

## BOOK STUFF

### #52 'No snowflake ever falls in the wrong place.' Zen Proverb

#### The Great Escape

The feeling I get when I'm reading a book  
Is a million times better than any drug I took.

When I was younger, they were my escape  
Dumbledore; a father figure, Willy Wonka – my mate.  
I read so much, my eyes would be burning  
They provided the escape I was desperately yearning.

When times got bad I could switch off and read  
Safety lay in books, or so I believed...

As I grew up, I found a new way to feel safe  
I escaped from the house, even found me some mates.  
It was then I discovered drugs,  
I spent less time reading, and more time in pubs.  
My books gathered dust, I'm ashamed to admit  
It was books, not drugs, I decided to quit.

But things took a change when I was locked up for recall,  
no one to turn to, my like stuck in freefall.  
My usual reaction is to each for a spliff,  
A pre gab to take or some subby to sniff.

But that never happened and I'm back to my best,  
Although, I did escape reality, I have to confess..  
Are you still puzzled by what it is that I took?  
Well, the answer is nothing, I just opened a book.

The feeling I get when I'm reading a book  
Is a million times better than any drug that I took.

**A reading group member**



#### Cracking Christmas Quiz

1. Where does the tradition of hanging stockings come from?
2. What is the most recorded Christmas song?
3. Which country donates the tree in Trafalgar Square at Christmas?
4. Which country did eggnog originate in?
5. In which country is it tradition to eat KFC for Christmas dinner?
6. What gifts did the 3 wise men bring Jesus?
7. Which country first decorated the Christmas tree?  
BONUS – and in which year?
8. Which King of England was crowned on Christmas day?
9. Which country does Stollen come from?
10. What's the most popular Christmas dish in New Zealand?
11. What was the first Christmas song ever played in space?
12. In which country do naughty children get rotting potatoes in their shoes?

## Jólabókaflód

In Iceland on Christmas Eve, the country spends the evening taking part in Jólabókaflód, loosely translated into English as the 'Christmas book flood.' They gift books to one another before curling up with a cup of cocoa or a tippie of *jólabland* (alcohol free ale) and diving into a brand new book.

## Origin

Jólabókaflód was coined in 1944. Paper was one of the commodities that was not rationed in Iceland as it was across other parts of Europe during WWII. The gift of a book was resourceful and fitting as writing and storytelling have always been part of the fabric of Icelandic society, going back to the 'Edda,' the old Norse work of literature written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. These were the stories of the early settlers and a marker of Iceland's literary culture. Storytelling of their ancestors during the long dark winters known as *kvöldvaka*, was not only a form of entertainment but how children would learn about their history whilst learning how to read and write. To this day, books and a love of reading are an intrinsic part of Iceland's culture and national identity and how they have kept their history alive.



## What we can learn

That reading does not have to be a solitary activity but something that can be enjoyed and experienced in the company of others. As social beings, we take comfort in the ability to share our experiences with others. Iceland gives a lot of time and energy into promoting books and reading. In the media, book reviews, discussions and interviews with authors and even debates on book over artwork are given a lot of airtime.



*From everyone at PRG and Give a Book, Happy Christmas and here's to a bright book filled New Year!*

| Answers   |
|---|
| 1. By accident when St Nick dropped a bag of gold down the chimney for a poor man's daughters who'd left their stockings hanging by the fireplace to dry. |
| 2. Silent Night   |
| 3. Norway   |
| 4. USA  |
| 5. Japan  |
| 6. Gold, Frankincense, Myrrh  |
| 7. Latvia, BONUS – 1510   |
| 8. King William of England 1066   |
| 9. Germany  |
| 10. Pavlova   |
| 11. Jingle Bells  |
| 12. Iceland   |



[www.giveabook.org.uk](http://www.giveabook.org.uk)

[www.prisonreadinggroups.org.uk](http://www.prisonreadinggroups.org.uk)

