



# Reading Recommendations Newsletter

## Spring 2025



### Welcome to our reading recommendations newsletter!

Each term, we will share with you reviews and information about books our pupils are currently enjoying.

We encourage our pupils and their families to look through these to see if any may be of interest to them. In addition, we have reading lists by year group and genre on our website.

**Happy reading!**  
**The BVS Book Group**

### Book Group Recommendations

Benaiah in Year 7 states that **'Geek Girl: From Geek to Chic'** by Holly Smale is "a truly wonderful book that I highly recommend because it's really relatable for girls that feel like they don't fit, etc., and it's also an inspiring book for girls. It shows that you can do anything, that you are loved and that you are unique."

Benaiah also praises **'The Fault in our Stars'**, stating that "it is a touching and meaningful book.... It's a story about love, emotions and facing challenges. It centres on Augustus and Hazel's adventures and friendship. It is truly amazing and I recommend that you read it! It is a beautiful and unforgettable book!"

Harrison in Year 12 is currently reading books in the horror genre (though perhaps these are not suitable for some of our younger pupils!). Our members across the year groups enjoy a wide range of genres, and they are always receptive to others' recommendations and ideas!

### Spring Reading Suggestions

Our Book Group pupils need no encouragement whatsoever to read, whether in the sunshine or curled up on a cold Winter's day, however as the days grow longer and the promise of warmer weather approaches, they advise that Spring is the perfect time to pick up a great book - whether for relaxation, inspiration or escapism. Here are a few engaging reads to enjoy this season:

- For those who love mystery and suspense, **'A Good Girl's Guide to Murder'** by Holly Jackson is a gripping page-turner that will keep readers guessing to the very end. This novel has been popular with our Book Group members of all ages!
- If fantasy is more your style, **'A Curse So Dark and Lonely'** by Brigid Kemmerer offers a thrilling, modern retelling of Beauty and the Beast with strong characters and epic world-building.
- Readers seeking powerful stories grounded in real-life experiences might enjoy **'The Hate U Give'** by Angie Thomas, a thought-provoking novel that explores identity, activism and justice.
- **'Scythe'** by Neal Shusterman offers a gripping dystopian narrative full of moral dilemmas and action.

Whatever your interest, there's definitely, always, without doubt, a book for everyone — so find a quiet corner, get comfortable, and let a good book take you somewhere new.

## Happy reading!

### Suggestions for Reluctant Readers: Free Podcasts and Audiobooks

Podcasts and audiobooks are a brilliant way to spark curiosity, improve listening skills and nurture a love of stories. Best of all - many excellent options are completely free!

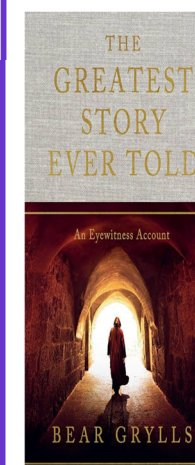
#### Podcasts to Try:

1. **Smash Boom Best** – A fun, fast-paced debate podcast where two topics (like dragons vs. unicorns!) go head-to-head. Great for developing reasoning and critical thinking skills in a playful way.
1. **Brains On!** – A science podcast that answers fascinating questions, such as "Why do we dream?" or "What's the loudest sound in the world?" Hosted by a rotating cast of young people co-hosts, it's both informative and entertaining.
2. **The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel** – A gripping audio drama that's part *Stranger Things*, part mystery adventure. Told from the perspective of middle school students, it's ideal for listeners who enjoy suspenseful storytelling.

#### Free Audiobooks:

- **Loyal Books** ([www.loyalbooks.com](http://www.loyalbooks.com)) and **LibriVox** ([www.librivox.org](http://www.librivox.org)) offer hundreds of classic novels as free audiobooks, including *The Secret Garden*, *Treasure Island*, and *Anne of Green Gables* - all narrated by volunteers.
- **BBC Sounds** often features free, high-quality radio dramas and stories for younger audiences, such as *His Dark Materials*, *The Jungle Book*, and more.
- **Spotify** and **YouTube** also host selected audiobooks and podcast-style series - just make sure content is age-appropriate and accessed under supervision where needed.

### A Spotlight On: 'The Greatest Story Ever Told' by Bear Grylls



Those of our pupils who attended the Flame Conference in Wembley were delighted to receive free copies of this book!

In 'The Greatest Story Ever Told', adventurer and survival expert Bear Grylls shares a deeply personal and accessible retelling of the life of Jesus, bringing the message of Christianity to life in a fresh and relatable way for young people.

Written in Bear's signature honest and down-to-earth style, this book explores themes of courage, forgiveness, faith and kindness, offering readers both a story and a guide on how to live with purpose and compassion. The book is ideal for young people looking to explore or deepen their understanding of faith; it is full of real-life wisdom, encouragement and hope. Bear draws on his own life experiences to reflect on what it means to follow Jesus in the modern world, making it a powerful read. Inspiring, thought-provoking and heartfelt, this book is a brilliant companion for life's journey!

#### Wise Words:

"Today a reader,  
tomorrow a leader."

Margaret Fuller

