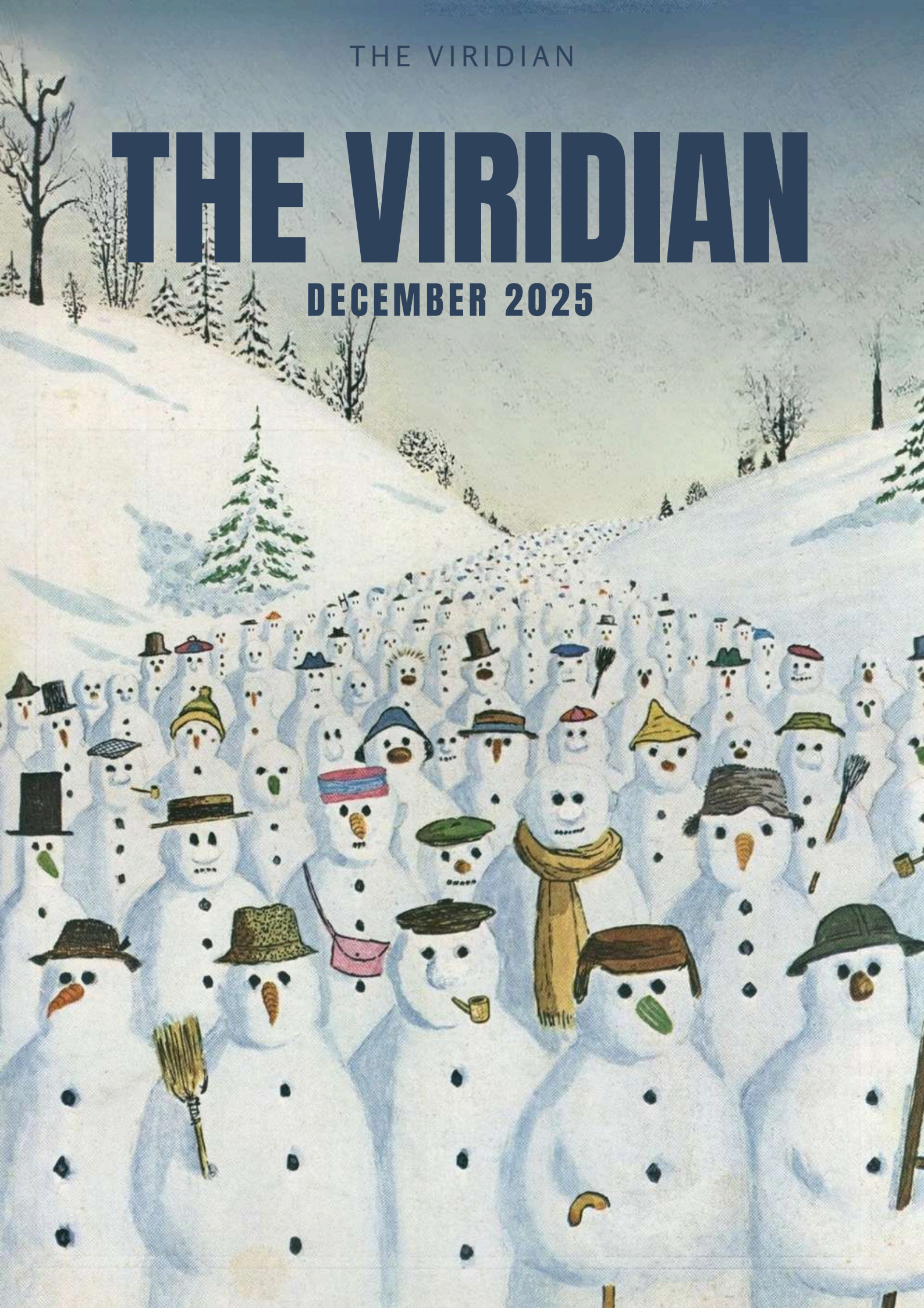


THE VIRIDIAN

THE VIRIDIAN

DECEMBER 2025



THE VIRIDIAN

INDEX

BOOK CORNER

ANNA PAVLOWITCH

VIDEO ARCHIVES

SIMONA MITSI

HISTORY

DAPHNE LIAPIS, RENEE STROUTHOU

MORBID MYSTERIES

LEONIE WEIDERUD, LOUISA LIAPIS

BEYOND THE SCOREBOARD

ROHAN STYLIANOS DUBEY

A DIP IN THOUGHT

FATIMA SANJAKDAR

PSYCHOLOGY

MAYA NATHANAEL

THE FASHION FIX

NEFELI VASSILIOU

MUSIC

ALEXA MICHAEL

THE LAYOUT

SYLVIA MICHAELIDES, ALINA MITSI, ANGELINA LYTRA, BETTY
ELIOPOULOU, EMILY ADAMS

SOCIAL MEDIA

SYLVIA MICHAELIDES, NEFELI VASSILIOU, SELINA ELIA,
ROMA THEOCHARIDES, NIKKI NEOCLEOUS, BETTY
ELIOPOULOU, ALEXIS KYRIAKIDES

PHOTOGRAPHY

LOUKA DEMANGE

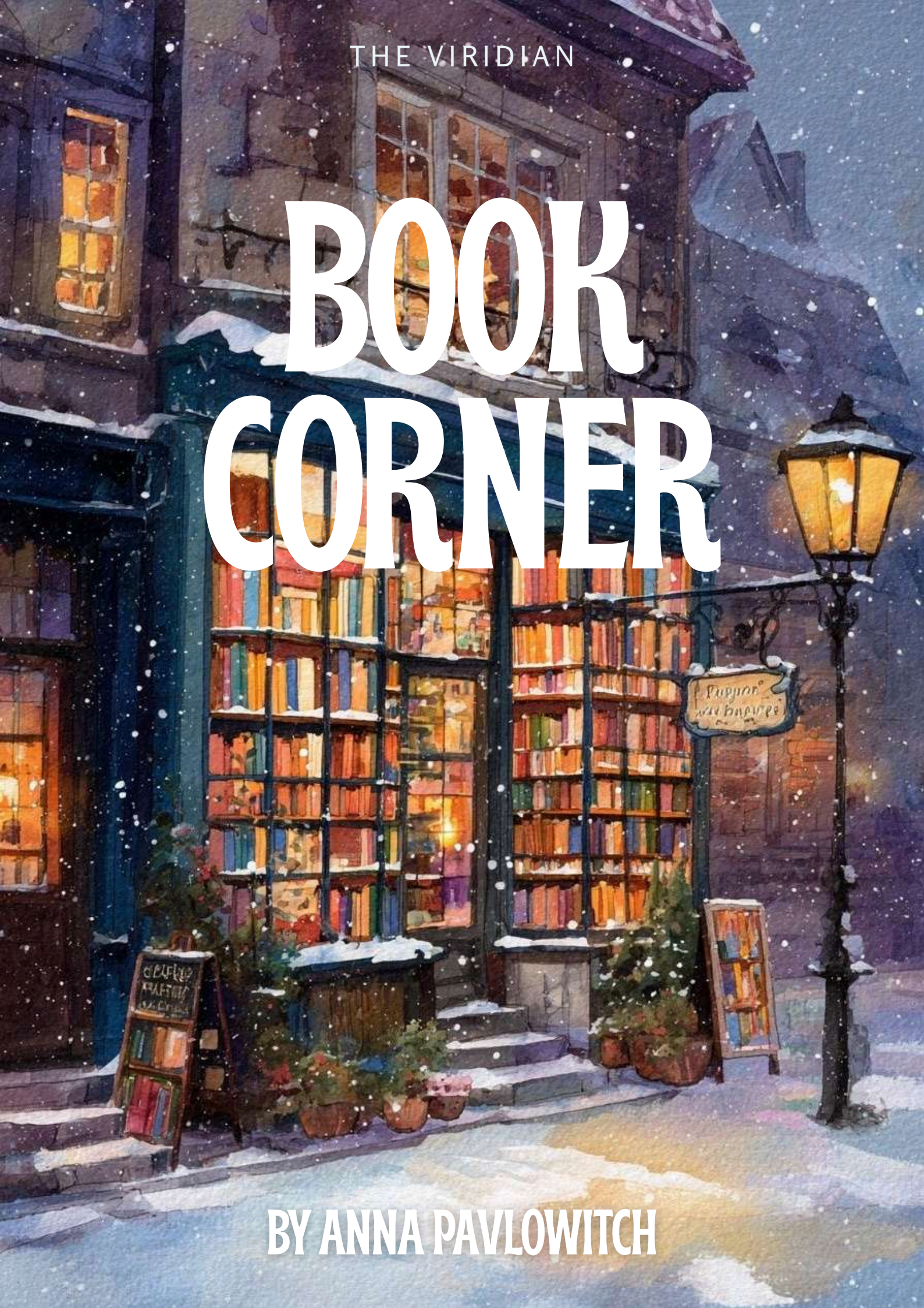
EDITED BY

STEPHANOS ARTEMIS, MR. ANTONIOU

THE VIRIDIAN

BOOK CORNER

BY ANNA PAVLOWITCH



THE VIRIDIAN

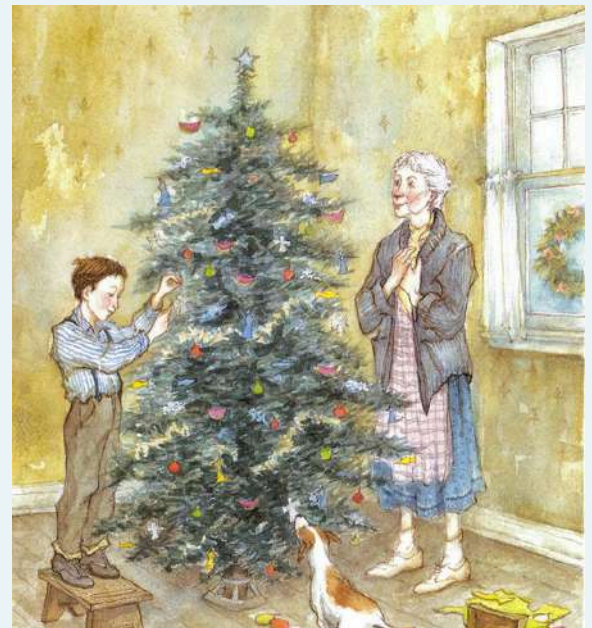
Anyone else not really feeling the holiday spirit this year? Anyone else feeling that the magic of the season slowly drains away as childhood fades into distant memory? Because I certainly am. Not in a grinch type of way. More in a “I’m already drowning in academic responsibilities don’t even mention the fact I haven’t bought a single present,” type of way. So, if you’re like me and need a small push to join in on the festivities, or if you simply need to shut the world out for a while, these are some books which I hope will do the trick.



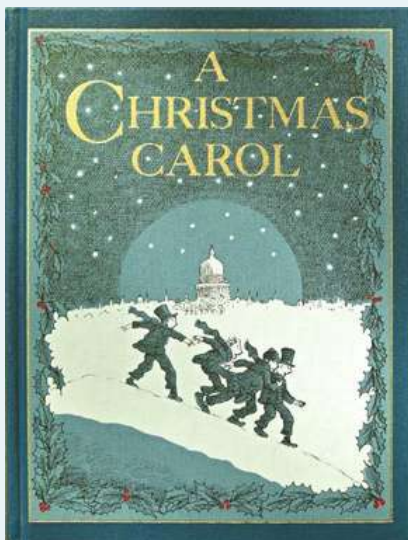
'A CHRISTMAS TALE' BY TRUMAN CAPOTE

(FROM THE COLLECTION: 'THE PENGUIN BOOK OF CHRISTMAS STORIES')

A touching depiction of the unique charm of Christmas tradition, *'A Christmas Tale'* paints an unforgettable portrait of the tight bond shared by two souls, one young, one old. Seven-year-old Buddy and his eccentric and (despite being in her sixties) childlike cousin, Miss Sook Faulk, live in a poor household along with their unsmiling relatives. Yet every year, they anticipate the holiday season with youthful giddiness, marking its beginning with the same remark, “It’s fruitcake season!”. As the now adult Buddy recalls his last Christmas spent with his beloved cousin, he reflects on the bittersweet nature of growing up and the nostalgia of holiday traditions. In the fast-moving, ever-changing world we live in, we tend to overlook the purity of human connection, the simplicity of family rituals, in our endless chase for the bigger and the better. This heartwarming tale takes us back into the innocence of the past, of our childhood, back when Christmas was nothing but celebration, in whichever form it could take.



'A CHRISTMAS CAROL' BY CHARLES DICKENS



A particularly niche and incredibly original choice on my behalf, don't you agree? Jokes aside, I firmly believe you cannot delve into the concept of Christmas storytelling while failing to address the timeless masterpiece which continues to captivate the hearts of innumerable readers and whose film adaptations warm the soul of every holiday household. At the heart of this novella is the heartless Ebenezer Scrooge, the original grinch, infamous for his bitterly dour personality, renowned for his bottomless loathing of Christmas. One cold Christmas Eve, Scrooge is paid a long-overdue social call from the chained-up ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, who warns him that if he fails to change his miserly ways, he will be condemned to a similar fate. His words of caution are embodied in three more apparitions, the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present and the Ghost of Christmas Yet-to-Come. Will these shadowy spectres be enough to imbue Scrooge with yuletide spirit? Please excuse my cheesy use of rhetoric.

THE VIRIDIAN

NORMAL PEOPLE

BY SALLY ROONEY

I'll admit this is a sharp deviation from the holiday theme. Although I'll also admit I realised that, conveniently enough, this book does end in a Christmas setting. However, the main reason I decided to bring in this review was for its escapist nature, for its character as an immersive, easily digestible book rec to pick up during the holidays. A more refined version of the 'will they/won't they' trope, 'Normal People' delves into how the connection between two people can ultimately guide the understanding of oneself. At school, Connell, the popular, well-adjusted, stereotypical star of the school football team, and Marianne, the mysteriously private girl whom everyone treats as invisible, pretend not to know each other. When however, they reach their college years, the roles are reversed: Marianne becomes a dominant personality of the Trinity social scene while Connell is restricted to its sidelines. Throughout their college years, despite their constantly changing dynamic, they circle each other, somehow magnetically, irresistibly drawn back together. To be completely truthful, as the plot progresses, the storylines become repetitive, predictable. The characters undoubtedly had the potential to convey a powerful message about the mental health struggles faced by the youth of today, yet their lack of depth makes them unlikeable and sometimes plain frustrating. I'd also like to give a shoutout to my biggest pet peeve in this book, and that is the lack of quotation marks. But since I'm not here to critique Rooney's choice of punctuation, I'll just say that at the end of the day, I was hooked, which means that the book achieved its purpose.



THE VIRIDIAN

VIDEO ARCHIVES

BY SIMONA MITSU

THE VIRIDIAN

The task of recommending holiday movies is one I somewhat admittedly hate because

a) Noah selfishly stole the best holiday movie of the 21st century for last edition's holiday review (The Holdovers; which if you haven't already watched yet, shame on you) and

b) because if I'm being completely transparent with you all, the only holiday-related piece of media I religiously consume is the routine rewatching of the Modern Family holiday episodes (ESPECIALLY "Undeck the Halls", S1 Ep10). Generally, the precision required in recommending jolly holiday films without including classics everyone's seen before (note, Mr. Antoniou, you'll be pleased to see that Home Alone 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 did not make the cut) and upkeeping the notorious nicheness of the Viridian's Video Archives is certainly no easy feat. That being said, I hope this edition's picks will cover a range of different holiday appetites and satisfy a sense of faraway holiday nostalgia:

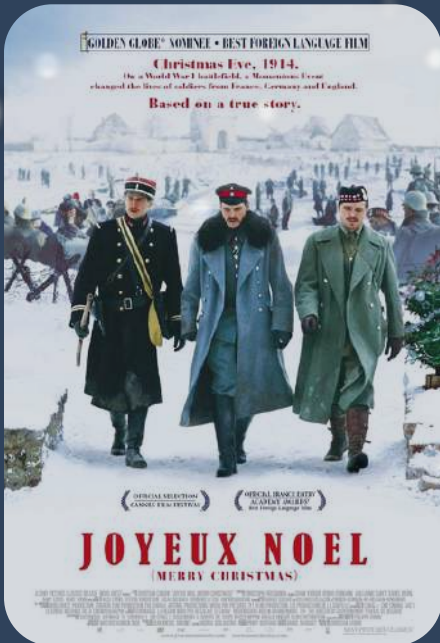
A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS (1965):

Maybe a cartoon isn't everyone's initial association to holiday movies, but after watching Charlie Brown last Christmas, it has become mine. And truthfully, Charlie Brown is a cartoon like no other. Is it for children? Maybe. However, do I wish I lived inside this movie? Yes. Does it have the best Christmas soundtrack? Again, yes. In only 25 minutes, this movie manages to capture a sense of childhood nostalgia I haven't experienced in any other Christmas movie I've ever watched. Magically, it feels like being transported back in time to a stuffy, festively decorated primary-school classroom where you're making paper snowflakes with glitter and cotton as a young child again. After having watched it, I dare you to not feel all warm and fuzzy inside.



THE VIRIDIAN

JOYEUX NOEL (2005):



A film for holiday history nerds. Joyeux Noel is a holiday war drama that compellingly depicts the Christmas truce in World War One. I'll leave it to Rohan in the Sports Column (page _) to share the touching story of arguably the most remarkable and humane moment in the history of conflict and combat, as Joyeux Noel is in fact a visual manifestation of this historic event. I'll have to admit that I am not the biggest fan of long, boring war films of tediously bloody fighting, however, the utterly wholesome football scene of this movie became the deciding factor for me to classify this film as genuinely touching as opposed to dull. Nevertheless, this movie doesn't fail to crush viewers with reminders of the utterly merciless, gruesome and unforgiving reality of war.

CAROL (2015) (16+):

A movie mainly comprised of cigarettes, lesbians and bobs. This dark yet elegant love story follows Carol (Cate Blanchett), who walks into a department store and instantly falls in love with the young, elusive store clerk Therese (Rooney Mara) while trying to find a Christmas present for her daughter. A sense of longing and loneliness emulates the pair's secret and forbidden relationship and overshadows the beautiful Christmassy cinematography Todd Haynes masterfully manages to capture. As Carol is heavily inspired by Patricia Highsmith's autobiographical book "A Price of Salt", it has a bold and prevalent LGBTQ commentary that bravely unveils the reality of a completely marginalized society in 1950s America. So yeah, if you haven't figured it out by now, this is not our average hallmark movie, and I would specifically recommend this to anyone in the mood for a more serious and emotionally rich watch this season.



THE VIRIDIAN

HISTORY

WRITTEN BY
DAPHNE LIAPIS AND
RENEE STROUTHOU

THE VIRIDIAN

Over centuries, various traditions have come and gone, shaping the Christmas holidays. Whether those customs were made for family or friends, it's clear that they have encompassed the Christmas spirit, and made it as magical and joyful as it is. However, there are some specific traditions which stand out, and it's important to know their history, so that we can celebrate them even more.



Firstly, one important tradition is gift-giving. Gift-giving has been around for a long time, going back to prehistoric years. People used to give each other necessities such as food or tools, so that they could survive. However, its Christmas relation originates from Saint Nicholas, who was a Saint who gave poor families gifts on Christmas day. This was done to allow even the lower-income families to enjoy Christmas. Over time, this tradition became commercialized, through songs and poems, and today, it is expected to buy and give gifts to your loved ones, which includes necessities, but is mostly luxury goods and things that you would wish for.

Another important tradition is the traditional food that you eat during dinner. Although this can vary from household to household, a typical dish would be turkey. Serving turkey during the holiday season started in America, as a classic meal for thanksgiving. It made its way to Europe in the 1700s, when many travellers that came to Europe. Then, this bird slowly became popular in the Victorian era, especially in the wealthier families, as it was a symbol of higher class. It was made even more popular in the novella 'A Christmas Carol', where Dickens portrays it the perfect Christmas centrepiece, and now it is a meal that is always available during these days.

Every December, millions of homes around the world glow with joy from their sparkling Christmas trees. During the early days of winter, most people will retrieve their stored Christmas trees that have been waiting in the attic patiently since last year's festivities and decorate them with their newly bought, overpriced decorations; however, a few centuries ago, this was not the case. The modern Christmas tree first originated in Germany during the 16th century, where Germans would set up a paradise tree on Christmas Eve (the religious feast day of Adam and Eve) and on it hung wafers and candles to symbolize the light that Christ brings to the world. From the 17th to the 19th century, the German Christmas tree spread around the globe and evolved into what we know and love as the modern Christmas tree with ornaments around it, presents underneath it and a star on top.



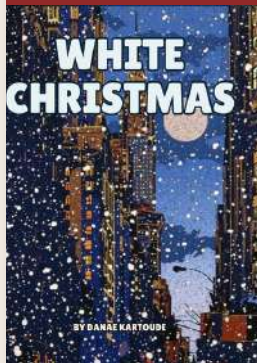
THE VIRIDIAN

Every year, families finish decorating for Christmas by placing a bright star at the very top of their trees – a tradition filled with symbolism, history, and a touch of magic. The custom traces back to the Christian story of the star of Bethlehem, which explains how a star shone brightly in the sky and guided the Wise Men to the birthplace of Jesus. As decorating trees became a common tradition around the world, so did the placement of the star not only to remind people of the meaning of this story but also turning it into a symbol of hope, guidance, and light during the darkest days of winter.



Traditions, whether ancient or newly created, continue to shape the way people celebrate, connect and find meaning during the holiday season. From decorating trees to opening presents and spending time with loved ones, each custom holds a special place in our hearts. As the world changes continuously, it's important to continue these traditions that have brought many generations joy and warmth, while also creating new ones, to keep the holiday spirit alive.
Happy holidays!

looking back at previous December editions...



THE VIRIDIAN

MORBID MYSTERIES

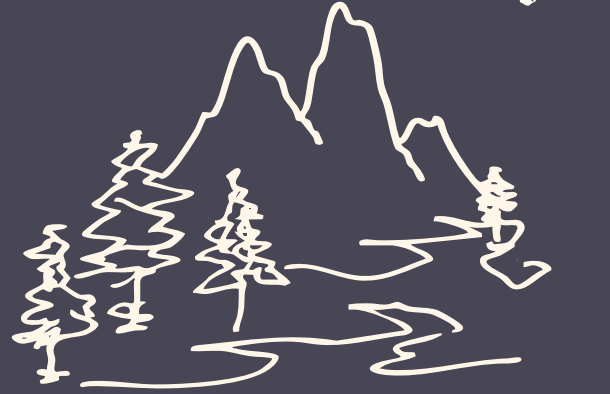
BY LEONIE WEIDERUD
AND
LOUIZA LIAPIS

THE VIRIDIAN

THE CHRISTMAS WITCH

By Leonie

On the darkest nights of winter, when the snow muffles every sound and the world feels suspended between breath and silence, there is said to be a figure who walks the frozen Alps in search of the unprepared. She slips through locked doors and bolted windows with the ease of a shadow. Some say she is beautiful, while others swear she is a gaunt crone with an iron beak and eyes like dying embers.



Frau Perchta is known by many names and comes in many forms depending on who's telling her tale. In some, she appears as a crone with one webbed foot, like that of a goose or swan, dressed head to toe in rags, trailed by spirits of unbaptized children, the smallest one dragging a pitcher filled with mothers' tears. In other tellings, she is a beautiful woman in white robes. She doesn't travel alone, her followers are known as The Perchten, an army of masked spirits can always be found following.

Legends state that at the start of the **12 Days of Christmas**, Perchta begins her hunt for the lazy, the slovenly, and anyone who's spent the last year being a 'bad' human.

It's said that upon entering an unkept home, where if a house isn't scrubbed clean and you haven't finished spinning all your flax, she will be sure to find you and punish you for it. However, even if a house is tidy, it customary to leave her a tribute, dumplings and herring in Central Germany, a porridge of oats and herring called Perchtenmilch in parts of Austria, or eggs dumplings, in Tyrol.

Kids don't fare any better, for those who've been 'nightmarish' for the year, they can expect to be carried off in a sack, taken to an undisclosed location, never to be seen again.

While for the kids who lie, she very politely takes away their ability to speak. It's not all doom and gloom with the Christmas queen of horror.

As opposed to the other Yuletide ghouls she's often compared to Perchta rewards those who've been upstanding citizens and show pride in themselves and their homes. Where on **January 6th**, people on Perchta's 'Good' list find a piece of shiny silver in their shoes, and for those who finished their spinning work before the end of the year are blessed with good luck.

So this Jan. 5, or Perchtentag Eve, tidy your house and leave out some snacks to please a terrifying witch.



THE VIRIDIAN

DOESN'T MEAN IT'S A GIFT

By Louisa

Coal is widely believed to be the worst item found amongst the pile of gifts under the Christmas tree; conversely though, a devastated twin brother discovered an atrocity far more scarring than one could ever conceive.



On a December night in Florida, a 67-year-old man, **Phil Axt**, twin brother of **Michele O'Dowd**, visited her home to discover the cause of her absence at work earlier that day, solely to find her abode in a state of mass disarray. Seeing as the door had been left ajar and furniture had been flipped upside-down, Axt remarked "I knew this wasn't going to be pretty."

At the time, O'Dowd had been hosting **Patty Michelle White**, her nephew's ex-girlfriend and family friend, whom she had reportedly treated her like family. She had supposedly even paid her to complete unconventional tasks, merely to justify financially assisting her, despite her inability to "Keep a job or get her life together," as Axt claims, even entrusting her with the PIN to her debit card to ascertain she would be able to provide both of them with necessities when O'Dowd was occupied.

Phil Axt advanced through his "Baby twin sisters," as he called her, house hesitating at her Christmas tree that had been brimming with gifts O'Dowd had lovingly prepared for her nephews and nieces. Horrified, Axt's gaze immediately fell on the foot protruding from the pile of gifts, the foot of his twin sister. O'Dowd's cold corpse had been entirely concealed by the presents and her marred face covered with a towel, an empty vodka bottle situated within the vicinity, in an effort to steer investigators away from the possibility of a murderer.

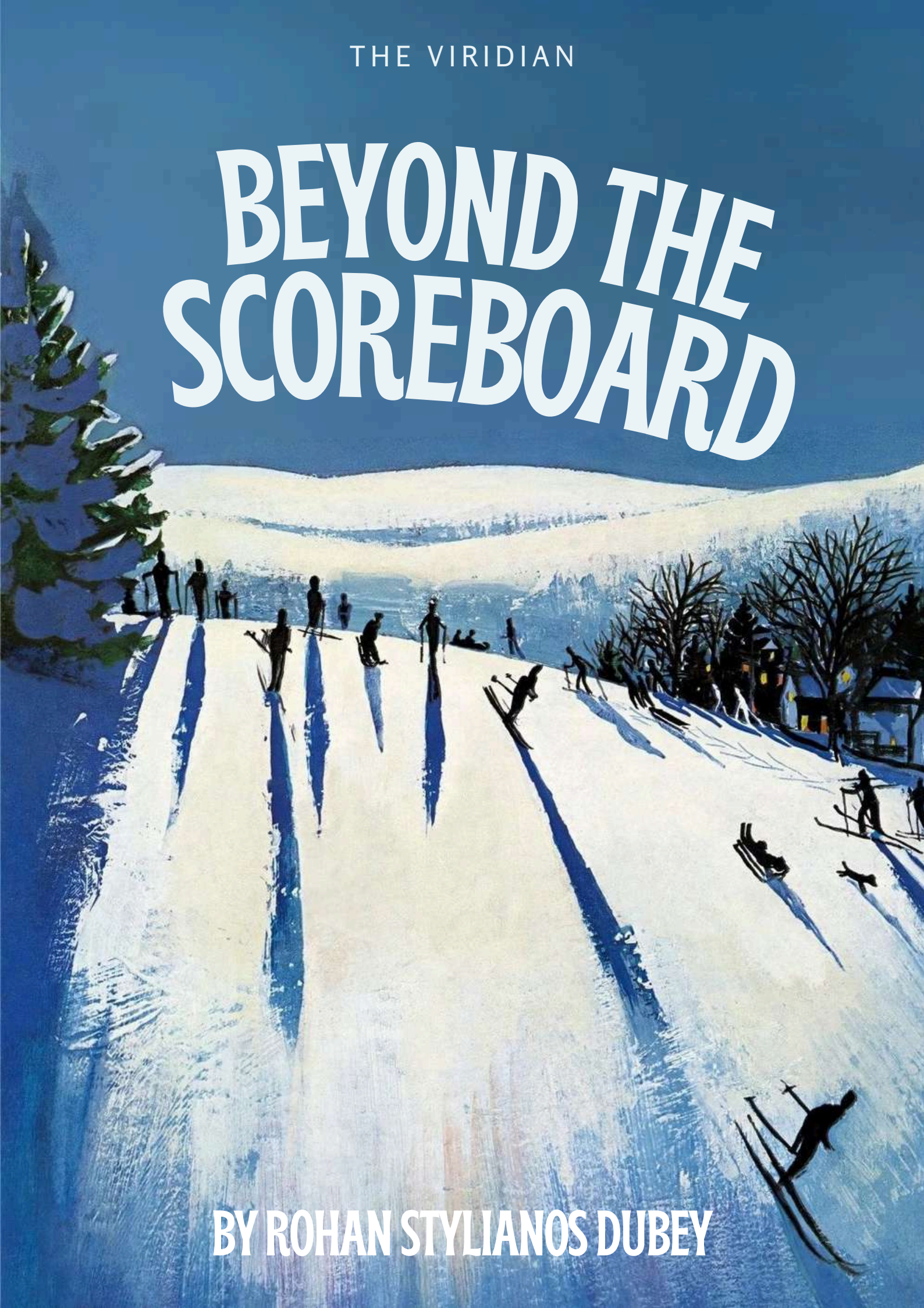


Upon further scrutiny it was discovered that White had used O'Dowd's credit card to steal \$1000 from two separate banks, \$500 from each, both robberies having been caught on camera. While fleeing to South Carolina, White was stopped by authorities and admitted to her crime which led to her arrest. Justice had been served but not nearly as soon as it should have been. Countless neighbours claimed they had noticed yelling and crying coming from within the house, and yet none of them called the police, none of them even made an effort to investigate further.

THE VIRIDIAN

BEYOND THE SCOREBOARD

BY ROHAN STYLIANOS DUBEY



THE VIRIDIAN

FESTIVE FICTIONES

The winter season is filled with holidays, whether you are celebrating Christmas, Hannukah, Diwali, everyone has something to celebrate. For an athlete, these days can be a bit conflicted as with these holidays comes the winter break where all sports ground to a halt for 2-3 weeks. However, sports have found their way to be played in these few weeks and today, I will be talking about them.

WWI CHRISTMAS TRUCE

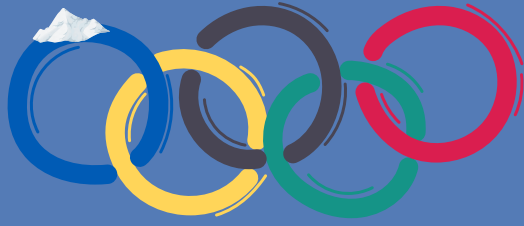
During the Christmas Truce of 1914, British and German soldiers slowly emerged from their trenches and gathered in no man's land, where the frozen, cratered fields became a meeting ground for men who, until that morning, had known each other only as targets; they exchanged warm greetings along with whatever small treasures they had – tobacco, chocolate, biscuits, sausages, while proudly showing photographs of the families they missed. Before long, someone produced a football; some soldiers swore it was a proper leather ball, others insisted it was a bundle of rags tied tight, and with a sudden spark of excitement, men from both sides began clearing a rough “pitch” between shell holes and broken fences; coats and helmets were tossed down to mark goalposts, and despite the mud tugging at their boots, they threw themselves into the match with a joyous, almost boyish energy.



The ground was lumpy, the ball skidded unpredictably, and every collision ended in laughter instead of gunfire. Cheers went up when someone managed a decent pass, and groans followed with every wild shot that flew over improvised goals. One British regiment later insisted the Germans “Won 3–2,” but most participants recalled no formal score at all, only the delight of playing football with men whose faces they’d never expected to see up close, let alone smile at. For that brief hour, the war seemed to end, be non-existent, replaced by the sound of breathless laughter, and the unmistakable joy of a simple game that reminded them all of home.

THE VIRIDIAN

THE WINTER OLYMPICS



The Winter Olympic Games began in 1924 in Chamonix, France, as a way to showcase sports suited to ice and snow. Before that, winter sports like figure skating and ice hockey were actually held during the Summer Olympics. The success of the Chamonix events led the IOC to officially create a separate Winter Games.

From then on, the Winter Olympics were held every four years, growing steadily in size and popularity. They originally featured just a few sports: figure skating, ice hockey, Nordic skiing, speed skating, and bobsleigh. Over the decades, the program expanded to include alpine skiing, luge, biathlon, snowboarding, freestyle skiing, and more. In 1994, the Winter and Summer Games were staggered so they no longer occurred in the same year. Since then, each takes place two years apart.

SIGNIFICANT SPORTING EVENTS IN DECEMBER

1947 – Baseball: Jackie Robinson was awarded Rookie of the Year in December, marking the end of his groundbreaking first season integrating Major League Baseball.



1973 – Ice Hockey: On December 20, Phil Esposito broke the NHL single-season goal-scoring pace, helping transform offensive play in hockey.



1981 – Cricket: The famous “underarm incident” preparations began in December as tensions rose between Australia and New Zealand, leading to one of cricket’s most controversial moments the following season.



1992 – Football : The Premier League hosted its first-ever Boxing Day fixtures on December 26, establishing the modern holiday football tradition.



2003 – Athletics: Kenenisa Bekele set a world indoor 5,000 m record in December, pushing long-distance running into a new era.



2008 – Boxing: Manny Pacquiao defeated Oscar De La Hoya on December 6, becoming boxing’s first eight-division world champion.



2015 – Basketball: Kobe Bryant played his final game at Madison Square Garden on December 11, receiving a historic farewell ovation in one of the sport’s most iconic arenas.



2016 – Mixed Martial Arts: Amanda Nunes defeated Ronda Rousey on December 30 in a landmark UFC fight that reshaped the women’s bantamweight division.



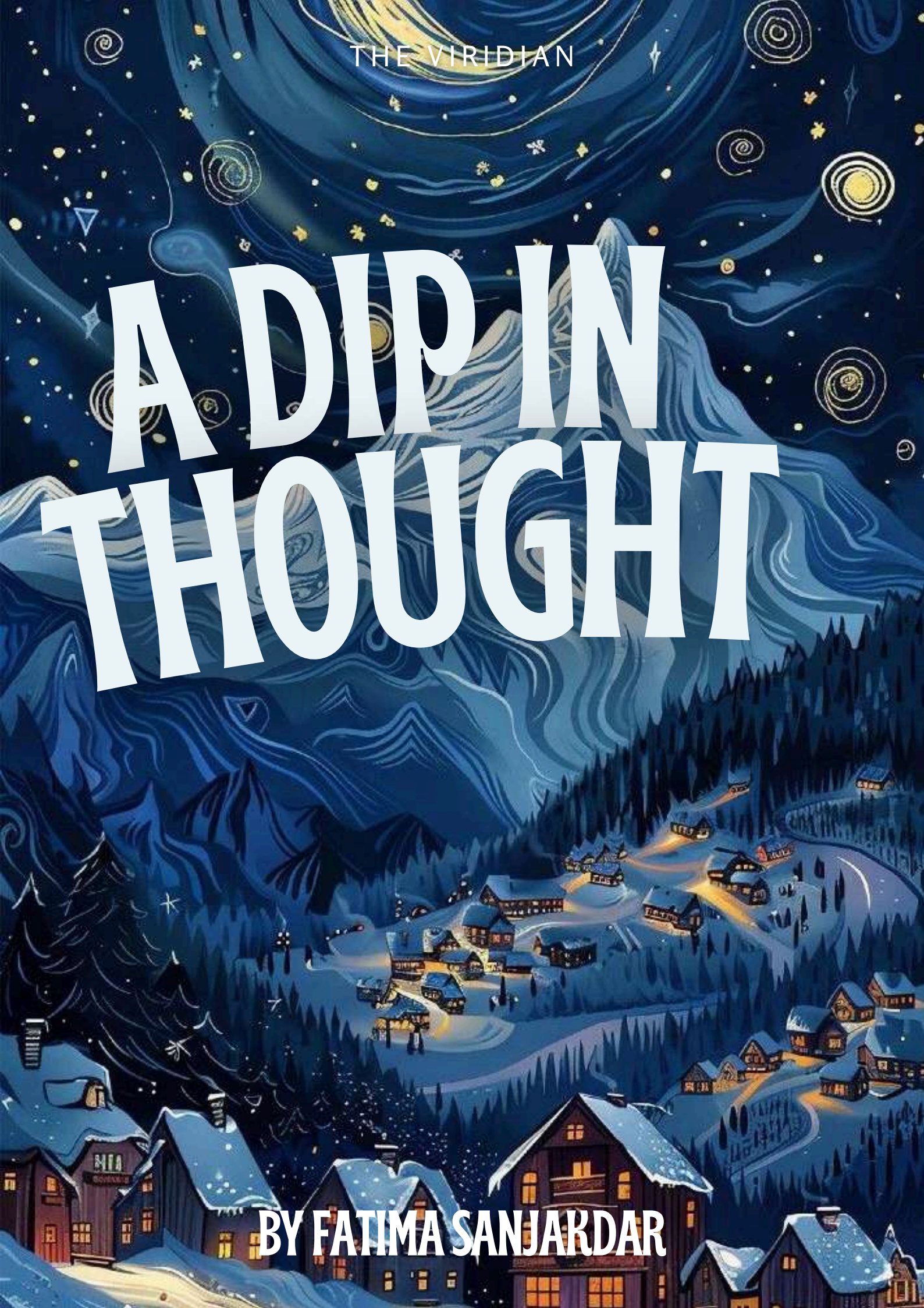
Although the winter season seems like an awkward pause in the sporting season, sport has and will always find a way to be played no matter the date, time or year. Hope you have a lovely holiday season and hope you celebrate it well!



THE VIRIDIAN

A DIP IN THOUGHT

BY FATIMA SANJARDAR



THE VIRIDIAN

SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN

The question of why people believe in God seems almost inappropriate to ask. Even as I type this article, I hesitate; going over my words, deleting them, pressing undo, then deleting them again.

But we cannot avoid the elements of religion that are laced into society. It's seeped into the language, the culture and, most significantly, the traditions. This has been done so seamlessly and so perpetually, that questioning it has become the taboo. Nonetheless, the most wonderful time of the year is constructed by intrinsic and well-nurtured traditions of mythmaking, ethic-building and storytelling. Through the fibs that we weave into the month of December, we suture fragments of hope, optimism and, most dangerously, comfort.

On the surface, it seems futile to question something so intrinsic to humankind. You believe in God because your parents believe in God, and their parents believed in God, and so on and so forth. Instead of a personal view, it has become a testament to tradition, a promise to our ancestors and a vow to our community. Therefore, the social impact religion has is reflected onto us, instructing us to celebrate, to mourn, to worship. The word of God may sway the individual, but nations adopt religions as a result of war, colonization and geographical placement. As Maya Angelou said: **“you are a result of everything you've ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgotten”**. And on a larger scale, you are a sample of where you come from, where you live, what school you go to, and even what church you attend. But then why would a fair God use his extrapolating powers to mould the world in such a way that where, how and to whom you were born dictates your opportunity to be saved? The Bible says, **“through Christ you will be Saved”**, yet God allows there to be people who were never introduced to the remedy to sin. The Quran reiterates that there is only one God, whilst the world is flooded with religions, denominations and worldviews that clash and collide and cause conflict. Life is the only test that no one knows the answer to, so one worships in what is ‘standard’ and does so because it is ‘right’.

THE VIRIDIAN



Over centuries, countless people have claimed to feel, see, or hear God, whether that is literally or metaphorically. Protestants during the Protestant Reformation coined the term ‘**Sensus Divinitus**’, which expresses that mankind has a seed of the divine which allows the connection between God and Man to flourish. Simultaneously, this gives rise to innate consciousness which some religious people may argue is an entity of our moral compass. “**Thou shalt not kill**” and other principles of natural law have their roots in religion, and it is difficult to locate how these ideas of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ were founded without a greater power or a creator.

Above all, people need something to believe in. We are born into a world with one undeniable truth: you are going to die. In the eternally menacing and expanding universe, we are only passerbys. The extensively developed human mind cannot grasp the extraordinary probability of our existence. With a world spinning in so many directions all at the same time, religion provides a path and, for some, a purpose. Through religion, God invites us to seek confidence, support and unconditional love, acting as a constant whilst the world moves increasingly fast. Faith goes beyond just belief in a religion, it means that no matter what you lose, you will never lose hope.

The truth is that we cannot make the world a better place by believing hard enough or doubting passionately enough in a greater power. This Christmas, open your presents with gratitude and let the world in, as you do for the carollers at your doorstep. On New Years', watch the fireworks with optimism, and a flame of inspiration in your widened eyes. During the year that is to come, give what you can and take every opportunity that you can get to restore even a bit of hope, whether that is in yourself or for those who need it the most. Through all you do, carry with you the burden of knowing that; at the end of the day; what people remember is how you made them feel.

TO QUOTE AUTHOR RUTA SEPETYS:

"We have only died if you forget us."

THE VIRIDIAN

PSYCHOLOGY

WRITTEN BY
MAYA NATHANAEL

THE VIRIDIAN

'TIS THE SEASON



Toffee Nut Latte. Home Alone. George Michael.

Not a mere mention of the word “Christmas” and for sure, you’ve already conjured up many nostalgic memories. Maybe to the warm glow of fairy lights, maybe to the smell of cinnamon or gingerbread – these cues trigger the brain’s emotional memory circuits, often before we’re even aware of it. Psychologically, nostalgia works by drawing on meaningful, emotionally loaded moments stored in long-term memory, which is why even the smallest sensory cue can bring back a wave of feeling.

For many, these associations spark warmth and an almost instinctive longing for earlier, simpler moments. For others, the same cues tap into something heavier: the ache of past conflict, loneliness, or loss. Psychological research suggests that it’s not the holidays themselves – it is the brain’s associations. If December once meant warmth, celebration, family – our limbic system lights up with joy. If it meant conflict, loss or stress ... it can just as powerfully evoke sadness or anxiety.

THE MAGIC OF TRADITIONS

Ever wondered why old Christmas songs or the scent of freshly baked cookies can make you emotional? Psychology explains this through schemas – the mental maps our brains create to organise and interpret information. Through repeated exposure, Christmas rituals form a highly integrated “holiday schema,” a mental structure that organises related sensory inputs, autobiographical memories, and emotional states. Once triggered by even one cue, the schema initiates rapid, automatic retrieval of connected experiences, producing a strong emotional reaction. Maybe it’s an old sweater, a particular ornament, or a film that always marks the beginning of the season. Repetition gives the brain a sense of stability; it tells us that, despite everything that changes, something remains the same. Emotional well-being might be strongly triggered by this nostalgic yearning for the past. By bringing us back to a period when life may have felt easier or more joyful, nostalgia serves as both a means of escaping the stressful present and a means of revisiting treasured memories, which may be particularly comforting over the holidays.

Traditions give us moments of intentional pause – decorating the house, baking, wrapping gifts – activities that slow us down and demand presence. Psychologists note that such festive rituals can enhance mood, reduce loneliness, and foster a deeper sense of inclusion.

Psychologists frequently associate the season's distinct blend of happiness and celebration with our emotional health. However, what brain science underlies this happiness? To begin with, the act of giving triggers the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure. Additionally, the holidays provide an opportunity to spend time with loved ones, satisfying our natural desire for social interaction.

THE VIRIDIAN

THE ITCHY SIDE OF THE HOLIDAYS

Of course, the season doesn't shine for everyone. For many, December arrives with pressure – financial strain, family expectations, and the unspoken demand to feel festive. The pursuit of a “perfect Christmas” can create fatigue. Although the brain will project nostalgic sweet emotions, negative feelings that creep in may be somewhat dismissed. Since the celebration of Christmas is a unifying one, the thought process, a sense of trans borders feeling of belonging can heighten one's self-worth.

Although our idea of Christmas past may not be accurate – Christmas parties gone awry, relatives misbehaving, burnt turkeys and spilt eggnog, the holidays can magnify any unresolved emotion simply because they place so much emphasis on togetherness. Researchers even describe a rise in stress, irritability, and loneliness during this period, often referred to as the Christmas Blues.

There's also the sheer intensity of the season. Lights, noise, social gatherings, busy schedules – for anyone sensitive to overstimulation or living with anxiety, it can be overwhelming. And when the decorations come down, many experience the “post-holiday dip,” a sudden return to routine that feels oddly hollow after weeks of anticipation.

BELONGING AND SELF-WORTH

Traditions remind us of our roots and shared experiences. Even if memories are hazy, imperfect, or slightly exaggerated – our brains don't demand perfect accuracy. What they crave is meaning. Feeling part of something – a home, a group, a tradition – offers reassurance. It reminds us that our experiences weave into a larger narrative.

Understanding the psychology of Christmas can offer us insights into our behaviours, our traditions, and even our spending habits. So yes – cue Mariah, fluff the pillows, pour the hot cocoa. But also let your brain, your history, and your feelings find space. Whether Christmas brings laughter or longing, lights or shadows – the season can be what you make of it.

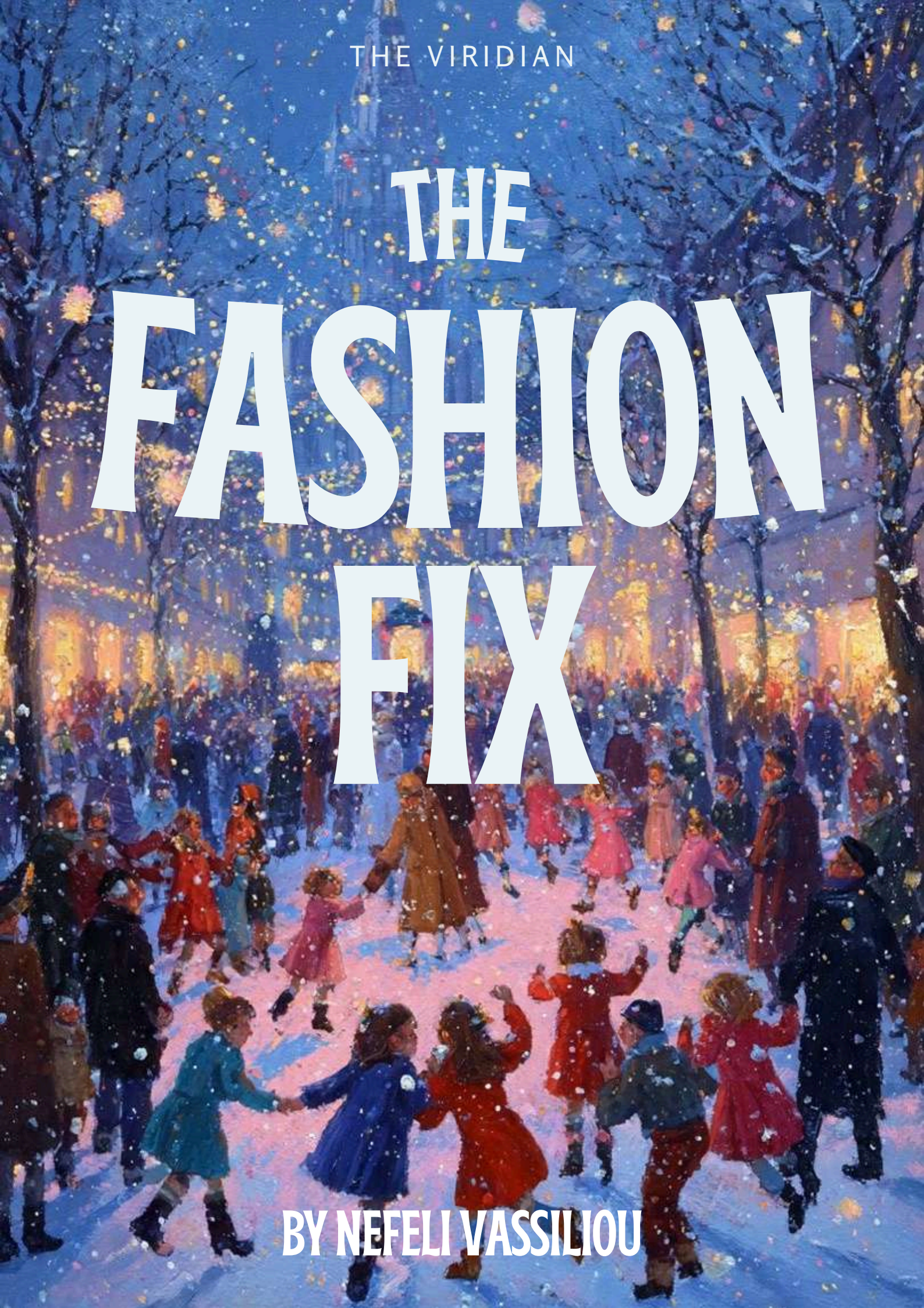
Happy holidays to all!



THE VIRIDIAN

THE FASHION FIX

BY NEFELI VASSILIOU



You know them, you love them. It's the Christmas gift that's getting thrown into the back of your closet the second you come home from your Christmas party: The Ugly Christmas sweater. They may be tacky, garish, and quite frankly ugly, but that's all just a part of their charm. The garment has become a tradition whenever the holidays roll around, but it wasn't always so.

TIS' THE SEASON TO GET UGLY

1950s



1980s



2000s

2002

Its roots can be dated back to the early **1950's**. Originally coined "Jingle Bell Sweaters," these sweaters were decorated with the typical Christmas symbols: **snowmen, Santa, Trees, snowflakes, jingle bells**, etc. During the post-war era, the design was usually simple, being knitted with muted colors and subtle patterns.

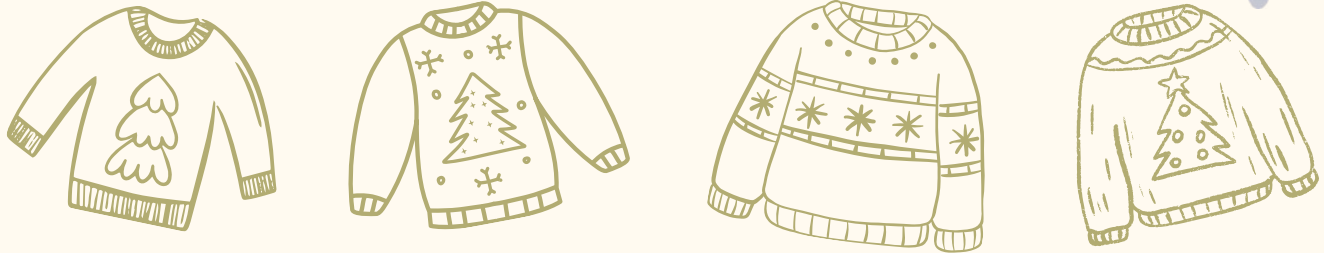
But with the **1980s** came the **shoulder pads**, the **comically large hair**, and the **audacious designs**. The sweaters became brighter, more colorful, and had bigger and bolder designs. The item entered mainstream with the introduction of "**The Cosby Show**," in which Cliff Huxtable played Bill Cosby. His wardrobe frequently consisted of a woolly pullover with bright colors and clashing patterns. While the outfits did catch on with audiences over time, these type of sweaters as gifts were about as popular as receiving socks.

By the **2000s**, the item was widely considered as an eyebrow-raising sartorial mishap. Something only your grandparents would think of wearing. Think of 2001's "**Bridget Jones's Diary**," in which Mark Darcy greets Bridget at a family party. She was sporting an unattractive knitted sweater featuring a giant red-nosed reindeer. Bridget is horrified, and so were you, probably.

In **2002** ugly Christmas sweaters became a tradition in Vancouver, Canada, where Chris Boyd and John Birch held the first-ever ugly Christmas sweater party. The idea eventually caught on. Brian Miller, the founder of online shop UglyChristmasSweaterParty.com claimed: "**It's hard to say what triggered the change in perspective, but I think that the moment someone wore the garment in a humorous way, people started seeing the comic side of it, and thinking 'this thing at the back of the closet could be fun, instead of something awful that nobody wants'**,"

THE VIRIDIAN

The popularity of the ugly sweater snowballed from there. Fast-fashion companies, vintage stores and even luxury fashion houses began filling their shelves and sites with gaudy designs each holiday season. In **2007**, Stella McCartney released a polar bear-themed alpine sweater. Givenchy followed in **2010**, and Dolce & Gabbana the following year.



However, the difference between a good quality and bad quality sweater is palpable, and sure, gifting your friend a cheap ugly sweater sounds like a good idea, but it's funny for approximately 10 minutes. Somewhere on the other side of the world, there's a little girl whose hopes and dreams have been traded away for a thread and a needle. Your 15-euro polyester sweater was made by a boy who had to give up his ambitions to work for a company that's exploiting him; just so he can sustain his family. With all of the marketing shoved into our faces lately, it's hard to be a mindful shopper, especially during the holidays. We're tempted by the Christmas themed candles, the coats, the home-décor, etc.



This holiday season, try lessen your consumption, both for the sake of your wallet and for the person behind the sewing machine working tirelessly. Buying good-quality and ethically-made sweaters is the best option, but it isn't always realistic when it comes to budget. Regardless, you can choose to buy less, or buy second hand. Either way, there is always an alternative option.



THE VIRIDIAN

MUSIC



BY ALEXA MICHAEL

Miss me? Well, I am back just in time for the holidays! And this is my present to you. You're so welcome.



A CHAOTIC GUIDE TO CHRISTMAS SONGS AS PARTY PEOPLE

If Christmas songs were people at a house party, half wouldn't make it past the bouncer while the other half would be crying in the bathroom. And now that Airbuds and Spotify Wrapped have convinced all of us, our music taste is "elite," it only feels right to judge holiday tracks the same way we judge our friends: Harshly, accurately, and with too much confidence.

So here it is – the breakdown of which Christmas songs would ruin the vibe, save the vibe, or accidentally trigger a four-person emotional spiral. Equal parts unhinged energy and painfully accurate judgment. Proceed at your own risk.

Let's begin with the one and only, irreplaceable, most overplayed Christmas song to exist – **"All I Want for Christmas."** The host that has been planning the party since the clock struck 12 on the 31st of October. They've definitely been caffeinated since 3 p.m., evident by their screaming and excessive smiling while greeting you, shoving cookies in your hand. Followed by a spam of pictures you are forced to take just for all the bad ones to be posted on Facebook, with either your eyes closed or you sneezing, accompanied by the worst caption possible being like, "Just a lil' festive get-together I threw in 0.0004 seconds ✨ no big deal lol! (#BlessedYetStressed)." And they will physically swat you away from the speaker if you think about changing their song, as they think it's vital for it to be played at every function. Their energy is so terrifying and slightly iconic. Although they're probably clinically insane, they're busy microwaving vibes to cause drama; receiving one star on the drama-causing scale.





THE VIRIDIAN

Next up, the #1-bathroom crier representing “**Last Christmas.**” They arrived looking normal, made eye contact with the bowl of punch, and then remembered a breakup from 7 months, 7 years, and 7 lifetimes ago. They whisper-cry over a paper towel, promising they’re “Literally SO over it,” while stress-scrolling their ex’s Instagram. Hug them and they’ll latch on like Velcro. And if they feel particularly devious that night, they might just start a chain reaction of 3 other people crying, hence why they get 4 stars. Incredibly annoying, yet you have some kind of sympathy as your festive consciousness is telling you that no one should be sad during holiday season, only to regret it a few seconds later after assuming the role of an unpaid therapist. This song is the emotional support ballad of December, and no one can convince them it’s basic.



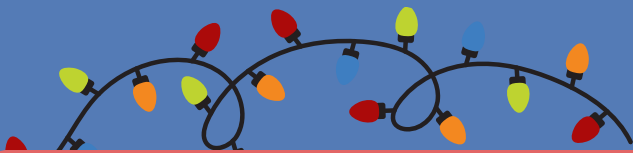
Then comes the drunk fun uncle screaming “**FELIZ NAVIDADDD**” through the door carrying the energy of 12 people, forcing everyone to do shots with him, starts conga lines any chance he gets, recruiting you along whether you like it or not until he completes his mission. And as a human megaphone, he obviously has never heard the concept of an “Inside voice.” He shouts every lyric at a volume that violates human hearing standards but somehow boosts the vibe. He is a loud, chaotic national treasure that everyone loves. He believes this is the best Christmas song ever created and will pause the music to lecture the room about why. So, he gets two stars, since the most drama he may cause is devouring all the cookies or spilling all the drinks during his conga line after having one too many glasses of whiskey himself.

Next, we have your brother’s irritating, flirty friend who somehow ALWAYS manages to get invited only to stand under the “**Mistletoe,**” as if he didn’t calculate the exact victim he would annoy, obviously trying too hard the whole night to find any female available. Only to ghost her when she shows interest towards him since he’s researched (by that I mean has found a TikTok video) that states he is an avoidant attachment. He keeps positioning himself under the mistletoe the whole night, saying, “Wait, hold on, do we have mistletoe?” at least five times. Genuinely thinks he invented romantic tension and still has a Justin Bieber haircut, yikes. So, he gets three stars, as his dumb, harmless flirting might just turn into actual drama no one wants to deal with.

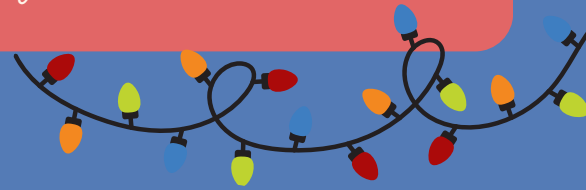


THE VIRIDIAN

Lastly, the soft-spoken, aesthetic girl who loves “**The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)**” specifically by Paul McCartney, arriving in soft neutrals, takes artsy film photos of random corners of the room saying it’s art (and honestly? It kind of is) and talks about how “winter is the most emotionally cinematic season.” She says stuff like “I love the silence of snow,” even though it hasn’t snowed in this city since 2015. She brings her own headphones to listen to her own niche Christmas-coded music like “**Christmas Lights**” by Coldplay or even more niche, “**White Winter Hymnal**” by the Fleet Foxes. And clearly, she deserves two stars, as she is mostly quiet and poetic.



By the end of the night, the songs have spoken—and you're just along for the drama. Whether you're dancing, crying, or lurking in the corner, the playlist doesn't lie, and at holiday parties, everyone fades—but the songs? They roast you forever.



THE VIRIDIAN

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Thank you for reading this month's edition
Stay tuned for our next edition, out soon!



FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!
@SENIORSCHOOLVIRIDIAN



FOLLOW US ON TIKTOK!
@THESSVIRIDIAN