs. Some of them, thus, feature a creature called Lama, alluding to Buddhist roots. There are multiple creation stories, many of which we only have fragmental written remains of, as they were mostly transported through the tradition of orality.

One instance of a creation myth, involving Lama, is How the Sun Came to Be. It is, initially, set in a time with no sun or moon, where bodies of people were blindly flying around, until one of them became sick. Therefore, a Lama was sent by Burhan, the primordial Buddha, to forage for the healing medicine. After he successfully completed his duty, Burhan rewarded him by creating a mirror, which became the sun. Finally, the people flying around, through nothingness, could settle down on earth, and nourished by the sun, they became mankind.

Another figure I would like to introduce you to, is the myth of the Mongolian death worm. The natives called it allghoi khorkhoi. It has even been dramatised in a (badly rated) movie, in 2010. To go back to its origins, being blood-red, a meter long and deadly, it is alleged to have emerged from the Gobi Desert. It kills with its venomous spit, and it is believed to have an electrifying effect. The English translation of the worm can be slightly misleading, as it is imagined resembling a type of snake. Although there are no photographs to be found, there are reports of frequent sightings to this day, which makes the creature even more ominous.

Of course, there are many more myths that I wish I could mention, but if you are feeling inspired to do some research yourself after reading this, I strongly encourage you to do it!



'foliis ac' by Thijs Biezen



frondibus aground
card'nal and gold; stones in green—
shackled by the moss.

Russian Myth

Morally grey, dark, and twisted: the deep and mysterious woods of Russian Folklore

Written by Mohana Zwaga – Illustrated by Żuzia Gelauff – Edited by Anna Preindl

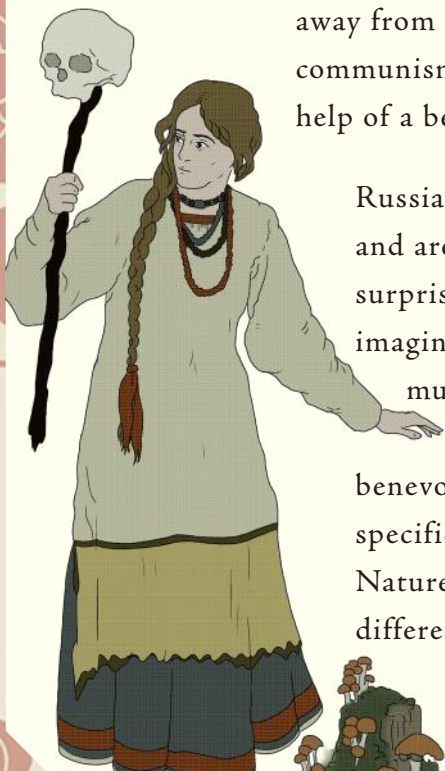
For as long as the people of Russia can remember, folklore, and more specifically skazki (fairy tales), have been at the core of Russian life and culture. While Russia's size has led to a great variety of stories, its extreme political states throughout history have allowed folklore to become centralized, as political movements often used it, even in the form of propaganda. Under Vladimir I, Russia became Christianized. The deeply ingrained connection between Paganism and folklore resulted in the Church seeing it as an obstacle in the way of conversion of the peasantry, and as a result, it was banned in the 12th century. This ban, fortunately enough, was rather impossible to fully implement, as it only strengthened the stories' appeal. This forced the Church to adapt the stories, blending in a Christian narrative, and as such blending religions. Tragically, however, due to the nature of Christianizing the stories, much of the matriarchal nature that was important within the Pagan Folklore was lost.

The pre-Christian stories contained many tropes of old, wise and magical women who acted as the key figures in guiding the male (bogatyri) and female (palenisti) heroes. A great example of this that is still well known today, can be seen in the development of Baba Yaga, who may very well be the most famous character from Slavic myth. Within Pagan tradition, she embodied the shamanic goddess of regeneration, living in the forest that was a symbol for crossing between life and death, and functioned as a mother-earth figure. The fact that she was without children or a husband, allowed for her to have the full freedom she required for her magic. However, through Christian influence and the increasingly patriarchal nature that came with it, Baba Yaga's story became unacceptable and was seen as a threat to the social order, thus she was reshaped into the evil witch from the stories we know today.

The rise of the Romantic movement in the 19th century led to a desire to go back to and write down the oral traditions of storytelling. Elite writers such as Pushkin attempted to 'improve' the stories they had heard from their nannies while growing up. Because of the impact, Christianity has had, the role of wealthy men in further developing and altering this story is often ignored, even though it has led the stories further

away from their original egalitarianism. The folklore developed a typical formula under communism: a modest lower-class hero defeating a greedy upper-class villain with the help of a benevolent leader, making it a form of communist propaganda.

Russian (or Slavic) folklore is deeply rich and ambiguous. Most stories stem from and are highly influenced by the Russian climate and nature. This is not much of a surprise, as the wild forests, mountains and cruel winters are likely to speak to the imagination. Frost demons, little girls of snow, forest spirits that grow as tiny as mushrooms or as tall as trees, Russian folklore has it all. What strikes me the most personally, is how the creatures appear to be morally grey; neither benevolent nor cruel. In this sense, they seem to represent the core of nature, more specifically, nature as the Russians long long ago had known and still know today. Nature that gives, but also takes. The question is, would you be able to tell the difference?



Want to get a taste of Russian folklore? I'd recommend the following novels:

- The Bear and the Nightingale by Katherine Arden
- Deathless by Catherynne M. Valente
- Fairy Tales by Alexander Pushkin

Japanese Myth

Written by Emilie Wiingreen – Illustrated by Emilie Wiingreen – Edited by Hester Schneider

When you initially dive into Japanese mythology, it is easy to get lost between the pages of the two primary pantheons of Japan: Shinto and Buddhism. However, Japanese mythology is not limited to the two pantheons, like the vast collection of folktales – also called Yokai –, traditional ancient stories, the imperial family, and the creation myth – by the name Tenchi-Kaibyaku – also influenced Japanese mythology heavily. Although Japan is relatively small, regional differences in the country have resulted in a plethora of beliefs making it hard to find a unified chronological view of mythology and its origins.

“Amaterasu is therefore known as the embodiment of the rising sun and Japan, ruling over the other deities of Japanese mythology”

Nevertheless, one part of the mythology that seems to be universal for most of Japan is the tales of the imperial family. In Japanese mythology, it is believed that the imperial family were descendants of the sun goddess Amaterasu and her grandson Ninigi-no-Mikoto. Amaterasu is one of the main goddesses of Japanese mythology and is the daughter of the creation deities Izanagi and Izanami. Izanagi is often referred to as the chief god of the heavens. However, as Japanese land and deities were born, Izanagi's wife Izanami was killed, which sent Izanagi into grief. According to some myths, this tragedy is referred to as the creation of the land of the dead. As Izanagi grieved, he taught his daughter Amaterasu how to rule the heavens, so that he could venture to the land of the dead and protect Japan from monsters and Oni's attempt to escape. Amaterasu is therefore known as the embodiment of the rising sun and Japan, ruling over the other deities of Japanese mythology.

However, Amaterasu was not the only descendant of the creation deities, and although the creation deities had many children, her two main siblings are Tsukuyomi, god of the moon – who was also her estranged husband – and Susanoo, god of the sea and storms.



Phoenix Ranks: Asian inspired literature

Written by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg; Edited by Julia Schuurmans; Illustrated by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg

As much as I adore Asian (inspired) literature, writing short synopsis for a few books will be too hard as I'm passionate about many of them. Therefore, I have decided to cover my favourite, **Six Crimson Cranes** by Elizabeth Lim, in a bit more detail instead. But fear not, I'll shout out some other lovely novels after I'm done obsessing over Lim's latest work ;)

Six Crimson Cranes has quickly snuck its way into my list of all-time favourites. The main story takes place in the kingdom of Kiata, which lies in Lor' Yan. The setting is heavily inspired by ancient Japan, but wait, it gets better; this story also heavily incorporates Chinese mythology AND (East) Asian folklore and beliefs. Is that convincing you to read it yet? No? One word: DRAGONS.

Skip the next paragraph if you want to avoid any kind of spoilers!

The story follows princess Shiori who possesses magic, but DUN DUN DUNNNN magic is forbidden. Shiori can bring life to lifeless objects, an example of which is a little paper crane that she named Kiki, her best friend.

Shiori's father is the Emperor of Kiata, and he is married to Raikama, Shiori's stepmother. It is important to note that Shiori also has six brothers she loves, but they're slowly drifting apart as they grow older. Hmm... six... where have I seen that number before? Shiori has also been forced into marrying someone she doesn't even know or love. To way to escape this fate, Shiori runs away and jumps into the lake on the palace grounds, where she meets Seryu - a dragon posing as a boy - who starts teaching her magic.

As Shiori becomes more involved with magic, she starts believing that Raikama is hiding something. Yet, as she tries to uncover his secret, things don't go so well... As a result, Raikama turns Shiori's brothers into six cranes. If Shiori says anything or tries to write down what happened, one of her brothers will die for every word she speaks. On top of that, Shiori is also stuck with a bowl on her head, ensuring that no one will recognise her. As Shiori is trying to get herself out of this mess, she starts folding paper cranes because if you fold 1000 cranes, you get to make a wish.

If you want to see how it ends, you'll have to pick up the book yourself!

For the fairy tales lovers among us, you might vaguely recognise the main plot from H.C. Andersen's fairy tale *The Wild Swans*, as this is what inspired Elizabeth Lim to write *Six Crimson Cranes*. A story familiar from my childhood but in a new setting. Reading this gave me the same happy feeling as reading children's literature does to me. My love for Andersen is also one of the reasons why this book grew on me so quickly, but did you know that that's not the only fairy tale that's hidden in Lim's masterpiece?

One of the things I love most is that the story has fascinating characters like Seryu and Raikama.

The latter has probably become my favourite character in the book because she's so damn fascinating! Perhaps even more intriguing are the allusions to so many folktales.



They make you resonate with it more - because you start recognising it subconsciously. Besides Andersen's *The Wild Swans*, there's plenty of other stories and legends to be found in this story! You might recognise elements from *Madame White Snake*, *The Bamboo Cutter*, *The Girl with the Black Bowl*, and *Chang'e the Moon Lady* from Chinese and Japanese folk tales. Or maybe you notice the allusions to western tales like *Thumbelina*, *Cinderella* or *Rumpelstiltskin*.

All in all, *Six Crimson Cranes* is a great novel where nostalgic elements are masterfully incorporated into a new setting. The characters and the development they undergo are so well written. Lim truly is a master at making you feel all kinds of things while reading the novel, from making your blood boil to doing happy dances. I'm sure this book and all its turning points will make you struggle to put it down (me at 4 am.. oops).

Book Recommendations

Have you already read *Six Crimson Cranes* but can't wait for the sequel? Or do you feel the sudden urge to read Elizabeth Lim's other works? Same here! Perhaps the *Spin the Dawn* duology will be the thing for you as it's set in the same universe as Lim's newest work - perhaps you'll enjoy those too. That being said, if you're in need of more dragon lore, I'm sure you'll love the sequel to *Six Crimson Cranes* as that's 'allegedly' filled with it - just a shame I can't confirm that yet, guess I'll have to wait for it to be published... *sigh*

If you're looking for other (east) Asian inspired literature that fit the fantasy or dystopian literature bracket, perhaps you'll want to give *Iron Widow* by Xiran Jay Zhao or *Jade Fire Gold* by June CL Tan a go.

“Reading this gave me the same happy feeling as reading children's literature does to me.”

I'd describe *Iron Widow* as a futuristic Chinese history-inspired novel mixed with Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. The thing I love most is that *Iron Widow* is very much a feminist novel. There's heavy criticism of misogyny. The book is very much making sure that the reader realises it's the misogyny rooted in traditional principles borrowed from Chinese history that the protagonist is fighting against. *TW Iron Widow: violence / abuse / assault / addiction / torture / suicide ideation.*

Jade Fire Gold, on the other hand, is a story inspired by Chinese mythology, with rich magic and an epic slow-burn romance... According to June CL Tan, the story is inspired by her own experiences and struggles with Confucian tenets and traditional beliefs in Chinese culture. She further explains that *Jade Fire Gold*'s main inspirations were elements and themes from *Xianxia*, immortal heroes, and *Wuxia*, martial arts heroes, as well as cultural mythology from Singapore. Besides these elements, the book speaks of themes and issues still relevant in the modern world, such as the repercussions of war and the influence of culture and diaspora nostalgia. *TW Jade Fire Gold: self-harm (non-graphic) / child abuse / parent death (implied & off-page) / character deaths / political violence, war and blood / mentions and descriptions of physical symptoms that might be triggering to those with emetophobia.*



Other honourable mentions include ***Descendant of the Crane*** by Joan He, ***Girls of Paper and Fire*** by Natasha Ngan, ***The Jasmine Throne*** by Tasha Suri, ***She Who Became the Sun*** by Shelley Parker-Chan, ***The Tiger at Midnight*** by Swati Teerdhala and *Epic Tales: Chinese / Japanese myths and tales*.

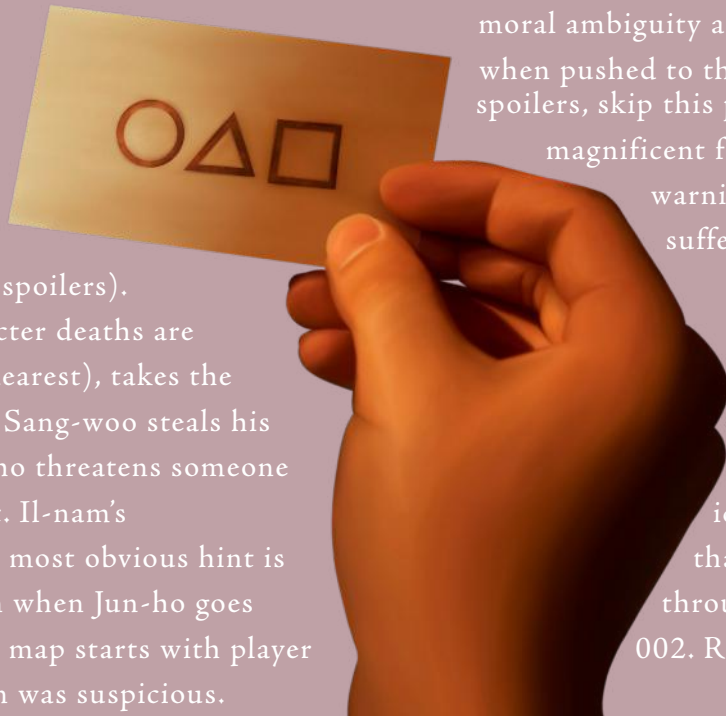
For the dragon lovers among us, try reading *Priory of the Orange Tree* by Samantha Shannon. And finally, for the history buffs or non-fiction lovers, try reading some of these eye-opening books written by North Korean defectors like *In Order to Live* by Yeonmi Park, *The Girl with Seven Names* by Hyeonseo Lee, *Without You*, *There's No Us* by Suki Kim or *Dear Leader* by Jang Jin-Sung.

Squid Games: Tag - You're dead!

Written by Noa Kimpton - Illustrated by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg - Edited Anna Preindl

Remember playing marbles? Tag? Or red light - green light? Do you remember tug-of-war and hopscotch? Now imagine being able to earn a whole lot of money by playing those very games. The price of admission? Your life - possibly. Seong Gi-hun is a man down on his luck. He is divorced, lives with his mother, has a mountain of debt and his ex-wife is taking his daughter away from him. In short, he has hit rock bottom. Then one day, it appears that his luck changes around when a businessman approaches him, offering him a solution for all his problems. All he has to do is play and win a couple of kids' games. That is all. It is not long before Gi-hun learns that that is, in fact, not all. I am usually not prone to peer pressure, but when my entire Twitter timeline was talking about this random Korean show about kids' games, and I was intrigued. I am a big fan of thrillers. The most thrilling and scary stories don't involve supernatural elements. Squid Game does a great job at being genuinely unsettling without resorting to the supernatural. It shows us that humanity can be cruel and ruthless. Though, given their circumstances, could you really blame them? It illustrates the moral ambiguity as well as social injustice, what humans are capable of when pushed to their absolute limit. If you want to avoid spoilers, skip this part because I am going to talk about the magnificent foreshadowing on the show. Okay, go, this is your warning. Still here? Cool. That means you have already suffered along with me (or that you just don't care about spoilers).

Many of the major character deaths are actually foreshadowed early on. Ali (my darling, my dearest), takes the money from his boss only to meet his demise when Sang-woo steals his marbles. We see a similar thing with Sae-Byeok, who threatens someone with a knife to their throat, only to get her throat slit. Il-nam's identity is also foreshadowed throughout the story, the most obvious hint is that we don't actually see him die. Another clue is given when Jun-ho goes through the player register. The keen eye will see that the map starts with player 002. Really, we could have known all along that the old man was suspicious.



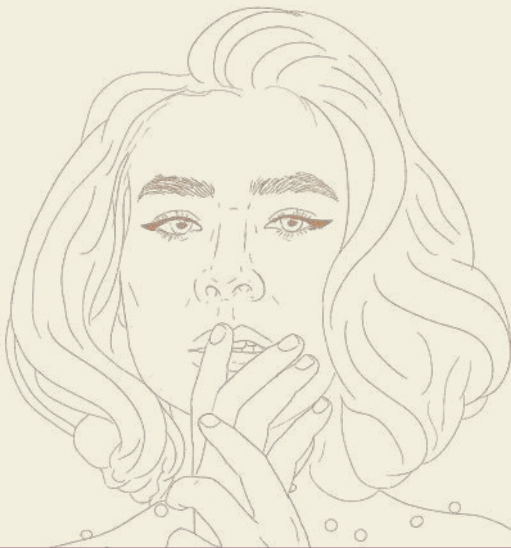
“It illustrates the moral ambiguity as well as social injustice, what humans are capable of when pushed to their absolute limit.”

Anyway, I am un-crying all the tears I shed for him. Another cool thing: pay attention to the walls in the bunker where the players sleep! They have little figurines that depict the games they play. In my opinion, the show definitely lives up to its hype. It is filled with twists and turns and it keeps you on your toes right up until the very last scene which sets us up perfectly for a second season. Netflix likes money as much as the next Squidgame VIP, so who knows? Let's just hope that they won't ruin it by overdoing it like some other shows.

Playlist of My Life

Illustrated by Zuzia Gelauf

ANNA-MARIA



1. Transparent Soul - WILLOW, Travis Barker
2. Washing Machine Heart - Mitski
3. Purge The Poison - MARINA
4. Oh Ana - Mother Mother
5. Stargazing - The Neighbourhood
6. Meet Me At Out Spot - THE ANXIETY, WILLOW, Tyler Cole
7. Lady in the Wall - Danny Knutelsky
8. I Love You But I Love Me More - MARINA
9. Burning Pile - Mother Mother
10. Happier Than Ever - Billie Eilish

"While I was making this playlist I was thinking that I wanted something relaxing, that I would listen to during my early train rides, but also something that would make me feel more upbeat and ready to begin my day. This playlist also fits my autumn vibes, the soft beats that I can listen to while I'm reading my favorite book during a Sunday evening. There are also songs in there that I always see myself listening to over and over again, no shame! I just knew that I had to put at least one MARINA song in there, because she is my comfort-artist, no matter my mood I find my way back to her music somehow!"

JAMIE



1. Valerie (Live at BBC Radio 1 Live Lounge) - Amy Winehouse
2. Greatest Comedian - Matt Maltese
3. Starman - David Bowie
4. Glimpse Of Love - Franz Ferdinand
5. Never Give Up On The Good Times - Spice Girls
6. I'm Your Man - Wham!
7. Does Your Mother Know - ABBA
8. Working Man's Town - Kid Kapichi
9. Do You See Us? - Left at London, ft. Nobi
10. ALLES MOET BETER - Hang Youth

Putting this playlist together, I wanted it to be a broad reflection of all the music I like listening to. Restricting it to ten was difficult, I could've added a better transition from ABBA to Kid Kapichi- but sometimes life moves from disco to rock and you just have to ride the waves. When I listen to music, it's usually for one of three purposes: to relax (1-3), to dance (5-7) or to blow off some steam (8-10). Experiencing music can be a very cathartic and emotional experience, but it doesn't always have to be. Sometimes, you just want to dance. I think this playlist reflects both of those sides, for me personally at least.

Weltevree

Or, Well-content

On the 16th of the month we call *August*, in the year 1653 of the *Common Era*, a *Dutch* ship headed from the island of *Taiwan* to the islands of *Japan* and landed on the island of *Jeju*, which the men decided to call *Quelpaert*, after a small *Dutch* sailing boat. This was a charming way to feel that they'd landed their vessel onto another familiar vessel, whose name sounds like a squawking duck-like bird compared to their own, *Sperwer*, *Sparrowhawk*.

But when I say *landed*, I mean *shipwrecked*,

because they hardly knew what *Korea* (or what they called *Coree*, or *Coeree*, or somehow *Tyocen-koeck*, and what the *Koreans* themselves would call *Joseon*, 조선) was, and so hapless were they that when they returned to their fatherland, they spread the idea that the peninsula was filled with crocodiles. But, no, the records would show they weren't in *Florida*, although I myself, a *Korean-American*, have lived on both peninsulas – landed / shipwrecked in a place optimistically called *Tampa* – as, for certain, have several people named *David Kim*.

Although *Jeju* is now known for its beaches and casinos

and shellfish from divers mythologized as *feminist folk mermaids*

(but in my experience are wet, *cranky old women* just trying to get on with their jobs,

“Are you just looking, or are you going to buy something?”)

– although *Jeju* is where my own parents went on their 1979 matching-outfits honeymoon

– at that time *Jeju* wasn't looking for any tourists. *Jeju* didn't have any bonsai gardens, horse-riding trails, or traditional folk villages, unless you were really living it,

living it like they did in the 1650s.

So the *Dutch* men

who landed

/ survived

descended onto

/ crawled up

the beach,

and they asked the *Koreans*, “*Nangasckij*?” meaning *Nagasaki*, or rather, *Deshima*. And the *Koreans* asked them, “*Kirishitans*?” meaning *Christians*, or rather, *Portuguese Jesuits*, as the *Dutch* certainly wouldn't count as *Kirishitans*. Then the *Dutch* thought, *What is this place?* Then the *Koreans* thought, *What are you?* And they continued to exchange such sentiments up to our current day in the *Common Era*.

Depending on the books you read,

you might learn the *Dutch* discovered *Korea*,

or that the *Koreans* discovered the *Dutch*,
but the truth is that neither
was very happy about it.

The *Koreans* tried their best to cover up “the problem,” which meant imprisoning the *Dutch* and marrying them off to *Korean* women. In fact, four hundred years later, when the *Dutch* sent over a replica of the *Sperwer*, *Sparrowhawk*, to honor the nations’ longstanding relationship – a charming way to imagine a fully intact *Dutch* ship landed on the *Jeju* shore – the *Koreans* still didn’t know what to do with it, just as they hadn’t known what to do with those shipwrecked men. They tied it up on a beach, arranged miniature windmills and plastic tulips around it, and filled it with memorabilia of World Cup soccer / football coach Guus Hiddink. I saw it myself on my honeymoon. You can’t say *Koreans* don’t value politeness, nor that they don’t value Guus Hiddink, the first person to become an *Honorary Citizen of South Korea* and who has been called an *Eternal Korean Hero*. Significantly my aunt – a direct descendent of Admiral Yi Sun Shin, 이순신, 李舜臣, and thus no stranger to *Eternal Korean Heroes* – named her dog after him, 히딩크, *Hidingk’ŭ*, *Hidingkeu*.

But truth be told,

more thrilling for the *Dutch* than discovering *Korea* was that here, in this place, they discovered one of *their own*. This continues to be true for many situations. I once sat through a lecture claiming Wallace Stevens was a *Flemish* poet, and don’t get my husband started on *Beowulf*. Even *American* 80’s rock music and hairstyles can be credited / blamed on the *Dutch*, thanks to *Eddie* (Edward Lodewijk) and *Alex* (Alexander Arthur) *Van Halen*. The *Dutch* are always worried about the dominance of *angelsaksische cultuur*, but consider what they’ve inflicted on *us Anglo-Saxons*.

Regardless,
the *Dutch* men discovered that three decades,
or half the length of the *Stems-and-Branched*,
before the *Dutch* men landed in *Jeju*,

one *Dutch* man, Jan Janse Weltevree, had arrived here and made *Coree*, *Coeree*, *Tyocenkoeck*, what have you, his home. He told the *Dutch* men he now lived in *Seoul*, *Sior*, 漢城, or *Hanyang*, had a wife and two children, and had fought against the 清朝, *Manchus*, *post-Jurchens*, *Chinese avant la lettre*, with the *Joseon* King’s army. In fact, the *Koreans* said, according to the *Dutch*, “He is not a *Dutch*-man but a *Coresian*.” What we should take this to mean I don’t know, but there is no record of whether Weltevree had ever seen or not-seen crocodiles.

What I do know is that later the other *Dutch* men began to plot
their escape
/ return home,
forgoing
/ abandoning

/ releasing
the *Korean* women they had married,
the *Dutch-Korean* children they had fathered.

Blood might be thicker than water, but nothing is thicker than the salty *North Sea* and the
friet-and-weed-filled liquid flowing through *Amsterdam* canals. And the problem with living
/ surviving in a small, self-isolating country is that at some point there aren't many more of
your own to discover. I myself, a *Korean-American*, now live in the *Netherlands* and know
this – and every member of the *diaspora* living within these borders – all too well.

Unlike me, however, *Dutch* men have always been very loyal to and believe in the superiority of
their own, so they sought out Weltevree, “not a *Coresian* but a *Dutch-man*,” so they thought,
and said to him, “Weltevree, Weltevree, why don't you come back to the fatherland with us?”
And Weltevree, with his red beard and blue eyes, turned to look at his people

and then turned back
to shake his head at the Dutch men.

He said, as politely as he could,
because politeness was something he valued,

“Weltevree, *weltevree*,
that means *I'll stay*.

You, you know that as well as I do.”

In this year of the 蛟龍, 이무기, a mythological creature
bearing the mouth of a crocodile,
I leave my reply to the records:

En zo

simpel

is

het.

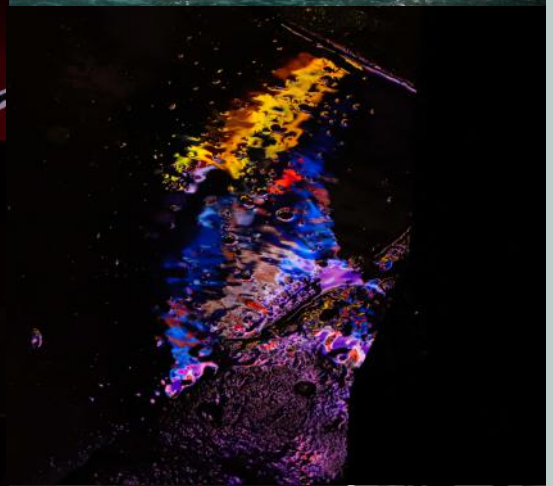
JAPAN by Mohana Zwaga

From the fine arts photography series "Pavement Rainbows" and "lonely bodies".

Lonely Bodies

From their fingertips the colours leak
Drip, drip, drip on asphalt roads
Trailing on, sluggishly
As legs pull and push the rest of them
forth.

This train is full of ghosts tonight
they tap and sigh
On the dark glass



None of them will see.

Gentle buzzing,
Head down,
Shoulders tight.
The blue advertisement lights
Dancing off their skin.

The colours are spreading like oil stains
Cover the linoleum
Webbing between their feet.
But the doors open
And carelessly spun treads
Are left behind
shattered.



THE AGE OF SAMURAI

Late april leaves rustle in the valley we call home.
Up north we went, to be all alone.
Said our goodbyes,
't might be our last chance.
We readied for battle, knowing 't was inevitable to come.

Then summer came and the army arrived
Like a thief in the night, the battle emerged.
I was watching you as you fought your war,
Deep within I knew,
't wasn't to be won.

Despite all that,
you stood firm - held your ground
They went and gone
Though, once they hit -
they hit hard.
I watched life slowly draining away.

Now I'm the last samurai,
Haunted by your loss
Unsure of when bad luck - will strike me again.

*Written by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg
Dedicated to Eric Balemans / for my dad*

