



# *The Rambling* **ROSE**

*Clifton High School Pupil Newspaper*



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## Foreword

As we all hunker down and start to think about a good few weeks at hopefully a slightly more relaxed pace of life, I could not think of a better reading companion than this edition of the Rambling Rose.

This is our 4th publication to date and our Rambling Rose continues to garner all sorts of interested contributors: those who want to refine and practise their writing skills; old hands slowly killing off the staff population (are HR aware?! - Ed.); those who have a burning issue on their minds that they want to shout about from the rooftops; and those who just love to write. It is always a joy to see pupils and staff around the school having a browse and enjoying the journalistic work of the pupils.

Finally, a significant mention this edition has to go to Aneline Wood: founder of the Rambling Rose and its inaugural editor. As her A level exams rightly take priority now, she will be handing the Rambling Rose reins to a new team. We wish them all the luck in the world and we have every confidence that the editorial tenancy will be dutifully overseen by the new incumbents. Aneline has done a remarkable job launching the publication and driving it with such boundless energy: thank you! Thanks as ever to staff and Marketing for all their help in getting this Paper to press.

With very warm wishes to you and yours over this holiday time and wishing bucketfuls of luck to Y11 and Y13 students whose Christmas holiday will be mostly mock-revision orientated. To them in particular I say: remember to breathe and take some time out to enjoy the season with your friends and family a bit too.

Mrs Pippa Lyons-White, Head of English

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*Aneline Wood*

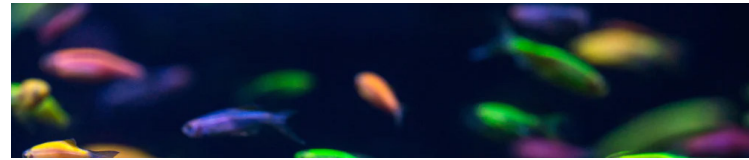


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# VOLUNTEERIN

## The story of how I fell in love with rural India

In August of this year I spent ten days in Ladakh and it was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. It was an initiative called 'voluntourism' run by the Indian NGO '17,000ft'. 17,000ft are based in the Indian Himalayan region and their mission is to facilitate quality education for children in the remote frontier villages. They work in over 350 schools in Ladakh and Sikkim and part of their initiative involves providing these schools with a playground, a library and a 'digi-lab', as well as their continued support. The school we visited as part of the voluntourism programme was in an extremely remote village called Udmaru in the Nubra Valley.

I'll be honest: I was very nervous about the whole experience. I had been warned that I shouldn't expect any of my usual comforts; for example, there would be absolutely no internet connectivity and there was unlikely to be running water. This meant no shower and a hole in the ground masquerading as a toilet for five days. There would also be a car journey of at least five hours through the mountains to get to the village on what I could only imagine would be a pretty bumpy road. And I get motion sickness. Really badly.



Luckily for me, I needn't have worried. The trip far exceeded my expectations and the luxuries that I normally took for granted didn't really seem to matter anymore. The views on the journey were so beautiful that the time flew by and everything about

Udmaru was amazing. The family we were staying with were lovely and they had a beautiful home. The food was simple but delicious and the views were absolutely breathtaking. The landscape is like nothing I have ever seen before, surrounded by mountains whose sheer size is awe-inspiring. There was a river of mountain run-off that was redirected to run through the whole village and there was green everywhere: apple trees, apricot trees, sea buckthorn with its bright orange, tart-tasting berries and so many poplar trees that it almost looked French.



However, despite the breathtaking beauty of the landscape, my favourite part of the trip was the children. They were absolutely gorgeous and their eagerness to learn was heartwarming. One of the things we brought with us was two packets of Bananagrams. They were so excited when I poured all the individual letters onto the floor and they realised that they could use them to make words. And they were even more excited when they discovered there was a second packet!



# NG

We played lots of different games with them and did lots of activities. For example, we did stone painting with them where they all got to go out and collect stones, wash them in the river and then paint pictures on them. We also made a knowledge tree at the end of the week which involved them helping to paint a tree and then all getting to write a word / words they had learned in the week on an apple which we then stuck on the tree. Some of their favourite games were 'Simon Says', 'Hot Potato' and 'What's The Time Mr Wolf'. They also really enjoyed doing the 'Hokey Cokey'. It was obvious that Hot Potato was very popular when we were doing a reflection on the week and every child without fail said 'Hot Potato'; some said only that! What's The Time Mr Wolf was also very fun. I was playing with the kids and every time the response was 'DINNER TIME!' there would be a stampede of children, giggling and screaming as they ran backwards.



After the children's performances, the villagers gave a small presentation to thank us for our time in the village. This involved presenting us with traditional prayer scarves and giving us a gift of dried apricots. It was so thoughtful and lovely. A representative for the Village Education Committee (VEC) also did a speech to thank us in brilliant English. It was amazing to hear how grateful she was. It made me feel so appreciated and special.



# LITERATURE

## Exploring Regency Era Adaptations

Recent modern adaptations in film and TV of Regency Era stories (such as Jane Austen's 'Persuasion') have begun to receive criticism. It can be said that after the original 18th century publication, and then the release of a first adaptation, the film industry should make more original and up to date versions as time passes. This might also allow film makers to find more representative ways to introduce iconic characters. Film makers may even consider the need to cross boundaries in this process: where an on-screen representation might seem dissimilar in comparison to the original novel. Without a doubt, it is the novels of Jane Austen that have had the most adaptations made: the timeless popularity of her stories means that many people consider her books can translate easily into a movie.

Perhaps surprisingly however, after some movie releases, critics have started to argue that the films are becoming too modern, trying to fit 21st century social expectations and target every demographic of 21st century viewers. For instance, a recent adaptation of 'Persuasion' was released by Netflix on 8th July 2022, with the lead role of Anne Elliot played by Dakota Johnson. This sparked excitement on social media as people were happy to be expecting

a fresh, new adaptation of a famous Austen novel. However, as time fast-forwarded and snippets of the movie were released, critics started to lose hope and worry if this much anticipated re-make would live up to expectations. After the release of the trailer, critics jumped at the opportunity to comment on it - British GQ, Variety Magazine and The New York magazines all wanting to add their thoughts to the mix. According to the Rolling Stones article, written by K. Austen Collins,

“Austen's heroines were already ahead of their time. Modernizing them can feel like putting a hat on a hat. But we keep doing it because the situations of those novels feel timeless—not least because we keep drawing from them. Their blueprints have already been remade a thousand times over anyway, much like the work of Shakespeare. The dramas, tensions, pleasures are all familiar. We could just as well leave Jane Austen out of it.”

It would be more satisfactory and perhaps better received if the producers had created a 'new' Regency



movie in its own right, rather than complying to the trend of adaptations for the sake of marketing and revenue. Austen's novels are considered timeless, so it is exciting whenever something new gets released.

The matter at hand is that modernisation is repelling audiences from their screens as the industry tries to recreate classics, as in the case of "Persuasion". This wasn't the case when new Regency era series and Netflix original 'Bridgerton' was released. This series keeps to the theme of Regency era language and ideas (such as balls and royal engagements), but casually includes 21st century-level hooks like scandals and seductions: 'But there's also an unstuffy pop aesthetic (those balls feature string arrangements of songs like Ariana Grande's "Thank U, Next").' This article by James Poniewozik writing in The Times, refers to the inclusion of contemporary music to keep younger audiences engaged, whilst never losing the Regency era style: a clever way to use both time periods while still staying true to the original Austen-esque tone. Known for representing diverse characters among the cast, the historical series is fiction-romance in genre, but includes real historical figures such as Queen Charlotte re-imagined. Its modern aspects are shown by the progressive, 'colour-blind' casting and it has been praised for challenging the fixed narratives that have been set in place by historical events. Shelli Nicole writing in Vogue states:

“

'Bridgerton is taking its first steps toward true inclusion, which inevitably invites a critical eye'.

”

Nicole claims that notwithstanding Bridgerton may receive disagreeable reactions, its advanced merits in representation of ethnicities significantly demonstrates a new future for inclusivity in the industry.

Conversely, criticism is still found, despite the height of others' elation. It is argued that, even though it has a notable amount of inclusivity, there can be

more to do and further that the industry could go in embracing our diverse, 21st century pool of talented actors. For instance, the series is based around a white family and the intention for the daughters to find wealthy and eligible husbands descended from high status, wealthy classes and (ideally) nobility... one could question - why not go a step further in the



right direction and have the show centred around a different family of non-white ethnicity? To address this, in the same Vogue article referenced earlier, Nicole observes:

“

“That would have been a far more authentic step to take, and would have felt far more significant to its viewers of colour.”

”

This may not be relatable for all viewers, but I would argue - isn't that what most modern shows are like anyway? Why should this be any exception?

And so the debate rumbles on: should we stay 'true' to authentic stories from the past as we produce and cast actors for 21st century adaptations of these historic tales? Or should we embrace the diversity of the modern world as we bring these stories back to life? Are we even doing that enough right now, or should we already be doing more? What do you think?

# MUSIC

## Arcadia Album Review

Ramona Lisa's *Arcadia* is its own local world of organic electronic music — whimsical, mysterious and totally addictive. A world to be explored.

Caroline Polachek formed indie pop band Chairlift with Aaron Pfenning in 2005, before Patrick Wimberly joined the band in 2007. They released their first album 'Does You Inspire You' in 2008, before Pfenning left in 2010 and Polachek and Wimberly went on to release two more albums as a duo before the band dissolved in 2017. Afterwards, Polachek went on to release experimental ambient music under the name CEP (for Caroline Elizabeth Polachek), before dropping all of her past aliases to become the Caroline Polachek famous today. But where does *Arcadia* fit into all of this? It turns out that the music of Ramona Lisa is as liminal as the persona itself.

While still an active member of Chairlift, Caroline Polachek began working on her first solo project, *Arcadia*, during an artistic residency at the Villa Medici in Rome, stating "When I was looking out the window in Rome, I wanted this type of electronic music to feel as organic as what I was seeing". Strangely enough, this led Polachek to produce the entire album on her laptop, without any physical instruments or external microphones. That is, apart from field recordings of sounds she heard in her surroundings and, of course, her iconic, airy and almost operatic vocals. This lack of expensive equipment wasn't, however, due to necessity, but to pure experimentation.

Polachek began using these low-quality softwares as a way to throw herself into the work, a beginning, but soon became enthralled by the effect it had on the music — "the worse I'd allow myself to make things sound, the better they'd turn out." And so, Polachek spent the next few months modifying the basis that she had created at the Villa Medici while on tour with Chairlift. She recorded vocals with her laptop's low-quality, built-in microphone, wailing out delicious fluttery tones in hotel closets, empty terminals, aeroplane bathrooms and any other

quiet space she could get ahold of on the road. These questionable conditions not only helped Polachek to achieve the dreamy, lofi quality of her music, but actually helped her on a more personal level — "I stopped caring if someone could read the lyrics on my screen or hear me singing into my computer in the aeroplane bathroom." This loss of shame, and focus on the internal world over the external, became evident in the quirky, understated, deep world of *Arcadia* — Rome explored through fragmented memories and imagination.



Polachek had been performing select songs from *Arcadia* in 2013, under various different names (Theora Vorbis and Kimsin Kreft, to name a couple). When the time came to release the album, she had to choose her favourite persona to release it as, which leads us to Ramona Lisa, a name that Polachek had been using privately since 2005. "Ramona Lisa is a format; she's not a person," Polachek said in an interview with Pitchfork, "she's more like a genre or maybe more like a screenplay. It's like a set of images, motifs and shapes that kind of all work together for me." — to me, the distortion of Mona Lisa to create the dull name of a gormless girl in the



basement flat captures the simultaneous mundanity and beauty of Arcadia.

To me, all of the album's stories exist in a single world — a liminal town of lush green fields, vast black lakes, toads on the lanes, church spires the tallest buildings around, second to the sandstone school on the cover. This setting, Arcadia, is established in the eponymous opening song, a conceptual, minimal piece in which the vast, organic, sparse landscape becomes brighter and brighter, taking you through the wide open fields on the outskirts of this hypothetical town, through the livestock, past the lakeside, over the bridge, past the school and to the great church at the centre, as the sun creeps over the hills, waking the town up from a gloomy dawn to a golden dewy morning.

With the setting established, Polachek is able to start telling the local stories of the creatures that inhabit this mundane yet magical place. Beginning with perhaps the album's most danceable track, *Backwards and Upwards*. Light, full-bodied sounds underpinned by a groovy guttural hum, the track is as scatty as it is sensual, an unwanted, unstoppable love affair as a woman is quite literally swept off her feet.

While some songs are complex and hard to gauge, songs like *'Getaway Ride'* and *'Lady's Got Gills'* provide a more tangible narrative. *'Getaway Ride'* depicts the classic trope of getting into a relationship and into trouble; in the setting of Arcadia, however, this kleptomania is half-innocent petty theft and general mild rebellion. The sweeping synths and over-the-top delivery make the song feel big, while the lyrics, nonchalant, flirtatious exclamations of "So what?" and, of course, the song's iconic recurring "Cha cha cha" undermine this serious tone and create a sense of irony. Polachek captures the simultaneous maturity and naïvety of childhood romance and rebellion, all in all, making for a silly and fun, melodramatic ballad.

*'Lady's Got Gills'*, though, is arguably the most ballad-like song on the album, telling the tale of, unsurprisingly, a gilled, webbed woman and her admirer. Sung in the third person, I imagine a local

fisherwoman warning a man of his lover's condition before she slithers into the water and out of his life forever, closing with the line "Would you rather drown than say goodbye?". The following outro is a rich musical interpretation of the watery bay; tolls of the ships' bells and sloshes of water mirror the waves lapping at the man's slowly submerging ears as he drowns, spending his final moments with his marine lover. Not only does this narrative paint such a gorgeous story, but it also serves as a cautionary tale, a fable, warning us not to change ourselves for our lovers and our lovers for ourselves.

The abundance of these laments in the album, underpinned by its organic sounds, seem to serve as an exploration of the fleeting nature of love and life, against the backdrop of the reliability of nature itself.

The closing track, *'I Love Our World'*, is the longest, and arguably strangest one. Conceived basking in the rays of sun on a rooftop in Rome, Polachek wanted to capture the feeling of the sun on the skin, the very first moment of spring. Peppered with field recordings of birdsong from that very moment on the roof, and void of her voice, the song takes you there with her, indulging in the wonder of nature, not daring to disrespect it with spoken words.

Arcadia is strange but worldly — not alien stories but folklore. Encapsulating the magic of pastoral towns, a black and dark green masterpiece, filled with little stories and surrounded by strange, mystical wind instruments, bold bells and gongs, and the chirping of electronic cicadas. With it, Caroline Polachek demonstrates her versatility, uniqueness and total love for the art she creates.

# MUSIC

## It is easy to make your own music!

Music is everywhere. We all probably have our favourite star or band; they are all very talented and have their own style of performance. So, how can you make your own music? Here are a few tips that should make composing very easy, and you can also show off to your classmates:

- Open the app called Sibelius on your iPad, iPhone, desktop or laptop etc and choose the piano and guitar Manuscript score (like using Microsoft Word, open a new file in Sibelius and choose the sample) in the Solo section (just scroll down).
- Use 4/4 as your time signature (how many of a particular note value are contained in each bar) for your first try.
- Make your melody simple, just find the right notes that makes you feel comfortable; use predominantly crotchets and quavers. Don't make the notes too fast for example, by using semiquavers (which look like this - ♪).
- Think of a base (an accompaniment with the melody, usually made up of lower notes) with four chords (based on the piano keyboard) which is made up of three or more notes which aren't consecutive. You can get inspiration from other songs and use their base but adapt it to your own style as you don't want to just copy them, you want to be creative. For example, C major chord with the notes C, E, G in any order, F major chord with the notes F, A, C in any order etc. You can make it as complicated as you want but if it sounds weird, it is probably not a good one.
- Add decoration notes or extra notes but in a faster or slower tempo and at a higher or lower pitch than the original melody and base. You can skip this step if you don't want to make your first piece too complicated.

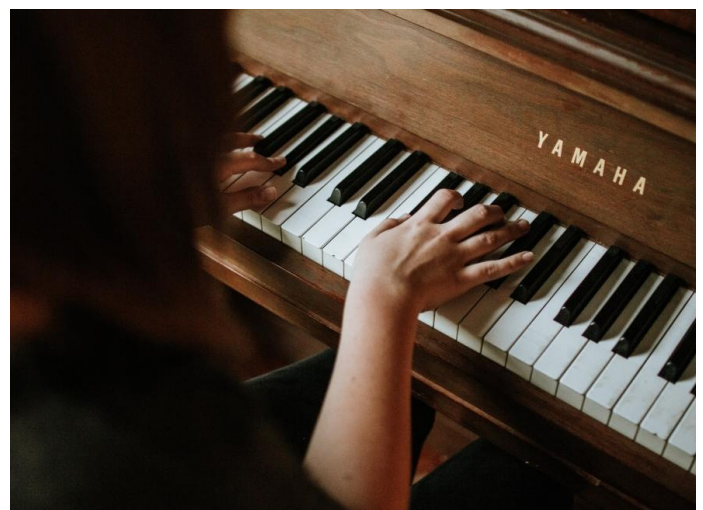
- Type in the metronome mark (choose the "Aa" and type in ♩ = 180) to make the tempo a little bit faster, I recommend 180.
- Finally, play the music and you can transpose the key to any major or minor (which is the tonality of the music) if you want to make it sound better.

If you want to compose on paper, that's also fine, just follow the same steps but write on paper with the staves which are the lines where you put your notes, and there must be five lines.

After a few tries you will make your own music score and this is a good way to spend your time as you can be creative and make all different kinds of music like K-pop music, meme music, TikTok trend music and your own.

Other than composing, just listening to music will really change your mood. I have played the piano for eleven years and I am now Grade 8. I really enjoy playing the piano as it is a way for me to release stress and is satisfying to be able to play any music I have heard.

I really hope that everyone can enjoy music, no matter what style it is, be it electric, rock, romantic, classical, jazz, pop or anything else. Hope you have fun!



# ECONOMICS

## Roswell's UFO Economy

It's July 1947 and 75 miles north of Roswell, New Mexico, rancher William Brazel discovers some unusual debris on his land. Confused, he takes it to the Sheriff in Roswell, who consults the Roswell Army Air Field (RAAF). Rumours start to fly across the city that a mysterious flying disc has crashed on Brazel's ranch and the next day the RAAF confirms it. However, in a sudden turn of events, the RAAF revokes their statement, claiming it was merely a weather balloon. It wouldn't be until 1994 that the world would learn what the debris truly was – a spy drone that was created to detect sound waves above the USSR.

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Summer 1947 would go on to be known as the '1947 flying disc craze' and, as if by chance, coincided with the beginning of the Cold War. Across America people were spotting what they thought were UFOs but were, in reality, military technologies being developed for use against the USSR. And the government let the people believe this lie, they would rather people believed in aliens than know what they were developing. Roswell was not the only location to experience UFO related activity, so why has the city become so famous for it?

This can most likely be attributed to the fact it was a crash site, rather than just a sighting, like so many other places. You can deny sightings and claim that the viewer saw something else or is misremembering, but you cannot invalidate physical evidence so easily.

Since the incident almost 80 years ago, fans of the supernatural still flock to the city, treating it like a pilgrimage that can connect them to life from another planet. And Roswell is embracing it. In 1996, two years after the incident had been disproved, the Roswell UFO Festival was founded and has since attracted thousands of visitors. The 75th anniversary in 2022 saw more than 40,000 people flock to the city, almost doubling the city's small population, and

gave a \$2.19 million boost to the local economy.

However, it's not just once a year that the city celebrates its supernatural history. Roswell boasts a plethora of alien related entertainment. The streets are lined with lampposts topped with alien heads and, upon entering the city boundary, you are greeted with a "Welcome to Roswell" sign featuring a 3D flying saucer, in addition to an alien family whose spaceship has broken down. Within the city, a range of museums and themed businesses also capitalise on the alien obsession. The city is so dedicated to creating an extra-terrestrial experience that the McDonalds is even shaped like a spaceship.



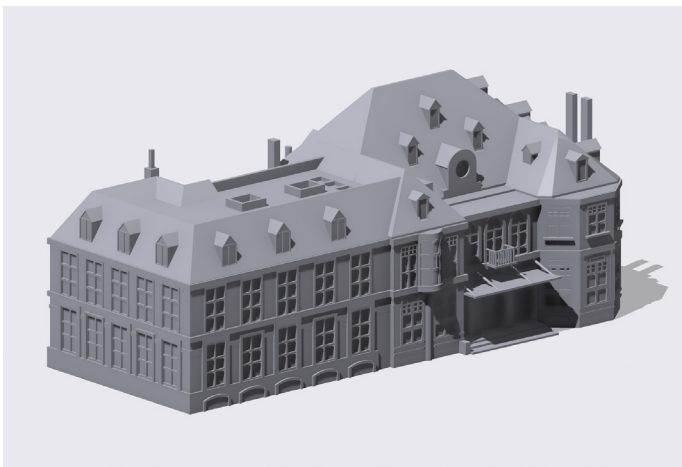
This dedication to all things alien has paid off for the city. The yearly tourist revenue is around \$14 million and, for a city of less than 50,000, this is a large amount of money. For reference, Farmington – a similar size to Roswell, generates a total revenue of just over \$1 million, which includes all income, not just tourism. Although the UFO mystery that started this craze has long since been debunked, Roswell is still able to thrive off the curiosity and fascination it has created, even almost 80 years later.

# DESIGN

## Using Shapr3d to make models

Shapr3d is a CAD software that is available on the school iPads and can be used for designing and making 3D models. The best thing about using Shapr3d is that it is very user friendly compared to other CAD softwares such as Blender. This allows new users to create intricate models of their choice. These models can then be 3D printed.

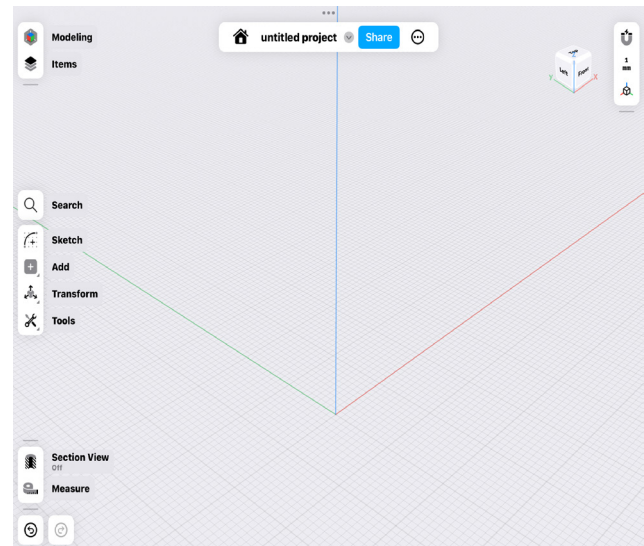
I have been working on a project to replicate the entire school in Shapr3d, which will then be 3D printed into physical models. So you can do very awesome things with Shapr3d.



Although Shapr3d is very user friendly, it can be tricky to tackle at first. This is a short guide on making Shapr3d models. It will not cover all of the features of Shapr3d since that would take a considerable amount of time but it will introduce you to the main features of Shapr3d. There are tutorials on the app itself that will teach you how to make more fun and complicated models and go more in-depth.

### 1. Navigation

**Sign up/Log in** to Shapr3d and make a **new project** by clicking on the plus button which is at the top of the interface. It should look like this:



Use 1 finger to **rotate** the camera, 2 to **move** the camera and pinch to **zoom** in and out.

The **toolbar on the left** is used to make the model itself and you will primarily be using the sketch function.

The **cube in the top right corner** allows you to align your view with the different axis. So, if you want to sketch something, click on 'top' to go to the top view and so on.

Navigating through the user interface is quite easy and you will get the hang of it as you use the app more.

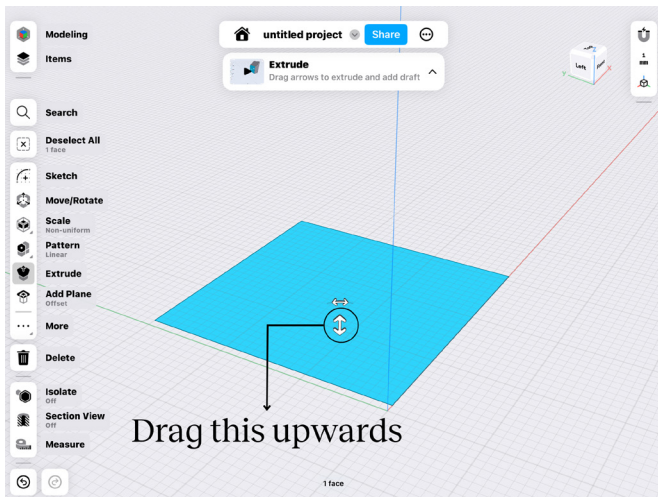
### 2. Your first 3D model.

Use the **sketch function** and click on '**rectangle**'. Drag your Apple Pencil across the screen to make a rectangle.

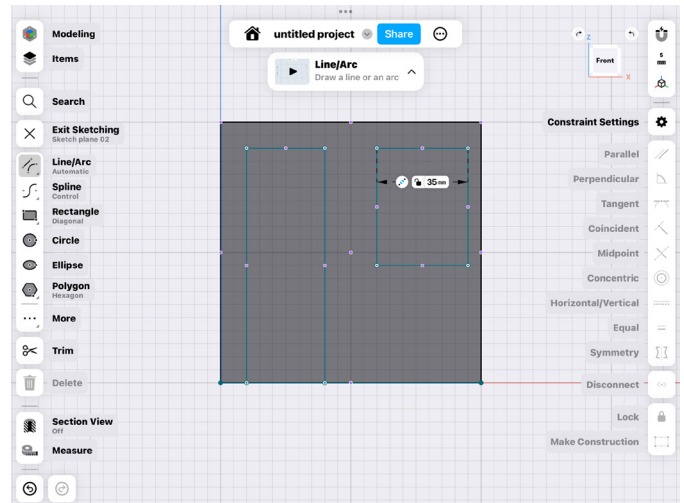
Now you have got a 2D drawing but we are looking to make it 3D.

After making the rectangle, **tap** on it using your **Apple Pencil**. Now **drag the arrow** upwards and you will get a cuboid!

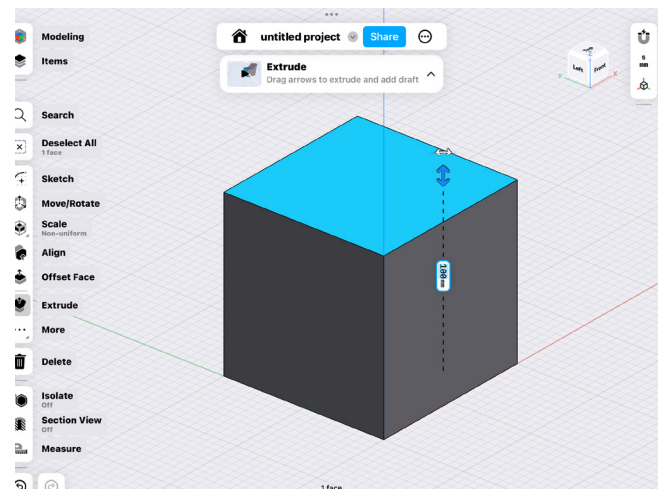
And that's your first ever model. It might seem underwhelming at first but it is the start of a journey!



a door and a window onto it. Select 'line' and draw a simple window and a door.



Make sure that when you are turning sketches into 3D models, they are **closed shapes**.



### 3. Adding Detail

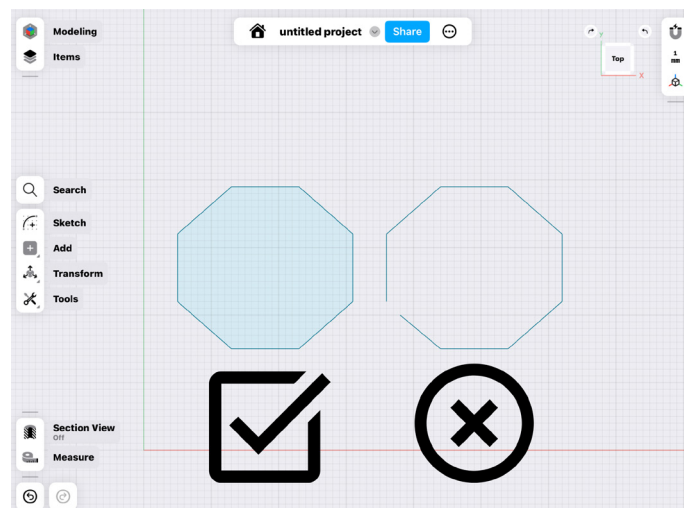
If you want to draw a face, you might start off by making the structure, drawing a rough circle for the face and lines where the nose, ears, eyes and mouth go. The same goes with 3D models.

To make something like the school building or any building in general, you start off with a cuboid. Then you sketch on it and carve the details into the cuboid.

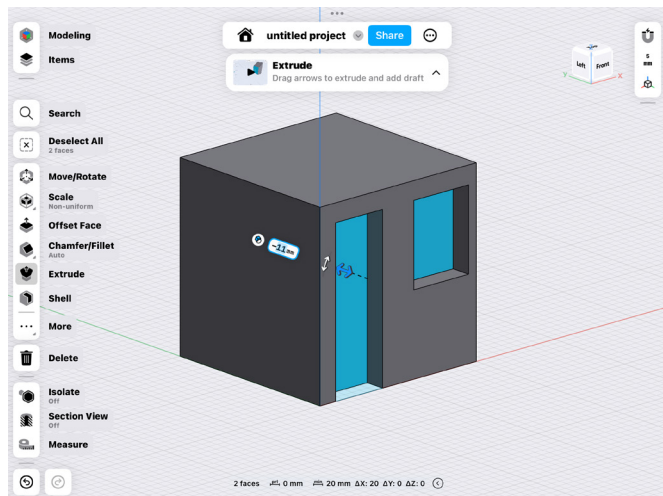
The same goes with any other 3D model. You start off by making a simple base to work on, then sketch more and add to it as you progress.

Let's turn this cube into a cottage.

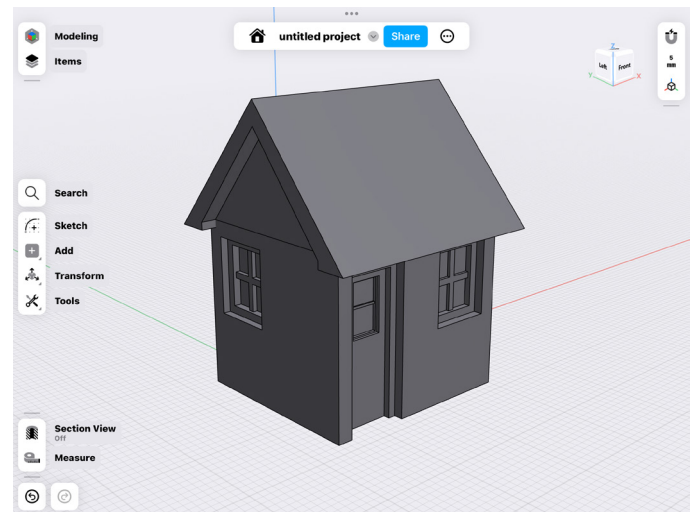
Click on **deselect all** on the left toolbar. Now **double-tap** on one of the surfaces of the cube. This will select one surface for you to sketch on. Let's sketch



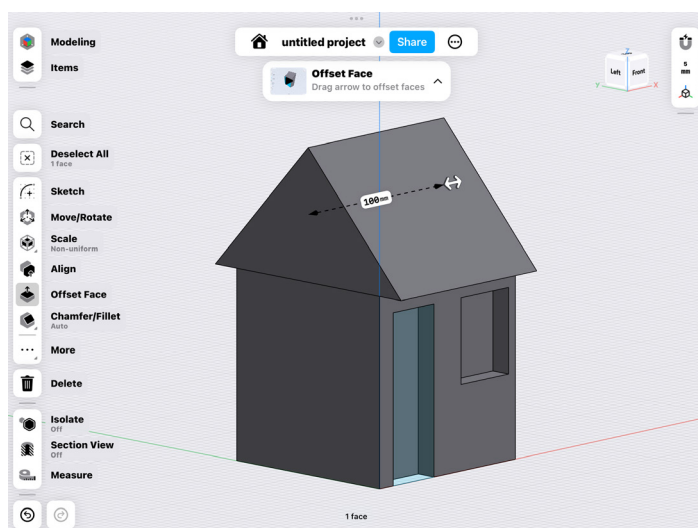
Now **rotate** the camera and **select** the window and the door. Then, use the **arrow** to push them inwards. It should look something like this:



This is what the somewhat refined model looks like:



Tap on the blue sketches and delete them if you want to. You can now add a roof. **Double tap** the right side of the cube to select it and then sketch a slanted roof using **lines**. Make sure that it is a **closed shape**. You can now turn this sketch into a 3D model by **tapping** on it and **dragging the arrow**.

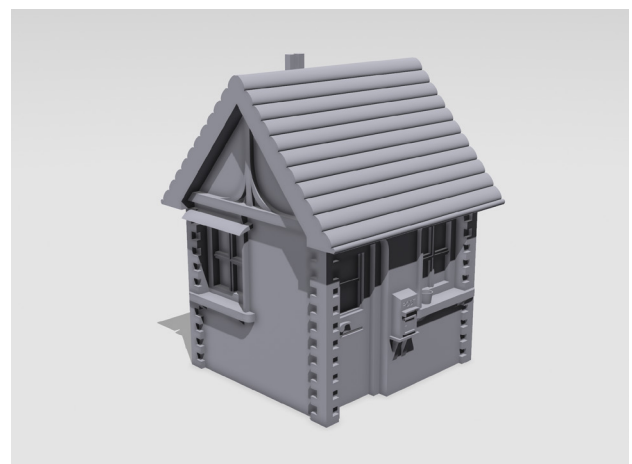


If you have made something that is similar to this, you have learnt the basics of Shapr3d. You can play around with the other functions and features and make cool models as you learn more. Making models of buildings is pretty straightforward, but making complicated models such as faces is something that takes a lot of time to master. However, Shapr3d is way easier than other softwares and it can be used on your school iPad.

The next time you are bored, hop onto Shapr3d and mess around. You are going to end up with some awesome models as well as learning a valuable skill!

*You can then 3D print these models.*

This is the final product:



If you want to make something larger, you can tap on it again and drag the arrow.

Now I will draw more windows, windowsills, a doorframe, and generally refine the model.

# SCIENCE

## Ethics surrounding human cloning

The discussion of and research into manipulating genetics has become more prevalent as the technologies and understanding of genetics have improved. The aim is to engineer genetic modifications which will, in theory, take advantage of natural genetics and manipulate them to alleviate genetic diseases, increase crop yield or to attempt to conserve endangered species to name a few. However, morals and ethics surrounding the genetic technologies have raised much controversy and conversation. This article will explore the two main areas of genetic technologies: human cloning and genetic modification. An argument for and against each sector will be presented with evidence, in particular focussing on whether the benefits outway the potential moral dilemmas associated with them.

### Human cloning

Definition: According to 'Scientific and Medical Aspects of Reproductive Cloning', a clone is the creation of individuals that contain identical sets of nuclear genetic material (DNA). To have complete genetic identity, clones must have not only the same nuclear genes, but also the same mitochondrial genes.

I am sure we have all heard of Dolly the sheep who was the first successful clone of a mammal. Dolly, who lived to the age of 6, was cloned from an adult somatic cell using the process of nuclear transfer from a cell taken from a mammary gland. The company PPL Therapeutics and the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Roslin Institute, which is part of the University of Edinburgh, claimed that Dolly was cloned purely for the commercial purpose of producing pharmaceuticals and that they had no goal for human reproductive cloning. Why was this? I expect, some people might think that human cloning is inherently morally wrong. Currently, human cloning is not safe as the technology is not advanced enough but, for the purposes of this article, let's say it is.

A multitude of ethical issues have been identified such as the hypothesis that the clones would possess less moral worth, or that the cloned child could undergo some sort of physical, social or emotional



harm (Cloning, Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2023). We all have a right to a unique genetic identity which cloning would violate. Most people, I anticipate, would not want a clone of themselves. Our DNA is what endows each human being with uniqueness and dignity (Callahan, 1993). Because cloning recreates a pre-existing DNA sequence, the cloned child would be denied that uniqueness and, therefore, arguably, their dignity could be compromised. Not only this but the cloned child would not have what is known as an 'open future'. Another common concern is that cloning is morally wrong because it oversteps the boundaries of humans and would become 'unnatural' or we would be 'playing god'. However, this argument does not suffice because most medical advancements such as vaccines or pacemakers would then also be deemed

as playing with the laws of nature. Finally, human cloning has been called out to commodify human life as a research product. A bioethics company suggests that, regardless of one's views on abortion or personhood of the human embryo, human embryos are unequivocally human beings and therefore should not be subjected to destructive research.

On the other hand, cloning does have potential benefits. Cloning babies would be desirable under certain circumstances, says Ian Wilmut, leader of the team that created Dolly the sheep (Singh D, 2004). He goes on to argue that it would be beneficial if it prevented genetic diseases such as motor neurone disease, which affects the brain and nerves and is ultimately fatal. Lastly, some suggest that human cloning could help with infertility and would be ethically justifiable for this reason. The child would possess nuclear genetic characteristics of both parents. The use of cloning combined with genetic modification could therefore be attractive to some infertile couples because it would enable both members to have a nuclear DNA relationship to the child (Journal of Medical Ethics).

The debate over human cloning is currently very hypothetical given its ethical violations and unavailable technology. But do you think this will change?

## Genetic modification

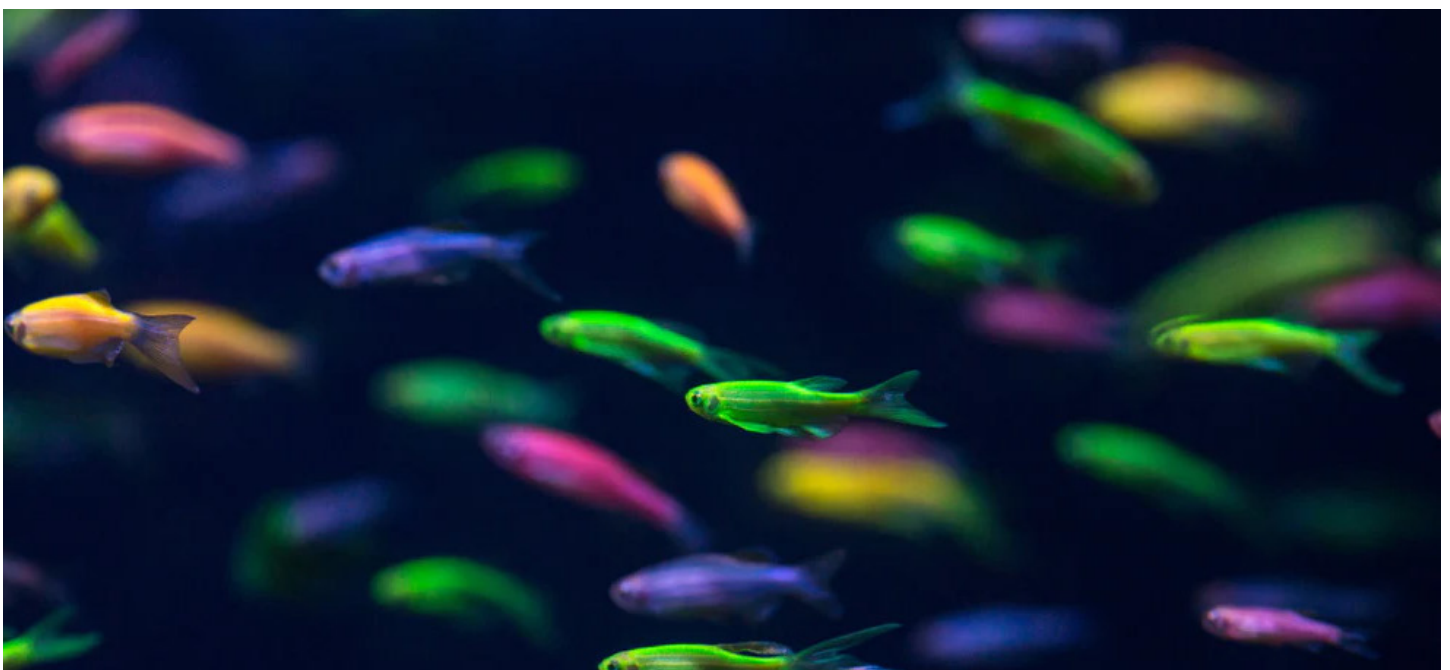
Definition of modification: According to the National Human Genome Research Institute, genetic modification is a process that uses laboratory-based

technologies to alter the DNA makeup of an organism.

Genetic modification (GM) is a far less hypothetical debate given its current use in the agricultural and research field. Its main identified uses are to increase food quality and yield, to create disease resistance, to increase environmental benefits and for medical advancements.

An example of genetic engineering is when pigs have been genetically engineered to express the  $\Delta 12$  fatty acid desaturase gene (from spinach) for higher levels of omega 3, and goats have been genetically engineered to express human lysozyme in their milk. Such advances may add to the nutritional value of animal-based products (Genetic Engineering of Animals, 2011). The use of GM, however, has raised controversy in the past as, in some cases, GM was used for the sole purpose of companionship. In 2003, a company in the United States put on the market something called 'GloFish' which were made by inserting genes from sea anemone and jellyfish into zebrafish to express fluorescent proteins. Their sale sparked controversial ethical debates in California — the only US state to prohibit the sale of GloFish as pets (PMC; Ethical issues, including welfare concerns, 2011). Other 'designer animals' have been manufactured by removing genes with knock-out techniques. For example, in the creation of hypoallergenic cats some companies use genetic engineering techniques to remove the gene that codes for the major cat allergen Fel d 1.

This introduces the idea of designer animals as a





possible side effect of GM. The phrase 'designer animals' typically refers to animals that have been genetically modified or selectively bred to possess specific traits or characteristics for various purposes, such as aesthetics, research, agriculture, or even as pets. There are various views people may have. Negative ones being moral objections, animal welfare, the unknown consequences and commercial interest. On the other hand, designer animals can help with medical research (using animals to mimic specific human gene mutations), disease resistance, and could have some possible environmental benefits (for instance by modifying bacteria that can help clean up oil spills and reduce pollution).



Genetic modification in humans has huge potential benefits however only a few gene therapies are approaching clinical use and remain extraordinarily expensive. One type of genome editing is somatic, which changes the genes in patient cells to treat a medical condition. By contrast, 'heritable genome editing would change genes in eggs, sperm, or early embryos to try to control the traits of a future child. Such alterations would affect every cell of the resulting person and all subsequent generations' (Center for Genetics and Society; 2023). However, heritable genome editing is widely considered unacceptable and thus is banned in 70 countries.

In conclusion, the ethical debates surrounding human cloning and genetic modification are inconclusive, multifaceted and complex. Both new and hypothetical technologies have tremendous potential to bring

about medical advancements, disease prevention and enhanced characteristics. However, they also evoke deep-seated concerns about ethics, consent, and unintended consequences. Striking a balance between scientific progress and ethical boundaries is essential.

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# FICTION



## a CLIFTON HIGH PRIVATE EYE mystery

The last thing that was going through Mr. Hilham's head before his fate was sealed was the thought that his coffee tasted a little off. It didn't take long after this for him to collapse out of his chair, and begin to make a violent outburst of choking noises. Suffice to say this was not something you see every Christmas assembly, so students and teachers alike, deeming this slightly more interesting than the awards that were being handed out, all turned their heads around in time to witness the beginning of Mr. Hilham's demise. Kicking away the shards of his shattered coffee mug, the nearest first-aid-qualified teacher rushed towards him, almost slipping over the pool of spilled coffee that was seeping into the Main Hall floorboards. An attempt at resuscitation was then made, but it was in vain. By the time a call to the police could be placed, Mr. Hilham had become the third person to be murdered in the school.

"I'll tell you what happened next," Mr. Gudmund said. "Chaos ensued, that's what happened." He cast his mind back to 20 minutes prior. Him attempting to tell the assembly-goers to leave the Main Hall in an orderly fashion, and no one listening to the 'orderly' part. Teachers shouting at their phones, trying to recite the school postcode to the police but failing to remember what lay beyond 'BS8'. That one student who somehow managed to stay slumped asleep in his seat amidst the anarchy that brewed around him.

Police Detective Sergeant Rosa Ryan looked up from her notepad.

"'Chaos ensued' is a very dramatic statement," she said. "But could you, you know, provide a bit more detail though? Just to give me an idea of how Mr. Hilham died."

Mr. Gudmund stared at his hands miserably. "In truth, I wasn't really able to catch what happened to Mr. Hilham," he confessed. "I know, I was on the stage when it went down, I should have had a good view of his death. But my head was swirling when I saw all hell break loose. What was I supposed to do?"

DS Ryan sighed heavily. "You know, this is starting to look awfully suspicious for the school. Didn't a teacher get murdered here just a few months ago? And wasn't there that other guy who was shot in April? What was his name?"

"Mr. Guttman," Mr. Gudmund said. "Nice guy. Very similar name to mine."

"That's the one," she said. "Okay, so if you didn't manage to see how Mr. Hilham died, we do have a list of people who happened to be sitting close to him during the time of death- Mrs. Joanns, Mrs. Woode, Mrs. Gyles, and Mr. Hawkin. Remember, these guys are witnesses, not suspects, so don't treat them as such."

"No student witnesses?"

"Yeah, according to this report, Mr. Hilham sat at the back row of the hall, where no students were sitting."

"That makes sense," Mr. Gudmund nodded. He then glumly buried his face into his hands, plunging his vision into darkness. He welcomed this momentary lack of sight.

"Where are these witnesses now?" He finally asked after a while.

"Staff room," DS Ryan responded. "We just told them to go get something hot to drink to calm the nerves."

Under police supervision, of course.”

“May I go see them, please?” Mr. Gudmund asked. “Just as a friend; I want to go and talk to them. I’m pretty shaken myself, so I don’t imagine they’d be any less traumatised from witnessing a death up close.”

DS Ryan stood. “You’re the boss here.”

The witnesses were dispersed around the staff room, each with their own activity on hand. Maths teacher Mr. Hawkin sat solitarily, sipping coffee from one of his custom printed mugs inscribed with his name and the Pythagorean theorem under it. Mrs. Woode, a Food teacher, busied herself by foraging through the storage cabinets, trying to find a snack to compliment her tea that met her expectations. Teacher of Geography Mrs. Gyles, with coffee in hand, was talking about how much she was in disbelief that a death just happened before her very eyes to the Chemistry teacher Mrs. Joanns, who did not have a drink at all and just cupped her hands over her mouth and breathed into them to warm herself up.

Mrs. Gyles was the first to notice Mr. Gudmund and DS Ryan enter the room.

“Mr. Gudmund,” she said. “What is happening? Is Mr. Hilham actually dead?”

Mr. Gudmund nodded solemnly. “Unfortunately, he is,” he confirmed. “But don’t you guys worry about that now.”

He carried on with his pep talk. “Right now, just hold on to your drinks, and I’m here if anyone wants to talk to me about anything. You’ve seen enough for one day, go home and enjoy the Christmas break, if that’s alright?” he turned his head to DS Ryan, who nodded.

He paused. “And I should be able to take care of this,” he said.

“With help from the police as well, of course.” DS Ryan added.

“Is there any way I can help?” Mrs. Woode offered. “I don’t think I’ll be able to sleep tonight without knowing I contributed to the investigation

anyways.”

The Detective Sergeant stopped to think, then said: “If you think you have any information to reveal, please do tell us.”

Mrs. Woode nodded. “I shall start sharing, then.”

The five teachers gathered on a sofa while DS Ryan stood watching them.

“So, I was just hanging out in the staff room waiting for the Christmas assembly,” Mrs. Woode explained. “I was about to leave – this was about 5 minutes before the assembly started – when Mr. Hilham walked in, in a hurry. I think he said something about wanting to quickly grab a cup of coffee before he headed off to assembly.”

Mr. Gudmund nodded. “Interesting,” he said. “And did you see the process of him making the coffee?”

Mrs. Woode shook her head. “I saw him taking a mug out of a cupboard and rinsing it out with water, but unfortunately I left before I could see him actually start to make the coffee. I know this looks highly incriminating for me. And I think we all suspect that Mr. Hilham probably had his coffee spiked by someone.”

“Spiked?” Mr. Hawkin repeated in shock. It was only after a brief pause that he was able to muster up words again. “Oh dear,” he realised. “That’s actually a good point. I was under the impression that he had a heart attack or something. Wait, if he was poisoned, would that not make this the third murder to happen in the school?”

“Sadly it would,” Mr. Gudmund said. “But we still mustn’t rule out the possibility that there was no foul play involved in his death.”

DS Ryan nodded in agreement. “We’ll just have to wait for the toxicology report to find out. If he was poisoned, though, we would need to find out who was the last person to interact with him before his death,” she said. “Mrs. Woode, you mentioned that you saw him in the staff room, could you have been this last person?”

"That honour would probably go to me," Mrs. Gyles admitted. "I confess, I chatted with Mr. Hilham for a little while before the assembly started. And maybe a little bit more after that as well, during the assembly. I'm sorry, I know I shouldn't talk during assemblies, but we were sitting in the back row."

"If that's the case, that would explain why he didn't immediately drink his coffee and drop dead before the assembly started," Mr. Gudmund stroked his chin in thought. "Being preoccupied with conversation, he would only find the opportunity to take a sip in the middle of the assembly."

"That, and the coffee would be too hot anyways," Mrs. Joanns suddenly joined in. "He would need to wait until it cooled down before drinking it."

"Either way, that provides ample time for someone to put something in his mug," Mr. Gudmund said. "In what order did you guys sit in the back row?" he asked.

"I sat at the far left end of the row," Mr. Hawkin recounted. "Mrs. Woode, you sat to my right, didn't you? To Mrs. Woode's right was Mrs. Joanns, and to hers was Mrs. Gyles. And Mr. Hilham sat in the seat furthest to the right."

"So Mrs. Gyles, you were the only one to sit next to Mr. Hilham." DS Ryan said.

"Yes, I was," Mrs. Gyles responded. "But in my defence, Mr. Hilham was holding his mug in his right hand for most of the time we were there. So pretty much the only way I could have put something in his coffee was by reaching across his lap, and Mr. Hilham would've definitely noticed me doing that."

"Did you notice anyone walking around Mr. Hilham suspiciously then? Perhaps someone could have tried to inconspicuously sprinkle something in his drink as they strolled past his mug."

Mrs. Gyles shook her head. "Mr. Hilham was pretty late to turn up at the Main Hall. Most people were already seated by the time he came with his mug, so I don't think there could have been anyone who had the opportunity to spike his drink," she explained. "But then again, I'm not too sure, as I said I was chatting with him quite a bit. I could have missed something important." Sighing dramatically, she paused to think, trying to dig up something useful from her memory.

It was at that point that a cold breeze made its way into the Staff room, and Mrs. Joanns shivered, as she still had not had something to drink.

Eventually, Mr. Gudmund spoke up. "DS Ryan, would we be allowed to go back to the scene of the crime, just to let the witnesses jog their memories? Perhaps just being in the Main Hall could prompt some useful memories to resurface."

DS Ryan shrugged nonchalantly. "If that would help, then go for it," she said.

And go for it they did.

"The body's been taken away by our forensics guys, but you guys will still need to stay outside the yellow tape." DS Ryan said.

She led the teachers through the Pembroke Room and into the Main Hall. Mr. Gudmund looked down at the floor and saw the chalk outline of a body drawn on the wooden floorboards. Bright yellow tape emblazoning the words 'POLICE LINE: DO NOT CROSS' flanked the area where the chalk body was splayed out, along with five plastic chairs, the furthest right of which was poetically knocked over.

A man clad in a white forensic suit approached the Detective Sergeant.

"We've sent the broken pieces of the coffee mug to the mobile lab," he said. "We should be able to whip up an analysis report in no time."

"Good work," DS Ryan praised him. "I've just brought these witnesses in here in case they remember anything else about the death. I'll be sure to not let them touch any of the evidence."

The forensics agent nodded, and left the hall.

For a good half a minute, the teachers just stood there in silence, staring intently at the five chairs. Eventually, Mr. Hawkin turned away.

"I can't do this," he sighed. "I've known him for so long."

Mrs. Joanns also looked away, and took a seat in one of the nearby chairs outside of the tape.

"It was all going so well," she said in misery. "I'd finally finished teaching my Year 11s everything in topic 4.10 in time for the January mocks. We'd all received our Secret Santa gifts. And we were just half an hour away from the holidays."

Mr. Gudmund suddenly felt a pang of guilt for taking the witnesses back to the scene of the crime.

"I'm sorry," he said. "Clearly, being here has dredged up more memories than we expected. We can leave if you want. We'll find another way to get more evidence."

Mr. Hawkin nodded. "I'm not even sure I believe that he's been murdered. He did tell me that his health had been faltering recently."

All eyes turned to him.

"He told that to you?" Mr. Gudmund asked.

"Yeah," Mr. Hawkin responded. "For the past week he's been telling me that he's been a lot more under the weather than usual. I told him to go see a doctor, but he insisted on waiting until after we broke up for Christmas, so he wouldn't need to take sick leave."

He cupped his hand over his beard then rubbed his temples with his fingers. "I can't believe he's gone now because of that. I'd known him for so long. He'd been my Head of Maths for years."

The five teachers and the DS all stood silently once more, this time not in concentration but in grief. It was DS Ryan who broke the silence this time.

"Mr. Gudmund," she said to the Head of School, "Can I speak to you in private?"

"I have reasons to suspect them all," DS Ryan put it bluntly. "Every one of those witnesses could have done it."

Mr. Gudmund leaned on the Pembroke Room wall and nodded. "I more or less arrived at that same conclusion."

"I'll start," DS Ryan said. "In Mr. Hawkin's lament for Mr. Hilham, he mentioned that Mr. Hilham was his Head of Maths. As morbid as it is, that made me realise that perhaps he killed him to thin the job competition."

"And Mrs. Joanns," Mr. Gudmund said. "Obviously she's a Chemistry teacher, she'd have the knowledge needed to produce something poisonous. And you know how you told the witnesses to drink something hot to calm themselves? Did you notice that Mrs. Joanns was the only one that wasn't having a hot drink? Could that perhaps be a sign of guilt over killing Mr. Hilham via hot drink? I don't imagine you'd have much of an appetite left after poisoning someone to death."

DS Ryan nodded, then said: "That's a good point, but it is kind of a stretch. Though I'm gonna be honest, so is my point about Mr. Hawkin. Realistically, it's not those two."

A nod from Mr. Gudmund. "Fair enough."

DS Ryan continued. "Mrs. Woode, on the other hand. She's the food and nutrition expert, she can probably also whip up a poison cocktail with ease. We also don't know how much of the stuff she said about running into Mr. Hilham in the staff room is true. After all, she would have only needed to tell the truth about when Mr. Hilham entered the room



and when she exited it, those two timings are the only two events in her statement which other people could have potentially been witness to. Whatever went on behind closed doors, however, is a mystery. For all we know, Mrs. Woode could have put cyanide in Mr. Hilham's coffee then, and that certainly would have killed him instantly."

"And Mrs. Gyles is a Geography teacher," Mr. Gudmund said. "Which means she probably knows where to find and harvest poison that could kill a horse. It's December right now, which means that certain types of poisonous mushrooms are ripe for harvest. Like the Fool's funnel mushroom, for example. These mushrooms grow in grassy areas and can be found in the UK, so it's not impossible that Mrs. Gyles found some in the Downs, then ground them up into a powder so that she could slip it in Mr. Hilham's drink."

"First of all, how do you know all this?" DS Ryan asked. "And secondly, if Mr. Hilham did manage to ingest this mushroom powder, would it not take a while for symptoms to manifest? That means Mr. Hilham wouldn't have dropped dead immediately."

"I'm a Geography teacher too," Mr. Gudmund responded. "So I know that if Mrs. Gyles has the same level of interest in the environment as I do, she'd certainly have the know-how needed to poison a guy. As for the symptoms, some mushrooms require just half an hour-ish for them to start appearing. Remember who told us about Mr. Hilham being occupied in conversation for 30 minutes?"

DS Ryan put her arms up to her head in disbelief. "Mrs. Gyles!" she said.

Mr. Gudmund nodded. "The same person with the most expertise on mushrooms. So to cover up Mr. Hilham's potential ingestion of mushroom powder, she could have lied about chatting to Mr. Hilham for half an hour. What if she had poisoned his coffee right after he sat next to her, and Mr. Hilham did drink it at the very beginning of the assembly? That way--"

"That way the symptoms of the mushrooms would kick in half an hour into the assembly, which is consistent with Mr. Hilham's time of death." DS Ryan finished his sentence. "Also, she was the only one sitting next to Mr. Hilham, so feasibly, she is the one who had a shot at poisoning his coffee."

"So yeah," Mr. Gudmund said. "Mrs. Woode and Mrs. Gyles look like the most likely candidates right now. But why would they even do such a thing in the first place? What beef could they have with Mr. Hilham?"

"Could be anything. Could be money, could be revenge."

"But why has it come to this? What could possibly be worth killing over?"

DS Ryan crossed her arms broodingly. "I guess we'll just need to work harder to find out."

When they went back into the Main Hall, the four witnesses were once again at their own activities. Mrs. Joanns was still sitting in a chair staring blankly at the 'DO NOT CROSS' tape, Mr. Hawkin also sat, but with his fancy coffee mug in hand. Mrs. Woode stood and gazed at the crime scene intently, as if trying to bring up a memory. Mrs. Gyles did the same, except she was squatted next to the chalk outline.

This time Mrs. Woode noticed Mr. Gudmund with DS Ryan first, and spoke.

"Detective Sergeant, I'm not sure I want to be here much longer," she said. "It is supposed to be the Christmas break right now."

DS Ryan nodded. "It is indeed. But I'm afraid you might need to stay a little while longer, just so that we can ask you guys a few more questions."

"Since when did we become suspects?" Mrs. Gyles asked.

DS Ryan was about to respond when her walkie-talkie made a beeping noise. She spoke into it, and a garbled voice answered.

"Thank you, officer." DS Ryan finally said after the voice stopped speaking, then looked up at the witnesses.

"So," she began. "My guys have finished a preliminary blood test report. We have found out the cause of death of Mr. Hilham."

"What was it?" Mr. Gudmund asked.

"An overdose," DS Ryan said. "A fentanyl overdose."

Mr. Gudmund immediately turned his eyes to the four witnesses to see if DS Ryan's remark elicited a reaction from any one of them, and, to his surprise, saw both Mrs. Joanns and Mr. Hawkin suddenly sit up. Both of their faces morphed into an expression that could only be described as a blend of confusion and realisation.

Mrs. Joanns opened her mouth to speak, but Mr. Hawkin beat her to it.

"Mr. Gudmund!" he demanded. "I know who the murderer is."

Almost at the same time, Mrs. Joanns blurted out: "The murderer, I think I know who it is."

Mr. Hawkin glared at her like a hawk in contempt for talking over him, then turned to the Head of School and the Detective. "I have to speak to you both, privately. Now."

Mr. Gudmund looked at Mr. Hawkin, then at Mrs. Joanns, then back at Mr. Hawkin. Finally, with a slight hint of hesitation, he said: "I'm sorry, we're going to go with Mr. Hawkin first. He did speak up first."

"No!" Mrs. Joanns protested. But Mr. Hawkin was already walking out the Main Hall exit with Mr. Gudmund and DS Ryan.

"It's Mrs. Joanns," Mr. Hawkin said. "She's the only one with the means to make fentanyl."

Mr. Gudmund frowned. "How can you be so sure, Mr. Hawkin? It's entirely possible that someone could have just bought it off a drug dealer or something."

But Mr. Hawkin kept nodding. "She's the one. I'm sure of it," he paused, then hesitantly said: "I'm sure, because she once bragged to me that she had all the ingredients needed to produce fentanyl."

"That is concerning," Mr. Gudmund said.

"In fact, go search CB6 now," Mr. Hawkin suggested. "And I guarantee that you'll find some more stashed somewhere in there."

Mr. Gudmund turned to DS Ryan, who nodded, said: "I'll send some officers to go check it out", and spoke into her radio. Then, the three waited.

"So when did Mrs. Joanns tell you about her having the means to make fentanyl?" Mr. Gudmund asked after a while.

"It was in September," Mr. Hawkin said. "I bumped into her right after one of the Open Mornings ended, and we initiated a conversation. She told me that day that she had to hide some of her chemicals deep into the cupboards in case a visitor decided to take an interest in them."

He looked down at his shoes in shame. "I didn't think much of it at first," he said. "I thought she was just telling a joke about having the capabilities to make drugs. I didn't know that she'd actually do it and then use them to, you know..."

Mr. Hawkin stopped talking, and Mr. Gudmund did not speak either. The silence was broken when DS

Ryan's walkie-talkie piped up again.

"Ma'am, we have finished our search in the chemistry lab," the voice on the other side of the radio said. "And we have indeed successfully located a resealable bag of powder labelled 'C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>28</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O'. That's the chemical formula of fentanyl."

Mr. Gudmund's sombre expression was shattered as his head physically reeled backward in shock. DS Ryan kept her cool and answered her radio.

"Good work, officer," she said. "Looks like we'll have one more chemistry teacher coming back to the station with us."

"One more thing, ma'am," came the voice on the radio. "We also finished our analysis on the shattered pieces of Mr. Hilham's mug that we swept up. We did find traces of fentanyl in it, among other things like his saliva and some hot glue adhesive. We've sent a report your way."

DS Ryan pulled her phone out of her pocket and checked her inbox. In it was an email containing a PDF file. She opened it, then showed it to Mr. Gudmund.

Craning his neck towards the phone screen, he looked down at the image on the PDF. It was a picture of the fragments of a broken mug, crudely pieced back together on a table so that it once again formed the face of a mug. On this cracked face were three symbols for the element holmium, spelling out 'Ho Ho Ho'. There was also a name printed under this festive exclamation. Mr. Gudmund's eyes flick downwards towards it.

The name was Meghan Joanns.

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*Scan the QR code below to first vote on who you think the murderer is thus far, then continue reading on!*



*Wild Rose is a work of fiction. All names and incidents are used fictitiously and are in no way a reflection of actual events or persons.*

# FICTION

## A letter from a WWI nurse

March 8th, 1916

My dearest Mother,

I am most pleased to hear that Joan's condition is improving. I was truly worried. To be frank, I believe it is better for her to stay home with you rather than join the nurses here. We know her tendency to pick up illnesses!

As I'm sure you have been informed, I have been moved post to the Waverley Abbey Military Hospital in Surrey. The living conditions here are much improved from my previous post. My bed is awfully comfortable, and the cubicles are much larger than they were before. I am working on the ward with two other nurses, Gladys and Mary. I'm sure you would love Gladys, as she reminds me greatly of dear cousin Eleanor, with whom I am hoping you've been able to remain in contact.

This evening has been the most amusing time. Tomorrow is discharging day and the men always behave badly in honour of those departing if they can.

Three of them evidently thought they'd see if they could hide in somebody else's bed in one of the other wards and come back late without my knowing. On my final check of the wards, which I usually would have done earlier, I of course found three empty beds. Knowing the men, whose beds they were, were good sorts and wouldn't do anything really bad, I said nothing but took away all their bedclothes, which very much amused the other patients.

At around 10 o'clock the men came to me to ask for their bedclothes, and I was in half a mind to scold them, but they were so sheepish I decided to laugh instead. They made it back to bed without being spotted by the night nurse, which I was glad to hear.

We've had a substantial amount of snowfall here the last two weeks, so much so that I have had to cross the courtyard in a coat to have my bath! I wonder whether you have had similar conditions in Somerset. I do hope not, as the ice would make your visit to the shop quite a challenge.

I do hope to hear from you again soon.

Give Daddy my love,  
Your loving daughter,  
Florence

P.S. If you could continue to update me on Joan's condition, I would be most grateful. Hearing that she is improving puts my mind at ease.



# HISTORY

## Oppressed women in Greek Mythology

As a Latin student, avid reader, and fan of Greek mythology, I've been introduced to countless pieces of prose, poetry, and literature whose focus lies on a man's intrepid and valiant deeds, but not so much on those of the women. However, to most people, this is (unfortunately) expected; throughout the centuries, ancient Greek literature has prioritised the immortalisation of "heroic" male figures such as Achilles or Odysseus, whilst blatantly marginalising, overlooking and undermining the complex stories of the women in mythology.

The first piece of epic poetry that I read was Homer's Iliad and despite its incredible story, it made me ponder the attitudes towards women given most ancient epics include a female narrative that is quintessentially centred around being an object of desire for the male hero. In the Iliad, Briseis is Achilles' war prize; the prophet of Troy, Cassandra, was a victim of rape; Helen's role as a catalyst for

the Trojan war reinforces her objectification - she is seen more as a prize and symbol of desire rather than a character with her own agency.

Cassandra's story, whilst only mentioned briefly in the Iliad, serves as a powerful commentary on the historical silencing, marginalisation, and objectification of women in history. The curse cast upon her by Apollo after her rejection of his romantic advances, ensured that her true prophecies would never be believed; this highlights the theme of male entitlement but furthermore, displays the consequences women faced for having autonomy over their own bodies. Moreover, her curse effectively reflects how, in a patriarchal society, women's insights and wisdom were often dismissed and suppressed. More specifically to the Trojan war, Cassandra's tragic fate as a prophetess who foresees the fall of Troy - but is powerless to prevent it - is emblematic of the limited agency often afforded to women in the ancient world. She possessed knowledge that could have altered the course of significant events, but her gender and the curse placed upon her prevented her from wielding any meaningful influence - a metaphor for the many women whose potential contributions have been stifled and not respected by societal norms and gender-based limitations.

Continuing with Cassandra's story, her treatment after the fall of Troy, when she became a concubine to Agamemnon, underscores the objectification and exploitation of women throughout history; Cassandra's status mirrors the pervasive gender inequalities of the time and reveals the subjugation and lack of control for a woman in the male dominated society of Ancient Greece. Cassandra's enslavement, like that of many other women, reduced her to a secondary and subordinate position - raising questions about the extent of agency and autonomy women could exercise in such environments but more so, the wider societal norms which perpetuated gender disparities and the voices of women like Cassandra.



Cassandra's myth continues to resonate with women and feminists as a symbol of the ongoing struggle for gender equality even in our society today; it is a poignant reminder to recognise and amplify women's voices in a world that has often been negligent of their contributions.

Another myth which I discovered through none other than a TEDx video is that of Pandora's jar. Though 12-year-old me didn't question the misogynistic nature of her story whilst watching this video, upon researching more about her now, I realize how the myth of Pandora's box is one of the most notable stories of sexism and misogyny in Ancient Greece.

Pandora's myth is said to offer an explanation for the origin of women, marriage, and the afflictions plaguing the world, and exemplifies the notion that women were perceived as a source of evil and suffering. Pandora's nascency was intended as a punishment, a response to Prometheus' theft of fire from the gods. In Hesiod's epic poem "Works and Days", Zeus reprimands Prometheus, holding him responsible for introducing fire to mankind, and promising to give men an "evil thing" in exchange for fire - a plague that would precipitate their demise. This evil entity was Pandora and, despite the knowledge that it was two males (Prometheus and Zeus) primarily involved in this divine/mortal conflict, only Pandora is held accountable for the afflictions released upon the world; this heavily underscores the gendered dimensions of blame as Pandora is cast as the source of sorrow and pain, even though she is equally a victim of Zeus' punishments. In the myth's context, womanhood itself was constructed as a punishment for the transgressions of men, and Pandora's creation was a direct consequence of Prometheus' defiance. The apportionment of blame in this myth embodies the deeply patriarchal nature embedded within it.

The myth continues to unfold its patriarchal and misogynistic concepts as Pandora's curiosity ("gifted" to her by Zeus upon her conception) leads her to open the infamous container. When the lid of the jar is lifted, torment, sorrow, and disease are set free, leaving only hope trapped inside - ostensibly unleashing great suffering upon humanity. According to Hesiod, had Epimetheus rejected Pandora when she was sent to live with him on the orders of Zeus, the jar might never have been found and opened, sparing the world from what was considered the destructive influence of women. Hence, even the containment of hope within the jar is presented as

Pandora's responsibility and as such she is essentially punished twice: once for opening the box and releasing these woes into society; a second time for effectively exacerbating the darkness she had unwittingly unleashed by shutting the container



before hope could escape. Of course, the blame is placed squarely at Pandora's feet, reinforcing the ancient Greek view that women are inherently destructive and malevolent. This narrative again portrays Pandora as the one responsible for afflicting society with evil and suggests that it was men's initial mistake to allow women into their world and homes.

Pandora's portrayal as illusive, deceptive, and the catalyst for the suffering of mankind reflects the oppressive and isolating treatment of women in classical Greece. This view can be traced to the belief that women were, while necessary for reproduction, also a potential source of ruin. Thus, Greek society sought to control women within the household, believing that by keeping them submissive and obedient, they could counteract the perceived deceptiveness exemplified by Pandora.

The Sirens (Peisinoe, Aglaope, and Thelxiepeia also known as Aglaonoe), originally monstrous sea-

nymphs, were transformed into alluring temptresses who lured sailors to their doom with a bewitching song. They originated as handmaidens of the goddess Persephone and were given avian bodies by Demeter to aid in the search for the abducted Persephone. The myth of the Sirens illustrates women's oppression in ancient Greece through the paradoxical desire and dangers associated with their captivating voices and allure; their legacy as a misogynistic archetype highlights the deep-rooted fears and restrictions women faced in ancient Greece.

The peril of the Sirens lies in their ability to sing - a characteristic that challenges patriarchal gender norms but concurrently - through its lethality - encapsulates the male fear of women expressing themselves in public. One of the most notable and notorious renditions of the Sirens myth can be found in Homer's *Odyssey*, where the hero Odysseus, determined to be the sole surviving listener to their entrancing song, employs a strategic approach; he instructs his crew to plug their ears with wax and binds himself to the ship's mast in order to endure the Sirens' song. The Sirens, with their bewitching songs and the measures taken by men to resist their alluring voices, provide a compelling allegory for the oppressive nature of patriarchal societies towards women's self-expression. Their ability to enthrall and sway those who hear them indeed challenges established gender norms, as it suggests that women's voices possess the potential to exert influence and command attention, both of which have been historically denied to them in many other myths (including that of Cassandra). However, despite the defiance of these gender stereotypes, the Sirens still stand as symbols of male fears; in a world where men are of higher status and power, the most powerful thing a woman can do is to hold an influence over them. Even the idea of an oppressed social group influencing the more powerful is threatening to the societal order that Ancient Greece had established. Hence, the apprehension of a world where women might freely articulate their thoughts, desires, and opinions and, more significantly, the deeply rooted suspicion, suppression, and vilification of these vocal women, serves as a testament to the destructive potential female speech could possess within a patriarchal context – revealing how the Sirens stand as manifestations of male fears.

In parallel with Cassandra and Pandora, the Sirens' story is just one example of how society and men

have historically portrayed feminine beauty, and women in general, as inherently dangerous to men. Moreover, the demise instigated by the Sirens' voices perpetuates the notion that women, and their attributes, pose a threat to men, a theme that demonstrates anew how women's voices were silenced and thought of as dangerous.

To conclude this article, the exploration of Cassandra, the Sirens, and Pandora's myths sheds light on the deeply rooted patriarchal and misogynistic beliefs that permeated ancient Greek society. Their narratives not only reflect the unequal treatment and limited agency of women in that era, but also demonstrate the systemic blame and objectification placed upon women for the misfortunes of mankind. Cassandra's silenced voice, the hazard of the Sirens' enticement, and Pandora's role as the source of all suffering exemplify the extent to which women were marginalised, devalued, and feared. These stories continue to appear in modern and contemporary discussions on equality and oppression and they serve as powerful reminders of the ongoing struggle for women's rights. I think they are crucial to recognising the challenges and historical prejudices that perpetuated gender disparities but more so, stand as an enduring symbol to fight against these inequalities - urging us to champion the voices and contributions of women in a world that has too often neglected them.



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