

ELLESMERE EXCLUSIVE



Girl In Pieces - Book Review:

Girl In Pieces is a young adult novel written by Kathleen Glasgow; it follows 17-year-old Charlie Davis in her recovery from a suicide attempt. Charlotte Davis was a wallflower with a manic mother and a depressed father; she alludes throughout the first few chapters of the book that her mother feels ‘nothing’ for her, and that her father is no longer around, demonstrating a strange connection between him and a river.

She goes unnoticed in school until year 10, when she meets the new girl, Ellis. Things eventually escalate and Charlotte ends up in some sticky predicaments, but she always bounces back.

In my opinion, this book portrays mental illness, relapse, and recovery incredibly well and it gives the reader a message that no matter what, we all must get up and try our hardest to recover whatever ails us. I can only describe this book as hauntingly beautiful, due to its excellent pacing, perfect balance of reality and fiction, and Kathleen Glasgow’s amazing communication of Charlie’s thoughts and feelings in a way that feels so raw and down to earth.



|Coming up...

AUTHOR NAME: ELLA HAYES

Overall, I would recommend Girl In Pieces to anyone due to its morality, and the element of actuality which presents itself at the most perfect times. I would rate the book a 4.7/5.

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Abigail Ma- Editor/ Writer
Mae Baxter- Writer/ Reporter
Zoe Finnegan- Interviewer/ Reporter
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GENERAL NEWS

Teacher Strikes

AUTHORS' NAMES: MAE BAXTER

The NEU ballot marks the largest strike action in UK history

Teachers are swapping the classroom for the picket line after an overwhelming number of teachers within the National Education Union (NEU) voted for strike action due to dispute over pay. The NEU is one of the biggest unions in the UK, with over 10,000 members. They have recently dedicated 7 days throughout February and March to the strikes, in what is said to be the largest strike action the UK has ever seen. The decision to strike came after 9 out of 10 teacher members voted in support of strike action back in January to demand a fully funded, above-inflation wage increase. In addition to this, extreme workloads have made a challenging time that much worse. The NEU secretary said, “This is not just about the pay rise, but correcting historic real-terms cuts.”

Most teachers in England and Wales have had a 5% pay increase in 2022, but due to inflation, this is actually a pay cut. As the price of food and bills are continuing to increase, people need this pay rise now more than ever. Unions explain that they also want to make sure the money is not paid out of the school’s budget, which they want to use for better school facilities to ensure that students are getting the most out of their education.

Last summer, the Government announced that starting salaries (the salary people are paid when they start their first job) would increase by 8.9% whilst most teachers would receive increases of around 5%. The Government are refusing to provide funding to cover pay rises, but the Union have said it would consider a pay rise of 9% should the Government fully fund it.

Dr Mary Bousted and Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretaries of the NEU, state that “teachers have lost 23% in real terms since 2010 and support staff 27% over the same period of time. The average 5% pay rise for teachers this year is some 7% behind inflation in the midst of the cost-of-living crisis. That is an unsustainable amount.”

Teachers have insisted that they don’t want to be on strike and “none of us want to be out the classroom” but “we have to do this in order for students’ education to improve.” The NEU agree with this statement and have expressed their thoughts that they regret having to take strike action and are willing to enter into negotiations at any place any time, but that this situation cannot go on and striking is their only option left.

With one strike day already behind us, the next time Ellesmere Park High School is set to close is the 28th of February, and the 15th and 16th of March, unless drastic changes are made before then.



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MUSIC EXCLUSIVE

Battle Of the Bands

AUTHERS NAME: ZOE FINNEGAN

On the 24th January 2023, bands from many schools across Manchester – including our own – competed in the ‘Battle of the Bands’ competition run by MAPAS, at Future Skills college in Media City. The competition lasted around 2 and a half hours, with an abundance of performances from some of our own bands, such as Bleech, who performed multiple songs including ‘Just the Two of Us’ by Grover Washington and a song written by the band themselves!

All of the schools provided outstanding performances from bands of all ages, and many popular songs were played, including ‘Where is My Mind’ by Pixies, ‘Boys Don’t Cry’ by The Cure and ‘Yellow’ by Coldplay. Students showcased their talent expertly by playing confidently in front of an astonished crowd and judges.

Overall, the competition was an enjoyable, fun occasion for everyone involved, and the winner of the competition was Year 10 band Bleech, with their remarkable performance and amazing stage presence, who will now be going on to continue to display their astounding talent by representing Salford at the regional competition.

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WORLD-WIDE EVENTS

Chinese New Year

AUTHOR NAME: ABIGAIL MA

On Sunday, January 22nd Manchester’s Chinatown and City Centre came to life to celebrate Chinese New Year, marking the beginning of the new year on the traditional lunar calendar. The Lunar New Year is based on the cycle of the moon and falls on a different day every year -typically between late January and the middle of February. Traditionally, it was a time to honour deities and ancestors, however over time it has evolved to also be a period to feast, visit and reconnect with family members. Each year of the lunisolar calendar is assigned an animal with this year being the year of the water rabbit, meant to symbolise longevity, peace and prosperity ergo. 2023 is predicted to be a year full of hope.

We’re all familiar with the fairy tales, myths and legends that are all around us. Even though many of them originated centuries ago, they have had a huge impact and shaped many things in our modern-day society - the things we feel are normal but are actually quite peculiar if you really think about it.

So why do we celebrate Chinese New Year the way we do? Well, thousands of years ago there was supposedly a grand monster named ‘Nian’ who would lurk at the bottom of the sea until, on one day a year, it would rise to feast on animals and humans. Shunned by all the other hiding villagers, a beggar took shelter with the only person who would take him in - an old woman - but only after he promised to chase Nian away.

To prepare the beggar strewn the houses with red decorations and awaited the beast’s arrival. When the clock stroked midnight Nian stormed into the town but stopped when it lay it’s eyes on the red paper adorned on the doors. As it roared ferociously, firecrackers sounded and after seeing the beggar dressed in red, laughing at it, it could only run away. This is when the villagers realized that loud noises and the colour red were Nian’s kryptonite. Therefore, ever since, on the lunar new year, families come together in their homes fortified in red and firecrackers to celebrate.

To honour this sacred holiday, Manchester usually holds one of the biggest celebrations in the country, however, as a result of the global pandemic such had been ceased for the last 3 years. Since it was the first event in a long time, Manchester made sure that the occasion was flooding with activities and fun. Hundreds of people wrapped up in hats and gloves gathered to watch all the festivities. Featuring a 175ft long dragon made from an array of colour materials all pieced together departed from Manchester’s Central Convention Complex, as a part of the city’s renowned parade.

Adults and children - usually on the shoulders of the adult - watched in awe as the puppet glided through the streets. “It looks so magical!” one child exclaimed whilst viewing the spectacular show. The colourful creature - symbolising good luck, health and strength in Chinese culture - was followed by the traditional lion and ribbon dancers, Chinese opera performers, 12 zodiac animals and Ancient Army characters.

Other than the parade there was also many other things happening. Ornate red lanterns had been placed on the branches of an abundance of trees around Manchester. These beauteous red lanterns are symbols of wealth and prosperity and used to celebrate joyous functions such as a wedding. There were also food stalls selling traditional Chinese food and other usual festival food, each filling the atmosphere with an irresistible aura. Altogether the occasion brings families together in the meaning of sharing joy and the events held in Manchester amazed many and truly honoured the sacred holiday.



SCHOOL NEWS

School Clubs

AUTHOR NAME: MAE BAXTER

Ellesmere Park has a substantial quantity of different and interesting clubs for all kinds of people. Varying from netball with Miss Smalley to arcade club with Mr. Aspinall, there is a large diversity of clubs to choose from and there is something that appeals to everybody. The Ellesmere Exclusive team have interviewed Mr. Aspinall about arcade club and Mr. Ritchie about IDEA club to find out more.

MR ASPINALL

Why did you start arcade club?

“I started it for the people who don’t necessarily enjoy sports and it’s different from normal or academic clubs.”

What is the best thing about arcade club?

“It’s just fun, one of the happiest places. There are lots of games available although we only really play the same ones. Lots of teachers like it too and come to play against us. Mr. Stravrinou is unbeaten!”

What are the most popular games?

“Probably Street Fighter 2, Mario Cart, Mortal combat and mostly just 2 player fighting games.’

Where is it held?

“It’s held on A floor.”

MR RITCHIE

Why did you start IDEA club?

“You only have IT once a week, so I think students would benefit from having it more.”

What is IDEA club?

“It’s where you can grow your computer skills by working on a site called IDEA where you complete tasks to get badges. From there, you can get bronze, silver and gold certificates. Anyone can join whether you are a complete expert or a beginner.”

What is the best thing about IDEA club?

“The variety of different students who turn up, some

are regulars, and some are new. It is also self-taught so, you can go at your own pace, no rush. “

What else do you want people to know about IDEA club?

“Some radical changes are coming with the addition of baked goods after half term. So, anyone who wants to join, feel free even if it’s just to come and try.”

To find out more about the plethora of clubs available at Ellesmere, check the school website or twitter!

