

The Golden Years

—Miller Doerr, Class of 2023

*For Mr. Henderson*

God, where are you?
For through this chaos cracked carnage,
Where our plight seems unheard,
All constrict our strength.

And yet...
But yet...

Through death,
Through suffering,
We see you so much clearer.

For how can one best know light,
But through a beam piercing into a darkest
void.
For the prisoner knows freedom best,
So the blind knows seeing best.

And so I say of this paradox of golden years,
These happy golden years,
These mourning golden years,
That we fall into two cities.

For it was the worst of times,
It was the best of times.



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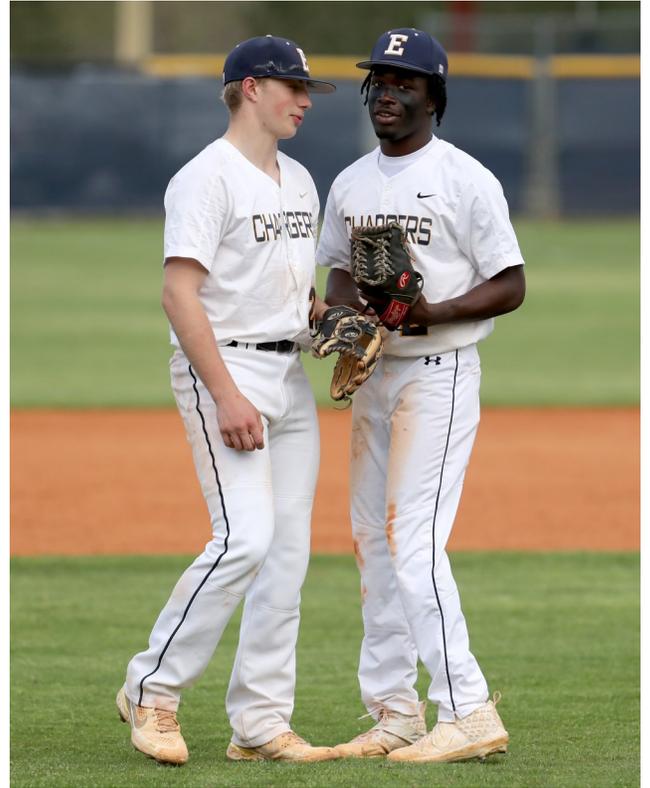
ELCA Baseball Photo,

—Christina Barrow, Class of 2022

King Jr. (2021)

—Steven Bundy, Class of 2022

For how he marched
 With members of a family
 Who wanted to set an example
 To all who watched from the sides.
 How he stood there,
 Listened to by those
 who shared the same ambition.
 The words he spoke
 Left his mouth
 Like fireworks to the night sky,
 To fill their eyes with light
 In their dark world.
 How his beliefs
 Gave life to many
 So after his departure,
 We now carry
 That same belief.



Jackie

—Christian Martin, Class of 2022

Wearing the unblemished uniform of the Dodgers
 Number forty-two
 Standing among first base
 Breaking barriers

The puzzled pupils focusing on him
 The only person of color
 His skin, unsettling to others

Some wanted him traded
 Some wanted nothing to do with him
 Taking verbal bashings

He opened many doors for African Americans
 He brought people together
 Black and white.



Biblical Providence in The Count of Monte Cristo

by Alexandre Dumas —Melanie Collier, Class of 2023

Throughout the majority of *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas, Edmond Dantès believes that through God, he has providential abilities to distribute punishment to those who have wronged him and reward those who deserve reward. However, at the end of the novel, he is finally able to realize that true providence comes from God alone. As Dantès decides to take matters into his own hands, he begins to believe that he himself is an agent of Providence. After his journey as *The Count of Monte Cristo* and several other personas, he realizes that his wisdom and providential abilities are finite, while God's are infinite.

Edmond Dantès begins his journey in the Chateau D'if, thinking that getting revenge on those who have wronged him is totally up to him to do. Soon after Abbe Faria reveals the ways Danglars, Mondego, and Villefort had conspired against him, he quickly vows to take revenge: "During these hours of meditation, which had passed like so many seconds, he had formed a terrible resolution and taken a fearful oath." (75). This pivotal moment in the story is the beginning of Edmond's deep distrust in God; thinking that he specifically has the right to ruin the

lives of those who have ruined his, and subconsciously believing that God will not work to avenge him. This is the first time in the novel that Edmond changes Biblical Providence to fit his own ideas of vengeance. While Dantès believes he can carry out this retribution all on his own, Biblical Providence argues that man is to leave vengeance to God. God promises His people several times that if they work for His good, He will work for theirs. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."

The Bible also states several times that man is not to seek revenge on his fellow man. Edmond twists these Biblical ideas and molds them into his own scheme to avenge himself. He ends up leading himself to believe that he is an agent sent from God to avenge his own life that was lost in his time imprisoned.

During his journey in several different disguises, Dantès not only takes it upon himself to punish those who punished him, but also believes it his job to reward those who were faithful to

him during his youth. Camouflaged as a bank representative and a sailor, Edmond saves the life and family of his former boss and faithful friend, Morrel. At the time he believes in his own providence so strongly that he even verbalizes it to himself after watching Morrel gain his life back due to his acts. "Farewell to all the sentiments which rejoice the heart. I have played the part of Providence in recompensing the good, may the god of vengeance now permit me to punish the wicked!" (154).

Although Edmond's acts can be seen as purely generous and altruistic, they also showcase his distrust in God's wisdom and Providence. Dantès has gotten so caught up in his own prideful beliefs that he can do everything for himself and others as God's agent that he forgets God's promise to man. As mentioned in Romans 8:28, God promises His people that He alone will work things out for their good. Rather than trusting that God has His own plans for Morrel and his family, Edmond takes matters into his own (continued on page 4)

(*Biblical Providence* continued from page 3)

hands, excusing himself with the idea that he is God's agent. Watching his good deed for the Morrel family play out really only strengthens Edmond's god-complex, rather than humbles him.

It is not until the very end of the novel that Edmond finally admits he was wrong in working so hard to deliver revenge and reward. In his letter to Maximillian, he even asks for prayers after realizing that vengeance was not his to take. "Tell the angel who is going to watch over you, Morrel, to pray for a man who, like Satan, believed for one moment he was the equal of God, but who now acknowledges in all Christian humility that in God alone is supreme power and infinite wisdom." (508). However, this is not the very first time in the novel that Edmond doubts his abilities as an agent of providence. Several times during his journey to get revenge, Dantès feels slight regret and pity, but pushes it aside with the excuse that he is carrying out God's vengeance. Even while plotting against his worst enemies, Danglars and Mondego, Edmond briefly feels guilty for ruining even their lives.

"Monte Cristo turned away his head to hide the momentary expression of pity that had found its way to his face." (346). As his plan for revenge on the Villefort family is carried out, he finally considers the idea that he may have gone too far after seeing that Villefort's young son has died.

"Realizing that he had vengeance, he felt he for me and with me." like these, he eventually that his own wisdom and nite, and it was never his his own hands. He realiz- wisdom, has His own things out for those who lessons learned in his demns his own humanly cepts that they had not dence. Dantès' final man wisdom is contained

"Tell the angel who is going to watch over you, Morrel, to pray for a man who, like Satan, believed for one moment he was the equal of God, but who now acknowledges in all Christian humility that in God alone is supreme power and infinite wisdom."

passed beyond the bounds of could no longer say, 'God is (488). After several moments comes to terms with the fact providential abilities are fi-right to take retribution into es that God, in all His perfect plans and abilities to work truly love Him. After all his years of scheming, he con- ideas of providence and ac- lined up with God's provi- words in the novel: "All hu- in these words: Wait and

hope!" (508), demonstrate his growth in faith and trust in true, Biblical Providence.

After being wronged by man, Edmond Dantès invents his own version of Providence and decides it is his duty to punish those who wrongfully punished him, and reward those he figures deserve reward. While most of *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas focuses on Edmond's hatred for those who had wronged him and his distrust in God's Providence, the novel ends on the hopeful tone that when it comes to real providence, all man can truly do is wait and hope in the Lord's plan.

Works Cited

Dumas, Alexandre. *The Count of Monte Cristo*. New York: Signet Classics, 2005.

The Holy Bible. English Standard Version. New York: American Bible Society, 2001. Print.



This I Believe

—Taylor Daniels, Class of 2022

I believe in wearing high heels. For most of my life, I despised the idea of wearing heels. The heel could have been an inch or two. I would still refuse to wear them. Instead, I would put on sneakers, preferably Vans or Converse, and call it a day. Despite my refusal to wear high heels, I couldn't lie and say that I did not have a longing to dress in them. I just hated the fact that I would become a colossal giant who would tower over everyone. Besides, having to look up at me already strained some people's necks. Shouldn't I give them a break? Being over 6 feet wasn't entirely ideal for someone my age. Girls, on average, are five feet and four inches tall, give or take. This was the one time I didn't appreciate being categorized as "above average".

Growing up, I loathed being designated as the "tall girl." "Although adults would remind me it was a blessing," It seemed so unfair to me that I had been "blessed" with such a prominent trait that barely any kids at my school had; I tried to make myself shorter so I could fit in with the kids in my school. Most of the time I would slouch, avoid wearing certain shoes like heels, and even just standing up altogether to attempt looking any smaller—of course, just cutting off a couple of inches was not an option. It wasn't until 5th grade when I met other people who were tall like me. It was a relief to see other girls who were not considered 'petite.' I still resented that they would still know me as a tall girl. It's as if that was all anyone would ever know about me. The first thing that people notice about me is my height; everything else comes afterwards, if they even get that far. Eventually, I grew so accustomed to people defining me through my appearance that I thought it was all I ever would be. I wanted to be remembered as a kind, intelligent, and maybe even a fun person to be around. But in my head, I was just an oversized child.

Our parents tell us we should not allow other people's opinions to affect us, but I let their judgments bring my confidence down. Instead of realizing how foolish my haters were, I took my frustration and anger out on those around me, particularly my parents. I'd cry to them, asking why I had to be as tall as I was and why I couldn't be like the other kids. I was hurting. I didn't know how else to express my feelings properly except through temper tantrums. My mom used to tell me I had no reason to be like everyone else. My mom asked me "Why do you want to be them when there is only one you?" There would be sleepless nights when I

would ask myself the same question.

Looking back, my younger self probably didn't understand the idea of conformity." Dressing the same, acting alike, and having similar vocations is not typically being "original." Contrary to popular belief, trying to be like the rest of the general public is not as glamorous as we might think it is. Having your style and unique character sets you apart from everyone else. If everyone was the same, our world would be anything but interesting. I'm not sure when I realized I did not have to be embarrassed by my height. All I know is that I accepted I was special. It reminded me that I was created in the image of God and He made no mistake on what I

I am a child of God, a loyal friend to others, and a passionate achiever who continues to seek excellence.

would look like. For so long, I envied individuals who were shorter, smaller, more "demure" than I thought I was. I wondered why I had to be as tall as I was and why I couldn't be someone else. The younger me would never have imagined trying out for the basket-

ketball team and playing throughout high school. The younger me would never have grasped the idea that I could be beautiful to those around me. The younger me would never have worn even two-inch heels to her junior prom. The younger me would never have imagined that I turned out to be more than just a "tall girl."

I am a child of God, a loyal friend to others, and a passionate achiever who continues to seek excellence. My height does not define me; it is just a tiny fragment of my overall being. My character and my impact on the world are what will define me. Of course, my height will always be there, but it's how I'll view myself that will make all the difference. Confidence is something that I lacked through my childhood and sometimes still struggle with it—everyone struggles with their own myriad of issues. It is how we deal with these hardships that will ultimately determine and influence our perception of life.

Taylor Daniels is a junior at Eagle's Landing Christian Academy and is proudly reigning at 6 feet tall. She has yet to decide what her future holds and is waiting patiently for God to lead her down the right path. Until then, she will keep wearing her high heels and confidently strutting her way through the rest of her life while carefully avoiding any obstacles that would cause her to stumble.



Empathy with Edmund Dantes –Marisa Dennard, Class of 2023

The Count of Monte Cristo, by Alexandre Dumas, is not a story of satisfaction in revenge, but rather it is a story of triumph over circumstance. Revenge does not truly fulfill the heart of the oppressed, as the actions of the oppressor can never be taken back. However, peace and acceptance of such is possible. Although Dumas' novel initially is about Edmond Dantès' revenge towards his persecutors, it ends with embracing the past and holding hope for the future.

In the beginning of the novel, Edmond held a certain naivety to himself, unaware of what those who envied him were capable of. These people, Danglars, Fernand, Caderousse, and Villefort, all destroyed the life Edmond had built up by falsely denouncing him for committing treason and being a Bonapartist. For these accusations, Edmond was sentenced to prison, and during his time he lost his lover, his father, and his reputation as a sailor. Edmond was to be in prison for the rest of his life, spending his time in misery, yet his desire to escape was never completely extinguished. After spending fourteen long years in prison, he had finally escaped, only to be thrown into the ocean that surrounded the prison of Chateau d'If.

In a way, I held my own naiveties towards an old friend in my life. The kind of naivety one has in their elementary years, which was when I had first met this friend, Brandon. I initially started my friendship with him out of pity, noticing he didn't have many friends, and nor did I. However, as time passed his dependency on me grew stronger, even as the friend group we had made got larger. Over the years, I had felt trapped in the friendship we had, often he would lash out at me and do everything he could to keep me under his thumb. A specific memory I vividly remember was when Brandon had a mutual friend of ours hold me down to the ground so that he could ridicule me for hanging around a new friend group. In moments like these, I felt imprisoned just as Dantès was. Eventually, I accepted his actions towards me, whether verbal or physical, because I believed I had nobody else. As Dantès had developed a contentedness with the awful conditions of his cell, I had grown to accept the metaphorical imprisonment Brandon had put me into. "No sooner had this idea taken possession of the unhappy young man than he became more calm and resigned; he felt more contented with his hard bed and black bread, ate less, slept not at all, and almost found his miserable existence supportable, for could he not cast it off at will as one casts off old clothes?" (Dumas 79-80) Yet, I did not let this ideology take a permanent hold of me. Similar to Dantès, I found a way to escape my own Chateau d'If.

Although rather anticlimactic, I simply stopped talking to him, however, this had its consequences. I found myself in my own form of an ocean, which was an ocean of strangers, people I had seldom spoken to or did not know. For a year, I drowned in this ocean of unfamiliarity, often going to school completely in a daze of dissociation.

Upon swimming to the safety of a nearby island, Dantès had escaped what was seemingly his inevitable death. However, the part of himself who was Edmond Dantès was gone and replaced with who is, The Count of Monte Cristo. After all that had happened to him, he could only feel anger towards what happened to him and a burning hatred for those who wronged him. With his justified anger, he sought out his oppressors to enact his own idea of justice, beginning with Caderousse, who allowed Old Dantès to starve to death. The Count took advantage of Caderousse's greed by presenting him with a diamond while under the guise of a priest. The diamond was supposedly from Dantès himself before passing away in prison, with the dying wish that its price be split between the few friends he had. However, Caderousse is given the entire diamond by the Count after being convinced he was the only friend of Dantès. Later, Caderousse murders an appraiser who offered to buy the diamond, so that he could take the appraiser's money and keep the diamond, getting Caderousse sentenced to jail. With Villefort, the Count ruined the reputation that he valued so greatly by revealing the existence of his illegitimate son. Danglars, the man who began the idea of falsely incriminating Dantès, was brought vengeance by gradually losing the wealth he wrongly amassed after taking Dantès' place as Captain. The Count took away his power and destroyed his pride, causing Danglars to flee from embarrassment. Fernand, who took away Mercédès from Dantès, was revealed to be a traitor, allowing the Count to get his revenge. Using Fernand's crooked past against him, the Count turned his family against him, taking away what Fernand took from him. However, everything the Count did against

his persecutors wouldn't bring him solace.

Although I never took revenge against Brandon for what he had done to me, I did want to. I had realized all that I lost being his friend for so long. I had lost opportunities at making better friends, as well as most of my memories from elementary and middle school. Most things my peers remember only seem like a blur to me now. Brandon's constant manipulation towards me greatly affected my perception of my other classmates, making it very difficult for me to feel comfortable around them. He had villainized them to me, claiming they never had my best interest in mind, only he did. For so long, I couldn't come to terms with how much I lost and the fact I had to rebuild myself from ground zero, it felt as if a piece of me had died. Similar to *The Count of Monte Cristo*, nobody seemed to know who I was:

“ ‘There is no Count of Monte Cristo!’ said Debray.

“ ‘I do not think there is,’ added Château-Renaud with the air of a man who has got the whole of European nobility at his fingertips. ‘Does anyone know of a Count of Monte Cristo anywhere?’ ” (Dumas 236)

I held a deep hatred for Brandon, blaming him for my lost opportunities, but no matter how much I despised him, it wouldn't bring me solace.

Realizing that revenge would never satisfy, the Count sought out peace and acceptance. He began by seeking out his past lover, Mercédès, who married Fernand after believing Dantès had died in prison. Although the two still loved one another, so much pain had happened between them that it was necessary they part ways. Along the Count's path of acceptance, he takes Maximilian Morrel, the son of the only man who was completely loyal to Dantès. The Count sees his past self in the young man, as he is mourning the loss of his lover, Valentine. He takes Max to his estate where he promises to allow the young man to take his life and be reunited with Valentine. Instead, he reveals that Valentine is still alive, allowing the two to be happy. In this, the Count found a sense of peace that he could allow someone such happiness he could not find with Mercédès. Nearing the conclusion of the novel, the Count finds a hopeful future in his life with a young woman named Haydee who proclaims her love to him for caring for her when she had no one else. Thus, he finds peace in his past as Edmond Dantès and optimism for the future as *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

As did the Count find his peace, so did I. I learned to understand the past is something that cannot be changed, no matter how much we either regret or hate it. The past is to be used as a learning experience so we may not make the same mistakes. Although, of course, all of this is easier said than done. It's difficult to forgive and come to terms with what has happened, but in order to move on in life, it must be done. Being stuck in the roots of hatred will only destroy a person, and I couldn't allow that to happen to myself. Through my experiences, I've learned to accept and not hold onto negative emotions such as hate. As the Count related the story of Dantès to Maximilian, a dialogue between the two struck a chord with me:

“ ‘And did this man find consolation?’

“ ‘At all events he found peace.’ ” (Dumas 580)

Knowing that the Count was able to find peace with everything that had happened to him was a wake up call to me. For me to hold onto all the anger I had for Brandon would never let me find peace or consolation, so I searched for it within myself. It took time, and is still a work in progress, but in this, I can move on.

Proverbs 20:22 states, “Do not say, ‘I will repay evil’; wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you.” This verse is something we should all live by, as repaying evil with evil is never fulfilling. As when the Count sought and had his vengeance, he was left empty. Revenge can be overtaking to oneself and completely consuming. Revenge almost consumed the Count, as anger almost consumed me. However, solace has been found in both the story of the Count and my own personal experiences. In the end, Alexandre Dumas' novel, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, is not a story of success in revenge, but rather an acceptance of the past.

Dumas, Alexandre. The Count of Monte Cristo. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2004.

What Do You Do?

—Sorriona Scott, Class of 2022

When the voices entrapped in your capsule get too loud
 When the voice of reason slowly decreases its range
 When your reputation stands for happy and go lucky
 But internally there's a riot
 Loaded with protestors all opposing one another
 Everyone believing they're right
 The wrong side accomplishes victory
 The once lucid voice fades to being opaque and distant; a whisper
 When there's no more brightness
 When the oaths bound by the chains of loyalty and love
 are now destroyed
 When there's a sea of torment and discomfort,
 But one optimistic soul is trying to save the lot
 When the optimism fades and the soul has succumbed to the agony
 When everything ceases to exist within,
 Yet you're still carrying the responsibility of making it through the
 days
 When throwing on the façade becomes second nature
 When the reality of an alter ego, which is everything you envy and
 crave, but beneath lies the ego caged, beholds the truth
 of brokenness, shame of everything that society has deemed
 disgusting and unwanted

What do you do?
 When you're speaking, but the noise don't carry
 Instead, it quiets down, disappearing into thin air
 When you no longer fight and let the evil win,
 wondering if this is the right decision
 What do you do after you've been killed by society?



In Memory of Chemistry

—Adriel Calderon, Class of 2023

The Periodic Table of the Elements

Legend:

- alkali metals
- alkaline earth metals
- other metals
- transition metals
- lanthanides
- actinoids
- metalloids
- noble metals
- halogens
- noble gases
- radioactive elements

Callout for Iron (Fe):

- atomic number: 26
- atomic mass: 55.845
- chemical symbol: Fe
- name: Iron
- electron configuration: [Ar] 3d⁶ 4s²
- oxidation states: +2, +3

Oh how he vanished from air like he was never there

Like a ship sunk and there was nothing left.

Nor the A's, B's, C's or D's were there to rise.

Only a lonely F that couldn't come up.

While he was alone with failing grades, he lost all his hope like you would do after a breakup.

Math was face to face with Chemistry when he said,, "If you don't become an A,

I will murder you because you are setting a bad example to my other grades."

The day of his final chance he failed.

This was the last afternoon as himself,

A crazy afternoon with doctors and nurses.

His mind became as blank as a piece of paper.

He had no more thought in his mind.

Nor any energy to spare to fix his mistake.

He slowly faded away not being able to speak or move.

He had one final breath before his entire body shut down forever.

All we know is that he is in a better place now.

The Periodic Table of the Elements

Legend:

- alkali metals
- alkaline earth metals
- other metals
- transition metals
- lanthanides
- actinoids
- metalloids
- noble metals
- halogens
- noble gases
- radioactive elements

Callout for Iron (Fe):

- atomic number: 26
- atomic mass: 55.845
- chemical symbol: Fe
- name: Iron
- electron configuration: [Ar] 3d⁶ 4s²
- oxidation states: +2, +3



Ode to the Lacrosse Playoff

—Matthew Williams, Class of 2023

Like “David meeting Goliath”, we faced our foes.

The other team had a bench that was twice as deep,

And filled with players ready for battle.

The game was on.

Victory was there for anyone to grab.

We fought with hearts like a lion until the last second was played.

In the end, the scoreboard showed we had been defeated.

But the heart of every Charger told a different story.

We had fought the battle with honor,

Like our coach always says,

“Play hard, play smart, play until you hear the buzzer.

And if you win or if you lose keep your head up.”

We left the field with our heads held high,

Knowing we would meet them again.

We would be ready.

Lacrosse Photos

*—Christiana Barrow,
Class of 2022*



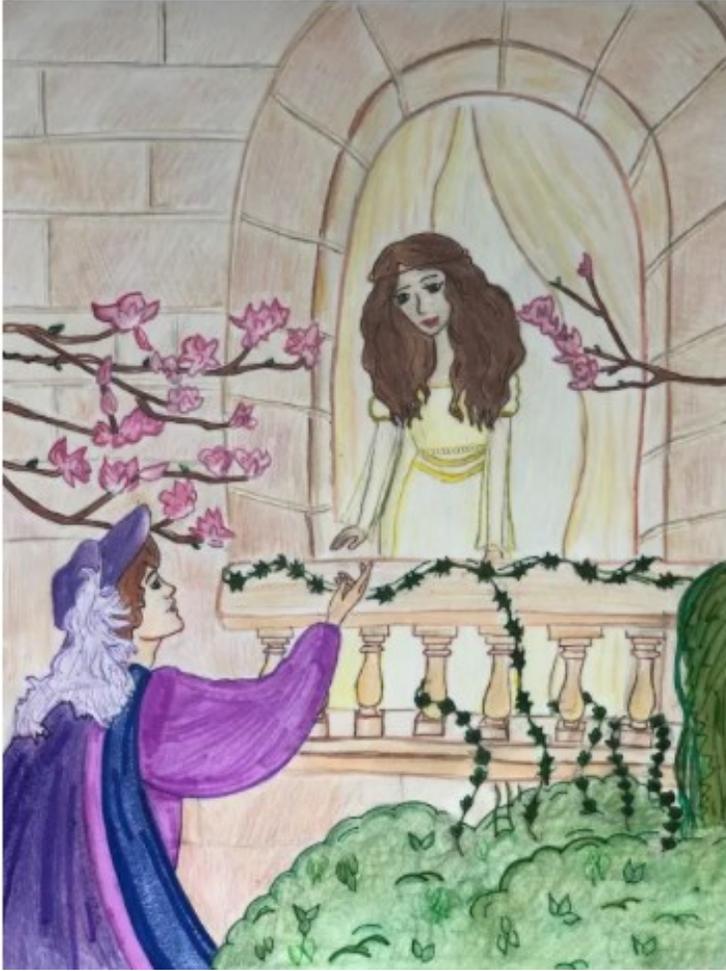
Back to When (elegy)

—*Alayna Smith, Class of 2023*

In a house I remember lay new appliances, carpet, and freshly laid pavement reflecting the sun to the blooming flowers. I saw a new ornament hung over the garage as we drove by. Years have gone by, though it feels like yesterday. B-Maw was causing a storm that had now drawn a rainbow. I was just sitting in a church pew crying over something I didn't understand. After a couple days go by, PopPop stopped handing out burgers and started feeling the wind as he sits in a wheelchair and I pass by on a scooter. I was now told I couldn't sit in his lap and I would think *what just happened?* I had just ran into the glass door that my brother shut while I was playing house in the sunroom. Now I think about this sitting in PopPop chair, in my room. After recovering from those memories and getting older, I thought I'd have this life for the rest of time. I never saw that house again. I only got to see MawMaw at the top of a tall building. During her long stay to the retirement home, the angle in the shape of my mom had convinced her to go home with her. After finding out what had happened I was immediately given the job of shaking hands and saying, "Thank you for coming."



Balcony Scene: Painting and Artist Statement —Cameron Ingram, Class of 2024



The play *Romeo and Juliet*, written by William Shakespeare, is one of the most famous plays today. Many of the scenes in this play are recognizable, but one of the most famous scenes is the balcony scene. The balcony scene can be found in Act 2 Scene 2, and takes place after Capulet's party.

After the party, Romeo sneaks to Juliet's balcony in hope of seeing her again. I chose this scene, not only because of its fame, but because of the significance it has. During this scene, you can see foreshadowing, character development, and how love plays a major role in the plot. In this scene, you can start to see how Romeo's character is going to develop. You begin to see his bravery and loyalty when he sneaks into the Capulet's house, even though he knew it was dangerous. One of the most famous lines in this scene displays their love. In line 35-37, Juliet says:

“... Deny thy father and refuse thy name,
/Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, /And
I'll no longer be a Capulet.”

This scene and these lines are so famous, because they show one of the beautiful aspects of love: that love looks at the inside and not the outside. Romeo and Juliet's family names did not matter to them, because they loved each other. This scene also foreshadows that their love may cause death. In lines 75-78 Romeo says, “I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes; /And but thou love, let them find me here./ My life were better ended by their hate/ Than death prorogued, wanting thy love.” Romeo begins to initiate the thought of death, and dying for love, which will happen. Ultimately, Romeo is predicting that he will die because he will lack Juliet's love, which eventually happens when Juliet “dies” in Act 5. The balcony scene is important, because it contains significant quotes that greatly affect Romeo and Juliet's future.

My work relates to the play, by connecting the two with the use of colors. Colors can be used to symbolize certain things, like emotions and characteristics. The use of colors to symbolize these things are common in the art world. In the balcony scene, when he first sees Juliet, Romeo refers to Juliet as the “sun.” In my illustration, Juliet stands behind a yellow background, wearing a light yellow dress that resembles her to the sun. Yellow and white symbolize youth and innocence. In Act 1, we learn that Juliet is only 13, which means she is young, innocent, childish, and immature, and the color yellow and white symbolizes these characteristics. The color pink symbolizes beauty, feminine, and love, and the pink flowers beside Juliet symbolize her love, and beauty; which is how Romeo sees her. Romeo's clothes consist of blues and purples in my illustration. The blue is to symbolize the pain, rejection and sadness he possessed before meeting Juliet. Romeo was lovesick over another Capulet girl named Rosaline, who did not love him back. Purple is known to symbolize royalty and wisdom, but it also resembles other things. Romeo wears purple, because purple also symbolizes devotion and loyalty. As the play progresses and Romeo's character matures, he shows devotion and loyalty to his friends and Juliet. An example of this, is when Romeo kills Tybalt, after Tybalt kills Romeo's friend, Mercutio. However, his most loyal act is when he takes his own life so he can be with Juliet in heaven.

Fight Scene Diorama Close Up

—LaRyah Tillaman, Class of 2024

The Wish

—Aujin Choi, Class of 2024

Students in Honors English I were given the option of writing an alternate ending to Romeo and Juliet. What follows is one such imagining:

It is the fourteenth century in which the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets has led them to prepare for battle. Sampson, a fellow servant of the Capulets, arms himself with a sword and buckler while talking to his co-worker, Gregory.

“The servants of the Montagues, they are like dogs to a hunter,” says Sampson in an angered tone.

“I agree, my friend,” replies Gregory. “These servants only serve to survive. We will show them what real loyalty is in the name of the Capulets!”

Servants of the Montagues, Abram and Balthasar, meet with the servants of the Capulets and battle. Swords clash, and sparks fly, while the sound of steel clashing fills the air. In the midst of battle, Benvolio, Lord Montague’s nephew, and Tybalt, Lady Capulet’s nephew, meet.

“Well if it isn’t the coward, Benvolio,” says Tybalt in a disgusted tone.

“Coward?” replies Benvolio, confused. “All I want is to end this fight and have peace.”

“Peace!” exclaims Tybalt, angered. “I hate the word peace as I hate all Montagues. Fight me you coward!”

While the families fight, the stench of iron from the blood fills the town. The citizens grab their clubs, spears, and axes to join the battle. “Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues! Beat them down to the ground!”

Prince Escalus enters to see all of the carnage. “You fools! Do you want to be executed for disturbing the peace!?” As he says these few words, the two rival families and citizens leave the battle immediately.

Three weeks pass and the Capulets decide to start a feast. While they prepare, a man of the Montagues, Romeo, and his friends, Benvolio and Mercutio met up in a plaza near a fountain.

(continued on page 14...)

("The Wish" *continued from page 13*)

"Romeo!" says Benvolio in a gleeful tone. "How have you been this fine evening!"

"I bet he has gone out with another girl I'd assume," replies Mercutio casually.

"Very funny," says Romeo. "To be honest, I still haven't found what true love is at first sight. No matter how many beautiful women I see."

"Try going to the feast at the Capulet's house," replies Benvolio. "There will be food and there you might like."

"Good idea!" says Romeo. As Romeo enters the Capulets' house, Juliet is getting prepared until she hears that a man of the Montagues has entered their house.

"Why is the Rat in our house!?" exclaims Tybalt in an angered tone.

"Calm down Tybalt," replies one of the Capulets. "He means no harm. Romeo is a gentleman and will never disturb the peace in our house."

"Tch, we will see about that," says Tybalt as he walks away from the feast.

Romeo and Juliet walk through the hallways until they met each other.

"What angel has bestowed upon my very eyes?" asks Romeo in a charming manner.

"As I also see a prince right in front of me," answers Juliet.

Ten minutes pass, which seem like years to them, and the two have already fallen in love with each other. Before the end of the feast, they kiss and arrange a marriage. Knowing that their families would have disagreed, they do this in secret.

Eight days after the marriage, Tybalt, as a begrudged man, wants to kill Romeo one way or another. He devises a plan to kill Romeo by dosing his drinking cup with poison. Mercutio hears about this and attempts to stop his scheme. "Tybalt, you fiend!" shouts Mercutio. "Why would you commit such atrocities and not have peace towards the family?"

"Atrocities! Peace?" replies Tybalt. "I have said this before, I hate peace, and I hate all Montagues!"

"I am afraid I have to stop you Tybalt, one way or another." Mercutio pulls out his rapier. "So be it then," replies Tybalt, who has also pulled out his rapier. "Have at you!"

Swords clash and sparks fly as each man thrusts and parries each blow. A crowd circles around them, cheering for Tybalt and Mercutio. Tybalt receives a blow to the leg as Mercutio receives one to his left shoulder. Blood oozes out, leaving both on their last legs.

As they fight and fight, Romeo, walking along the path with Juliet, sees them "Stop, both of you!" shouts Romeo as he runs towards them. "This is enough from both of you! Juliet and I are married, and we shall form peace between our rivaled families!"

As he says those words, both Tybalt and Mercutio fall to the ground in a pool of blood. The foul stench of sweat and iron fills the air and stings their noses.

Both are led to the infirmary, covered in blood, wounded.

"Why? Why did this have to happen?" asks Romeo, having heard that the two would not make it

As Romeo wept out of sorrow for the two, Juliet entered the infirmary, watching him full of grief. As they wept and cried, they both said in unison, "I wish this had never happened from the beginning."

As days pass, a miracle occurs. Both Tybalt and Mercutio are fully healed from their wounds. The doctors cannot explain the cause of this, Instead, they excuse it as a lucky recovery.

The Capulets and the Montagues later form a treaty for peace, which everyone signs. Peace is restored, and they all live happily for the rest of their lives.



The Noble Warrior

—*Nadia Osmani, Class of 2022*

There in China war was raging,
Here she sat all dolled and waiting.
Her future groom to be chosen.
Her big mistakes left her frozen.

On her shoulders a big task lay,
Anxiously praying, feelings at bay.
Because she knew that somehow she,
Must bring honor to her family.

Then, one day came soldiers through clangor.
Their hooves predicting a horrible danger.
“Come fight for your country’s sake!
Brothers, fathers, and sons we must take.”

She cut her hair and off she went.
For her kin she’ll represent.
With her went two fearless creatures,
A small dragon with swell features.

But what he lacked in his size,
Charm, wit, and Guardianship multiplied.
To boot we see a lucky cricket.
Fortunately, she’s glad she picked it.

So our brave girl went off to camp,
In this part she was not the champ.
But valantly she rose to the top,
And one day an attack she did stop.

Smart and kind, yet strong and daring,
Mulan won, there's no comparing.
China’s battles could not be gorrier.
Mulan was the noblest warrior.

Determined Mulan inspired a nation,
All its people in celebration.
Mulan arose in victory.
Bringing honor to her family.

Barack

—*Taylor Daniels, Class of 2022*

**There he stood,
Presented in front of millions.
Unlike the rest who came before.**

**A different color, a different shade.
His name would echo for centuries,
As a legend. An inspiration.**

**Judged by his face,
Our society craved similarity.
Afraid of what was to come.**

**He was the first,
Far from being the last, for there were more.
More complexions, more colors to arise.**



Israel v. Palestine —Kameron Warford, Class of 2024

What are Israel and Palestine? Why are they fighting? The State of Israel is a country in Southwestern Asia; its capital city is Jerusalem. Israel is the only Jewish country and is known as Jews' spiritual home. The Palestinians are Arab people from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip also called the Palestinian Territories. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the world's most tragic conflicts. This conflict goes back to Biblical times and is a battle that is still going on. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a long battle between two people who are related. It's a fight between two groups of people over who gets what land and how it's controlled.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been a never ending problem facing the two states. It began in the 19th century during the British rule. It was between the Arabs living in Palestine and the Jews living in Israel. The main issues were territory disputes, security, and the control of Israel, The Gaza Strip and The West Bank. The Jewish claims to the land are based on the biblical promise to Abraham and his descendants. On the other hand, Palestinian claims to the land are based on them living in the country for hundreds of years. During World War II, the German Nazi soldiers, who hated Jewish people, killed nearly 6 million Jews, known as the Holocaust. After this, thousands of Jews flocked back to their homeland of Israel.

The UN Partition Plan of 1947 was a plan to divide Palestine into an Arab state and Jewish state. On May 14, 1948, Israel was officially declared a state, marking the first Jewish state in over 2,000 years. Just one day later, war broke out between Israel and five Arab countries—Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon. At the end of this conflict, known as the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Egypt was given control of the Gaza Strip. This resulted in at least 750,000 Palestinians being driven out of the new Israel into refugee camps in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and other regions. The territory was divided into three parts: The State of Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Throughout the years there was still no peace.

In 1967, what's known during the Six-Day War, Israel did a sneak attack on the Egyptian and Syrian forces. After the war, Israel gained territorial control. Six years later in 1973 the Yom Kippur War, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur to attempt to regain the land lost in the Six Day War, but failed. In the late 1980s came the Palestinian uprising-the Intifada. During this time of 1987-1993, thousands of Palestinians were either killed or injured. In 2013, the US attempted to revive the peace process between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority. However this didn't happen because Fatah formed a unity government with its rival Hamas, a foreign (continued on page 17...)

terrorist organization.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has been going on for more than 100 years. In May of 2018, a fight between Hamas and Israeli military became the worst period of violence. After many attempts of bringing peace, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is far from being resolved. In 2018, the Trump administration took away funding for the UN Relief which provides assistance to Palestinian refugees. The US Embassy was relocated to Jerusalem which was a change of the US policy. In 2020, the administration also released the Peace to Prosperity plan which was rejected by the Palestinians. The goal of the plan was to bring peace, but it seems to have left the two sides as divided as they have been for more than 100 years.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict goes back to Biblical times and is a battle that is still going on between related people groups. It goes back to when Moses delivered the children of Israel who wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. God promised the children of Israel they would live in the Promised Land which belonged to the Palestinians. I believe that to bring peace and to resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestine, they must have equal rights, their own territory, affordable health care, provide assistance to the Palestinians and remove all terrorist groups. Isaiah 32:18 says, “My people will live in peaceful dwellings-places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.” Perhaps they can come together and set their differences aside, to sign a peace treaty that would be beneficial for both sides, and restore the relationship between the two families. It will be interesting to see if the Biden Harris administration can strike a peace treaty for Israel and Palestine.

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