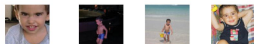
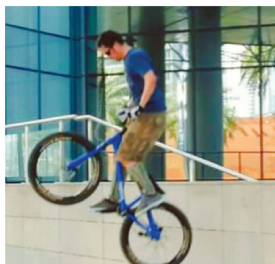
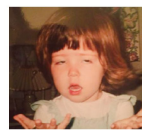
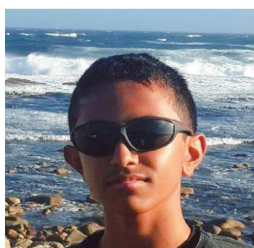


# D Constructed



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# Editors' Note

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**WHEN WE ARE BORN IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES, EITHER WE COMPLAIN ALL OUR LIVES, OR WE TELL OURSELVES 'LET'S GET ON WITH IT'. AND WE TRY, AND WE TRY, AND WE DO THINGS.**

**- S. HALL**

This academic year has been like no other, with our community and everyday dynamic being constantly disrupted. The novel Covid-19 has challenged the normalcy of our lives, keeping us indoors and away from our friends and family. These tumultuous times have given way to an opportunity to self-reflect and to see how strong the bonds of our community truly are. We have learnt that the strength of our community is not dependent upon routine, but is rather preserved by the innate human traits that unite us as a diverse community. It is perseverance, duty, humour and empathy, among other traits, that bring us together and help us overcome the challenges we face within today's pandemic. It is with that thought we bring to you this year's edition of DConstructed with a special focus on some of the individuals who make the Dubai College community what it is. Their stories echo Dubai College's ethos to make meaningful change, to care for each other, and to persist in the face of a challenge. We hope this magazine serves as a memory of our resilience and a reminder of what we can achieve as a community.

**Rhea Kale and Lea Wakim**  
design by Diptasri Gupta





# Lockdown

Simon Armitage

And I couldn' t escape the waking dream of infected fleas  
in the warp and weft of soggy cloth by the tailor' s hearth  
in ye olde Eyam. Then couldn' t un-see  
the Boundary Stone, that cock-eyed dice with its six dark holes,  
thimbles brimming with vinegar wine purging the plagued coins.  
Which brought to mind the sorry story of Emmott Syddall and Rowland  
Torre,  
star-crossed lovers on either side of the quarantine line  
whose wordless courtship spanned the river till she came no longer.  
But slept again, and dreamt this time  
of the exiled yaksha sending word to his lost wife on a passing cloud,  
a cloud that followed an earthly map of camel trails and cattle tracks,  
streams like necklaces, fan-tailed peacocks, painted elephants,  
embroidered bedspreads of meadows and hedges,  
bamboo forests and snow-hatted peaks, waterfalls, creeks,  
the hieroglyphs of wide-winged cranes and the glistening lotus flower  
after rain,  
the air hypnotically see-through, rare,  
the journey a ponderous one at times, long and slow but necessarily so.



# THE FORUM

Rhea Kale  
Nishka Keni  
Tiya Bhatia

The Forum represents the intellectual curiosity of the DC community, making its popularity no surprise since its beginning in 2018. Catering to a wide variety of subjects, The Forum focuses on a different theme each session, from nature to the progression of technology. This year alone, there have been lectures linked to English, Art, Classics and Economics. The two main events that The Forum has hosted this year have been 'Innocence and Experience' and 'Wealth & Inequality'. The accessibility of the forum has been a large part of its appeal to a large number of year groups as these ideas are handled with a clear and intelligible mindset. In the first episode of The Forum, Mr Rushworth and Ms Lambert explored the theme of 'Innocence and Experience'. A wide variety of topics were discussed, some even drawing links to the English Literature A Level curriculum with an exploration of Othello. The content simultaneously branched out of the syllabus too, with Mr Rushworth's brief tour of the history and artistic integrity behind the female nude even creating a stir due to its complete divergence from the typical curriculum. During the event, handouts were given out of key texts and images including Edouard Manet's Olympia (1863) and Tess of the D'urbervilles, allowing the audience to develop their own perspective.

The interdisciplinary approach of The Forum can especially be seen through the second session on 'Wealth and Inequality' as the speakers combined their expertise to construct a comprehensive picture of inequality. The speakers outlined the economics behind inequality, the geographical significance of the distribution of wealth, and the history behind solving inequality. We were first introduced to the nature of inequality by Mrs Norris, who explored the econometrics of inequality from an objective perspective allowing us to understand our perception of inequality. Mrs Saran, adopting a more subjective view, discussed the importance of geography in understanding the problem of wealth inequality. Guided by Mr Agent, the audience delved into an insightful discussion on both the severity of inequality and the solutions to it. This discussion branched out to cover the role of political ideology and education, with audience members debating the impact Thatcher's right-wing approach, discussing the nature of grammar schools in the UK, and even asking if we are unknowingly part of the problem by attending a private school. Given the context of current protests against inequality in Latin America, the matter of wealth and inequality remains of significance. The Forum continues to be an integral part of the Dubai College community, encouraging students to look past their textbooks and into the diverse, ever-changing world around them.







## MR RUSHWORTH

My last day at the grammar school, last indoor climbing club session, the banner and balloons were part of a leaving present from my Climbing Club boys who I took all over the UK climbing in the six years I was at the school. Note the (not deliberate) spelling mistake!

“I used to teach in a grammar school. The boys were particularly cheeky. You know, they pushed the boundaries a bit. So, for an April Fool’s, this guy called Florian Blackburn - one of my A-level students - knew that we had a double and that I always used to go and get coffee. He knew I’d be out of the room for about four or five minutes, and he’d measured out my whiteboard and brought a screwdriver in. In the time I was getting my coffee, he removed my entire whiteboard on which my PowerPoint was projected. So, I got back to my classroom and looked up at where my presentation should be: there was no presentation, and there was also no whiteboard! He had removed the entire thing in four minutes, and filmed my reaction. I had to acknowledge it was very funny!”

A person who stands out is a boy called Veljko Mladenovic. He did his GCSEs in Chouiefat and then arrived at DC to do his A Levels. I really liked him;. He was quite punky – I had to tell him off on the first day when he rocked in with a huge bar through his ear and had a bit of eyeliner on. He joined Mrs B’s art class in Year 12 and came to me in Year 13. He got a D in Art in Chouiefat at GCSE, then got a B at AS Level and ended up with an A\* at A Level – he worked really, really hard. He’s now working at Bjarke Ingels (BIG) in Copenhagen – one of the most renowned architecture firms in the world. But, he was also really funny and a bit inappropriate. If you were having a conversation and he could say something a little bit outré that might get a laugh, he just would! Not in a mean way, I just don’t think he could help himself. Vel was like that about everything. Always talking about anything and everything with no filter. He was Serbian and when he left he brought you a gift. My grandfather makes this Serbian drink – it’s called Rakia and it’s made from plums! I’ve still got some in a cupboard at home. I bumped into Vel around 3 years ago and we had a nice catch-up. At the time he had green hair!

## MR TATE



“I wanted to do something that I thought was noble. I wanted to do something meaningful, where I could think, ‘Ah! I’m working for the good of other people’. I wanted to be a police officer. At the time, the only way to become one was to volunteer for a number of years and complete a range of tasks. Then, you can apply for a full-time position, which was my main goal. I soon became a Special Constable in Lewisham, London. When I started to serve, I actually realised that it wasn’t what I expected - maybe it was just the people I served with, maybe it was where I served as Lewisham was a particularly rough part of London. But the people I encountered weren’t really doing it for the same reasons. I realised that if I wanted to progress I would have to do things that I wasn’t hugely excited by, like you needed to reach a certain number of arrests so they encouraged you to arrest people rather than resolve things in a non-confrontational manner. Once I realised that I didn’t want to do that, and also my family constantly cried at me about being in the police force, I tried to think of other things I could do that seemed to help people. Genuinely, teaching seemed to be the most likely way to do that.”

## MR O’BOYLE



## MRS LAMBERT



“I joined the navy in 2008, and I did “First Phase” for twelve weeks. That’s when you go to Dartmouth, and you’re essentially locked away from the world! So you’ve got no communication home, you can’t have your mobile phone. But you can write letters- and that’s it. And the idea is to sort of break you. You’re broken down and then rebuilt as they want you. It’s to get you thinking their way, and to work with them. Cynics would say it’s brain-washing- very effective! As part of our navigation classes, we were looking at the Portland Crash, which was quite a sad incident where a helicopter basically ditched during a training exercise just off the British coast. The pilot and the observer died. It’s one thing to go to war; you go into that knowing that you’re putting your life on the line. But for it to go wrong during training, to just go off to the base in the morning and not come back that night, it was just a bit too real. I was obviously going into maternal mode and deciding that a family was really what I wanted. I don’t regret it, I even miss it sometimes. But it’s really a single life. I’d already met Mr. Lambert and being married to a civilian and trying to have a family is hard. More so for women. I think that’s where the twenty-first century hasn’t quite caught up, that those are long, long stretches away at sea.”



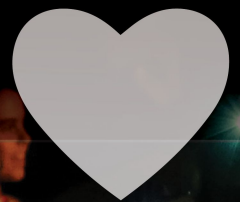


Despite stormy skies and the occasional drizzle, Dubai College persevered with its annual Music Charity Love event on the 21st of November. The Charity Committee, determined to host an astounding concert as always, set up the stage, seating, and stalls, ready for an evening of music and relaxation. Each of the twenty two performances had their own unique touch and style, ranging all the way from sedate piano covers to bouncy and exuberant band performances.



In addition to the enthusiastic crowd of students, teachers, parents and friends all enjoyed the performances throughout the evening. Over the course of the evening, large quantities of raffle tickets were purchased by the attendees, many of whom were incentivised by big prizes including free meals and spa treatments at the Burj Al Arab hotel. The Charity Committee also raised funds at the event by selling food and organising mini-games around the school's quadrangle.

Overall, it was an incredible evening that lived up to its expectations. As always, the concert was an astounding success, raising approximately AED 20,000 for the projects being organised by the Charity Committee. Not only did it raise funds for the school's many philanthropic projects, but it also provided an evening full of entertainment and enjoyment for all who attended.



**Manan Gupta**  
**Rayan Malik**





In the electric atmosphere of the Dubai College Auditorium, hundreds of students, teachers, family and friends anticipated the reveal of the long-awaited school production. The captivating performances of Eddie Zickerman and Lara Begley as Seymour and Audrey truly embodied the emotionally complex nature of their characters. Beside them, a talented cast of performers, ranging from Year 10 to 13, brought this piece of theatre to life through their talent and dynamic on-stage chemistry. Jake Mustard's sinister yet quirky role as Orin Scrivello left the audience with goosebumps. While the cast was unarguably compelling, a highlight of the production was the skilfully commandeered gargantuan monster of a plant.

Although not physically on stage, Finn Page amazed the audience with his powerful and expressive vocals as he personified the churlish, man-eating Audrey II. However, the play would not have been possible without the musicians and crew members, who methodically brought together all the elements of the performance from behind the scenes. From the moment the curtains drew back, the audience was taken on a journey of love, dreams and betrayal with a touch of horror that left them at the edge of their seats. Undeniably, this creative masterpiece directed by Ms. Stilwell and Ms. Madison will remain as one of Dubai College's most memorable school productions.

**Nishka Keni**





# HUMANS OF DC

Stories from the  
Dubai College  
Community

“[My father] recently left us. He was an orphan. He never got to know his parents. And at thirteen or fourteen, he left Algeria, his country. He was told to get by on his own and build a life. It’s really an incredible thing to inherit; we know that we have to get by and make the most out of life, even if life is hard. And all of a sudden, [he] finds [himself] in a completely different country! A country with a different language, a new culture and a new religion. Although Algeria used to be a French colony, they’re two extremes. So he gets to France - and in the North! I must have inherited that from him. It could be why I chose to leave France, because I wanted to try a new country out. My father [would tell me]: “Why did you leave? Why did you abandon me?”. As an orphan, we don’t want to be abandoned by our children, because the children sort of become the parents, the only family we have. For him it was a little bit like “I’ve been abandoned again.” My father worked in a factory then because he did not have any qualifications and did not speak French. At one point, he wanted to open his own store; he wanted to be his own boss. My parents cannot write; they are illiterate. Without any understanding of the law or what they should do - going to the Chamber of Commerce, finding money, buying products to resell... He succeeded. And even if he didn’t become rich, he took risks. And that’s another quality I’ve inherited from him; this “risk-taking”, not being afraid to make mistakes. He wasn’t always successful and we would tell him: “Why have you done this again?” Ultimately, to pursue our dreams, to try, to fail, to make mistakes but to go on and live the way we want to live is the most important thing.”

## MRS HALL





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## RAYAN MALIK

“What began as a small competition for students in Dubai College soon transpired into one of the largest high school entrepreneurship competitions in the Middle East. Earlier this year, Yousuf and I noticed that there were limited opportunities for students in the UAE to develop their entrepreneurial skills and pitch an idea, so we decided to try to do something about it by creating our own entrepreneurship competition in Dubai College. Our competition featured over two-hundred entries, all of whom had the opportunity to attend entrepreneurship workshops and receive feedback from mentors within the field. We were extremely fortunate to be able to offer prizes of over AED 120,000 with the backing of nine companies, including Careem and PwC. Yousuf and I were truly blown away by the large interest from both the students and companies in the UAE who were eager to get involved and contribute towards the prizes of the competition. It is really interesting to reflect on how this initially started out and look at all the progress we’ve made. I guess it really does prove that students in the UAE are actively searching for ways to go above and beyond their school curriculum, and that there is significant demand for other competitions like ours.”

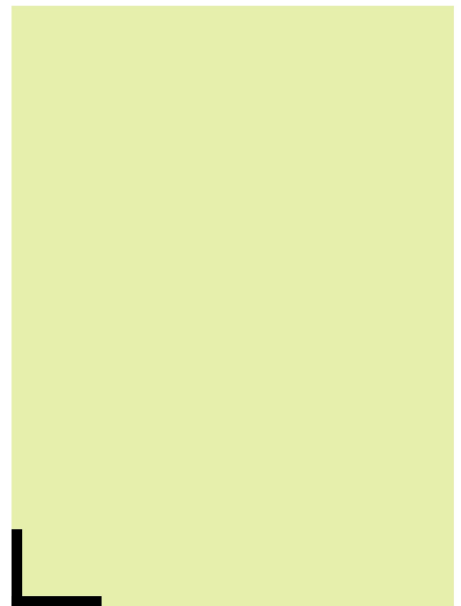
“Two years ago, my family and I attended an event called MindValley University. We were exposed to various self-growth tools and wellbeing improvement advice. Upon experiencing the stress and anxiety of GCSEs, I realised that my learning from MindValley would have really helped keep my peers and I composed. So I decided to create a mobile application. MiZen has three main functions: Meditation, a Gratitude Journal and a Mindfulness Journal. I chose these to be the core of the app after speaking to Mr Samways; he noted that these were the three most effective tools to improve wellbeing. In the meditation section, you can choose between different breathing patterns which are proven to be extremely effective at calming you down in just a few repetitions. Gratitude journals are useful for individuals who wish to focus their attention on the positive things in their lives. Similarly, research suggests that mindfulness benefits many aspects of our psychological well-being—improving our mood, increasing positive emotions, and decreasing our anxiety, emotional reactivity, and job burnout. The app is currently available for free on the App Store and the Google Play Store. It has reached a small audience so far, and has received many positive reviews. I believe that MiZen is especially useful during the current pandemic and can improve the wellbeing of people across the globe.”

## VEER VOHRA

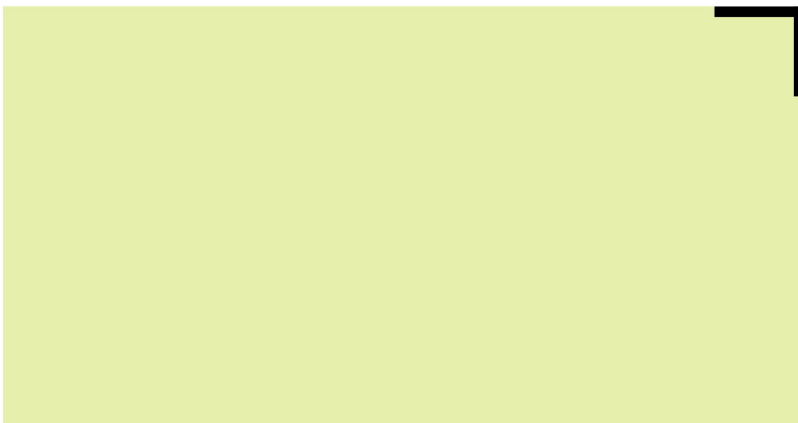




“Returning from school in Dubai’s searing summer heat, I was struck by an unconscious labourer sprawled on a construction site floor. Jolted by the fact that we had become desensitized to this all-too-common sight, I was spurred to understand the underlying issues and act. 90% of patients who have heat-related illnesses are laborers, with up to 10 men collapsing daily from heat exhaustion during summers. This statistic prompted me to utilize an idea from a business competition that I had previously entered with a friend, and make our idea a reality. This led to the product "Cooling Vests" that uses a polymer-embedded material to reduce risks to heat-related illnesses, thereby ultimately subverting these men’s socio-economic norms. After winning the business competition, I went on to mass-produce the vests, contacting companies in China and India to import 200 vests for the labourers of Dubai. I spoke about these endeavors at the Global Gift Gala and highlighted the effects of the vicious cycle of poverty that would continue if someone did not create change. My experience at the Global Gift Gala prompted me to keep going, extending to Cooling Caps now. Last year, we distributed 500 caps to the labourers and the Bursar bought 50 caps for the Men in Blue – you might be able to see some of them wearing the cap with the DC logo embroidered onto it!”



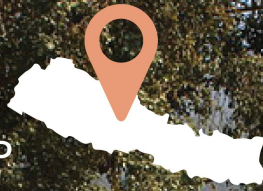
**MAHIRA JETHWANI**





# Jaisithok

NEPAL CHARITY TRIP





Dubai College's Charity Committee has branched out to many communities worldwide, making a difference one student at a time. Recently, the Charity Committee's tireless efforts culminated into the achievement of opening a school in Jaisithok in partnership with United World Schools. During the February half term, a group of eight students undertook a tireless journey that embarked from the narrow, bustling streets of Kathmandu to the most remote districts in Nepal through a path of miles upon miles of valleys and crumbling roads.

Throughout a period of three days, the students participated in a variety of activities that were planned by the Dubai College team and two teachers from United World Schools. These activities ranged from Art and English to Maths and Sports, even including Tree Planting. Embarking on a teaching experience, the Dubai College team attempted to differ from the typical rote learning method of teaching by incorporating drawing, games and different creative outlets to engage with the students. The Dubai College team also took many lessons from the Jaisithok students who worked together to plant corn crops and shared the local Nepali culture and environment.

The beauty and purity of the village was exemplified by the individuals that comprised its community. Dubai College was welcomed with open arms and an abundance of local Nepali flowers, where the principal of the school thanked Dubai College for its aid in helping build what they hope to become one of the best schools in the Gulmi District. The perseverance, curiosity and optimism that the students displayed is the epitome of everything that Dubai College values.

This trip showed us the power of education and, most importantly, the hope for a future of equality. In a country like Nepal where there is no compulsory education duration and a lack of access to education past primary level, the power of education and the opportunities it can provide have astounding effects. By the end of the trip, tears were shed on both sides with a reluctance to leave our new friends behind and return home. The bond that the Dubai College team formed with the students at the Jaisithok school crossed the boundaries of language, age and culture, and this partnership between Dubai College and the Jaisithok community shall continue for years to come.







# DC ⚡ AC

More than any other event, DC/AC emulates the community vibe that has been nurtured in the Dubai College Sixth Form ever since its inception. The first 2019 concert was certainly one to remember: Around two hundred and forty students, including one hundred and twenty confused year 12's, piled into the common room. As the nine year 13 musicians unleashed their musical talents on the common room, it was filled to the brim with laughter, applause, and very lively acoustics. The seasoned Year 13's bands once again were crowd favourites; with Viraj Ramakrishnan, Sachit Lumba, KV and Seyhan Khan performing Lynyrd Skynyrd's Sweet Home Alabama and Lucid Dreams by Juice WRLD. Casey Bell then movingly delivered Jason Mraz's single I'm Yours, wrapping up the student segment of the show.

It's fair to say no one was quite expecting what happened next. As Mr Tate walked onto stage, armed with a glittering guitar, all of us in the common room knew we were in for a treat. As students and staff cheered on in wonderment, Mr Tate treated us all to his very own mash-up of A Message To You, Rudy by The Specials, and Express Yourself by NWA; the perfect way to finish off what had been an outstanding event.

As the Sixth Form left the common room slightly dazed, cries for a second concert could already be heard. The sixth form reunited again in December, for the second DC/AC of 2019. Audiences were beside themselves as Viraj, Sachit and Ajay returned to the makeshift croom stage, treating everyone to a performance of Let It Snow. Seb and Armaan followed suit with a rendition of Ed Sheeran's A-Team, with Anahita Kashyap and Rima Makhoul rounding off with a moving performance of Wham!'s Last Christmas. Casey and her form swiftly took the stage, amusing us all with their take on Johnny Mathis' It's Beginning to Look A Lot Christmas.

Seb and Armaan finished off the show and were joined by a nervous Seb Springuel who, having never sung publically before, put a smile on all our faces. With the success of the last two concerts, it's clear that DCAC is a Sixth Form favourite, with everyone waiting restlessly for the next one.

**Yousuf Yaqub**



# SPORTS DAY 2020

The most anticipated event of the house competition took place on February Monday 10th. The day kicked off with the most entertaining and popular race; the 1500m. As the day went on the races became shorter and more competitive. Cousteau began to dominate in the younger year groups whilst Barbarossa was winning nearly every race in Years 9-11. After a few upsets in the senior 100m races, the initial standings were announced by Mr. House who was filling the shoes of Mr. Lavery in the commentary position. Barbarossa was leading the standings with Cousteau trailing right behind them. Thus, like most years, the relays were going to be the deciding factor for Sports Day 2020.

As the relays began, Cousteau continued their domination in the younger year groups and won the first four relays. However, after the baton landed on the floor during the Senior girls' relay, the house competition was in the hands of the Cousteau boys who had to win their relay to bring home the trophy and overtake Barbarossa. Seb Snaas, Matt Johnstone, George Boon and Harry Devereux lived up to the challenge and won the last, and arguably most important, race of the day. Mr. House announced the standings and Cousteau was the overall winner. This means that the overall house competition has become extremely close, with Chichester, Barbarossa and Cousteau all within a few points of each other!

After an hour, Barbarossa was dominating Sports Day, winning multiple races in every age group. The day continued in the same fashion, with Barbarossa steam rolling away whilst Cousteau and the rest dragged behind. Mr. House was doing a great job filling the shoes of Mr. Lavery in the commentary position whilst Abela & Co were attempting to outcompete the Charity Committee. Sports day represents what makes the Dubai College community so special, and this year was no different.

**Manan Gupta and Rayan Malik**





## U19 FOOTBALL

The U19 football season began against Choueifat at Dubai College on Wednesday October 2nd. After a long and tiring match, filled with muscle injuries, DC managed to win 3-2 and they began their season on the right track. However, the team failed to replicate their opening performance when they travelled to Gems World Academy to play a heated game which ended in a draw. After already dropping points, winning the league was going to be an uphill battle. Yet, the team rose to the occasion and won their next two games scoring 12 goals in the process. Through the guidance and coaching of Ben Smith, the former Newcastle Goalkeeper, the Dubai College U19 team was slowly becoming one of the most feared teams and were looking like potential league winners.

Moving away from the league, the team then participated in the annual DASSA 7's tournament at DC on the 16th of November. The team dominated the group stages scoring eight goals in four games and progressed straight into the semi-finals where they replicated their performances from earlier on to book themselves a place in the final against Repton. However, Repton were adamant to not let DC outplay them and they started the game by putting DC under heaps of pressure. With a few minutes left on the clock, both teams squandered great opportunities and were still searching for the opening goal. Repton's central midfielder was then dismissed after a late tackle on Tom Rose. Repton, a man short, were holding on and trying to take the final to penalties. Three minutes later, the whistle blew and Repton was successful in doing just that. The final of 2020 DASSA 7's was to be decided by a penalty shootout. Repton's No. 10 stepped up to take the first penalty and it was saved by the DC goalkeeper. Jake Hower then buried his penalty in the bottom left corner to win the trophy for Dubai College, who conceded zero goals for the whole tournament.

One week after the triumph, the team had to put the victory out of their minds as they travelled to DESC to play the title decider for the league. Every year this fixture is extremely close, and this year was no exception. DESC had the edge during the game but they were still in search of a goal with only ten minutes left. However, their search did not last much longer as they scored a wonder goal from outside the box which left DC desperate for an equaliser. After hitting the bar, the DC attack failed to score and walked off the pitch having lost the title. Whilst the league ended on a low note, the team has already begun preparing for the Cup competition and they won their Round of 16 match against GEMS International School. The team is confident that they have what it takes to come out on top this time around and bring home another trophy.





## Y14 INTERVIEW WITH SHUMRAZE

*Shumraze Fawad, Dubai College graduate, shares his input on settling into post-college life in university, drawing parallels between his upbringing in Dubai and the troubles and victories that come with newfound independence. Interview conducted by Yousuf Yaqub.*

### WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT DUBAI COLLEGE/ DUBAI?

Definitely the weather and the people! I really miss all the familiar landmarks, malls, restaurants etc. I also miss the close community at DC and the incredible friendships and connections you can make in school.

### WHAT SINGLE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE PREPARING TO START LIFE AT UNIVERSITY?

Definitely apply to do what you want to do at university and don't just do what people recommend because of future career prospects etc. There is obviously an element of truth in the fact that some degrees have higher earning potential, but university has taught me that happiness is the only measure of success. If you're doing a 'hard course' and you're miserable, that's a waste of time. Equally, I think a lot of people lose track of reality and it is important to do something where you can map out a bunch of potential plans for the future.



### **IN WHAT WAY IS UNIVERSITY LIFE DIFFERENT FROM COLLEGE LIFE?**

There is a lot more independence, and that isn't necessarily a good thing! Growing up in Dubai is such a privilege because we take a lot for granted and having to do basic things yourself, like laundry, can be very daunting. The rigour at university, depending on your course, can be exponentially harder. Although, A-Levels definitely make you more intellectually curious which I think is an attribute you absolutely need to succeed at university.

### **IF YOU HAD TO UNDERGO THE 'TRANSITION' PROCESS OF SETTLING INTO UNIVERSITY AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?**

I would definitely have invested more time in learning how to cook and do my own laundry. I had a massive culture shock when I first started! I think DC definitely prepares you for university socially (especially if you're going to the UK), but it's important to know how to be independent and what is expected of you in that new found independence.

### **COULD YOU TALK ABOUT SOMETHING THAT SURPRISED YOU ABOUT LIFE AT UNIVERSITY?**

How friendly everyone was! I genuinely thought I'd come to university and find people to be reserved and quiet but most people I've interacted with are genuinely so nice and have helped me settle in. Another shock was how many people knew about Dubai but had no idea about the UAE.

### **AS A FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENT, IN WHAT WAY DO YOU THINK LIVING IN DUBAI HAS BENEFITED YOU?**

I definitely think living in Dubai made me more open minded and I've found that my experience of being raised in a multicultural environment made me more receptive to different cultures and ethnic identities.

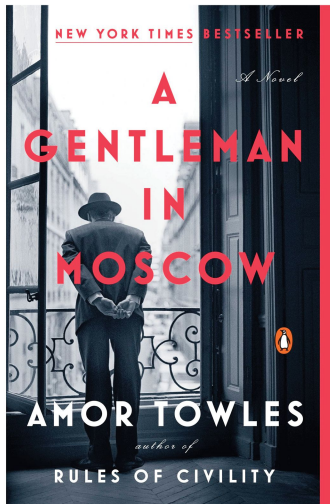
### **AS A FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENT, IN WHAT WAY DO YOU THINK LIVING IN DUBAI HAS DISADVANTAGED YOU?**

Whilst Dubai is incredibly open and diverse, most of us operate in a bubble where we are completely unaware of the realities of the world; be it the ways in which poverty and malnutrition is rampant in places where DC students will go to university, or the way in which political conversations and decisions are being churned out with direct ramifications for many of us as we transition into post-Dubai life. It's easy to lose track of reality as Dubai is almost like a big theme park that your life revolves around. It's important that you remain aware about the larger world.



# E-Block Picks

## book recommendations



### A Gentleman in Moscow

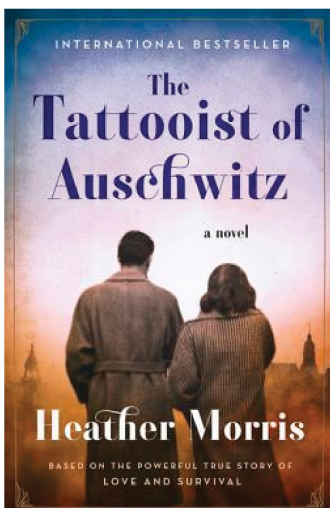
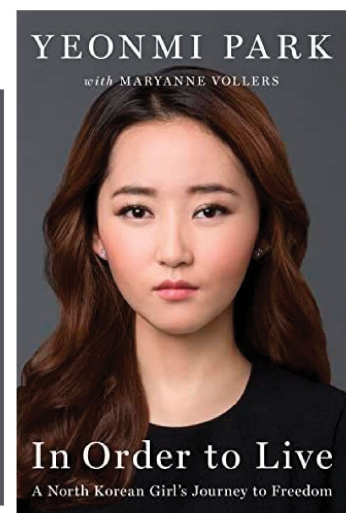
by Amor Towles

Set during the Bolshevik revolution, the story follows an aristocrat, Count Rostov, who has been placed in lifetime house arrest in a room at the Metropol hotel. Though he first sees his physical entrapment as isolating and feels hopeless, he eventually manages to personally grow, and despite its obstacles, continue an enriched, meaningful life. This is an eloquently written and beautifully narrated story - most importantly, it resonates well with the times we face today.

### In Order to Live

by Yeonmi Park

This autobiography is shocking, eye-opening and inspiring. Park's story of her life is something most of us would never be able to imagine; it is almost as though she has lived in a completely different world. Park's bravery and resilience despite her bleak and traumatising circumstances is something all of us can learn from.

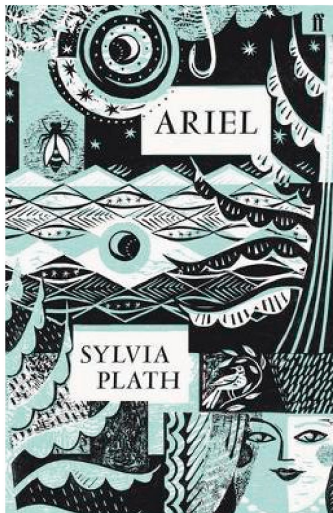


### The Tattooist of Auschwitz

by Heather Morris

The Tattooist of Auschwitz is based upon the true story of Lale Sokolov's unbelievable heroism as a prisoner of the Austrian internment camps during the 1940s. There have been countless books written about these horrific experiences, but this particular novel beautifully captures how difficult it was to overcome the endless terror and torture of the Holocaust. Sokolov's story of torment and triumph reveals the bravery needed to find humanity and strength in such a barbaric place.





## Ariel

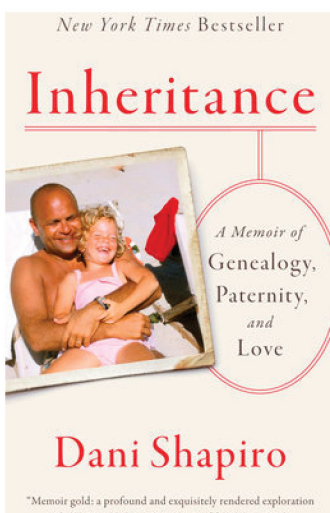
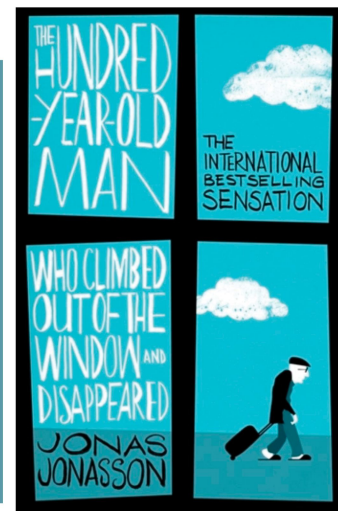
by Sylvia Plath

"What a thrill -  
My thumb instead of an onion.  
The top quite gone  
Except for a sort of hinge."

Ariel contains the extraordinary, eloquent, unhinged and tormented burst of poetry that Plath wrote just before her suicide in 1963. Beginning with a fearful love letter to her newborn daughter, Plath's poetry unravels as she explores daring themes of humanity, family, life and death to create the collection that immortalised her as one of the most influential, controversial and lyrical poets of the twentieth century.

## The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared by Jonas Jonasson

"Things are what they are, and whatever will be will be" begins Jonasson's novel when a hundred-year-old man escapes the confines of his life through his window (all too relatable nowadays) and recounts his influence over the momentous events of the twentieth century. Jonasson's second novel The Girl who Saved the King of Sweden follows Nombeko, born in a shack in Soweto and destined for a short, hard life. But both of Jonasson's hilarious novels show how your future is not immovably fixed, but can be crafted by courage and the chances you take - perfect for lifting your spirits.



## Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity and Love

"All my life I had known there was a secret. What I hadn't known: the secret was me." by Dani Shapiro

In the Spring of 2016, Dani Shapiro discovers that her father is not her biological father. In a memoir that reads like a thriller, we follow Shapiro's heartbreaking journey into selfhood when it is revealed that everything she had believed about her life was a lie. Shapiro recounts the discovery of her biological father with such beautiful rawness that we ourselves are driven to question what it means to love, to accept and to belong. It is a book about family secrets, kept out of self-protectiveness or out of shame. It is a book about the extraordinary moment we live in, where science and technology have outpaced both medical ethics and the capacities of the human heart to contend with the consequences of what we discover.

contributions by

Anica Mirza · Lily Ashby · Yun Soo Park · Lea Wakim




# Film Reviews



## THE CHOSEN

Rhea Kale



Russian Marxist Georgi Plekhanov suggested that ‘the function of art is to assist the development of man’s consciousness’, and in many ways *The Chosen* achieves this through its sympathetic retelling of the infamous assassination of Leon Trotsky in 1940. Directed by Antonio Chavarrías, *THE CHOSEN* is a Spanish-Mexican production that tells the story of Ramon Mercader (Alfonso Herrera), an agent of the Soviet Secret Service, and his journey to Mexico on a mission to assassinate Trotsky.

Delving straight into the rich history of the Russian revolution, *The Chosen* begins with footage of a black-and-white documentary outlining Trotsky’s role as a leading socialist both in the Russian Revolution and as the organiser of the Fourth International. This film is for those with a pre-existing interest in Trotsky or the Soviet Union as Chavarrías uses this snapshot of context to delve into the methodology of rather than reasoning for Trotsky’s assassination. Although requiring concentration at times given its slow pace, *The Chosen* recounts Ramon Mercader’s journey to Paris under the guise ‘Jacques Mornard’ with the aim of seducing American Trotskyist Sylvia Ageloff (Hannah Murray) who is known to Trotsky. The drama unfolds as the pair travels to Mexico City and meet Trotsky (Henry Goodman) and his wife, Natalia Sedova (Frances Barber). As Mercader prepares for his mission, we see an unexpected side to him: he is scared, vulnerable but dutiful. Unlike Losey’s *The Assassination of Trotsky*, *The Chosen* has been praised for its historical accuracy as it offers a raw and real, albeit less dramatic, take on Mercader’s characterisation. The words of a Soviet agent at the start of the film ring true as the movie concludes: “truth and reality don’t exist.” The reality of Stalinism is convoluted with false histories and dramatized vilifications, yet Chavarrías’ *The Chosen* seems to offer the closest version to the reality of Trotsky’s assassination in film history. *The Chosen*’s sympathetic portrayal of Trotsky in fact develops man’s consciousness in a way that is more open to the nuances of Marxism, making it a brilliant film for those interested in left-wing history.





# BLACK PANTHER

**Mahé Samee**

BLACK PANTHER brings the thrilling excitement and action expected of a Marvel movie and unexpectedly provides commentary on foreign politics. With a star-studded cast of Chadwick Bowmen, Michael B. Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o and Andy Serkis, director Ryan Coogler creates a rich and beautiful representation of African culture and at its core opens a discussion about foreign aid. The movie pays homage to the African culture and amplifies it with a modern twist. This is achieved from the set design (created by Hannah Beachler) to the costumes (created by Ruth Carter) to the film score (created by Ludwig Göransson). The attention to detail and research in all these areas is astounding. The scene at the waterfall trial displays all of these aspects at their peak. Each tribe carefully coordinated in colour and design, with a stunning backdrop and Ludwig Göransson's score to set the scene, makes it truly mesmerising. From this scene alone, it is clear how they were able to bag Academy Awards for their work. Black Panther is a thought-provoking, exciting visual masterpiece that is certainly worth the watch.

Often deemed “the greatest movie ever”, Robert Zemeckis’ 1994 movie FORREST GUMP is a timeless classic. While following the heartwarming journey of the slow-witted Forrest (Tom Hanks), audiences experience the explosion of American pop-culture from the early 50s to the late 70s, with Aretha Franklin, Lyndon B. Johnson, John F. Kennedy and Malcolm-X coming onto the scene. Forrest is a running fool, weak in the legs as a young boy, his bullies push him to the edge and make running a part of his identity. “Run Forrest, run!” screams Jenny (Robin Wright), his love interest throughout the film. This is surely the most iconic saying in the movie, as Forrest keeps this advice close to heart. Running becomes a therapy when things get too difficult to bear: he crosses the entire continental United States because he “felt like it”, he runs back into the battlefield to save his fellow men during his time serving in the Vietnam war and when his mother grows ill, he runs back home to spend her final moments by her side.

“Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re gonna get.” Forrest has taught us that we are in no way limited by our intelligence, but by the way we overcome the unexpected twists and turns of our lives. Absent-mindedly, our beloved character impacts the lives of his friends and family as well as that of popular musical icons like John Lennon and Elvis Presley. Unaware of his personal success and humbled by the love with which he looks at the world, his final devotion and the lengths he’s willing to go to for his family is ultimately what makes this character so lovable. When we wonder about the true measure of success, Tom Hanks’ moving portrayal of Forrest Gump succeeds in showing us that it’s not a multi-million dollar partnership with Apple or the presidential medal of honour that makes a man, but the abundant love and gentleness that one spreads to those that are dearest to one’s heart.

# Forrest Gump

**Lea Wakim**







Greta Gerwig's LADYBIRD doesn't include crazy plot-twists, Hollywood-tier action sequences, or extravagant set design. Its value is instead rooted in its raw yet comedic portrayal of adolescence. Set in 2002, the story follows Christine "Ladybird" McPherson (Saoirse Ronan), a free-spirited, ruthless, and often dramatic senior in high school, who faces the everyday trials and tribulations of growing into adulthood: applying to College, moving as far away from Sacramento as she can, and finding love. Ladybird's best friend Julie (Beanie Feldstein) is lovable and smart, and arguably more mature than Ladybird. The portrayal of their friendship throughout the film is something everybody can relate to; sometimes slightly jealous of one another's achievements, yet always supportive of each-other. Another key aspect to the movie is Ladybird's love life, which takes many turns throughout the film, and often finds her feeling betrayed.

However, the key focal-point of the movie follows a very strained relationship with her formidable mother, Marion (Laurie Metcalf), who drives Christine's decision to go by the name Ladybird - to assert an individuality away from her mother. Despite this tension, what Gerwig does so well is portray the underlying love between the Mother-Daughter duo, even with the petty arguments scattered throughout the film. While one minute they're screaming at each other, the next minute they're enjoying their favourite activity – viewing luxurious houses that they could never afford. By the end of the film, Ladybird will have you emotional and in no doubt more appreciative of your mother. What is so great about this film in comparison to other coming-of-age films is its relatability. It certainly doesn't glorify any aspects of teenage life; if anything it downplays them as much as possible. This is what gives it its ability to be so hilarious and heart-warming.