

‘Completely immersive and addictive. Within pages I was in so deep I started to believe I was one of the students myself.

Another slice of genius’

Louise Candlish, author of *Our House*

‘Cleverer and twistier than ever. This is Janice Hallett at her very best’

Elly Griffiths, author of *The Locked Room*

‘Insanely readable. Hallett is an absolute original, a complete one-off’

Mick Herron, author of *Slow Horses*

‘Janice Hallett serves up another winner. Witty, creepy and oh-so-clever’

Tom Hindle, author of *A Fatal Crossing*

‘Another compulsive page-turner. Excellent fun and at least three twists I didn’t see coming’

Alex Pavesi, author of *Eight Detectives*

‘Witty, devious and outrageously brilliant. Janice Hallett is up there with the greats and already a national treasure’

Ian Moore, author of *Death and Croissants*

‘I loved this puzzle box of a story. Hallett’s writing is so good. Just when you think you know you’re presented with a fresh, infinitely intriguing perspective’

J.M. Hall, author of *A Spoonful of Murder*

‘A fun, exciting, exhilarating read. Just couldn’t put it down! Janice Hallett has produced another sure-fire winner’

Abir Mukherjee, author of *A Rising Man*

‘My favourite so far of Hallett’s novels. Charming, hilarious and very dark’

Emma Curtis, author of *One Little Mistake*

Also from Janice Hallett and Viper

The Appeal

The Twyford Code

The Mysterious Case of the Alperton Angels

The Christmas Appeal

THE EXAMINER

Janice Hallett



First published in Great Britain in 2024 by Viper
an imprint of Profile Books Ltd

29 Cloth Fair

London

EC1A 7JQ

www.profilebooks.com

Copyright © Janice Hallett, 2024

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Designed and typeset by Crow Books

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

The moral right of the author has been asserted.

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the publisher of this book.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

HB ISBN 978 1 80081 045 7

Exclusive HB ISBN 978 1 80522 346 7

TPB ISBN 978 1 80081 046 4

Ebook ISBN 978 1 78283 982 8



For Alison and Samantha,
my oldest and wisest friends

Dear reader,

I need to oversee the final grades for a Masters degree at a prestigious university. Despite access to all the documents I require and some I wouldn't normally expect to see, I find myself unable to grade the submissions. In fact I can't quite work out what happened on that course at all. It was either something so disturbing I can't even bring myself to write it down; or, as the police seem to think, it was nothing.

I'd appreciate your help. Please read the enclosed and let me know. For context, it includes an academic year calendar marked with key dates, the official guidelines that govern our marking process and my correspondence with the college admins.

Be aware that if my worst fears are true, then one of the students on this course is dead.

Thank you,
The Examiner

Royal Hastings Academic Year 2023–24

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

First day of autumn term

Pitch prep meeting

OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Deadline assignment 1

1st day of Spring term

NOVEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
					3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Assignment 2 deadline

Assignment 3 deadline

DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Pitch meeting at RDs

Last day of term

JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Easter Monday

Trip to Somerset

1st day of Summer term

FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

Assignment 4 deadline

MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Last day of term

Good Friday

APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

RDs visit studio

Assignment 5 deadline

MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

long essay deadline

Assignment 6 deadline

Big RDs launch event!! and final day of MMAMs course

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Last day of summer term

To: Matilda Ricci
From: Ben Sketcher
Date: 30 May 2024
Subject: As discussed

Tilda,

I've gathered together everything I think is relevant. This includes the coursework, final essays and tutor reports I downloaded from Central, plus everything I could get hold of from the Doodle message board, email cache, diaries and chat groups.

After our first message exchange today, I've placed everything in chronological order from when they started the course last year.

Ben

Message group: 2024 Examiners, 30 May 2024

Ben Sketcher

Anyone else read the Multimedia Art MA submissions yet?

Tilda Ricci

Hello Ben. Who are you?

Ben Sketcher

Sorry, should introduce myself. I'm from Central. Your external examiner.

Karen Carpenter

Ooh-er! Sounds rude!

Ben Sketcher

External examiners are appointed from a separate college, Karen – in my case, Goldcrofts – to oversee the grading of courses otherwise marked internally. This verifies that no over- or under-marking has taken place.

Karen Carpenter

I know. Just being mad ol' me!

Tilda Ricci

No, I haven't read the submissions yet, but sounds joyous. Will probably read tomorrow.

Ben Sketcher

Couldn't sleep, so went through these submissions last night. The whole thing is odd.

Tilda Ricci

It's a revamped MA. We've had to overhaul our art courses and qualifications, make them workplace-relevant, employer-friendly, etc.

Karen Carpenter

Not so airy-fairy.

Tilda Ricci

Promote logical problem-solving as well as creative solutions. The department has been drastically reduced and all our Fine Art MAs have been discontinued. Of course there'll be hiccups during the transition, but Gela will soon knock any corners off!

Ben Sketcher

The tutor, Gela Nathaniel. Do you know her?

Tilda Ricci

Oh yes, she's a stalwart of Royal Hastings. She's devised and taught our postgrad art degrees for many years.

Ben Sketcher

I asked the tech department to retrieve what they could from Doodle. I'm sending you the group's messages so you know what they were discussing behind Gela's back.

Tilda Ricci

I'm sure everything's fine.

Ben Sketcher

Nonetheless, please give me a shout when you've read. I don't want to sound alarmist. I may be mistaken. But I can't help thinking something awful has happened.

Ben Sketcher

Let me clarify that. Something awful *may* have happened, and if it did, then everyone else is covering it up.

Royal Hastings, University of London
Multimedia Art MA (Full-Time Programme) 2023/4

Notes for External Examiners

This course is designed to bridge the gap between creative-arts education and the workplace.

It is examined on a **portfolio** of coursework, both practical and written. This **must** include a **long essay** on the **final project**. Coursework should demonstrate a clear progression, improvement and application of learning.

For the **final project** students are commissioned by an industry sponsor to devise and produce a bespoke art installation, with multimedia elements, to a precise brief and budget. Students must collaborate to research and create a work that best meets the sponsor's brief within practical limitations and the timescale given. This process is intended to emulate the roles played and the challenges faced by real-world creative professionals.

The 'long essay' is a **separate** work documenting and exploring the project from an **individual** point of view. Students are encouraged to be creative in their execution of the long essay, but not at the expense of a full and clear account. Given the collaborative nature of the course, this is each student's opportunity to demonstrate their **personal** approach to the brief and to evaluate their experience working as part of the team. They are encouraged to identify where the project succeeded and failed, and to detail any learnings that can be taken forward into the workplace.

Students are marked firstly on the progression they make during the course as a whole. Secondly, on their problem-solving skills and approach to change within a dynamic environment. And, finally, on their understanding of and adaptation to the opportunities and limitations of **teamwork**.

Royal Hastings, University of London

New student info: Using Doodle

Doodle is the intranet and messaging system used by Royal Hastings' students and staff. All new students must register in the week **before** their course starts. You will need your email address, mobile-phone number and unique Student Reference Code to set up a Doodle profile. You are welcome to get Doodling with your course-mates as soon as you register on the site. Doodle keeps all digital communications within the remit of the college and protects all parties in the event of a dispute. If necessary, admin staff will help you set up your free account via the Doodle app on your phone and laptop or desktop computer.

Doodle may be used for the following:

Message boards:

There is a main message board for your course and year. All students and staff may post or start new threads at any time. Check Doodle every day to see notices and discussion topics from your tutor, admin staff or fellow students.

Private messages and emails:

Contact staff and students directly or set up private chat groups.

Diary:

The diary and calendar function helps you manage your coursework deadlines. In addition, you may keep a private record of your thoughts each day. Many students find this helps with their mental health, as it is a record of how you feel over a period of time. Each diary entry may only be amended on the day. After midnight, the previous day's entry is locked and cannot be altered.

Coursework submission:

Written coursework may be submitted via Doodle, with the exception of some final essays and practical work that must be handed in at the admin office.

Royal Hastings does not tolerate bullying or discrimination on its campus, nor will it do so on Doodle. Users are encouraged to report antisocial behaviour to their tutor or admin staff.

Doodle is designed to be fully accessible to all students, but if there is anything we can do to improve it, please use the ‘suggestions’ button on the home page.

Happy Doodling.

Doodle message group MMAM(FTP), 21 September 2023:

Jem Badhuri

Hello! Great to meet everyone. There's six on the course, right?

Jonathan Danners

Hi Jem. Yes, there were six names on Gela's email, plus Hannah the administrator.

Patrick Bright

Hello all.

Jem Badhuri

I'm so excited for this course! I've just done a BA in FA at West Middlesex. Anyone else straight from their first degree?

Patrick Bright

This is my first degree – assuming I get to the end of it.

Jem Badhuri

Aw, don't say that, Patrick. Can we call you Pat?

Patrick Bright

That's fine, Jem.

Jonathan Danners

My first degree too. Know how you feel, Patrick!

Ludya Parak

Hey. Excited to meet you all next week.

Jem Badhuri

Hi Ludya! How do we pronounce your name?

Ludya Parak

Exactly how it looks.

Patrick Bright

Gela is pronounced with a hard G, even though it's short for Angela, which has a soft G.

Alyson Lang

Can anyone near Guildford give me a lift in on Tuesday?

Jem Badhuri

Hi Alyson with a 'y'. Sorry. My dad's driving me from North London every day. Well, the days we have to be in. He can't believe we only do Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays!

Ludya Parak

Anyone else vegan?

Jem Badhuri

I am. Well, I eat cheese.

Alyson Lang

About access to the MM studio on the days we aren't officially 'in'. This is a coursework degree. It's essential we can come and go whenever we want, yet Hannah says keys aren't issued to students. We have to ask a technician to unlock it and they aren't there 24/7. Anyone else pissed off?

Patrick Bright

It does seem a bit inflexible.

Alyson Lang

It's unacceptable. I make my best work at night. When I did a 3D module at Portsmouth they had a keypad with a code. We could access the room whenever.

Jonathan Danners

Might be worth mentioning.

Alyson Lang

If we all go to Hannah together on day one and lodge the complaint, Gela will *have* to ask for at least one set of extra keys.

Jem Badhuri

I won't need to access the studio out-of-hours. My dad said he'll drive me in on any Monday or Friday if I need extra time.

25 September 2023:

Jem Badhuri

Can't wait to meet you all tomorrow. Did you get Hannah's email about picking up a welcome pack at the admin office before we go to the Media Arts building? There's one student who hasn't replied on this thread yet. Cameron Wesley. Hope she hasn't dropped out already.

Cameron Wesley

He.

To: MMAM(FTP)
From: Gela Nathaniel
Date: 26 September 2023
Subject: Assignment One

Dear all,

I hope you enjoyed your first day of MMAM(FTP) as much as I did. What a pleasure it was getting to know you all outside of the interview process. Thank you to Hannah for organising our welcome buffet lunch.

It's going to be a year of as much fun as hard work and, at the end of it, you'll have a real-world project to look back on and feel proud of. As I explained in our introductory class, this is a valuable opportunity to explore the ups and downs of a creative career, with the support and guidance of staff and peers.

I was delighted to hear you've all read your welcome pack and registered on Royal Hastings' Doodle Board. Keep an eye on our section, as I'll post or email anything you need to know there. You can socialise on other media, public and private, of course, but as this is a collaborative degree, we ask that you discuss college matters and coursework on Doodle only. This protects everyone, in the unlikely event of a dispute.

Regarding the request to issue keys to the multimedia studio. It seems one or two of you feel passionate about access to the room at times that suit the way you work. I've spoken to the department and it's a no, I'm afraid. The safety of all students and the security of the site are paramount. Also, the department feels that adapting your natural

creative process to the demands of a more regular work environment is a positive exercise within the remit of this course.

Now to your first assignment! This is a broad, liberal task to establish the coursework segment of your final grade. In short:

Assignment One

Devise the logo for a fictional start-up company. This should take the form of a 2D illustration or a 3D model, plus one short multimedia (film/sound/animation/graphics) promotional presentation suitable for playing on a screen in a company's foyer. Deadline: 19 October 2023.

The studio and its equipment are at your disposal, likewise the technicians, who can help and advise you. I'll be available myself for the rest of this week as we are on-boarding the BA group next door. If you have any questions, just ask.

Best wishes,
Gela

Doodle message group [Private] Patrick and Gela, 26 September 2023:

Patrick Bright

I don't have to do the multimedia presentation, do I?

Gela Nathaniel

You do. It's 50% of the assignment.

Patrick Bright

But we said I'd concentrate on sketching and watercolour.

Gela Nathaniel

The MA is in Multimedia Art. That means digital and animation. You've got the software.

Patrick Bright

My laptop says 'Not enough space to open FlowHand 11'. I don't have any other programmes on it. Not even Internet Explorer. I thought we said I could stick with traditional art?

Gela Nathaniel

Sorry. I can't seem to favour one student over the others. Please try to come up with something. Your shop assistants seem to be tech-savvy. Could they help?

Patrick Bright

I'll ask Joy. She usually sorts out my phone.

Gela Nathaniel

Phones – argh! Thank you, Patrick, you've just reminded me.

Doodle message group MMAM(FTP), 26 September 2023:

Gela Nathaniel

Typical! I forgot something crucial, and the technicians will take a dim view if I don't make you aware. Today was an exception, but from now on, no mobile phones are allowed in the studio. The reason is twofold. First, the room poses all sorts of dangers to expensive electronic devices – paint, varnish, glue, chemicals, and so on. Second, thanks to the volatile materials all around, the art studio is particularly vulnerable to fire. Mobile phones are considered an elevated risk to life and property and must be left in the metal tray by the door. The building is secure and the door is covered by CCTV. You may visit your phone in the tray as often as you like, within reason, during the day. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Ludya Parak

I've got two kids. My phone stays with me. I'll apply for special consideration.

Doodle message group [Private] Hannah and Gela, 26 September 2023:

Hannah O'Donnell

Quick reminder: diversity forms for the MMAM(FTP) group. We haven't received any yet.

Gela Nathaniel
Yes, yes, will sort!

Doodle message group MMAM(FTP), 26 September 2023:

Alyson Lang
Gela didn't ask anyone about the studio keys.

Jem Badhuri
To be fair, what she says about security makes sense.

Jonathan Danners
Great to meet you all in person. Like I said over lunch, I haven't done any 'real' art since my A-levels, thirteen years ago. It's daunting even being in a studio again.

Patrick Bright
Jonathan, you and I are similar in that we've worked in the art world, but not created work ourselves. I don't know how we'll compete with Alyson. A proper artist.

Jem Badhuri
I'm a proper artist!

Patrick Bright
Sure, but Alyson is already a name. Confess to googling you, Ali. Very well done.

Alyson Lang
It was just an Emerging Talent Award ten years ago. Still trying to emerge. It's a tough business, folks.

Patrick Bright
You can still be proud, however long ago it was – and of losing all that weight since. Must've been at least three stone. Any tips for me?

Alyson Lang
Swimming, tennis and no carbs after 5 p.m.

Jem Badhuri

I thought you'd all be recent graduates. I'm the youngest by at least ten years.

Patrick Bright

Gela said she likes a mix of people. Diversity is always good.

Jonathan Danners

We're certainly all different, but we're all in the same place on the same journey, so let's support each other along the way.

Patrick Bright

Hear! hear! And learn from each other. All for one and . . .

Ludya Parak

I can't make tomorrow, for personal reasons.

Cameron Wesley

This stonking Doodle thing. A 90s dot-com start-up wants its message board back. Why no page-visit counter?

Jonathan Danners

. . . one for all!

Alyson Lang

I'm writing a formal letter to the department head about fitting a keypad. Keys are so last century. It's meant to be a state-of-the-art studio, FFS.

Doodle message group [Private] Jem and Jonathan, 26 September 2023:

Jem Badhuri

Hi Jonathan! Like I said in the Aviator at lunchtime, I'm more than happy to give you an intro to working with clay. It's a (literally) hands-on medium that takes you anywhere you want to go. I can come in early any day and we'll go through the basics together.

Jonathan Danners

Hi Jem. Thanks for the offer. Perhaps a bit later on, when I've found my feet with the coursework.

Jem Badhuri

No problem. Let's chat later in the week.

Jonathan Danners

Good idea.

To: MMAM(FTP)
From: Gela Nathaniel
Date: 9 October 2023
Subject: The Studio

Dear all,

It has been brought to my attention that someone from our course – I won't say who – has been less than polite and courteous to a particular member of studio staff.

May I remind you that the art technicians are knowledgeable professionals who work hard, under pressure, to keep our studio and workspaces clean and ensure we have supplies of whatever materials we need. They are to be treated with the utmost respect.

The person concerned has apologised, and Griff has accepted that apology. I'll say no more at this stage. But if I hear of any further incidents, I shall be less than pleased.

I look forward to receiving your first assignments on or before the given deadline.

Gela

Doodle message group MMAM(FTP), 9 October 2023:

Ludya Parak

Wasn't me.

Jem Badhuri

What happened? Does anyone know? Must've been after I left on Thursday. I'm trying not to bother the technicians.

Patrick Bright

Gela implies one of us has been rude. I find Griff very gruff, but hope I haven't said anything that's been taken the wrong way.

Jonathan Danners

Gela says they apologised, so I think you're in the clear, Pat.

Patrick Bright

Ah, didn't see that bit. Must have a guilty conscience.

Jem Badhuri

Tony is so slow. Rita is always helpful, but she's only part-time. Who would have complained about us?

Ludya Parak

I wasn't even in past 4 p.m. last week.

Jem Badhuri

Jonathan, Alyson and Cameron – do you know what Gela's talking about?

Jonathan Danners

No idea.

Cameron Wesley

Clueless.

Alyson Lang

OK, so this is what happened. Last Wednesday, Tony let me stay overnight. On Thursday evening Griff said I had to leave at six. I wasn't rude, just pointed out the inconsistency in studio policy. One night I can stay, the next I can't. That's *all* it was. He clearly has a problem with strong women. I said I was sorry, but if it happens again, I *will* lodge a complaint.

Doodle message group [Private] Jem and Patrick, 9 October 2023:

Jem Badhuri

Thought we'd chat in private. Shall I invite Jonathan too?

Patrick Bright

I'm honoured, Jem. Jonathan? Yes, do. He's grand.

Jonathan Danners has been added to this group.

Jem Badhuri

Oh. My. God. I guessed it was Alyson. How embarrassing for Gela, and the rest of us.

Patrick Bright

Poor gruff Griff!

Jem Badhuri

While I appreciate her point about accessing the studio when she can be most creative, there's no excuse for being rude to tech staff. They work really hard.

Patrick Bright

They're all characters, no?

Jem Badhuri

Jonathan, did you know Gela meant Alyson in that email?

Jonathan Danners

I've been concentrating on my assignment.

Patrick Bright

You and me both. How's it going?

Jonathan Danners

I could've used photography as my main medium – it's what I'm most familiar with – but I'm here to expand my skills, so I tried a simple resin design and basic stop-motion. Learned a lot, but it's not come across in the work. It looks naïve and amateur next to everyone else's.

Patrick Bright

Gela knows your circumstances. We're not competing with each other – we're building our skillsets. What you've done sounds ambitious.

Jem Badhuri

Has anyone seen Alyson's assignment yet?

Patrick Bright

Yes. She showed me today. It's out of this world.

Jem Badhuri

Have you seen it, Jonathan?

Jonathan Danners

I have. Patrick's right.

Jem Badhuri

Well, it's no wonder. She's been a professional artist for years. Why is she even on this course?

Patrick Bright

Ah, there's always something new to learn.

Jem Badhuri

If you ask me, she's rude, disruptive, arrogant and is only here to take advantage of the facilities, which she wants to access at night, alone, so no one can see how much stuff she's using. I'm going to mention it to Gela.

Patrick Bright

Gela is Alyson's biggest fan.

Jem Badhuri

That's what I find so unfair. Gela acts as if Alyson is the best artist here and expects us to worship her too.

Jonathan Danners

Need to get back to my assignment.

Jem Badhuri

I'm going to say something. Just not sure when yet.

Jonathan Danners *has left the group.*

Jem Badhuri

Did you notice he wouldn't say anything negative about her?

Patrick Bright

Have you finished your assignment, Jem?

Jem Badhuri

All except the final touches. Can't wait to hear what Gela thinks of it.

Patrick Bright

Wish I had your confidence!

Jem Badhuri

If you hear anything more about Griff-gate, let me know.

Doodle message group [Private] Jem and Cameron, 10 October 2023:

Jem Badhuri

Great session in the studio today! Thought I'd start a private chat because we haven't connected yet. You're always speaking to Alyson and never post on Doodle. Do you struggle with technology, like Pat?

Cameron Wesley

Ha! I don't even like the word 'intranet', let alone this Arial hellscape hammering my retinas.

Cameron Wesley

Apols. Inappropriate rant. Still working on myself.

Jem Badhuri

I'm thrilled with how my assignment has turned out. Have you seen my sculpture waiting by the kiln?

Cameron Wesley

Nope. Can't take eyes off Ali's work. Girl leaves the rest of us clinging to the perch.

Cameron Wesley has left the group.

Jem Badhuri

Really? Well, not for long.

Doodle message group [Private] Jem and Patrick, 16 October 2023:

Jem Badhuri

Thanks for your help, Patrick. Who'd have thought working in art supplies would qualify you as a detective?

Patrick Bright

Indeed! Although you're the detective, Ms Badhuri. Remember what I said. Don't go in all guns blazing. There might be a perfectly innocent explanation for the discrepancies.

To: Gela Nathaniel

From: Jemisha Badhuri

Date: 16 October 2023

Subject: Alyson is stealing

Hi Gela,

I've been conducting an investigation into another MMAM(FTP) student and my findings are below.

As you know, I like to maximise my hours on each assignment and have no suitable facilities at home – unlike Alyson – so I've familiarised myself with the whole area, the studio, stockroom and storage cupboards, so I don't have to keep buzzing for a technician. This means I know exactly what's been taken out, or not, on any given day.

I had my suspicions, but needed proof before I came to you with it. For the last week Patrick and I have been making a note of which stock items have been signed out and when, plus what's missing, without a formal paper trail.

You must know Alyson sneaks into the studio overnight whenever Tony is on lates. That's a matter in itself, but it's not the subject of my investigation. The sad fact is, items are going missing from the store-room, overnight, whenever Alyson is here by herself. This is everything that 'walked out' over one night alone. Tuesday last week:

Material	Quantity	Trade price	Total
Acrylic paints	500ml pots x 11 assorted colours	£3.33	£36.63
Plaster mix, white	10kg bags x 3	£6.15	£18.45
Resin	1litre bottles x 4	£14.03	£56.12
Triple canvas packs	3	£4.87	£14.61
			£125.81

You'll notice these are all trade prices. This is thanks to Patrick, who knows the costs exactly, thanks to his art-supplies shop. We weren't sure if Royal Hastings pays trade or retail prices. So, the above loss to the department is a conservative calculation.

It could be that Alyson is using these materials for her assignment, but eleven pots of acrylic paint? Three whole bags of plaster? Patrick says that's enough to make an installation for the foyer of the Tate Modern. We aren't meant to be working on canvas for this, so why the canvases?

I suspect Alyson is stocking her personal studio at home with whatever she can get her hands on from the cupboards here. Working overnight gives her the best opportunity to do so. As Patrick says, she can park behind the sheds and move larger items quickly. The true extent of her thieving is difficult to work out, as more obscure items could have gone missing without me noticing.

I'm happy to continue monitoring the stocks if you require more evidence before calling the police. Patrick will back me up.

Jem

Doodle message group [Private] Gela and Patrick, 16 October 2023:

Gela Nathaniel

You've been helping Jem 'investigate' items missing from the studio?

Patrick Bright

I'm sorry, Gela. How could I say no? She was so fired up and indignant on behalf of the department.

Gela Nathaniel

Perhaps let me know next time, so I can address it *before* she gets fired up.

Patrick Bright

I feel sorry for her. She's so young. There's no one remotely her age on the course.

Gela Nathaniel

She's old enough to accuse someone of theft. Now I have to go through the formal channels and at least appear to investigate it.

Patrick Bright

And that's not what we want. I know.

Doodle message group [Private] Gela and Jem, 16 October 2023:

Gela Nathaniel

Can I have a quick word with you before tomorrow's session?

Jem Badhuri

Of course. I'll get my dad to drop me off early.

Doodle message group [Private] Jem and Patrick, 17 October 2023:

Jem Badhuri

I've spoken to Gela. Let's just say a certain someone won't be stealing for much longer.

Patrick Bright

'Excellent,' I cried. 'Elementary,' said she!

Jem Badhuri

Who? Gela? Well, no one will worship Alyson any more, knowing she's a thief.

To: MMAM(FTP)

From: Gela Nathaniel

Date: 18 October 2023

Subject: Assignment One

Dear all,

This is your final reminder that completed Assignment One materials must be sent to Hannah (or, in the case of 3D items, left with Rita) by close of play tomorrow (Thursday).

On Tuesday we'll spend some time going through each project as a group. Be prepared to chat, informally but in detail, about your idea and how you achieved it. Also be prepared to critique each other's work. Learning to give and accept criticism to a high level is a key part of this course.

Good luck to those of you in the final stages.

See you Tuesday.

Gela

Doodle message group [Private] Hannah and Jem, 18 October 2023:

Hannah O'Donnell

Hello Jemisha. This is to open up a dialogue about how you're getting along on the course. You're the youngest and we are all keen for you to know you're supported at every stage. If you need anything, please do not hesitate to ask me, Gela or anyone else in the department.

Jem Badhuri

Thanks, Hannah! I'm getting along just fine. I was a tiny bit disappointed to find everyone was so much older. Patrick is in his fifties! Almost as old as my mum and dad. But this MA is only a year and I'm looking forward to all it holds.

Doodle message group MMAM(FTP), 20 October 2023:

Gela Nathaniel

The deadline for submitting your first assignment is now passed. Thank you everyone. I'll see you at 10 a.m. in the studio on Tuesday. Enjoy your weekends.

Jem Badhuri

Thanks, Gela! I've loved working on this project. Enjoy your weekend too!

Ludya Parak

I'll be late on Tuesday.

Doodle message group [Private] Jem and Jonathan, 23 October 2023:

Jem Badhuri

Hi Jonathan! If you fancy an intro to clay in the downtime between assignments, I'll be in the studio tomorrow morning, as usual.

Jonathan Danners

Won't be in early tomorrow. Giving Alyson a lift.

Doodle message group [Private] Jem and Patrick, 23 October 2023:

Jem Badhuri

Do you know if Gela has confronted Alyson about her thieving yet?

Patrick Bright

Steady on. We don't know for sure she's stolen anything.

Jem Badhuri

We do! We've done the maths.

Patrick Bright

Gela will sort it. Hopefully she'll have a quiet word, and if Alyson is doing anything she shouldn't, she'll stop.

Jem Badhuri

She should be kicked off the course. Gela should thank us personally for rooting out a thief.

Patrick Bright

It's out of our hands now. You've done a great job, Jem. Now concentrate on getting that MA.

Jem Badhuri

I hate to think the department is being drained of its resources, which we know are scarce enough, by one selfish person.

To: Gela Nathaniel
From: Jemisha Badhuri
Date: 23 October 2023
Subject: Re: Alyson is stealing

Hi Gela,

Have you spoken to Alyson about her stealing from the storeroom? I'm happy to give a statement to the police, and I know Patrick will be too.

Jem

To: Jemisha Badhuri
From: Gela Nathaniel
Date: 23 October 2023
Subject: Re: Alyson

Jem, no one is stealing from the storeroom. We aren't the only group to use this space. The technicians move items around frequently between both studios, depending on what each group is doing. The BAs were

working in clay and resin when you noticed a shortage of those. They also needed canvases and acrylics, and you discovered those missing. Please do not spread rumours about anyone in our MA group – it reflects badly on us all. You are doing well and (I hope) enjoying the course, which you are now free to concentrate on exclusively.

Gela

To: Gela Nathaniel
From: Jem Badhuri
Date: 23 October 2023
Subject: Re: Alyson

Hi Gela

Thanks for looking into it. I just want to assure you I have nothing against Alyson, but I have a very good sense when it comes to people, and something about her pings my radar. But not to worry. Like you say, I'm doing well on the course and intend that to continue. See you tomorrow.

Jem

Doodle message group [Private] Jem and Patrick, 23 October 2023:

Jem Badhuri

Gela is covering up Alyson's thieving.

Patrick Bright

Ah now, I don't think she'd do that.

Jem Badhuri

Royal Hastings' art department has dropped most of its Masters courses already. This is one of the few left. It looks bad if anyone, least of all the golden girl, has to leave under a cloud and so soon.

Patrick Bright

Let's look forward to tomorrow's session. Excited to see everyone's work for the first time.

Doodle message group MMAM(FTP), 24 October 2023:

Ludya Parak

Please tell me at least one other MMAM has been up all night and feels like shit this morning.

Patrick Bright

You said it. Lying awake worrying about the assessment today.

Jonathan Danners

Ditto. When I finally got to sleep, I dreamed Gela was staring in disgust at my model.

Ludya Parak

You guys were awake all night. I was editing my promo. ALL NIGHT. Finally sent it at 4.30 a.m.

Patrick Bright

You didn't hand it in on Thursday?

Ludya Parak

Gela gave me an extension. Personal stuff.

Jem Badhuri

I'm so excited!

Alyson Lang

I got an extension to this morning as well. At the studio now, if anyone fancies a pre-assessment smoke.

Jem Badhuri

Smoking isn't allowed in the studio. Or outside.

Alyson Lang

There's a neat little unofficial hang-out space beyond the rear double-doors to the car park.

Jem Badhuri

I don't smoke.

Jonathan Danners

I might start today.

Patrick Bright

See you there.

Ludya Parak

Like I said. Gonna be late. Family reasons.

Cameron Wesley

I'll join you for a puff, Ali.

Doodle message group [Private] Jem and Patrick, 24 October 2023:

Jem Badhuri

I've noticed something about Cameron. If he's not on his phone in the corridor, he's flirting with Alyson in the studio.

Patrick Bright

Oh Jem! You're a sharp one, but I don't think he flirts with Alyson. They just get along.

Jem Badhuri

He has the loudest, clearest voice of the whole group, but when he's on his phone he whispers.

Patrick Bright

I suspect he's still doing his regular job, even though he was supposed to step back to make time for this course. He's on his laptop in the bar every lunchtime.

Jem Badhuri

How can he focus on his MA? Gela will have something to say about that. I have to put my phone in the tray now, but I'll make sure she knows.

Patrick Bright

Nearly at the studio myself. Let's get through this first assessment!

Doodle message group [Private] Gela and Cameron, 24 October 2023:

Gela Nathaniel

I don't know if your phone had anything to do with events in the studio today, but in future, switch it completely OFF when you leave it in the tray.

Cameron Wesley

Apols.

Gela Nathaniel

What was that anyway? I've never heard a shriek like it. Not from a phone.

Cameron Wesley

Because your phone belongs in a museum, Gela. If you had the latest model – or even one from the last decade – you might have facial recognition that, set to the highest security level, would alert you when it detected a stranger's face looking at the screen.

Gela Nathaniel

Well, why the panic?

Cameron Wesley

I deal with top clients and corporations. That phone is chocka with sensitive strategy plans and embargoed info. When the alarm goes off, it alerts the office. They instantly assume it's either been stolen or my security compromised. I had to get straight on to them or they'd call the old Bill.

Gela Nathaniel

No one at Royal Hastings is going to compromise your company's data, I can assure you.

Cameron Wesley

Well, *someone* picked up my phone and looked at it while I was distracted in the studio.

Gela Nathaniel

If it's a top model, then someone was possibly curious. It doesn't mean they tried to hack into it.

Cameron Wesley

Benefit of the doubt, sure. But it stays in my pocket from now on. Anyway I'm surprised you – or anyone – remembers that, quite frankly, insignificant episode, after what happened next, FFS.

MMAM(FTP)
Coursework Module: Assignment One
Tutor's Report, 24 October 2023

Brief: Devise the logo for a fictional start-up company. This should take the form of a 2D graphic or a 3D model, plus one short multi-media (film/sound/animation/graphics) promotional presentation suitable for playing on a screen in the company's foyer.

Overview: For their first assignment I devised a brief that would allow students to utilise familiar materials, while extending their diverse skillsets into unfamiliar mediums. All approached it with unbridled enthusiasm and submitted well within the deadline. For their 2D logo, oil or acrylic on canvas was discouraged in favour of mediums popular in today's commercial world. Photography, computer graphics and illustration were all used.

Jemisha Badhuri

Jem devised a logo for a charity that clears litter from shorelines, especially plastic detritus that can entrap sea animals. She submitted an 18-inch foyer ornament of her logo in clay, which she textured by hand. It combined human hands with waves from the sea. The impression was of humanity embracing the animals and ecosystems of the oceans. For the multimedia part, Jem devised an innovative soundscape, also intended for use in the charity's reception area. This she made using audio clips of ocean noises, inventively mixed to create a soothing, calming air, all the more impressive because sound was not part of Jem's BA. Apparently she took a course in sound electronics over the summer. Her commitment and enthusiasm paid off. Grade: B+

Patrick Bright

This is Patrick's first experience of formal art education. His logo was for his own art-supplies shop, which currently doesn't have one, beyond its name in block capitals. He used pencil on paper for his