



Reading Group Round-Up

Promoting reading and reading groups in prisons

Since lockdown, most of our reading groups have had to take a break. But PRG and Give a Book are working hard to get books into prisons and we've had some great feedback. We've also created a weekly handout called 'Book Stuff' that we hope is getting distributed on the wings. It's got short stories, poems, quizzes and conundrums. Look out for it and ask around if you haven't seen it. Here's a taste of what's on offer.

Teasers

- Which is more real, a table or love? Thoughts or feelings? Liverpool FC or Mohamed Saleh?
- My car has had a new engine. Is it still the same car?
- Was the wheel or the box humankind's greatest invention? If neither, then what?

The Tyger

William Blake wrote and illustrated the poem for his 1794 collection called 'Songs of Experience'. One critic has described it as a portrait of 'strangeness, otherness and inhuman grandeur'. Do you agree?

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

A quiz for July

1. July 1, 1838: Who presented a paper to the Linnean Society in London on his theory of the evolution of species and natural selection?
2. July 4, 1776: What was signed on this day in what was to become the United States of America?
3. July 6, 1535: Who was executed after refusing to recognise King Henry VIII as head of the Church in England?
4. July 10, 138: The death of which Roman Emperor who built a wall across northern Britain to keep out the Scottish tribes?
5. July 18, 1920: A new national monument to the war dead was unveiled in Whitehall, London. What is the monument called and what does the word mean?
6. July 21, 1969: What was the name of the space module that landed on the moon and

who was the first astronaut to walk on the surface?

7. July 25, 1814: Which engineer unveiled a steam locomotive called 'The Blucher' that could haul eight carriages loaded with 30 tons of coal at the breakneck speed of 4 mph?

8. July 27, 1953: What war, that cost an estimated five million lives, was formally ended with the signing of a peace agreement at Panmunjom?

Here's another ending

This time my story has a foregone conclusion. It is true also. After I tell the story, I say, "You could start a religion based on a story like that - couldn't you?"

The story begins with my idea of a huge dog - a Doberman - which is to me an emblem - cruel, not lovable. The dog is a household pet in a neighbourhood such as mine, with houses with backyards which abut.

The huge dog is out and about when it should not be. It should never be. When the dog returns to its owners, it is carrying in its mouth a dirty dead rabbit.

The dog's owners exclaim - one of them does - "The neighbour's rabbit! He's killed it!" The dog's owners conclude, "We must save our dog's reputation at all costs". They think, Our dog is in jeopardy.

The dog's owners shampoo the dead rabbit and dry it with a hair dryer. At night, they sneak the rabbit back into their neighbours' yard, into its cage. The morning of the following day, the dog's owners hear a shriek from the rabbit owners' yard. They think, Oh! The dead rabbit has been discovered! They rush to see what's what.

One of the rabbit's owners - the father in the family - is holding the limp, white rabbit up in the air. He says to the dog's owners, "We buried her two days ago!"

The dog's owners explain nothing. They won't, but not because they are ashamed of themselves. There is another more obvious reason. (Diane Williams)



Prison Reading Groups (PRG) was created in 1999 to set up, support and fund informal reading groups in prisons. We now support more than 60 groups in over 45 prisons nationwide. Members choose the books they read and discuss and new copies are theirs to keep or pass on to others. PRG is part of Give a Book.

Quiz answers: 1. Charles Darwin, 2. Declaration of Independence, 3. Sir Thomas More, 4. Hadrian, 5. Cenotaph, from the Greek words kenos and taphos meaning empty tomb, 6. The Eagle, Neil Armstrong, 7. George Stephenson, 8. The Korean War.

Future Prison

Dialogue and debate on the future of incarceration



National Prison Radio aims to bring you important conversations. This month's brand new series, Future Prison, does just that. Over six weeks, we bring together people who have been in prison and senior figures from the Ministry of Justice.

We'll hear direct, honest and hard-hitting stories from young men and women who know what prison life is like. They describe the lowest moments, and the challenges they faced both inside prison and out.

They also suggest solutions to some of the key decision makers in the Ministry of Justice, in order to start a dialogue about what the future of criminal justice might look like.

Each story brings out unique issues, but common themes are also covered, including the particular experiences encountered by people from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds, the experiences of being a woman in prison, and the experience of being a young person behind bars.

Gabby was in prison for more than four years, leaving her daughter to be looked after by her family. She discusses this experience and the problems it threw up with Sonia Flynn from the Ministry of Justice, who as well as being the Chief Probation Officer is also Executive Director for Women.

Kelly went to prison for a drugs offence, but that label doesn't even begin to tell her amazing story which took her across the Atlantic and back to England and the risk of homelessness.

Ali is a former National Prison Radio presenter who went to prison at the age of 19, and spent time in Young Offender Institutions. He discusses his experiences with Helga Swidenbank, the Executive Director for the Youth Custody Service in the Ministry of Justice.

Courtney, another National Prison Radio regular, also experienced prison at a young age, and it took her to a despairing place where she hit rock bottom. Now released, she talks with immense maturity about her experiences.

Victoria experienced racial prejudice in prison, particularly around such simple and everyday issues as the food she ate. Now out of jail, she works for St Giles Trust and she shares her story with Tanya Robinson, Head of Diversity and Inclusion across HM Prisons and Probation Service.

Daniel's first contact with the police had a long-lasting effect on him and he ended up behind bars. He also experienced different treatment because of the colour of his skin, and his story leads to a tough but constructive conversation with the people who were responsible for his wellbeing during his sentence.

The series is hosted by Hilary Ineomo-Marcus, who himself

spent time behind bars. It was produced with support from the Barrow Cadbury Trust and the Saint Sarkis Charity Trust. We'd like to thank all the contributors from both sides of the door for their generosity in sharing thoughts and experiences, and the positive way in which they approached these conversations.

Future Prison is on National Prison Radio every Tuesday throughout July at midday and 6pm, and it's also repeated on Friday afternoons at 4pm.



Two hours of Free Flow

If you've been writing rhymes inside you'll now have double the time to test them out with Free Flow expanding to two hours each week.

Your host, the poet Lady Unchained, will be on hand to dish out the writing knowledge, while serving up the best new instrumentals for you to freestyle along with.

Lady Unchained spent time behind bars - while she was inside she started writing notes to herself which she soon realised were poetry. Finding her lyrical flow got her through her sentence, and she now runs a poetry platform to help others find theirs.

Check out Free Flow, at the new time of 9pm every Monday and 5pm on Saturday.



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