

Hello Camden Students. It's your Head Boy Cassius here (that sounds like I'm gloating on paper but I just wanted to identify myself!)

What an odd set of circumstances we have found ourselves in here. We've had a rather abrupt end to what otherwise was a great year. For some of us this abrupt end marks the last time we'll ever go to Camden with the intention of receiving an education. I've really loved Camden though. I feel like I've really maxed-out all the opportunities Camden brings: Skern, Open days, Pink Day (twice), sold cake to main school (too many times), sold *plantain* to Main School, theatre trips with the drama department, a play with the drama department, I ran for Head Boy (not gloating), put-on a pantomime, witnessed a normal Founder's Day and witnessed a non-normal Founder's Day (this!)

Ironically, the only thing I didn't do was my A-levels which sounds fun but that's due to the fact we were forced into quarantine by COVID-19. That being said, there isn't a great deal of difference between quarantine and A-levels (or GCSEs for that matter). Staying indoors and not seeing friends until the end of June sounds just like revision to be honest. The only difference is I'm revising the configuration of the furniture in my bedroom rather than agricultural techniques from 17th century England.

Quarantine is weird: the only thing worse than quarantine is thinking about being in quarantine. Quarantine feels like the embodiment of unhelpful regret. All of a sudden I really want to go to Oxford Street because *I know* I'm not allowed to go out, despite the fact that in-reality going to Oxford Street is like attending a selfie stick convention with a bit of "get-on my bike-chariot contraption-thingy" thrown in.

But perhaps there are some positives to being in quarantine and the other impacts of COVID-19. I've heard from people who aren't religiously affiliated *at all* that Corona kind of feels like an Old-testament style 'correction' of the world. This is not to say that all the impacts Corona has had have been positive by any means, but rather there's a positive flip-side to many of its impacts. Far-right, populist governments are coming under fire as there's only so far a boisterous personality can get you when you are faced with a virus and the death tolls it can bring about. A conservative government has re-nationalised some of the trains (who would've thought!) The sky in Beijing is clear once again and the effects of Climate change are decelerating because less and less people are taking that 'essential trip' to the Bahamas. The importance of the NHS and the issues it has faced have been brought to the fore in these extreme times. For once, we're all forced to think about the problems experienced by our own health service and the challenges other countries with less developed health care systems face.

The bottom line is I don't think it's all doom and gloom but rather there is something to take away from this experience. I know people don't love the fact that exams have been cancelled but perhaps this means it's time to consolidate and grow from what we've learnt independently. We haven't just learnt what we have just to slap it on a CV or take a test (as implied by Micheal Gove's reforms that to my delight are under great threat!)

After all, our Founder Frances Mary Buss certainly didn't have the approval of the masses behind the idea of advancing women's education. She needed to build her own resilience, her own validation.

Think about how you will build yourself independently so you can come out the other side of this experience feeling as though you have gained something. Don't regret what you didn't do before going into quarantine but rather think about the regret you'd have if you didn't use this time effectively.

I want to thank all the teachers and students who enriched my experience at Camden. I hope we can all meet again at some point to say proper goodbyes.

Cassius