

April 2021

Issue 3

Phoenix



The Dark Academia Issue

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Word of the Board



Rixt Tuinstra
Commissioner of
Internal Affairs

architecture and classic literature find their place in this subculture. Even though I hate Covid-19 as much as you do, Dark Academia actually grew substantially as a subculture during this ongoing pandemic! So, I guess Covid-19 is one of the reasons we can enjoy this lovely issue of Phoenix. But, as always, the main reason we are lucky enough to read yet another Phoenix issue is, of course, because of the lovely Phoenix team, who make every issue another dream come true.

Enjoy the read, I hope to see you soon during one of our activities!

Love,

Rixt

Dear Albioneers,

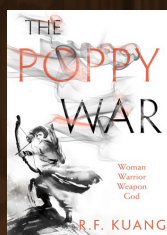
Springtime is finally upon us, and I hope that, aside from all the online lectures and seminars, you find the time to go outside and enjoy the nice weather we've been lucky to have these past few weeks. Of course, we are all sick and tired of not being able to see each other in real life, during classes or during Albion activities. I want you to know that you are not alone in this struggle. I love seeing all of your faces during the activities we are able to host on our online server, and I love talking to you!

Personally, I have been busy working on a lot of Albion-related stuff, but I have also been busy with trying to get into another bachelor program next year: Architecture and the Built Environment at TU Delft. Drastically different from English Language and Culture, but there are definitely similarities between the two studies! Both have an analytical aspect; during Literature courses, you analyse books, stories and poetry, whereas you analyse buildings, and their history and environment, during Architecture courses. What really ties them together is time; both buildings and books represent a specific time and how society functioned during that time. Both tell a story; a building just doesn't use words. And: both architecture and literature can be found in the theme of this issue, Dark Academia, where both gothic

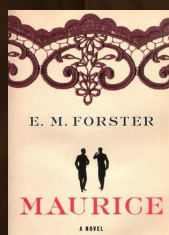
what we're reading



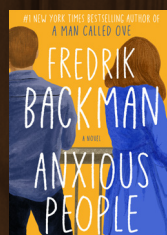
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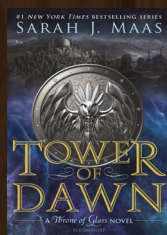
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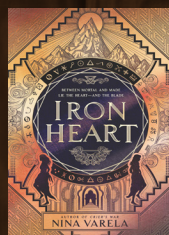
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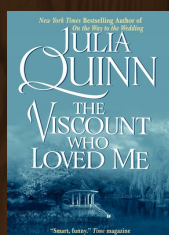
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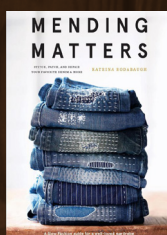
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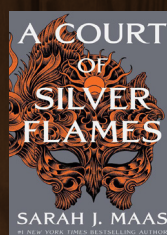
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van het vermo-
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PHOENIX

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Illustration by
Cecilie Balemans-Højberg

A Brief Introduction to Dark Academia

Dark Academia 101

While there are no actual guidelines and rules for how to be part of an aesthetic, every aesthetic has its different signature features that set it apart. Dark Academia is an aesthetic that focuses on having an interest in classic literature, education, arts, writing (especially poetry) and much more. Overall, people that are part of the Dark Academia aesthetic are fascinated by knowledge and self-discovery.

Any aesthetic can be approached differently and has many different sides. In Dark Academia, fashion is very important for some, while others are more focused on the literature and art side of the aesthetic. Being part of or inspired by an aesthetic is, of course, a personal choice. This also goes for how far you want to take it. Don't feel obliged to be interested in every aspect of the aesthetic! Personally, I think that this is not the goal. Try to see any aesthetic as an inspiration, for whatever you are fascinated by. It might also be a great way to connect with people who have similar interests! By the way, if you just like to wear turtlenecks and dress pants, don't feel pressured to conform to other parts of this aesthetic. You do you! If you are interested in learning more about Dark Academia, definitely look around on the Internet. Social media like Pinterest and Tumblr (but also just Google) can be great sources of inspiration. There are also many related aesthetics that might even be a better fit for you, like: Art Academia, Classic Academia or Writer Academia!

When you look up pictures that fit the Dark Academia aesthetic, you often see libraries, castles, universities, all with a mysterious and dark atmosphere. Because Dark Academia is partly focused on classic literature, there are many books that are 'recommended reading.' You can find entire lists with recommendations that also have this darker atmosphere. Think of classics like *Jane Eyre* and *Frankenstein* (which we discuss in this issue) but also newer books like *Ninth House* by Leigh Bardugo and *A Deadly Education* by Naomi Novik.

Please be aware that when this aesthetic is taken too literally, it advocates a toxic mindset of being as productive as possible. I also want to point out that most of the media and pictures of this aesthetic are very white-centred, and the people shown are often men. This ties in with the idea of elitism and the history of education. The source

material for this aesthetic is limited in that sense and is also problematic, so keep this in mind. With our issue, we want to show that this aesthetic can be inspiring for everyone and not just for the 'elite.' Many people advocate for more diversity within this aesthetic, and it is a shame that this is not already the case. Please know that everyone is welcome to become part of this aesthetic and make it their own!

Written by Julia Schuurmans; Edited by Michelle Moonen

Poetry

After realising I was only mildly familiar with the phenomenon of Dark Academia, I decided to scour the depths of Tumblr, to see what kind of poetry actually can be classified as DA. If you can't be bothered to delve into Tumblr to do the 'research' yourself, I'll try to give you a brief overview of what I've learned so far. Quick disclaimer: If I'm wrong... blame Tumblr, not me (please).

The general themes of DA involve some kind of higher education, related to the act of writing or reading (poetry) or discussing and/or admiring Greek and Gothic architecture as well as classic literature. References to historical events or people are not uncommon either! When looking at DA poetry specifically, you can generally see a pursuit of self-discovery and along with a passion for knowledge and learning more. DA poetry, obviously, also involves or combines any of the other things listed above. That's it for the recap. Let's dive into some poetry!

The first group of poets that was mentioned over and over were, perhaps unsurprisingly, the romantic poets: John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Wordsworth, William Blake, Lord Byron but also Edgar Allan Poe.



Illustration by Marijn van de Visser

Other poets that were mentioned quite often were Walt Whitman and T.S. Eliot, but also some of my personal favourites, namely Emily Dickinson and, of course, the love of my life, Sylvia Plath. There are many more but I won't bore you with an endless list of all the poets and poetry I like, so I'll just give you a little taste of some amazing poems by some of these incredible poets!

If you want to get into some good DA poetry, you may want to start out with Keats' odes. I reckon *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *Ode to Psyche* and *Ode on Melancholy* would be a great place to start. If you want to combine DA poetry with some classic English literature, you may want to look into *On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again!*

If you like the idea of self-discovery you may want to get to reading Shelley's *Alastor*, which starts out as a search for the ideal in landscape and womanhood but ends up as a pursuit for a supernatural spirit that transcends earthly ideals. Do you prefer some of Shelley's poems that bring to life and speak of the desire for an abstract concept? Then you might enjoy *To Night!*

If you prefer a badass female poet that writes about melancholy, suffering, rebirth, and more, you'll love Plath! Plath's poem *Ariel* is about the rebirth of a fearful woman into a powerful woman, while other poems like *Daddy*, *Cut* and *Lady Lazarus* use references to historical events and words from other languages to describe one's suffering. Plath's language use is amazing, use and at times she uses harrowing imagery to convey her message.

If you have some spare time on your hands, you may like T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*. This poem is written with the legend of the Fisher King in the back of Eliot's mind. So, if you like poetry based on myths, you'll love *The Wasteland*.

And finally, I'd like to end with some Emily Dickinson recommendations! For example, 378, which rejects the possibility of finding comfort in the divine or in Earth itself. Or 449 which reflects on life by realising that everything that's achieved in life is quickly erased by death. And on that note... *I'm signing off so I can go read some more poetry!*

Written by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg; Edited by Julia Schuurmans

Literature

What exactly is the Dark Academia aesthetic? When I think of Dark Academia, I think of pretty universi-



Illustration by Marijn van de Visser

ties, reading, writing, poetry and most of all learning and studying. This aesthetic has appeared in every part of our culture in the past few years and even entire communities have popped up. The best way to describe this new, yet very popular, aesthetic is to say that this subculture has devoted itself entirely to everything scholarly, something a lot of us crave since our world has been online. So, if you miss going to the university, this new community might be right up your Diagon Alley!

The aesthetic has taken its origin somewhere on the internet and ever since Dark Academia became trending on social media, it has become a wildly popular genre in literature as well. This sub-genre is growing rapidly every single day and is getting more well-known by the minute, so an increase of books on the subject couldn't be anything but obvious. Reading about Dark Academia in a fictional way is an entirely new experience than watching it on TV or listening to its music. But what to expect when reading a book about Dark Academia? Well, probably a lot of pretentious and privileged characters, pretty universities, late-night study sessions and a bit of Greek or Latin. These aspects give the book its well-known characteristics. Another important aspect of the genre is the sense of mystery or thriller. Many books revolve around a murder, a riddle or a disappearance, giving the genre a little edge that it needs.

Even though the Dark Academia genre took off only recently, the genre was already in practice decades ago. Did you know that some well-known

books that you must have heard of, actually do fit in with the themes and ideas that this aesthetic embodies? Maybe after reading this issue you might finally be inclined to pick up these novels! One of the novels you should know about that is fitting to this genre is *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde, didn't expect that, huh? But surely this novel revolves around mystery and knowledge, which are the ingredients for a Dark Academia novel. And did you know that *The Canterbury Tales* are also part of Dark Academia? Even *Frankenstein* belongs on this list. Were these surprising to you? It completely blew my mind that all of these belong to Dark Academia, and of course, they have been added to my shopping cart right away!

In 2021, there will be a record amount of new novels released which revolve around the aesthetic. For instance, *A Lesson in Vengeance* by Victoria Lee, *A Beautiful Doom* by Laura Pohl, *The Devil Makes Three* by Tori Bovalino or *How We Fall Apart* by Katie Zhao, which are all coming out this August. A lot to look forward to and a lot to be added to your TBR-list, am I right?

To make sure I was in the right vibe, I was listening to Dark Academia music when I was writing this article and I was wearing plaid pants, a green turtleneck and a black blazer :)

Written by Marit Vogels; Edited by Julia Schuurmans

Fashion

Although I'm no fashion guru, I was very happy to dive into the world of Dark Academia inspired fashion for this article. If you've ever seen me, you probably know that I'm in no way dressed according to the Dark Academia aesthetic, so if you prefer to learn from the 'experts,' I highly recommend looking on Tumblr or Instagram for some more inspiration, but for now, I'll try to teach you the basics of dressing like a "Dark Academic."

Dark Academia revolves around knowledge, so it makes sense that its fashion is largely inspired by the clothing that Oxford and Cambridge students wore in the 1940s. At these times studying was mainly meant for rich and white men, but the Dark Academia fashion that is inspired by it is for everyone! It's often even praised for its androgyny because the sort of outfits that the male students of Oxford or Cambridge would wear in the 1940s is now worn by people of all genders.

You might think: okay cool that these looks are for everyone these days, but this sounds super expensive and therefore not that inclusive at



Illustration by Marijn van de Visser

all. And yes, of course, outfits that are inspired by students of the 1940s often include fancy and thus expensive items like blazers and pencil skirts. Fortunately, second-hand stores are the perfect places to find your new Dark Academia look! Buying your outfit at a second-hand store makes your look even more authentic (and better for the environment!) because Zara and H&M definitely don't sell vintage items from the '40s.

Hopefully, you now know a little bit more about the background of Dark Academia fashion, but I still haven't told you what items you should look for. I will do that in a bit, but before I dive into that, I'd like to say that there is not one way of dressing according to the Dark Academia aesthetic. As an aesthetic that originated on the Internet, it is obviously also still open for subtle changes, so if your favourite Dark Academia item doesn't match my list, don't feel bad, you're probably just a Dark Academia trendsetter! That being said, I'll give you my list.

Dark Academia fashion summed up in 8 points:

1. Colours: brown, beige, black, white, navy;
2. Material: Plaid patterns, tweed, lace;
3. Tops: Turtle necks, jumpers, sweaters-vests, blouses (with cuffed sleeves);
4. Bottoms: pencil skirts, cigarette trousers, linen shorts;
5. Top layer: Trench coats and blazers;
6. Shoes: Oxfords, Mary Janes, Dr Martens';
7. Accessories: (Faux) leather belts and watches, simplistic jewellery, (fake) glasses, a book in your hand;
8. Make-up: use dark colours, for example, dark red lipstick and black eye make-up.

Written by Eva Biesheuvel; Edited by Julia Schuurmans

The Literature of Our Minds

Written by Eva Biesheuvel; Edited by Hester Schneider; Illustrated by Elise Brouwer

The wind was howling and made the old shutters of the library creek. It was dark outside and it felt like a perfect evening for reading. All I could focus on, however, was that one girl a couple of feet away reading the same trashy romance novel that I'd been reading the evening before.

It had all started a week earlier when the girl first turned up to the library. Usually, it was just the librarian, Margie, and I who were at the library in the evening. Margie was the closest thing I had to a friend at university, even though she was an elderly lady. I suppose being together in the library all those evenings had created a bond.

When the girl showed up a week ago, I was reading 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'. I didn't mind her presence; it was nice to see more people enjoy the silence and solitude of the library. The problem started the next evening when she came again and started reading –out of all books– 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'. I thought it might be a coincidence that first time, but it had been a week now and she'd read all the novels I'd been reading so far this week.

When Margie told us the library was going to close soon, I decided that overthinking this wouldn't bring me anywhere. I had to confront this mysterious girl, so I left the library and waited for her in the courtyard.

My heart was beating fast and I still wasn't sure what I was going to say, but I didn't have time because she already came walking out of the big engraved library doors. She looked up at me and smiled shyly, but she didn't say anything and started to walk away.

"Wait," I said softly. It was loud enough for her to hear and she turned around but didn't speak.

"Why are you reading the exact same books as I am? That's creepy," I said. I only realised I'd been very rude when I'd already spoken.

She looked down at her black boots and said: "I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to freak you out ..." Her voice was soft and she seemed quite scared. I didn't feel like comforting her though, because she was the one acting weird.

"But why?" I asked.

She was silent for a moment and then said: "Well, we're in the same classes-" I felt myself blushing because I hadn't realised that.

"I'm aware that you probably didn't know, that's fine."

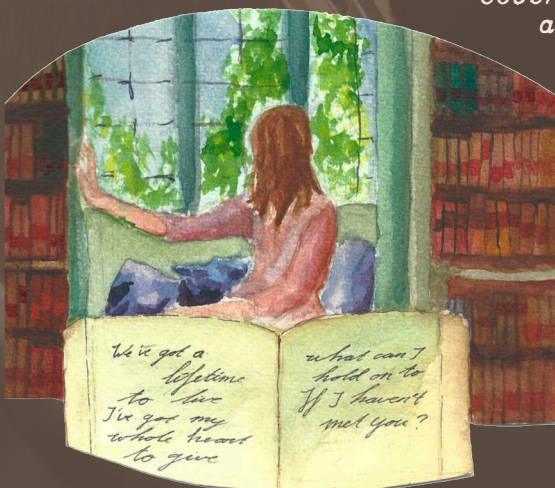
"I'm sorry," I murmured.

"Oh please don't be, I'm the one that has been acting creepy, so I should apologise. The thing is just, in class– I just– I like the way your mind works. The way you talk about literature and the fact that you always know so much more than anyone else. I wanted to get to know you, because I've started– to admire you... But you always seem to be in your head. I tried to talk to you once, but I was nervous and you didn't realise I was talking to you."

I felt overwhelmed by all these confessions because they seemed to come out of nowhere, but I didn't have time to think because she kept talking: "I was walking around campus one evening when I saw you sitting in the library. You were so absorbed in this novel that I'd never heard about. It made me curious. It somehow seemed like the perfect way to finally reach you. To reach you through the book you were reading, to get into your mind by discovering the books you liked. It just started with one book, and it was supposed to stay like that, but I loved the book and I wanted to see more of your mind, and I

felt like these novels were the only way so I did it again, another night. It was that night that I finally caught your attention, but I was scared to talk to you about it because I didn't know how to explain myself. I just hoped that if I kept doing it, you'd keep noticing me and start talking to me one day."

I just stared at her. I wasn't sure what to think yet, whether I should be scared or grateful. We were standing there in silence for what might have been several minutes when I smiled at her and said: "Do you want to come up to my room? It's getting cold."



Tea Time

with Tomas Pollard

Written by Hester Schneider; Edited by Marit Vogels; Photos by Tomas Pollard

Sitting behind our laptops, Dr. Tomas Pollard and I met up to get some new insights into the life of an American teacher in the Netherlands. Born and raised in Texas, teaching 'This American Life' seems to have been his true calling. During our call, we discussed a large variety of things; Tomas enthusiastically told me about the transition from America to the Netherlands, being part of one of the biggest grassroots movements in the 80s, and, surprisingly, pecan trees as well. Most importantly, we discussed quite some political intrigues (in connection with gender studies), that led to, what was all in all, an interesting conversation.

Could you introduce yourself?

My name is Tomas Pollard. I mainly teach American literature at the University of Utrecht. I've worked in the Netherlands for 22 years. I also taught at the Hogeschool Utrecht, for about 17 years. I'm originally from the United States – I grew up in Tyler, Texas, and went to university in Austin. I am an Americanist who also specialises in writing theory. I do basically two things, first, I teach people how to write. Recently we started a creative writing minor at the Hogeschool Utrecht, where we teach people the basics of how to write poetry, short stories and non-fiction, and I'm really glad to be a part of that. Secondly, I teach American culture and literature. I coordinate a minor called 'American Studies' at the HU, but I also do research, periodically on American literature. I've published short essays on different things that I found really important or that people asked me to write about. I have looked at many different things. At the moment I'm still wanting to do more research on humour and gender. Everything has changed so much since I've finished my project in 2002. It'd be nice to look at what happened if I went back to the topic, because, of course, the whole view of gender has changed. So, even though I did my best to use the right language, I'd have to throw out the whole thing and start over, basically. Now we avoid certain words or use certain other words, so it kind of looks like a piece of literature written in the 16th century... But that's a scholarly interest that's starting to grow larger, partially because I'm teaching at the university and then partially because our students are changing - we have transitioning students and we know they're there, there were people like them in the past, but we just weren't aware of them... and so redoing that project would help me maybe serve that new group to be more visible.

How did you end up in the Netherlands?

That's all kind of a long story. I was in Austin and my roommate and I decided to move off-campus.

We found a student-owned house, there was no landlord, just a student council that ran a couple of houses. We decided to move there and the first day I was there I walked into the living room and there was a Dutch girl on a chair. So, she was living in my house and introduced herself. We started talking and got to know



each other. Gradually, that grew into something. I visited the Netherlands a little bit after that. Then we were together for quite a long time and got married finally and we moved here after the birth of one of my children in Texas in 1998. Our second child was born here. What I really liked about her and Dutch women, in particular, was that if they were intelligent women, they didn't hide their intelligence. They're really opinionated. The problem with many Texas women – not all of them of course – is that they often dial down their intelligence when they meet a man. And I just didn't feel like they were as intelligent as the Dutch women. That may be very unfair because it's kind of the way that the culture raises people, but I finally found someone to talk to. My mother is very intelligent, reads all the time, so I grew up with a very intelligent woman. But unfortunately, I didn't think I could find one outside of my home, and that was a really strange feeling.

Is there anything about the USA that you really miss or for that matter don't miss at all?

Of course, I miss my family. I called them a lot and think about them a lot. The food is also an aspect that I miss. There are one or two good Tex-Mex restaurants, but usually, I make it myself because I know kind of what I like, and I don't have to be disappointed. I lived in East Texas, which is really close to Louisiana and so I got the best of the British and the French cuisine and the kind of post-war American cuisine. So, I didn't go to fast-food restaurants that much actually. What I ate at home was usually just terrific and what I experienced in other people's houses too, so we really enjoyed the food. I don't know if it's the common image of Americans or that would fit everyone but that's what I miss.

Do you think you'll ever maybe go back or is this now where you're staying?

This is a really difficult question... Of course, I'm here now and my children are here now too. They're in their 20s and also university students. I do have one son who may want to go back to the United States because he likes it a lot and I don't know how that's going to develop. If my sons moved back, and they have a family with them – that would make it more difficult to stay here. It would make me think about it every day.

I grew up taking care of a lot of trees when I was a boy, especially pecan trees, and it would be a lot of fun to buy a pecan tree if I retired, and start taking care of it. They're just wonderful trees, and it's wonderful to be outside with trees. So that would be the call-back.

Can you tell me something about your student life?
In the United States, I studied at two places that are rival schools. You're supposed to hate the group at the other school, but I had nothing to do with all of that. I went to the University of Texas at Austin and also Texas A&M University. This rivalry did cross over into the cultural area. When I was at Texas A&M as a graduate student, they were trying to invite really impressive international figures, real academic superstars at the time, and we got them to come to our schools and people drove from Austin to prime College Station, and it was like a moment of victory. My first school is probably the most democratic university, it's in the most progressive town. The second school is the most conservative. But I didn't have a lot to do with politics there – I did at the first one because that was the time when Ronald Reagan was in central America. I was a part of a huge student movement – it was the second biggest grassroots movement in the 1980s to stop the American military actions in Latin and Central America, especially in El Salvador and Nicaragua. But at the second university, there was very little political life. Now that I'm here, I do try to stimulate students who are interested in politics. We have a group called political junkies – we studied the 2020 election (in America) and we had a special for the Dutch elections, with experts and political scientists coming in and talking to us about the election. I think that the kind of civic aspects of being a student is really important. You make political decisions - how much are you going to care about politics and how much time are you gonna invest in it? If we're ever going to see a woman prime president, it's gonna be because of things that we're doing at the university to try to attract women to politics, to help them learn why they should invest in politics and why it's good for them, for us. We have to be bait, and try to attract people to politics, I think. It's time, right? I'd love to bug and yell to Americans that at least we have a female minister-president here. I was reading a political article yesterday about the state legislatures in the United States. They are still primarily occupied by white men, and of course, we know a more diverse group of people makes it more representative and makes better decisions. We know that's true with banks as well, so this isn't just an aspect of political correctness, this is just

empirically-based knowledge of how corporations and state legislatures and nationalizations make good decisions. That's why I really would like to see a more diverse group. Not that if I'm the next candidate for minister-president I would be stepping aside for the next woman, but as an intellectual, you realize you do contribute to the group of people who are in the pool that would finally end up in a place like that.

"Try to read something outside of what you're doing"

What do you love most about lecturing This American Life?

Where do I start? What do I not like about it? I love humour and American humour studies and I love the books that are in the selection that we teach, and I really like what we're doing in terms of topic. It gives a place for people to come too if they're interested in gender studies. You can look at gender studies broadly, and also really narrowly – for example as a way to study heterosexuality and how it functions in literature. So, you can do both in this course, which is nice. I've always been a part of a group of men who are interested in gender studies. I started by looking at Willa Cather and primarily became interested because I had a professor that was really heavily invested in Cather's studies and I discovered I really liked it, and that I had something to offer – some people thought it was a new refreshing perspective. I was surprised because that was just my perspective. I think everyone has that. I finally ended up writing about four men writers who wrote about WWII, and I was writing a lot about what I call military masculinity. So yes, there's plenty to do, plenty of insights to have in gender studies. I like all the aspects; I don't know what there's not to like.

What's your favourite pastime?

Americans are used to big yards and compared to that I currently have a small yard, but I do try to get out there several times a week. That's the easiest way for me to relax. I bought my house because it has a little bit of a larger yard than I could have had in Utrecht. That's why I live in this place, it's for my backyard. So, I guess I'd have to say just being in my backyard.

Do you have any advice for current students?

The pieces of advice that I really did follow, and I really did think were good, was to try to read something outside of what you're doing, something that's also literary criticism or studies in linguistics – for about an hour a day. Make sure you enjoy it. I did that, I just went to the library and I picked up books about James Joyce or Mark Twain. I learned so much that way. I did not really understand what that would do for me, but I realise it now. Because I found that such a good piece of advice, I would give that to students now.

DARK ACADEMIA vs. *Cottage Core*

Written by Eva Biesheuvel; Edited by Julia Schuurmans; Illustrated by Elise Brouwer

What aesthetic fits you best? - Pick one for every pair to find out!

Plants or Statues?

Yellow or Black?

Day or Night?

Singing or Listening to music?

Hufflepuff or Slytherin?

Tea or Wine?

Wood or Marble?

Picknick or Fancy dinner?

Spring or Autumn?

Guitar or Piano?

Gardens or Libraries?

If you picked mostly words on the left, *Cottage Core* is the aesthetic that fits you best! If you picked mostly words on the right, **DARK ACADEMIA** is the aesthetic for you! I'll now tell you more about both of these aesthetics.

Cottage Core

Nature, baking, farm animals, flowery dresses, and of course cute little cottages. Cottage Core is an aesthetic that romanticizes rural life. It's a nostalgic aesthetic because it goes back to the slow living of the countryside and resists the fast living of modern (urban) society.

There's a lot of irony in the idea of Cottage Core because it rejects our fast society while it also grew popular on one of the fastest places of our time: The Internet. On top of that, Cottage Core is often criticized for its white Euro-centric view and its romanticizing of colonial times. So, if you're dreaming about going back in time to live your true Cottage Core dream, try to realise that the times when 'Cottage Core' was reality, were in no way as perfect as it may seem in your dreams.

Although I think a critical tone is important when looking at Cottage Core, I hope I haven't shattered all your romantic Cottage Core dreams, because Cottage Core brings some amazing things with it as well. It, for example, encourages people to take things slow, to live a more sustainable life and to be more minimalist. It may not be a huge surprise that this aesthetics' popularity grew a lot during lockdown. If slow living is the only thing you can do, you might as well embrace it, right? So, while you were baking bread, knitting, or taking care of your houseplants during lockdown, you might have been channelling your inner Cottage Core aesthetic.

Although Cottage Core might sound boring and isn't as mentally encouraging as Dark Academia, it is possibly an aesthetic that can bring a lot of peace of mind. It encourages you to take a step back from the fast world around you and to focus on yourself and the nature surrounding you. It's romantic, but in a way all aesthetics are.

DARK ACADEMIA

If you're reading this issue you probably already have a pretty good idea of what Dark Academia entails.

Dark Academia is often seen as a more approachable aesthetic than Cottage Core because Dark Academia doesn't require you to live in the countryside, own a cottage or have the best baking supplies.

This doesn't mean that Dark Academia has no problems at all. Just like Cottage Core, Dark Academia is criticized for being too white and too Euro-centric. The aesthetic is mostly inspired by 1940's Cambridge and Oxford students, most of whom were white, male and European. On top of that, the way in which Dark Academia Romanticizes studying is sometimes seen as a way of promoting overwork, something that can be dangerous for one's (mental) health.

Having set a critical tone for Dark Academia as well, let's now look at the good things that Dark Academia brings! Just like Cottage Core, the love for Dark Academia grew massively during lockdown. Sitting at home, people perhaps realised that going to school isn't that bad.

Dark Academia romanticizes learning and knowledge, and in that way inspires people to read and learn more. The beautiful pictures of candlelit libraries, wax-sealed envelopes and ink written notes, inspire people to gain more knowledge. And, even though the aesthetic might be flawed, some study motivation is very welcome during these times. So if you ever feel unmotivated, I highly recommend looking into this aesthetic!



Pygmalion

Written by Thijs Biezen

smooth skin, white as snow
with marring black veins
running like ink below
cracks in a glacier.

the veins, like roots, branch
out, from your breast
to your shoulders and thighs
coming to circle your chest.

up your unblemished neck
reaching pale cheeks
covered in many flecks
of ink, akin to stars.

with my fingers I draw
the lines I can see,
creating constellations
solely meant for me.

with my eyes I capture
the beauty of you
which does so enrapture
me to no extend.

with my thumb I touch
the hills your lips pose
in the meadows of your face
to which I come so close.

slowly I bring my face
so very close to yours
taking away the space
until our lips finally meet.

yours, once cold, turn warm
as black turns red, ink to
blood, and once vacant eyes
gaze back at me, a greyish blue.

this time you return the kiss
I place upon your soft lips
eliciting in me a feel of bliss,
nothing more, and nothing less.



Humans of Albion

Written by Leanne van Kampen; Edited by Julia Schuurmans



About a year ago, I was sitting outside, procrastinating uni-work and I fell into an online rabbit hole, transporting me into the wondrous world of Dark Academia. That world was full of history, literature, and poetry, of knowledge, languages, and romanticism. A world full of art and the written word, full of muted colours and an appreciation for tweed and shades of brown. It's a world focussed on the mysteries of daily life: from making up stories about strangers or learning a nearly forgotten language. As the panorama (pandemic) progressed, I fell in love with the romanticisation of daily life, with trying to express how I yearned, and with a community full of people who shared those feelings. And the best thing, there is not "one" way to enjoy the Dark Academia aesthetic, and you certainly don't have to partake in every aspect. I, for instance, enjoy the general aesthetics, the yearning, and at times the literature. Other people might enjoy the clothing, the music, or the poetry.

A Call for Murder

Written by Julia Schuurmans; Edited by Marit Vogels; Illustrated by Elise Brouwer

When Meredith woke up, the bed was empty. Confused, she looked around and felt the soft morning breeze on her skin. The room smelled of coffee, cigarettes and whatever alcohol they had drunk the night before. After putting on the first blouse of his she could find, she stepped between the books and papers scattered on the ground to the open door of the balcony.

Thomas' dark hair was ruffled, he had a cup of coffee in his hand and a cigarette in between two of his fingers. Even sleepy, he looked hot.

"Mornin'," he said as he turned towards her, smoke puffed out of his mouth. "Wanna share?"

"Sure," she replied, took his cigarette and put it between her lips.

"Hell of a night."

She chuckled and shook her head. Leaning against the railing of the balcony, Meredith looked out over the city, it was still early.

"About the sex..." she started, "it might be better not to tell anyone yet."

"Wasn't going to, I don't like the drama."

"Same for me."

Last night felt so far away. It started out reasonably innocent but after a few drinks, she let her desires take over. She had her eye on him for a while now, and when he invited her to look at some texts after class, the choice was easily made.

After a quick breakfast together, she dressed and said goodbye. Her bag, still filled with the books from their studies, felt heavy on her shoulder. During her walk through the city, she admired the coloured leaves of the trees in autumn. She liked her friends, but every moment she spent alone was a moment she enjoyed. Instead of immediately returning to her apartment, where her roommate was probably waiting to interrogate her after her night away, she decided to spend the first hours of the day more productively, in a café.

When she had found a spot to work, she opened her laptop. Files from the night before were still left open and she went through them once again. Together with Thomas, she wondered what he was to her now. Her friend with benefits? Her one-night-stand? Anyway, together with Thom, they'd researched how death was described in different novels and texts. Both of them aspired to become writers, she already spent most of her time digging into books, but having someone to share this with was a nice change.

Despite her attraction to him and, well, the sex, she did get the feeling that he might be involved in other, darker practices. They had spent hours talking about death, but particularly murder. She could picture his gleaming eyes when they were discussing this last night. While she hadn't felt uneasy then, probably because of the drinks, she started to now. She remembered him saying albeit with a doubtful look: "I wish to know what it feels like to kill someone." She tried to suppress her shudder.

After Meredith finished her flat white, she felt for her phone in her pocket. It wasn't there. Also not in her other pocket, not even in her bag. Had she forgotten it? She apologised to the waitress but was able to pay with the cash she kept in her bag for emergencies.

Rushing back to his flat, she felt tenser than before. She wasn't the person who forgot things, especially not her phone. Besides, she couldn't escape this anxious feeling she had about him. Had he been serious about his statement? When she entered his floor, she saw that his door was slightly opened. Was there someone else? Or had he known? She left her bag outside his apartment and opened the door. The squeak echoed through the room.

"Thomas, are you here?" she asked while she stepped through the door. The silence pressed on her, her anxiety rising. "Thom? I forgot my phone, have you seen it?" No response. "Thom, this shit is creeping me out. Where are you?"

Without knowing exactly why she grabbed a random knife laying on the kitchen counter and walked towards the bedroom.

"Thom, are you asleep?"

The moment she stepped through the door, someone grabbed her arm. In her terror, she whirled around and slammed the knife in his chest. Blood immediately poured out of the wound and splattered in her face. Thom's eyes widened as he looked back at her. Without producing much of a sound, he slid to the floor, blood staining his clothes and the carpet.

"Mer..." he whispered as the light died in his eyes.

The shock kicked in, she started breathing heavily and stepped backwards. What had she done? At the same moment, her phone started ringing and she took it out of her pocket...



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Frankenstein's Two Geniuses

Written by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg; Edited by Michelle Moonen; Illustrated by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg

As most people already know, if you know me in real life, I may have what you'd call an (unhealthy) obsession with Mary Shelley's work 'Frankenstein'. But if you may not be too familiar with 'Frankenstein' and how it may fit into the whole dark academia setting, let me give you a quick recap.

One way in which it fits in with the dark and melancholic characteristics of Dark Academia is through the most recognisable characteristic of romantic works of literature and poetry: the presence of the sublime. In 'Frankenstein', this exists in two ways, one being the overwhelming beauty (or horror) of nature and the other one being the abomination that is Frankenstein's monster. Both of which are in a literal way quite dark. Plus, pretty much all of Victor's loved ones die as a result of his own creation, which in itself is also quite tragic. And then there's one of the key points in the story; the confrontation between Victor and his monster on top of a mountain when it's raining and thundering (very dramatic – I know). But enough about the sublime and melancholy... let's talk academics!

The most obvious way that academics are featured in this masterpiece is through Victor Frankenstein himself. Humble as he is, Victor starts the novel off by boasting about how intelligent he is since he was so busily employed in learning languages. He has been able to read things in Greek, Latin, English and German since the age of 17. As Victor grows older, his sole occupation becomes natural philosophy, mainly chemistry. Victor becomes obsessed with the anatomy of the human body and tasks himself with doing the impossible: bringing the dead to life. Because, of course, being fluent in 4 languages and excelling in science is not good enough. While the idea of some guy studying and eventually robbing limbs from charnel houses is quite creepy, I have to admit that it is quite impressive that he managed to bring those body parts to life. Victor himself seems to be pretty happy with his accomplishment as well. Great... more boasting...

Okay, we get it... Victor is the great scientist that reanimated the dead; he's intelligent and all that..., but did you ever notice that the monster was actually pretty damn smart too?

The monster may not have Victor's talent of bringing life to lifeless matter because, fun fact, he needs Victor for that (but that ends with the monster, understandably, going on a rampage after Victor kills his new monster girlfriend – but that's another story). Considering that the monster used to be a lump of limbs spread throughout charnel houses, the fact that he learned to speak and to read should already be seen as an accomplishment. Especially since, when 'Frankenstein' was written in 1818, the literacy rate in England was only at 53%! The most noteworthy thing may be that the stories that the monster read were not simple stories meant for children, NO! On the contrary, the monster seems very interested in, arguably difficult, works of literature! He is, for example, seen reading Milton's 'Paradise Lost', a volume of Plutarch's 'Parallel Lives' and Goethe's 'Sorrows of Werther'. The monster uses the language skills he learned from observing the cottagers to understand what he is reading. From Milton, he learns about faith and the complexities of good and evil; from Plutarch, he learns about the great leaders of the Greco-Roman world as well as of the nature of politics and public affairs, and from Goethe, he learns about domestic life and social relationships, particularly when it comes to growing up. In short, he uses the information in the stories to learn about how humans function in the real world. Quite impressive, if you ask me!

Considering the monster was initially expected to remain emotionless and brainless, perhaps the fact that it learned so much so quickly, both on an emotional level and on an academic level, can be seen as a greater accomplishment when compared to Victor's endless list of skills. Even if the monster's skills might be less impressive to a human, at least he doesn't go on about how amazing, and intelligent he is, unlike someone else we know...

cough* Victor *cough



The Life of Mary Shelley

Written by Anna Preindl; Edited by Michelle Moonen; Photo by Fenna Leeuwenburgh

Daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was born on 30 August 1797. Her most famous work is certainly *Frankenstein*, published in 1818. *Frankenstein* ties into Dark Academia because of its horror genre. Notably, it is also considered the first work of science-fiction ever. She composed the book at merely 18 years old and published it anonymously two years later. Her inspiration for the title came when she and her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley travelled through Germany, passing by the Frankenstein castle in Gernsheim. Their destination was Switzerland, where Lord Byron invited both of them to his estate. It was he who suggested a challenging ghost story write-off, which eventually pushed Shelley to write *Frankenstein*. Being influenced by the physician John Polidori, who also stayed at the estate and experimented with dead bodies and electric shock, Shelley got inspired to use these findings to write a character who is brought back to life by such techniques.

Being raised by a political philosopher and the lingering legacy of an early feminist writer, Shelley grew up in a fruitful environment for a career as a novelist. Tragically, her mother died of complications after her birth, leaving her with her half-sister Fanny Imlay and her father. Later, he married Mary Jane Clairmont, who brought her own children Jane and Claire into the family. She wanted both her daughters to receive an excellent education but would see no need to provide the same for Mary. Luckily, her father had an extensive library, allowing her to educate herself on topics she found interesting.

Growing up, Shelley's home was visited by literary acquaintances of her father's, such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth. According to later letters of hers, Mary's favourite pastime as a child was writing stories. She did even publish her first poem, *Mounseer Notongpaw*, through her father's company in 1807.

Her relationship with her later husband Percy Bysshe Shelley began in 1814, two years after she met him in Scotland. When he got together with Mary, he was trying to escape his first marriage, leaving behind his wife and first child. Their relationship was not an

easy one, they weren't only struggling financially, but were also being riddled with adultery.

The dramatic occurrences of death of loved ones continue later in life when she bears her firstborn child, which traumatically dies after a few weeks. A year later, her half-sister Fanny committed suicide. After that, she would lose two more children, until their son Percy Florence was born in 1819, who was their only child who made it to adulthood. Another tragic occurrence was the death of her husband, who drowned sailing in the Gulf of Spezia in 1822. Shelley was thus widowed at 24, working hard to support both herself and her son.

Later in life, she published several more novels, including *Valperga* (1823), *The Last Man* (1826), the autobiographical *Lodore* (1835) and *Mathilde*. Shelley died of brain cancer at the age of 53 in London, England.



Illustration by Michèle Zwaga

Q & Alumni

Written by Eva Biesheuvel; Edited by Hester Schneider; Photo by Lars Engels

On a Friday afternoon, I called Lars Engels to talk with him about his career path. Our conversation was a lovely start to my weekend because Lars is a very honest and engaging storyteller. Even though Lars' career path might not be something you'd expect from an alumnus of English, his story can be truly inspiring for anyone who has no clue what they want to do career-wise.

Why did you decide to study English?

I've never been someone who really knows what they want to do. When I came out of high school, I started studying Communication Science in Nijmegen, which was mostly because one of my best friends went there. It took me a year to realise that this was not what I should be doing. I went back home to my parents and thought about what I saw myself doing. I was really into music and songwriting and realised there's something about the magic of language. I'd always liked English at school, so I considered studying English, but I was afraid I'd have to read a lot, and in high school, I never read. I took a couple of books that summer and challenged myself to see how fast I could read. I went through three classics in like a week and ended up deciding to study English.

Did you enjoy studying English at Utrecht?

Yeah, I enjoyed it. On the first day, a group of friends started. I also really liked the analysis part of looking at literature. I didn't really like linguistics, it was more mathy and binary, which I like now, so maybe I was just off-key. And I'll be honest, I'd just spent two years of stuft and time on a different study that I only got my propedeuse from, so I wanted to make this count.

I noticed you worked for Phoenix as well, how was that?

Back in my day, it was a blog, because the budget for the physical magazine was cut. I used to write stuff for it, but I was complaining because I thought it was kind of shitty. Somewhat pushed by my girlfriend, I became chief editor. We made the decision to stop with the blog and to start with an online magazine. We took the old Phoenix as an example, but we also tried to refresh it. I was excited to see that some of our concepts, like Tea Time, are still in there now.

What kind of master did you do, and how was that?

Right from the start, I took the American English-speaking classes and I also really liked American literature, partly because of Derek Rubin's classes. His classes about Jewish American literature and about ethics really opened a few doors for me. What I also liked about the American part of things was the dream-like aspect of the States, it's just so at odds with reality. But to answer your question: I did American Studies as a master's degree.

What has your career path been like?

I had this side job when I was in college, so when I got out of college and didn't know what to do, I decided to do more of that. It was the lamest thing ever, and I knew I wasn't going to stay and do it. Through a friend, I then got randomly wound up in an administration function at a company that sells solar panels. It didn't really make any sense, and a year and a half later I was kind of fed up with that, so I started looking for something else. I got an

other job in solar energy, as a project manager, which was cool because I got to work in Excel a lot. There also came an end to that job, though, because it wasn't really a match anymore with that company.

"Looking back on it, you see these patterns in your life. Not that I have it all figured out now, but it's really fun to look at your path from a distance"

When I came out of that, I realised I knew myself better and I had some experience, but I still didn't know what I wanted to do. I started a trajectory of career coaching. It was pretty useful because it made me realise that I really don't have a vision in my mind of where I want to go, and that's okay. I do have other sorts of visions, visions about how I'd like to live my life for example.

When I was done with the career coaching trajectory, I wanted to do something with either data or communication, but also something that served some public service. I ended up at the social media division of the Belastingdienst (the Dutch tax services). When I'd just arrived there the news came out about all the f*cked up shit that had happened, so that was falling with my nose right in the butter. It was a step back from what I was doing with my job before, but half a year later I got a promotion and now I have a function in data analysis. The idea is that in half a year I'm going to get another promotion. I also told my boss that I like to make plans, but I don't like executing them. Looking back on it, you see these patterns in your life. Not that I have it all figured out now, but it's really fun to look at your path from a distance, because at the time it seemed like it was going absolutely nowhere but, in the end, I picked up stuff along the way. Life turns out a certain way and I'm really happy with what I'm doing right now.

Do you still do something with music?

I put a lot of time and effort into my job, but I realised that I'm missing a sort of creative outlet because my job is pretty unsexy, it's not poetic. I needed to bring some of that back into my life, so I've taken up my guitar and my notebook again to write some lyrics down and I've been reading more. It's regaining something, something that maybe got lost along the way in trying to be very serious.

Curriculum Vitae



Lars Engels

Education

2002 – 2008

VWO Cultuur & Maatschappij at
CSW Elzenlaan, Middelburg

2008 – 2010

Propedeuse Communicatiewetenschap
at Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen

2010 – 2013

BA English Language & Culture
at Utrecht University

2013-2014

MA American Studies
at Utrecht University

Jobs

2014 – 2016

Technical Advisor Solar Energy
at ZON-IQ, Utrecht

2017 – 2019

Contract Manager Solar Energy
at iChoosr, Amsterdam

2019 – Present

Traffic Manager Social Media & Webcare
at Belastingdienst, Utrecht

Other

2011 – Present

Volunteer at Passionate Bulkboek
Festivals, Netherlands

2012 – 2014

Editor-in-Chief of Phoenix Magazine
at Utrecht University

2013 – 2014

Member Opleidingscommissie
Geesteswetenschappen
at Utrecht University

The Disappearance of Sirius Gray

Written by Helenie Demir; Edited by Anna Preindl; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

They sat on the floor of the library, between shelves, with stacks of books, journals, and papers between and around them. Lost Souls of Time, Missing Friends and Foes, Death Unsolved, Darkness in the Light; all stories, information, to help them find out what killed their friend.

Their school library – coloured with dark brown mahogany, and the biggest space of the building – would hopefully offer the answers Con was searching for.

"Found anything yet?" Leo asked her while toying with the golden ring on his finger.

"Not since the last time you asked me, which was five minutes ago," she replied flatly.

He sighed and looked up, closing the book and tossing it to the side, "Con, look at me."

"Stop wasting time and continue with what we came here to do."

"Look at me," he said, this time with more severity in his voice. She dismissed him with a hand and didn't bother to listen to him until he called her by her name, her actual name, Constance, which he never does.

As she slowly and silently looked up, he pushed away the books between them and sat closer to her, so close she could feel his warm breath on her face.

"We're not going to find anything."

"Not if you keep interrupting me."

"Whatever it is that killed Sirus... we're not gonna find it in here, and you know that."

"I don't know that because you haven't given me a chance to properly look thanks to your stupid questions and comments." She focused on the book that she was reading again, only for Leo to close it, put it away, and gently grab her hands.

"Con..." he said softly. She looked him in the eyes and he could see her green eyes shining, tears welling up in them.

"I will help you. But not like this," he gestured his head to the floor where books lay scattered around them, "You need to take a break." She shook her head. "You haven't slept like a normal person for the past two months, you've been hiding in here, in dark places, going to the forest, alone... I know he was your friend, a brother, but you'll get yourself killed before you find out who killed him."

Her purple-coloured lips trembled. She looked down as if to avoid the reality in his hazel eyes. He followed her gaze and met her eyes again, forcing her to look at him.

"I have to know the truth," she said as a single tear fell from her eye, "I have to know what happened to him because I feel like I'm going out of mind if I don't."

"And I get that, I do, but you've been avoiding everything and everyone around you. Your friends are worried, your teachers – I am worried..."

His palm touched the side of her face, wiping the tear that rolled down her cheek away with his thumb, sending a comforting warmth through her. She closed her eyes, breathed in and out while tilting her head to the side of his hand, as if it savoured the moment.

"Sometimes I feel like I already have the answer, but I don't know what it is."

"I'll help you find it. I'll always help you."

She neared her head to his, her hands on his shoulders, his on her waist, brows touching brows, and they sat there for a minute until they both looked up, slowly, and everything around them went silent, leaving nothing but the sound of each other's uneven, shaking breath.

Con leaned into him.

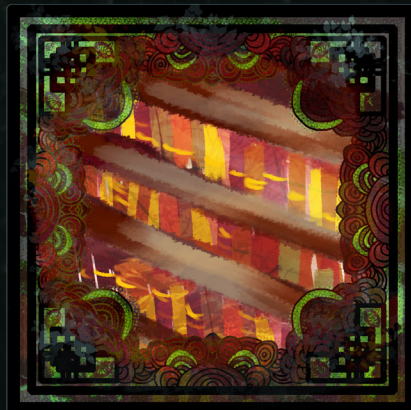
Their lips touched a little and he hesitated to press his to hers, but she didn't waste a second on doubting if this was right.

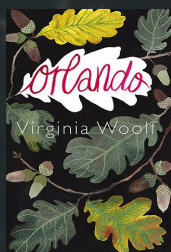
For a moment it was only the presence of each other that they could feel, only their lips meeting. But Constance could have sworn she felt something cold touching her shoulder, and she pulled away, frightened of, what felt like, a hand. She turned to look over her shoulder, but nothing was there, save for the shelves filled with books. There was one book, though, dark aegaeon blue with silver details, that caught her eye: Ghosts of the Past.

"I'm sorry, if..." Leo stammered.

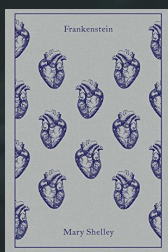
She met his face and saw a purple blur on his lips and around his mouth. She smiled faintly before wiping the colour away, only for it to now become a blue stain.

She didn't know it then, but she would later realize she had marked him with death.





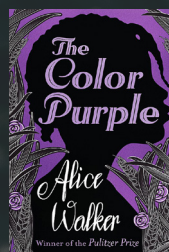
Anna
Orlando
by
Virginia Woolf



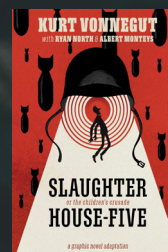
Cecilie
Frankenstein
by
Mary Shelley



Elise
Animal Farm
by
George Orwell



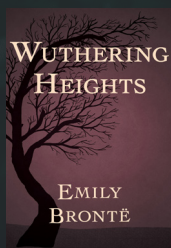
Eva
The Color
Purple
by
Alice Walker



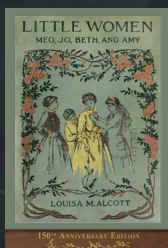
Fenna
Slaughterhouse-
Five
by
Kurt Vonnegut



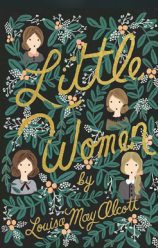
Helenie
The Great
Gatsby
by
F. Scott Fitzgerald



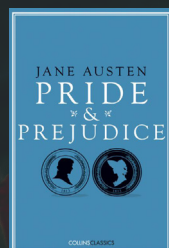
Hester
Wuthering
Heights
by
Emily Brontë



Julia
Little Women
by
Louisa May
Alcott



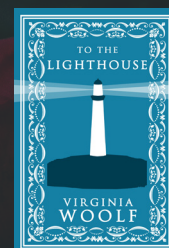
Leanne
Little Women
by
Louisa May
Alcott



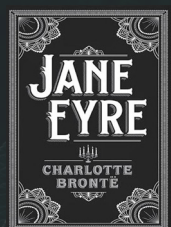
Marijn
Pride and
Prejudice
by
Jane Austen



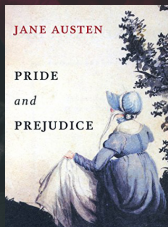
Marit
Pride and
Prejudice
by
Jane Austen



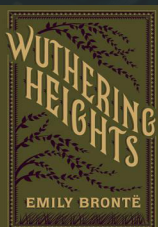
Michelle
To the
Lighthouse
by
Virginia Woolf



Mohana
Jane Eyre
by
Charlotte
Brontë



Rixt
Pride and
Prejudice
by
Jane Austen



Thijs
Wuthering
Heights
by
Emily Brontë

*The Phoenix Team's
Favourite Classics!*

Word of the Month: April "Wisecrack"

/ˈwɪzɪkrak/

Noun

1. a witty remark or joke.

The month of April is once again upon us, which means it is time for the best, and if not the best then surely the funniest, day of the year. That day being the very first day of April, also known as April Fools' Day. A day filled with jokes, tricks, pranks, flimflams, and other such buffoonery. Undoubtedly you will encounter one of two wisecracks along the way as well, as a prime example of the witticisms (another strong contender for this month's word) this special day has to offer.

Even though April Fools' Day only lasts for a single day, you will still have all of the month of April to revel in your new-found inner prankster as you reminisce on how you horsed around, pulling the legs of friends and family alike, who you'll be able to lord that over through wisecracks, witticisms, and other ha-has for weeks from now. So, I hope you are all still able to bask in the glory you've won with your April Fools' shenanigans, and I wish you many a wisecrack!



Written by Thijs Biezen; Illustrated by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg

BOOKSHELF

Written by Eva Biesheuvel;

Edited by Anna Preindl;

Photos by Nienke Bouman

If you're ever unmotivated to read, I'd definitely recommend talking to Nienke about books because her enthusiasm about books is very contagious. We talked for almost an hour, and apart from her showing me several of her favourite novels and her cute little hamster, we also found out that we have a shared love for W.G. van der Hulst. This interview was truly a blast, so I hope it will give you some reading inspiration as well.

in conversation with Nienke Bouman

What is your favourite book?

Nienke stands up and walks out of her camera's view, she comes back holding *The Cemetery of Forgotten Books* series by Carlos Ruiz Zafón.

It's these! I think these are my favourite books. They are so greatly written and have these long complicated sentences, the style is just beautiful. It's this mysterious story about a library in Barcelona. I read them really fast three years ago, and I still love them. I'd also like to give a shout-out to the translator who translated these books to Dutch. I don't understand how she did it, but she just slayed it. I wonder how someone can translate so beautifully.

If I'd have to tell you my recent favourite, I'd go with *Normal People* by Sally Rooney. I loved it so much, it's so down-to-earth. It's a really different style from *The Cemetery of Forgotten Books*, but I love it as well.

What was the last book you read for "fun"?

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott. I have this really pretty edition which I got from my boyfriend for Sinterklaas. I enjoyed it a lot, it's just this beautiful little story about these girls. It was easy to read, and I kind of read it because I wanted to watch the film because Timothée Chalamet plays in it.

Which book do you think is extremely overrated?

I have some unpopular opinions about certain books. I've read *Lord of the Rings* completely for example and I'm happy that I've read it, but it just didn't excite me all that much. It's just so hard to get through, and fantasy is not really my style. I also watched all the films, but I did it more out of curiosity. I always had a headache at the end of the film. I don't think it's overrated though, I just don't think I enjoy *Lord of the Rings* as much as most people do.

Which book are you most ashamed of for not reading?

Before this block, I'd never read a book by Jane



Austen and I felt like I should've read at least one book by her because I'm studying English. They've been on my list, but I just never got one. Recently I got *Sense and Sensibility* for my birthday, though, and I've also read *Pride and Prejudice* for this block. I really loved *Pride and Prejudice*, it was beautiful. It's the first book that kind of put this romantic genre to life and I think that really deserves a lot of respect. Oh by the way! One book I'm also ashamed of for not reading, but I've owned for a really long time, is *Don Quixote*. I really want to read it, but it's really big... but it's also important. It really fascinates me, because it's like the first novel ever.

Which books have you only read halfway through or less?

It's a pet peeve of mine to start in a new book while I'm still reading another one because it just feels kind of mean. When I don't read a book fully, I don't feel satisfied, so I don't think it happens a lot. I don't really have a lot of books that I haven't completed after starting them, except for *The Bible*. I do see it as a challenge though, to read *The Bible* completely. I just want to know what's in there, and it'd also help a lot with classes. I just feel like once I've read it, I'll just know a lot more about what's happening in literature. I was raised Christian as well, so I was already familiar with it, but I never got around to reading it completely. I think it deserves a lot of appreciation though because it's so important.

If you could recommend one of your books, which one would it be?

Definitely the Zafón books, I would recommend them

to anyone. They're just really fun to read. Sometimes you can be kind of bored by books, but these stir every emotion inside of you, and that's just really nice to have in a book. I feel like no one could really hate these. It has everything: the thrill, the love, the setting, the style. I love it.

If you were to write a book, what would it be about?

I've actually been thinking about this quite a lot recently, because I have this friend of mine who wants to be a writer, but we are really different in what we would write. She's really good at making these really exciting stories in beautiful language, kind of like *Zafón*. I'm more of a minimalist, I think I'd see myself more in the direction of Sally Rooney. I think I'd write a book about a contemporary romance, something intricate, in which you'd have these vulnerable descriptions of everything. I sometimes think of certain things, for example when I'm sad. I can get really poetic, and I'm like: oh I could write this in a book. I think it's so touching to be introduced to a really vulnerable character in a book, and that's also why fantasy doesn't appeal to me as much, it's just all this mess around it, it's not really my style.

Which author have you read the most books of and why?

I guess it'd be an author from my youth. I don't know if you know W.G. van der Hulst? His stories were read to me so much, these books belong to my sunny little child world. I can still read them these days and I'll just be transported to this world of happiness. I think if you haven't read his books as a child, you've really been missing something. It just touches your heart, I think I'll read them to my children as well. My two favourite W.G. van der Hulst series are probably *Rozemarijn* and *In de Soete Suikerbol*.

Team literature or team linguistics?

Team literature. I was not really sure at the beginning of this year, because when I had to pick a study I was doubting between Literary Studies and Linguistics. English just seemed like the perfect middle way to have both, but now I'm kind of like: hmm I should've gone for Literary Studies. But no; I'm happy that I chose English of course.

What is your favourite film adaptation?

Call Me By Your Name probably, but I really love *Normal People* the series as well. I think it really caught the vibe of the book because it's really minimalist and down-to-earth, and I also just love *Irish English*.

Which book are you looking forward to/reading next?

I'm getting ready to read *Hard Times* and *To The*

Lighthouse for uni and I do really like that I have to read them. I think it's really good to read certain stuff for education because you wouldn't do it yourself. But if I had to pick a book to read just for fun, I guess I'd want to read *The Eight Mountains* by Paolo Cognetti, which I recently got from my boyfriend. I don't really know why it attracted me so much, but I read the description and saw the beautiful cover and wanted to read it.

What is the best text you read for a course?

I really liked *Fantomina* by Eliza Haywood. I also did a presentation on it, so I really dived into it, and it surprised me that this story existed in that time period. We've only read two novels so far, but if I'd have to pick a novel, I'd pick *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Namesake* just wasn't that special.

Who is your favourite fictional character?

First of all, let me say that I love Elio from *Call Me By Your Name*, but I think that answer is just influenced too much by Timothée Chalamet playing him in the film. I just don't know if I'd like the book and Elio as much if I hadn't watched the film. So if I'd have to pick another character I'd pick Fermin from *The Cemetery of Forgotten Books*. He's just so funny and great.

With that question, we ended the interview, chatted about other stuff for a bit and wished each other a lovely weekend. Thank you again Nienke for this fun interview!



Edinburgh's Ghosts

Written by Mohana Zwaga; Edited by Anna Preindl; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

Ah, Edinburgh. A city brimming with history, culture, cosy cafés, bagpipers... But Edinburgh is well known by some for another name: the city of the dead. With a history dating back to the early 12th century, you are bound to run into a few good ghost stories on these cobbled streets.

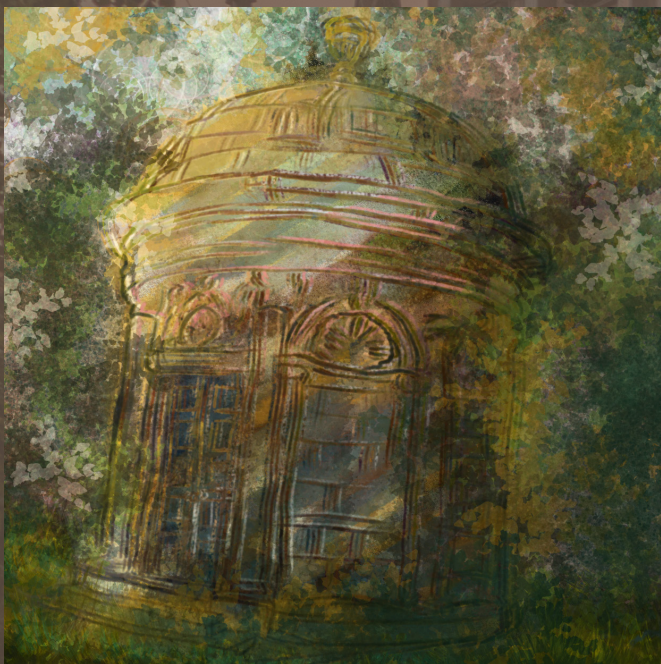
One of the city's most famous ghosts may very well be the old George Mackenzie, a poltergeist who haunts the Greyfriars Kirkyard near Grassmarket in the Old-Town. George Mackenzie was a merciless judge who oversaw the trials of the Presbyterian Covenanters in the late 17th century. To crush the Covenanters – who rebelled against the Crown in hopes to gain freedom of religion – "Bloody Mackenzie" brutally punished and imprisoned the 1200 in a field next to the kirkyard. The Scottish rebels were forced to await trial outside the graveyard for over four months. They were given no shelter, and just barely enough food to keep them starving, in a constant state between life and death.

The conditions during their imprisonment were so monstrous, that the Covenanters' Prison nowadays is often referred to as the world's first concentration camp. Even after those months of suffering, most prisoners were executed and hundreds died of the physical strain they had endured.

At this time, George Mackenzie was single-handedly responsible for the death of close to 18000 Presbyterians during what has gone down in Scottish history as 'The Killing Time'.

Years later, Mackenzie's body, by some strange twist of fate, ended up buried in the Black Mausoleum in Greyfriars kirkyard, which is but a few meters away from the former prison. His spirit is said to live on, and physically attack those that dare to visit. The poltergeist is said to have been released in 1999, when a homeless man broke into the vault looking for shelter and (as the story puts it), "unleashed a force of evil". When he tried to open the casket, he stumbled and fell backwards into a pit that contained the remains of century-old plague victims. Understandably so, the man ran away from the Black Mausoleum screaming.

Ever since then, the churchyard has been humming with strange, supernatural events linked to the Mackenzie Poltergeist. Visitors have left covered in bruises, scratches, bite marks and even burns. The attacks got so intense at a certain point, that on two different occasions there has been an attempt to perform an exorcism, but to no avail, and one of the exorcists, Collin Grant, died of a heart attack only a week later. The jarring attacks escalated to such a scale, that the city considered it necessary to close off the Covenanters' Prison from the public entirely. But lucky for those ghost and horror fans among us, the prison grounds are now open for controlled visits as part of a ghost tour. So, have fun and be ready to catch those who faint!



The Snake Eating Its Tail

Written by Mohana Zwaga; Edited by Michelle Moonen; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

The rain outside had soaked the earth to its core, clinging to every leaf, dripping off every surface. The warm air inside the room had caused the window to fog up, and Emilia watched the world drip, pool and puddle through the misty lens it granted her. Everything was slightly out of focus, and it seemed to her as if time had stopped, burying everything in a deep, hazy kind of sleep. She preferred the world this way, such quiet.

She turned in her chair, facing the room with its papers scattered on the wooden floor. She pushed her hair back and sighed, slouching against the back of the chair. She didn't even know what she was looking for.

She slid the box out of her coat pocket again. Holding the coin, she traced the inscriptions with the nail of her index finger. 'XP', it read, Jesus' symbol, typical of early Christians during the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan. When she had discovered it in the dusty sandstone at the Pergamon ruins, she almost didn't pay it another thought. But then, she had noticed the inscriptions.

They had struck her, seemingly being neither Roman nor Latin writing, but rather early Coptic, the dead language of Egypt. The other side of the coin displayed a faded image of a long, almost dog-like snake, eating its own tail, forming a perfect circle.

"Ouroboros..." She mumbled to herself now, as she held the coin closer to her face, turning it so the light could catch it. The snake eating its tail, an alchemist symbol of eternal repetition.

It had taken her weeks to translate the Coptic inscription. She did not dare ask any of the professors. Her instinct told her that this object was special and so she should unravel its mystery herself, without someone else claiming the artefact's discovery as their own. So, she had spent a month in the city's libraries, scouring the shelves for anything that could help her translate the inscription. She looked down at the note she had scribbled in the journal before her:

"Only those who look beneath heaven may find the eternal."

A similar sentence, written in the margins of a Byzantine manuscript she had seen in Florence, had set her on a madman's hunt across Europe's main Roman archaeological sites. The illustrations of the XP symbol and what she presumed to be the Holy Grail, found in a Polish bible, had sent her to England, following a trace of Arthurian legend.

She found herself there now – sitting cross-legged in her room at an old B&B somewhere in the Cornish countryside – surrounded by her many scribbles, photocopies and maps, utterly and helplessly at loss. Her cryptic trail of vague symbols and writings had led her to the ruins of a chapel that still remained from the dawn of English Christianity. What she was to find there, she had not the faintest idea of. She took the final sip of her now icy coffee and brushed her papers together, messily stuffing them in her backpack.

With her worn backpack flung over her shoulder and the weight of her camera bag resting against her hip, Emilia turned back to face the room once more before stepping out into the hallway, letting the door fall into the lock with a soft click.

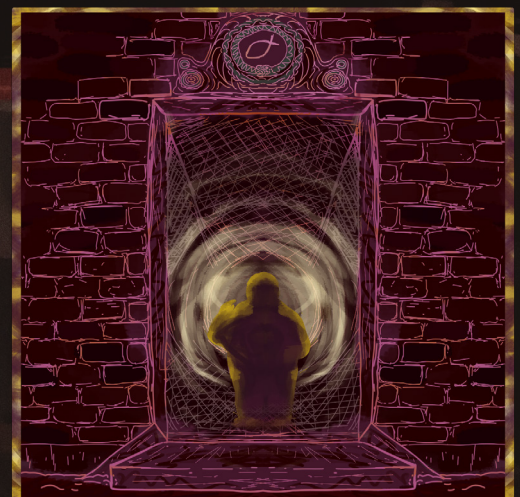
She drove the rusty Volkswagen along the winding roads, swerving to avoid the many cracks in the asphalt along the way. At the chapel, the car stood lonely in the empty parking lot, and Emilia quickly popped open her umbrella to shield herself from the rain.

For hours she searched the chapel's grounds until she stumbled upon a door on the side of a grave monument. The aged slab of marble had caught her attention when she discovered the same Ouroboros symbol below the names of whose bodies it held. She pushed against the door and her heart fluttered as she felt it give way.

In the weak glow of her flashlight, she could barely see her hands in front of her, brushing along the walls as she moved further on. Suddenly, she found herself in a large, circular hall. The white walls reflected the light and made her look up. The ceiling above her was painted in a deep-blue night sky. Her stomach dropped when she realized.

"Only those who look beneath heaven may find the eternal"

Crouching down, she felt along the floor. There. A latch. She pulled. Below it, only visible in the flickering of her flashlight: a stairway. Emilia closed her eyes for a moment, let out a shaky breath, and silently descended into the darkness.



Culture Corner: Jane Eyre

Written by Julia Schuurmans; Edited by Michelle Moonen; Photo by Fenna Leeuwenburgh; Illustrated by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg

A well-known and well-loved classic that fits perfectly in the dark and mysterious atmosphere of Dark Academia is 'Jane Eyre'. Jane's growth as a person is an important part of the novel. As a young girl, she is sent away to Lowood, a school for girls where she endures strict teaching for her entire childhood. After her 18th birthday, Jane gets a job as a governess at Thornfield. She works for Mr Rochester, with whom she falls in love. Yet, when she finds out that Mr Rochester is already married to a madwoman (who is kept locked up in the attic), Jane runs away and spends some time on her own, becoming a teacher at a charity school in Morton. Mr John Rivers, the man who saved her when she almost died of starvation, got her to this position and later asks her to marry him. Jane refuses and realises that she must return to Thornfield and Mr Rochester. When she does so, she finds out that the manor has been burned down, Mr Rochester was blinded by the fire and crippled, yet Jane decides that she loves him anyway. The mad wife of Mr Rochester died in the fire, by her own doing. And so, Mr Rochester is free to marry Jane. 'Jane Eyre' fits the Dark Academia aesthetic because of its Gothic theme and atmosphere. The style of the novel is quite Gothic-like, as was popular in the time of writing. The novel contains a lot of mystery, as well as ruined buildings, a bit of supernatural, and barren landscapes. These Gothic undertones create a lot of suspense and mystery in the story. Yet, the themes of the novel make the story more than "just" a Gothic romance. Social class, gender roles and religion are challenged in the novel, giving the story a lot more depth. In the novel, we see Jane grow and develop as a person and a woman. She overcomes her weaknesses and becomes independent (#strongindependentwoman). Yet, 'Jane Eyre' is not really a feminist novel. In the end, Jane decides to dismiss her ambitions and plans to go abroad and instead she takes care of Mr Rochester. Likewise, Jane becomes his equal only after he was crippled, which also doesn't feel that feminist to me. However, Jane is a smart woman. Already in her childhood, she had a passion for reading and the desire to learn more. For a woman at that time, 'Jane Eyre' was inspirational and ambitious. 'Jane Eyre' was quite scandalous for many readers as it reflected on (and criticised) patriarchy, class distinctions and Christianity. While 'Jane Eyre' is not as academic as other Dark Academia literature, it is a fun classic to read anyway. Jane is an inspirational character, who grows as a character and learns to think for herself. For those interested, I can also recommend the film adaptations of 'Jane Eyre', personally, I enjoyed the 2011 adaptation a lot. This film really shows the Gothic vibes the story has!



Tithonus

Written by Thijs Biezen; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

i.

*by that tower upon the cliff
dawn lasts for hours and hours
as if decreed by the divine powers*

*it stands as it has for eons
that tall build of brick and mortar
but dawns get shorter and shorter*

*in there lives an old scholar
who drew crowds playing his lyre;
a man everyone did so admire*

*it has been too long since
he was last seen walking outside
we feared the old man had died*

ii.

*so we ventured outward
to explore those hallowed halls
and find old Tithonus within the walls*

*it was early when we arrived
the sun starting to shine far away
from its bed in the watery bay*

*the door opened too easily
unlocked, without world's care
it made us all instantly aware*

*a pounding sounded throughout
badum, badum, badum, badum
from all around us did it come*

*must be a clock, it must be
but we have never heard it sound
the unbroken rhythm of this pound*

*nevertheless, we went on
up the stars, growing slightly winded
my hair only recently been brinded*

iii.

*we came to the room we knew
and in front of the door to the old man
we found a feather of a white wingspan*

*like an angel had graced us
or graced old Tithonus, more rather
in the room of the ancient grandfather*

*the pounding still sounded
as if from afar, it was fainter now
but it seemed closer somehow*

iv.

*upon touching the door it opened
ever so slightly, pushed by a weary gust
showing us a place covered in dust*

*the pounding had stopped
I never really noticed when it did
I think it rode the gust and hid*

*there was a chirping now
from a slow, palm-sized locust
but that's not where I focussed*

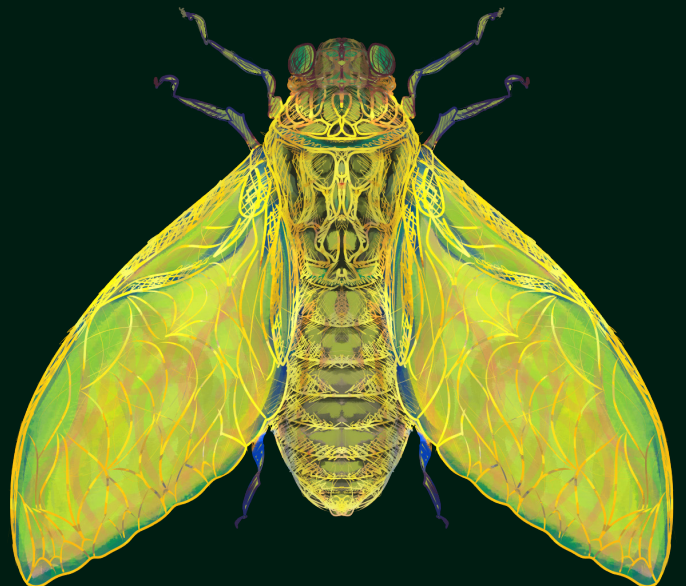
*my eyes fell to the old man's bed
where an imprint of him had been made
like trenches dug by many spades*

*yet its soldier was missing
nowhere to be seen or heard
as if he had already been interred*

v.

*like pursuing an ever-lasting dawn
the locust flew off, fleeing the sun
a life of forever being on the run*

*the clock had been unwinded
and silence reigned the stone tower
only abdicating after many an hour*



Culture Corner: Dark Academia Films

Written by Eva Biesheuvel and Elise Brouwer; Edited by Marit Vogels; Illustrated by Elise Brouwer

kill your darlings

As a fifteen-year-old *Harry Potter* fan, I wanted to watch every single film with Daniel Radcliffe in it. This honestly resulted in some fun watching experiences, but unfortunately, Daniel Radcliffe wasn't there to save me from my nightmares after I watched *The Woman in Black*, so I wouldn't recommend this way of picking out a new film to anyone.

However, this weird puberal obsession with Daniel Radcliffe did result in me watching one of my favourite films for the first time. This film, which is loosely based on a true story, is called *Kill Your Darlings* and follows the young Allen Ginsberg – an American poet who wrote works like *Howl* and *Kaddish* – while he is studying at Columbia University in the 1940s. It's here where Allen meets his fellow student Lucien Carr and becomes obsessed with him and his ideas for a new literary revolution. Soon, Allen falls in love with Lucien, but Lucien is still followed around by his ex-lover and old college professor, David Kammerer. Even when Lucien seems to cut loose from David, the tables turn quickly and Allen gets tangled up in a manipulative and toxic friendship with Lucien. When something terrible happens in the end, Allen has to decide if he accepts Lucien's manipulative ideas or if he will follow his own truth.

Beautifully shot, with a fascinating yet heart-breaking plotline, *Kill Your Darlings* seems to be a must-watch for everyone who loves literature, or Daniel Radcliffe...

Written by Eva Biesheuvel

maurice

Recently, my friend and I had an online watch along for *Maurice*. Needless to say, it was a lovely experience. Before I try to convince you to watch it as well, you should know a little bit of the background.

Released in 1987, the film is based on E.M. Forster's novel *Maurice* (1971). The main characters, Clive and Maurice, are played by James Wilby and Hugh Grant. It is set in early 20th century England among polite society. The film portrays the development of mostly Clive's feelings and experience of homosexuality and the challenges these bring him.

10 reasons you should watch *Maurice*:

1. It is very daring on the subject of homosexuality, for the time in which it was first released and in a way for the time in which it is set;
2. The chemistry between Hugh Grant and James Wilby is simply amazing;
3. The general aesthetic! Every single scene is so very beautiful; the architecture, the attention to detail, and not to mention the costume design;
4. Who doesn't like to have their heart broken by fiction?;
5. The constant tension really keeps you engaged;
6. Young Hugh Grant;
7. Not sure if this is a reason to watch a movie, but the opening scene is absolutely hilarious;
8. The director, James Ivory, was also involved in the production of *Call Me By Your Name*;
9. The acting, there is just so much talent;
10. The 'I love you' and everything it means.

Written by Elise Brouwer

Culture Corner: Architecture

Written by Anna Preindl; Edited by Michelle Moonen; Photo by Fenna Leeuwenburgh

The Dark Academia aesthetic is largely based on Gothic architecture, built roughly in between the mid-12th century and the beginning of the mid-17th century. The most central defining features include pointed arches, rib vaults, buttresses, and extensive use of stained glass. It emerged from Romanesque architecture, which was much more simplistic and characterized by its semi-circular arches. The Gothic pointed arches were used as a solution to building taller structures, whilst still preserving a lot of light. The rib vaults allow for more stability with less material, thus making the walls thinner. Outer flying buttresses further reinforce the buildings. This allows for much higher and taller buildings than Romanesque architecture could. From the inside, the thin-walled buildings are reinforced by columnar piers and ribs, implementing an impression of soaring verticality. Within the architectural period, two main streams emerged: European Gothic, which is also referred to as French Gothic, and English Gothic. The architectural movement of European Gothic started in France with the building of the Abbey of Saint-Denis, constructed between 1140 and 1144. Eventually developing into High-Gothic, it is much more extravagant than the English development. The buildings are characterized by being compact and having three west-facing portals, surrounded by a rose window and two large towers.

The English Gothic period lasted from the 12th until the mid-17th century. Characteristics here include symmetrical towers, internal emphasis on the horizontal and relative excessive length. Notable examples are Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral. Furthermore, elite universities such as Oxford and Cambridge are also built in this architectural style, tying into the Dark Academia aesthetic. English Gothic eventually developed into Tudor Gothic, which features even more simplistic silhouettes. Worth mentioning, this Collegiate Gothic is a further development of Gothic architecture, which emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century in the USA for high schools and colleges. While inspired by European Gothic, Collegiate Gothic is much more simplistic in its form.

Thus, the Gothic architectural movement provides the basis for the aesthetic; it sets the scene. Imagine following your academic duties in a majestic environment with Gothic buildings all around you – you find yourself studying the classics in a pompous, dark-wooden library with coloured windows, looking into a courtyard with a fountain compiled of gargoyles. Light shines dimly through the coloured glass, you see some particles of dust dancing in the air. The library is filled with the smell of leather-bound books and when you take a look around you, you notice old globes and devices used for calculations a long time ago; apparatuses of different kinds that remind you of how far and fast humankind has progressed. Yet, you purposefully seek out places that make you feel like time has not progressed from the setting where some of your favourite classics might have been written in. In a study break, when you feel like you just need a bit of sun and fresh air, you might take a stroll through the majestic botanical gardens to continue your reading. Let yourself be immersed by the grandeur of the architecture of past times – and be inspired to maybe conceptualise a story of your own, feeling as if the story just finds you with ease.

Love Turns Out Deadly

Written by Marit Vogels; Edited by Julia Schuurmans; Illustrated by Elise Brouwer

Quietly, I take the letters from under my bunk bed and slip into my nightgown. On my tiptoes, I run to my slippers and slip them on. While holding my breath, scared to make any noise at all. The creaking door makes my heart race like a madman and just before I close the door again, I peek inside to see if anyone has woken, but the room has remained quiet. As I stroll through the grand hallways of the university, I try to make as little noise as possible. The dimly lit hallway feels cold and a shiver runs down my spine.

'What are you doing here, Lilly-Rose?' I almost scream when hearing her voice, but instead, I drop all of the letters I was carrying. Only a second later I realise the noise I might have made. The teachers sleep only a few turns from here, surely one of them must have heard us. For seconds, we stay motionless. Amara looks at me straight in the eye, almost daring me to make another noise, but I remain quiet and fortunately, she does too. In silence, we wait for a teacher to enter the hallway, but nobody comes. Could it actually be that no one heard us?

'Leave,' I hiss when it feels safe enough again.

'Ha, you're funny. I am already way too much involved in this, you can't ditch me now.' She doesn't even lower her voice while talking, what a pretentious bitch. Who does she even think she is?

'This is none of your business, I never asked you to follow and stalk me. Your twisted mind might think we are bonded now because you think you know my secret, but you have got to leave before they hear us,' I whisper as loudly as I allow myself to. As I quickly try to gather all of my carefully written letters, Amara also kneels and starts picking up a few of the ones I dropped. Which is the last thing she was supposed to do right now.

'Hmmm,' she muses, 'what is this, Lilly-Rose?' She folds open the paper. "Your secret-but-not-so-secret business?"

"Give that back!" I yell, not caring about the consequence of my screaming. Angrily, I try to pry the paper from her hands, but Amara is much quicker. Her athlete body definitely is in advantage right now. Her lean, strong but petite body will always be able to outmanoeuvre me.

"You know," she says triumphantly, 'you could just let me help you?' Her proposal is one I should decline, I cannot and do not want to get her involved, but I really need to hurry now, so before I realise it, I beckon her to follow me.

After a few silent turns, she finally speaks again. Up until now, she has been the perfect companion, but that has sadly only lasted for less than five minutes. Her black hair is tied in a bun, but I have never seen her wear her hair like that. It looks good on her, makes her cheekbones stand out a bit. Gosh, I need to focus right now, not think about her hair.

'Where are we going?' She looks around her. 'Are we going to the guy dorms?' I pick up my pace and she mimics me. 'What are you carrying by the way? What are all of these letters?' Before she can ask me another question I stop.

'I can tell you what these are, but you are going to laugh.' I tell her.

'I won't.' Honestly, I have never seen her face look so serious. Her jaw is clenched, she is frowning a little bit and her lips are for once not formed in a wicked smile.

'Fine. I write love letters.'

'To whom?' I can see her trying not to laugh.

'No, tomorrow is Valentine's Day, but due to the exams nobody had time to write love letters for each other so I helped some girls.'

We are nearing the first dorm I have to deliver some letters, but when we open the door we both remain in the doorway. Soundless we gaze at the body at our feet. Red, thick liquid spreads underneath the body, even picking up speed. The panic in my throat is getting worse with the second.

"I can't breathe," I gasp.

'Is this...' Amara starts. I nod.

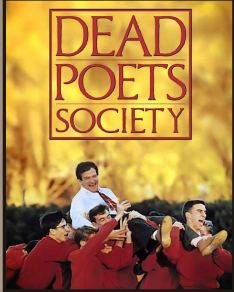
'Gavin,' I finish her sentence. Gavin is dead.



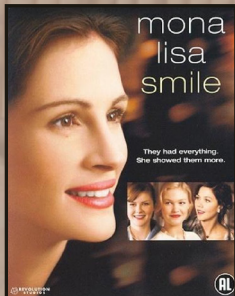
Phoenix ranks

Written by Leanne van Kampen; Edited by Hester Schneider

Dead Poets Society: How could I ever rank (or lightly review) Dark Academia movies without mentioning *Dead Poets Society*? *Dead Poets Society* is a movie that tells the story of a beloved English teacher at an all-boys prep school in the 50s. He inspires his students and their views on life through his teaching of poetry. When the boys find their teacher's old poetry book, they reinstate the 'Dead Poets Society' and are taught lessons on self-discovery, freedom of expression, and not conforming to the crowd. It's a beautiful and emotional movie.



Wilde: This movie tells the story of Oscar Wilde, the infamous gay author, (poet, and playwright), of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. This movie shows the life and the struggles of Wilde after the discovery of his own sexuality and his love for Lord Alfred Douglas. Oscar Wilde is one of the more frequently mentioned authors in the DA community and this movie that shows his extravagant lifestyle fits in nicely with the aesthetic.



Mona Lisa Smile: Like *Dead Poets Society*, *Mona Lisa Smile* tells the tale of an unconventional teacher and how she influences her students. This time set at a women's private college in the 50s, the teacher uses art to challenge her students and society's beliefs about the social roles of women. Being a housewife is not the only answer, as is shown by this intriguing art teacher.

The Riot Club: Set at a contemporary Oxford, *The Riot Club* follows a group of students who join a very prestigious (all-male, of course) secret society where they learn that someone's reputation can be ruined in the span of one evening. Like the infamous DA book, *The Secret History*, it focuses on wealth and hedonism, themes that are all too prevalent in DA recommendations. I hope you can watch this movie through a critical lens, as I wish that a group of British elite white boys won't dictate your way of life.



Dorian Gray: Based on the book by Oscar Wilde, *Dorian Gray* tells the story of –you guessed it– Dorian Gray, who has made a deal with the devil to keep his youth (never a good idea), as he is obsessed with his own beauty. To keep his youthful glow, he keeps a painting in his attic with a hidden secret. This teaches you about the dangers of being obsessed with immortality and beauty.

Phoenix Reviews

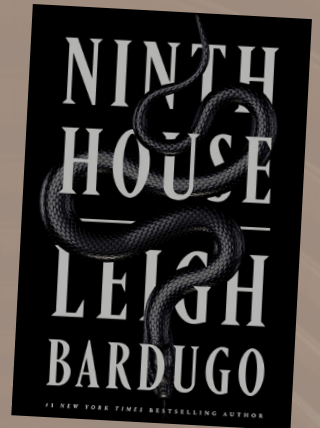
Written by Marit Vogels; Edited by Anna Preindl

Ninth House

Leigh Bardugo

I give this book 5 stars! ★★★★★

I have to admit I had high expectations going into this novel, knowing the love Leigh Bardugo often receives about her novels. Yet, I was left a little disappointed at the end of the story. The reviews of this novel are rather split, and I can understand why. I believe my rating is right in the middle. Liked it, but not loved it. Disliked it, but not hated it. I did receive some warnings that Bardugo's writing style might be a little bit hard to get into and everyone was right. It took me a good 200 pages to grasp what the story was about. Even though I got the warning, I had trouble picking up the book because of the slow pace. It didn't help that Bardugo narrated almost the entire story, thus making the book lack dialogue. However, I did like her world-building and descriptions. Connecting the story to a Dark Academia theme, I must admit it does fit. The novel revolves around Yale, which is a great setting for an academic book. On top of that, the book can be described as Dark Academia with a paranormal twist, which creates a whole new genre, ready to be explored. Another good aspect of this novel by Bardugo, are the many plot twists throughout the book. Once I got invested in the story and the characters, every page became a page-turner. These characters made some unexpected choices, which caused the plot to become twisty, surprising and unique.

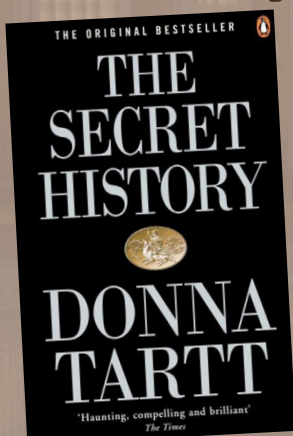


The Secret History

Donna Tartt

I give this book 5 stars! ★★★★★

My only expectation was to get a lot of Dark Academia vibes and I got that and more. So safe to say, I picked up this completely ready to be blown away by whatever Donna Tartt had to offer me. Considering this issue's theme of Dark Academia, this book fits perfectly. The plot itself is rather simple since it is a regular mystery thriller, however, every detail around the plot makes this book match the Dark Academia vibe. Greek history, the use of Latin, privileged students, philosophy mixed with logic make up for a well-written, mind-twisting and brain-breaking novel. The writing in this novel demands its own special attention in this review since it was so good. Donna Tartt shows outstanding use of language, English and Latin to grab your attention (and she makes sure you're not letting go until the very last page). Her writing almost lets your imagination guess whether the book takes place in the past, present or future, making the novel a timeless work of art. If you love reading novels that give you likeable and cute characters, then you might want to pass on this one. However, if you love a good unlikeable character then this needs to be added to your Goodreads list! The novel contains some outstanding, well-developed and complex characters, but all of them would be considered the villain in any other book. While reading the novel, I loved hating them.





Icarus, Icarus

Written by Thijs Biezen; Illustrated by Elise Brouwer

*Icarus, Icarus
did you cry together with your wings
hot tears of wax
as the winds fell away from you?*

*Icarus, Icarus
did you cry together with your father
flying overseas
looking for Davy Jones' locker?*

*Icarus, Icarus
I don't want to cry, but I am
burning up
there is nothing over the horizon*

*Icarus, Icarus
I met a polar bear last week
ursus maritimus
he left me alone again today*

*Icarus, Icarus
I only have myself left now
no one else
how long until you left yourself?*

*Icarus, Icarus
how long before you lost yourself
falling and falling
before submerging? or after*

*Icarus, Icarus
I don't want to go to Asphodel
be a nameless face
I wish to have done something*

*Icarus, Icarus
I am slowly melting in the sunlight
Apollo's gaze
it taunts me as it taunted you*

*Icarus, Icarus
do you cry together with me
tears into the sea
carving long jagged ravines*

