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THE FALL ISSUE

Into the Woods — Behind the Scenes of a CHS Production
By Hannah Kunze

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Everyone enjoys a good fairytale. Maybe it reminds you of the innocence of your childhood, or that happy, fuzzy feeling you used to get when a parent would lovingly recount the tale of Cinderella and her prince, or Little Red Riding Hood and the hungry wolf. Everyone lived happily ever after, rich and content. But not all stories have happy endings. *Into the Woods*, one of CHS's most riveting productions yet, recounts the thrilling tales of the fairy tale characters from your childhood in a way no one has ever seen. It centers on the lives of Cinderella, Rapunzel, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and his beanstalk, the Witch, two princes, and a baker and his wife who will take any risk in order to have a child. Little do they know how much their lives intertwine. Act One, like many classic fairy tales, ends with the happiest of endings for Cinderella and her prince. But don't go thinking the show is over just yet - because the mistakes made in Act One may just come back to haunt the characters in the unique and spectacular performance of Act Two. The interwoven stories continue to develop through a dark and mysterious twist on the classic fairy tale ending. The plot twists will have your eyes glued on the action until curtain call.

However, a show this spectacular takes months of time, effort, and plenty of sleepless nights to pull off. Whether a lead, understudy, or ensemble member, the process is a grueling one. It all begins with auditions, three in total. The first is a singing audition. Each person is asked to prepare a song from another show to sing in front of Mrs. Lauren Cochran, the

director, and Ms. Amanda Roeder, the music director. An acting audition follows, during which everyone is called up to do a cold reading with scene partners. In other words, everyone is asked to perform a scene from the show with no prior knowledge of what the scene will be. Lastly, there is a dance audition, in which the student choreographers, Justine Long and Mia Kelly, teach a dance from the show while Mrs. Cochran watches.

If the directors think a person is suitable for a certain role or multiple roles, he or she will be invited back for a callback. During the callback, scenes and songs are performed that include the specific character(s) in the play that a person was called back for. Usually the cast list comes out two to three days after callbacks; the anticipation gives everyone nervous butterflies. Upon finally seeing the list, a flurry of mixed emotions races through everyone who views it, disbelief in getting a part, pride for a friend who got a lead role, disappointment in not getting a part at all, a sense of hopefulness that next time, just maybe, auditions will go better and they be rewarded with a lead. Every actor has gone through the sting of not getting a part. It is incredibly important for an actor to keep an open mind and remember that there's always the next show.

Actors from Chelmsford High seem to spend more time in the PAC than they do in the rest of the school. For most, the PAC is like a second home. It's where friends and memories are made, where kids become actors, and where the magic happens. It's where a show is transformed from a bunch of high school students giggling over inside jokes on stage to a true work of art. Needless to say, the PAC is occupied (**continue on page 7**)

What do we do now?

We live out today.

Where do we go from here?

We go on.

Will we be okay?

Of course we will.

The past week has been a rollercoaster for many students. We're exhausted from the stress of trying to keep grades up at the end of the term. This historical election season has come to a dramatic end, but the tension between the two parties unfortunately has not. And in the midst of this all, Chelmsford High suddenly and tragically lost a beloved teacher. It seems that we all could use a little reassurance, a little hope, and a little time off.

I went with my family to vote on November eighth, and I'll admit that I was crying tears of joy as we left the polling booth. I was so awestruck and overwhelmed by the enormity of this election; I was dreaming of the day that I would be able to refer to our leader as 'Madame President', the day that I would know that there was someone like me in the highest office of the land. I wanted to be able to take pride and inspiration in the fact that this pervasive, seemingly impenetrable glass ceiling had been broken.

I had hope for this election. Yes, I'm heartbroken. Dejected. Afraid, even. But what we all need to remember is—life goes on. We are all on the same team. We all need to support and respect each other, and we cannot allow hate from either side of the aisle to drown out the voices of love and unity and respect. Life goes on. The sun still rises and sets, all the best tasting food is still bad for you, and there are new lives brought into the world every day. The only question that remains is: what kind of world do we want these new lives to be brought into?

We must stand by our brothers and sisters of all religions and genders and political persuasions. Do not forget the election of 2016 and the divisiveness that went along with it. Be kind to those in your community, regardless of the color of their skin or which side of the aisle they stand on. Be patient and understanding with those whose beliefs differ from your own. Engage in conversation, not derision. Make your voice heard as one who calls for peace and supports equality.

Be kind. Be strong. Be patient. We can do this.

Life goes on.

Depression: The Hidden Darkness Within

By Sahil Malhotra

When our minds fail to coordinate and function normally, almost every part of our body is affected. The human brain is responsible for coordinating almost every function of our daily lives, from the registration of pain to simple locomotive movement. All our actions and responses to the environment are functions of the brain and, in most cases, we will react the way our minds direct us. While the brain is such an important vessel to the human experience, why is it that mental illness is such a taboo, misunderstood concept? Why is it that so many people fear or hide their mental illness?

The unrealistic academic, social, and family expectations placed upon the average high school student can be overwhelming and can even be the origin of mental illnesses like depression and anxiety. Depression affects nearly 20% of adolescents across the nation. Characterized by feelings of extreme sadness, anger, and even suicidal thoughts/attempts, depression is a very real and significant danger to society that needs to be addressed. Suicide caused by depression is a very real and significant danger to society that needs to be addressed. Suicide caused by depression is the third leading cause of death among American adolescents.

(Continue on page 8)

The following are some common symptoms of depression, especially if they last for over two weeks:

- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Poor performance in school or work
- Sadness and hopelessness
- Lack of enthusiasm, energy or motivation
- Anger and rage
- Overreaction to criticism
- Feelings of being unable to satisfy ideals
- Poor self-esteem or guilt
- Indecision, lack of concentration or forgetfulness
- Restlessness and agitation
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Substance abuse
- Problems with authority
- Suicidal thoughts or actions

The Lunch Revolution

Sonya Voloboi

It is no secret that thawed broccoli and cups of beans rarely evoke an appetite in students. While the pizza gets gobbled down, the mandatory fruit and vegetable servings often end up in the trash. Dissatisfaction among students is almost unanimous; from small portions to unappealing food, there's no shortage in the complaint department. However, before casting evil glances at the lunch ladies, know that your criticism has not been fruitless (no pun intended): the school lunches are about to get a major makeover.

The root of government-controlled school lunches can easily be traced back to the Happy, Hunger-Free Kids act of 2010. We can all recall with undeniable nostalgia the days of 25-cent cookies, vending machine soda and pizza crust with gluten. Although Michelle Obama's hopeful dream of happy children working together to grow onions for a fresh salad never became a reality, her intentions are noble. In an attempt to combat childhood obesity and provide nutritious lunches to those who can't afford it, the Obamas turned to the place where kids are bound to spend at least half their waking time: school. Aside from increasing the number of kids eligible for the school meal program, the Happy, Hunger-Free Kids Act put forth rigid nutritional guidelines. Government-funded schools, including those in Chelmsford, were forced to abide with strict fruit, vegetable, and whole grain requirements.

Danielle Collins, the current director of school nutrition, described the process of creating the menu as "as confusing as Sudoku," due to the variety of criteria that she must satisfy in every lunch. For instance, aside from having to serve a cup of vegetables daily, the nutritional standards also require specific sub-groups of vegetables: dark green, red/orange, and starchy. In addition to stringent vegetable regulations, lunches must also feature around 2 ounces of whole grain. This accounts for the pizza dough, bread, and pasta, which of course are required to be gluten free.

Despite these ridiculous limitations, it is the calorie and sodium restrictions that have caused the most uproar. In order to make any food taste good, healthy or not, seasonings like salt and spices are required.

When a maximum of 740 milligrams of sodium permitted, bland and tasteless food is inevitable. To put this number in perspective, that's roughly how much salt is contained within 8 large Saltine crackers. Up to 850 calories can be served, and while that might seem like a sufficiently large number, it assumes that the student is eating all the mandatory fruits and vegetables. So, while the student might be leaving the lunch line with a full tray, the majority only end up eating the main dish- which often accounts for a mere 300 calories. With most students skipping breakfast and participating in time-consuming after-school activities, many are finding it to be increasingly challenging to make it through the day on a mere school lunch.

Ms. Collins is acutely aware of these issues, which is why she proposed the idea of a "Cafeteria Committee". One of the worst issues with current lunches is the lack of student involvement. The dishes don't account for the tastes and foods that appeal to students, which is why it's important to get student input. Without knowing what works and doesn't, we are unable to improve. To quote Ms. Collins, "I'm not trying to please the general public, I'm trying to please you." And without student contribution, the staff are unable to work towards creating better lunches. The hypothetical meetings, set to happen during Flex block, would feature taste tests, samples, and brainstorming of future lunch ideas. The Cafeteria Committee will include a diverse range of students to make sure that people of all tastes, preferences, and activity levels are included. If you have any ideas on lunches you'd like to see, or are simply looking for a place to share your frustrations with the school lunch, consider joining the committee. After all, we lose the right to complain about things we dislike when we refrain from doing anything to improve them.

Although we are lacking equipment, employees, and funding, the lunch revolution is beginning. Additional equipment opens up a new world of possibilities with foods like homemade hummus, burrito bowls and other cooked dishes. It's possible to make healthy food taste good and meet the nutritional requirements; but to make that happen, we need student input. **Be a part of the change, join the Cafeteria Committee!**

Chelmsford High's Ultimate Frisbee Club

by Justin Rodriguez

While Chelmsford High School is full of amazing clubs, ranging from helping the community to bringing together different cultures, one club stands out for its amazing participants and friendly atmosphere. Ultimate Frisbee Club, run by Emma Brigham and Kai Medina, provides a welcoming community and an opportunity to have fun while staying active. Nationwide, Ultimate Frisbee has seen an exponential increase in recent years; CHS's addition is part of a growing trend. The premise of the game is simple: two teams try to score in their respective end zone by throwing a Frisbee to a teammate, but the player currently in control of the Frisbee can only take three steps while holding it. The highest scoring team is then considered the winner.

Co-founder of the club Emma Brigham expresses her enthusiasm for the sport by describing how she had "always loved Frisbee, and had a great desire to start up the club." It's a fun game that can even be enjoyed by people with little experience, something Brigham wanted when developing the club. "It's a sport that's not as competitive as other sports, it's very team-oriented, and the number one thing we want our participants to do is have fun." Co-founder Kai Medina had the same passion for the sport, and when asked what drove him to help found the club, he simply replied, "I like Frisbee".

It's not only the amazing founders who make Frisbee Club an exciting extracurricular to participate in. One member Tommy Vi recounts his time at the club as "a fun and exciting thing to do. The calm and enjoyable atmosphere makes me want to come back every week. It's a very underrated sport that should be more popular than it is. I hope to see an expansion of the sport in the upcoming years, especially in Chelmsford".

Every Thursday from about 2 to 3, countless points are scored, memorable highlights are made, and fun memories are created, all things that make the club worth checking out. The club is open to anyone and everyone. We meet in Mrs. Blagg's room before heading out to the field by the gazebo- come check out us out on Thursdays!

"Caring - Our Way of Life" - CHS Key Club

by Sonya Voloboi and Hetil Patel

Are you looking for volunteer hours, a way to give back to your community, and a chance to make new friends while helping others? If you answered yes to any of these questions, come on down to Key Club! We meet on Thursdays in room 313. Key Club is a distinguished non-profit organization whose main objective is to contribute to local community service events. A typical meeting consists of discussing and preparing for the upcoming volunteering affairs, with occasional snacks.

Key Club has participated in multiple events recently. Sponsored by the Kiwanis Association, the Monster Bash took place at Lowell High School. We set up games, competitions, and an eerie haunted house, which resulted in many tears from the younger kids. We handed out brownies, cookies, and various other treats. After the event was complete, we indulged in complimentary pizza. At the end of the day, it was not the free pizza and snacks that ingrained themselves in our minds, but rather, the faces of the children that we made smile.

Key Club also participated in Haunt for a Cure, another Halloween centered event that raises money and promotes awareness towards autism. The volunteers got to decorate spooky themed cabins and participate in a haunted trail. Key Club decorated a *Finding Dory* themed cabin, which evoked shrieks of excitement from visiting kids. The event raised over 2,000 dollars, all of which went towards Autism Speaks and The Paul Center for Learning and Recreation. While we go about living our healthy, happy lives, it's easy to close our eyes to the suffering of those that have not been as fortunate. Events such as Haunt for a Cure encourage people to take notice and act upon these pressing issues in our community.

Aside from being an amazing opportunity to help others, Key Club is a great way to earn community service hours for National Honors Society. The club is internationally recognized and is one of the largest and oldest student led community service programs. It's a great way to get community service hours while taking part in fun and meaningful events. Since the club is international recognized, it looks great on college resumes. Although the promise of volunteer hours and improved college resumes might sound appealing, truth is, those are far from Key Club's core values. Key Club gives students the rare opportunity to help make the world a better place.

Chelmsford High vs Nashoba Tech

by Julia Blair

Last summer was very important for current freshman. It was the time we spent choosing which high school we were going to attend. For most of us, it was a decision between CHS and Nashoba Tech, and I was personally unsure of which school to attend. Initially, I was set on Nashoba, but after attending the orientations for both schools, I decided on CHS. Here are some of the similarities and differences I noticed along the way.

Chelmsford and Nashoba both have a strict attendance policy. At Nashoba you are only allowed 3 unexcused absences per term (9 per year). If you accumulate more than 3 absences in one term, you will receive a failing grade for all your classes. At CHS, a student cannot be absent more than 6 days per semester. Any student who has an excess of 6 absences (excused or unexcused) in a course in a semester will receive 'No Credit' for that course for that semester. Both schools offer an appeal of these consequences (if you were sick, or had family issues, etc.).

Next, CHS and Nashoba both have fantastic sports teams and many different extracurricular options to choose from. Both schools have football fields and a track, but CHS has just one building for the fine arts and one area for athletic activities. Nashoba, on the other hand, has a dance studio, a daycare center, and other buildings that students go to for their 'shop,' or specific area of study. While Nashoba may be more specialized during the day, CHS has many more after school clubs and extracurricular activities.

When attending the Nashoba orientation I noticed that there is only one cafeteria, while CHS has 2 cafes with plenty of seats and tables. I also noticed that the CHS library is much more electronically advanced than Nashoba's. Nashoba has an indoor restaurant and salon for students to make some extra cash while attending school. In contrast, CHS is focused primarily on academics.

Since Nashoba is a technological high school, it has students attending from many towns in the area. CHS, obviously, is only for Chelmsford residents. Nashoba bus rides are longer than Chelmsford's, but they're free. At CHS, the routes are shorter, but you have to purchase a \$200 bus pass within the first month of school. At both schools, if you're an upperclassmen want drive to school, you have to purchase a parking pass. At Nashoba it costs twenty dollars, and but at CHS it's one hundred and fifty.

Both Nashoba and CHS had amazing freshman events and had helpful orientation days. The programs at Nashoba are fantastic and can prepare students for the career that they want in the future, but for me, I thought that CHS would be a better fit academically. Both schools have fun, welcoming atmospheres and will definitely prepare you for life after you graduate, and I'm happy where I am.

CHS Theatre Does *Life in Color*

by Grace Mescall

As the first show of the new school year, the drama club decided to wow the school with their production of *Life in Color*. The play, written by a CHS senior, takes place in two different worlds separated by the Great Star. On one side is Dimsville, a sad, boring place with more rules than you could count. On the other side in Sunnyside, that has none of the rules and all of the fun. Percy, played by Kevin Hamilton, lives in Sunnyside, while Violet, played by Eliana Lantheaume, is from Dimsville. Both teens dream of a new and exciting life, and want to explore past the Great Star. The two meet and adventure follows, with the evil queen of Sunnyside dogging their heels every step of the way.

Written by Jake Wetmore and directed by Nadya Lisciotto and Michael Xavier, the show was almost entirely student run. Not including the set designers, crew, and supervisors, the play had roughly fifty students in its cast. This small band of students pulled together and rehearsed for many long hours in order to make this play a success. Considering the small number of participants and the low budget they had, it was very well done. Although a few plot holes were noticeable, it wasn't anything the intended audience – young kids – would notice. With its fun, goofy atmosphere, *Life in Color* was light-hearted and enjoyable for everyone from the young to the young-at-heart.

Let's Band Together

by Grace Mescall

Everyone around here has heard of Gillette Stadium. Since it's the Patriots' stadium, people all across New England would love the opportunity to go there, but rarely have the opportunity. However, on October 15th, our very own CHS marching band had that opportunity.

Every year, the UMass Amherst marching band hosts an event, known as the UMass Band Day, at Gillette Stadium. It's meant to convince high schoolers to continue with marching band after high school. In order to get a sense of what the band is like, they invite students from many different schools to spend an entire day there, playing their instruments and meeting the other students. Don't misunderstand, it wasn't all disorganized mayhem. The students had all practiced for weeks on end in order to play at the halftime show along with the college band.

Over the course of the day, the high schoolers and college students played a piece that had been distributed to the participating bands a few days before, broke for lunch, and then sat in the stands and watched the game until the halftime show started.

This program is so popular and so well done that high schools from all over the country accept the invitation to come and experience the event. This year, over three thousand students played in total. That's ten times the turnout we had at our band night with the middle schoolers the night before. But what really makes this program so popular? Parents of kids who had never been to band day before said they were "blown away" by how friendly everyone was. "I think it's inspiring," says Chelmsford Color Guard member, Charlotte Bailey. "One day I hope to be the one to teach the high schoolers during their band day." If even a handful of the participants in band day felt the same way, then UMass Amherst is doing something right.

The First Day of High School by Hetil Patel

I have been preparing for high school since the day I was an infant. I've watched all the movies, TV shows and YouTube videos that have to do with High School. I have had dreams about the first day and how astonishing it was going to be. I am a typical freshman overly energized, enthusiastic and most importantly annoying. My first day of high school didn't begin as I had hoped it would. There was chaos in my house: my brother was snoring, my mother was preparing breakfast, and my dad was photographing every moment of the day. My alarm had a malfunction so I woke up late, and the first thing I saw was my dad looming over me and documenting every moment as if I was on Keeping up With the Kardashians. I was feeling groggy and irritable, but I tried to maintain my cheerful mood. My dad was slowing me down which just pushed me over the edge, turning me into Godzilla. I had lost my temper and began to ramble about how he was getting on my last nerve. I was infuriated so I snatched his camera and smashed it onto the hardwood floor. I saw my mom headed toward me with a wooden spoon with an infuriated look and that's when my alarm went off. I woke up to the sound my iPhone beeping and vibrating.

I blinked a few times before I forced my body to rise up. I stepped out of my cozy warm bed and began to stomp into the bathroom. My brother, on the other hand, was sleeping like a baby. I was extremely jealous of his slumber so I decided to step on his foot so that he would wake up in agony. I turned the doorknob expecting to hear my dad listening to the news while my mom cooked breakfast; instead I saw nothing it was completely dark. My parents were sleeping in their room and the halls were pitch black. I flicked a switch and the light above flickered on. I glanced at my phone to see what time it was and I saw the digital green hue read 6:15. I thought to myself, "Shoot, I'm going to be late," so I rushed into the bathroom and quickly took a warm shower. While I sauntered out of the bathroom, I left the room filled with steam. I had picked out an outfit the night before because I was excited. As I slipped into my clothes I thought about how many new friends I was going to make and what my classes were going to be like.

"Honey, you're going to be late! It's already 6:45," said my mother as she popped out of her bedroom.

I rushed to my backpack, which was perfectly organized with color coded subjects and brand new writing supplies, strapped it on and felt the weight **(continue on page 7)**

The First Day of High School (continued)

of a thousand pounds on my shoulders before hastily rushing out the door without grabbing my lunch or a water bottle. I looked at my phone as I got a text from my friend saying, "The bus is almost here, so you better start sprinting." I did exactly that, running towards the bus stop and soon realizing that it was a prank. The bus was nowhere in eyesight. The upperclassmen were laughing while I gasped for air. One of them even commented on my overly packed backpack. "That's such a freshman backpack," she said, in an excessively mocking tone. I stood outside in the cold for 15 more minutes before the bus arrived and we were on our way to school. The bus was late that day, due to the driver getting accustomed to the new bus route. After my experiences thus far, I wasn't particularly excited for high school.

The buses arrived at the school and the bus driver told us to exit. The bus was warm and comforting and I didn't want to leave its secureness. One of the upperclassmen pushed me because I was moving dreadfully slow. I was now on the pavement walking towards the school, I texted my friends asking their whereabouts, but sadly there was no WiFi or reception. I felt like an ant compared to my fellow classmates. They were all tall and intimidating. Everybody was walking alongside someone and I was all by myself. My mind was racing with thoughts: "What are people thinking of me? I have no friends, I am going to die in these hallways?" It was as if my life had turned into the song Lonely by Akon. I was walking towards my first class which was supposed to be English but I ended up in the science wing. Just as I thought nothing could get worse the bell rang. I was terrified because I didn't know where my class was and I was going to be late. I was on the verge of breaking down and that's when a senior helped me get to my English class. The teacher was extremely sympathetic and gave me an excuse because I was a freshman.

After this my day changed for the better. All the upperclassmen weren't so intimidating anymore. In movies they are perceived as cruel and insensitive, but in fact, they are some of the most helpful, warm-hearted people in the school. They treat you as equals and give you the proper respect you deserve; although a select few can also be complete intolerant jerks. The teachers started to trust me and began to treat me like an adult. Some teachers weren't as lenient as others, but were definitely not like the malicious teachers represented in movies. All in all, as with most new things, the first day of high can be rough and confusing, but you can't let that bring you down. You just have to persevere.

Into the Woods (continued)

for hours every night by actors and crew members working hard to put in the effort it takes to make that 'magic' happen. As the show gets closer and closer, the time spent rehearsing gets longer and longer. By production week (or in layman's terms, the week before the show goes up), actors spend up to eight hours in the PAC after school putting the final touches on the performance.

At the very beginning of the rehearsal process, we have music rehearsals with Ms. Roeder for a few hours after school where the music for the show is learned separately. This makes blocking easier for both the director and the actors - the actors actually know the words to the songs they are supposed to be singing. Blocking is when the director indicates to the actors their movements at specific times during scenes. Blocking rehearsals are usually longer than music rehearsals because of the lengths of the scenes and the constant revision of movements. It may mean that we have to run a single scene three or four times before it is exactly right, which is frustrating but worth it when the show comes out amazingly. Every detail has been carefully thought out and rehearsed. Some rehearsals are dedicated to the crew as they perfect lighting and sound. There is also a costume parade, which is when every actor and ensemble member saunter onto the stage in their costumes, and the director either approves them or changes them. The costume team works hard to make every stitch and sequin exactly as it should be.

The final stage of rehearsals is production week. During production week, actors live off of Starbucks and McDonald's scarfed down between scenes, and sleep is a rare occurrence. Patience often runs short. The show is run each day in full costume and, during dress rehearsal, full hair and makeup, which takes about two hours to complete for the entire cast. Production week is one of the most emotional and physically draining weeks of the entire process.

(continue on page 8)

Eyes On Owls

written and photographed by Kai Medina

Have you recently been hearing crows cawing and circling your neighborhood, and been curious about why they seemed distressed? Ever wonder what ever could have happened to that mouse you saw running through your yard? On November 2nd, the Chelmsford Retirement Home hosted a program called 'Eyes on Owls' to answer some of these questions. Created in 1994 by Marcia and Mark Wilson, this program began in order to educate the public, while showcasing the interesting aspects belonging to these remarkable birds of prey. The Wilsons truly showed their love and dedication that night: the crowd was impressed by more than just the snack table.

We learned that a single owl often catches over two thousand mice a year. Because mice are owls' main food source, if you need to take care of a mouse problem yourself, try not to use poison. This could potentially harm an owl or other wildlife when the ill mouse is eaten. In a similar vein, a few signs of an owl living in your area are alarmed crows trying to reclaim their stolen nest, or white-wash (bird droppings) layering tree branches.

After an informative Powerpoint delivering the points above and many more, six live owls were carefully presented to the residents of the retirement home. These owls were delighted to see this crowd, as they have been around humans for most of their lives. For one reason or another, they are unable to survive safely in the wild due to injuries or previous human captivity, so 'Eyes on Owls' has been taking care of them.

It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to learn about and photograph these owls, and special thanks goes to everyone who helped make such an event possible!



Spectacled Owl



Great Horned Owl



Eurasian Eagle Owl



Screech Owl

Into the Woods (continued)

Finally, it's Showtime, the moment the entire cast and crew has looked forward to for months. Adrenaline is high and nerves are abundant. In the green rooms backstage, you will find picture after picture being snapped by cast members to preserve the special night in their memories. The shows end all too quickly, with many tears being shed at the final performance. The cast has a celebratory meal at Chili's, as is the tradition after every show, and a cast party the next day as a final gathering for the new, tight knit "show family".

Although the ending of a fantastic show is, of course, a sad occasion, the next production is often just around the corner. As soon as one show ends, auditions for the next take place, and the entire process begins again, guaranteeing more laughs, countless hours spent in the PAC, and memories no one will forget.

Into the Woods will be performed December 8, 9, and 10- come join us!

Depression (continued from page 2)

Recently, there has been a suicide epidemic within the Acton Boxborough community. In light of this, I encourage anyone with a friend or family member struggling to cope with depression, or who is struggling themselves, to seek professional help. CHS recently brought in new psychologists to each house; if you are currently experiencing depression, please go pay them a visit. Don't let your thoughts get the best of you. Your life is valuable, there are people who care about you, and there is a way out.

To read more about suicide and depression, follow these links on our on-line edition from the CHS website:

http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_878.html

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/depression-teens>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>



Barred Owl



Justin Rodriegowl

It Only Gets Stranger From Here

By Fiona O’Hearne



For some reason, it’s always hardest for me to get up on Monday mornings. Maybe it’s just me, but it feels like you can just go on sleeping and the world won’t even notice that you didn’t show up. Nevertheless, I always stumble out of bed at an ungodly six am and trudge into the bathroom to take a shower. It’s my personal opinion that if humans were intended to get up before the sun, we would have night vision. Luckily, after showering I am (reasonably) conscious and stumble down the stairs to obliterate everything in my path to satisfy the gnawing void inside of me. Ahem, I mean “get some breakfast”.

“Jamie, aren’t you forgetting something?” My mom raises one of her gingery eyebrows at me, and I wish once again that she had passed the ability to raise one eyebrow on to me. The power I could wield! I look down, checking my clothes. Jeans and a plaid shirt? How could that not work? I look down at her, unsure of what to do.

She sighs, her cool blue eyes rolling like two spheres of ice. Thankfully, that’s one trait she did pass on to me, although I have dark chocolate brown hair like dad instead of curly orange locks. “Utensils, Dear. We aren’t animals.”

I yank open the silverware drawer and grab a spoon. “I just wanted to make sure that there were no updates to modern etiquette. One must keep on top of the standards of propriety in this day and age.”

My mom cracks a smile, and her whole face lights up. I take it as permission to retreat to the table and begin breakfast. My mom is an English teacher; fancy words and proper grammar always win her over. She comes over to join me at the maple slab we call a table, a mug of herbal tea in hand. “Tis true. Now, you better hurry up. I can’t drive you today if you miss the bus.”

I ask through a mouthful of Cheerios why this is, only to receive the evil eye. Swallowing, I repeat my question. She waves me off, sipping demurely from her mug of tea.

“It doesn’t matter. Now, go brush your hair, love.” She reaches out and tousles my semi-long hair (it’s a couple of inches below my chin). “It looks like a family of squirrels moved in overnight.”

Perhaps, but tasteful squirrels. That must count for something.



One of the only benefits of getting up so early is getting to see the sunrise every morning. I stare out of the grimy bus window at the multi-color sky, rubbing my frosty hands together futilely. Why do colors always seem brighter when they are painted across the heavens? Before the sun ascends the horizon, its rays singe the clouds, turning them pastel pink or making them glow a vivid clementine. A side effect of having an English teacher for a parent: your vocabulary is wildly over-developed. By now the bus is pulling into the school, so I stand up and quickly descend. The air has that pleasant chill to it that only happens in fall. Clouds of pale white rise like fine mist from the mouths of students as they tramp under a sign bearing the words “Villiers High School” in all caps. As prisons go, this one isn’t too bad. I turn to the right, making my way to the English wing and my locker. I quickly find it and enter my combination. I grab my things for French and English and head down to the Language and Health wing. People stand in tight clusters all through

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the hallways, chatting with their friends before the bell rings and ushers them off to their first class. That's not really my style. I enter into Mr. Havlin's (my French teacher) room and set down my bag on a desk. I'm just slipping my phone into a slot in the "phone jail" when I hear a very familiar voice behind me.

"Well, well, well, if it isn't Jamie Flitz. We meet again."

I whirl around to see my best friend, Luca Séduire perched on a nearby desk. A few strands of his pale blond hair have escaped from his ponytail, falling into his twinkling green eyes. He, not unlike his last name, is rather French. I slide (alright, galumph) through the desks, making my way to where Luca is perched.

"It's been a while, Séduire. I haven't seen you since--"

Just as I come up in front of him, he launches off the desk, landing easily without making a sound. The worst part is, I know he's not even trying to show off.

"Last night when I shimmied up the rose trellis on the side of your 'ouse?" He has a very slight accent, but it still touches all of his words. It's especially noticeable whenever he says a word with an "h" in it. He reaches out and puts his arm around me comfortingly. I lean into him, grateful for his warmth and sturdiness. He knows I hate getting up early, so he always tries to make my morning a little more bearable. The slapping of footsteps echoes through the hall, and he detaches from my side. Luca sticks his head out into the hall, then quickly pulls it back.

"Looks like teach is 'ere. Wonder what we'll learn today?"

I laugh at the absurdity of Luca taking a French class. Technically, he's not even supposed to be here, but it's a bit hard to get Luca to obey the rules. I believe he is supposed to be in Mr. Aperzina's room right now, learning about velocity and scalars or something else physics-y.

"Shouldn't you be going? Havlin doesn't appreciate your company, if I recall correctly."

Luca winks at me, flashing his crooked smile.

"That never stopped me before."

Just as Luca predicted, Mr. Havlin arrives, papers trailing out of his semi-closed bag. He stops right in front of Luca, but he doesn't even glance at him. Instead he gives me a curious look.

"Jamie, are you okay?"

I frown, confused as to why Mr. Havlin is acting so strange. He's always disorganized, but he is never so impolite, far from it usually. Well, he does have a certain grudge with Luca. I let it slide.

"Of course. Why wouldn't I be sir?"

His wild eye brows furrow even more, and he places his bag down on the desk next to him. However, he accidentally hits Luca, who cries out as he falls to the floor. I'm mustering up my courage to yell at my teacher for slamming my friend with a book bag, when Mr. Havlin speaks.

"Well, you seemed to be talking to yourself."

And that's when I remember.

Luca isn't real.

END OF INSTALLMENT 1.