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## **A Halloween Story**

BY JESSICA B.

I

Once, two hundred years ago, in a huge house on Witch Drive, a perfectly normal family suddenly disappeared. No one knows what happened to them. All we know is that they disappeared, and a crazy lunatic escaped from jail two weeks earlier. Some people say the lunatic killed them, but nobody ever found out. Since the family disappeared, no one had ever entered the house, because it is believed to be haunted. But last October four teenagers thought it would

be fun to find the ghosts haunting the house on Witch Drive. After that night only one teen survived. This is her story.

I'm Chris Snow. My friends and I heard the rumors of the haunted house when we were at a Halloween party at our school. My best friend Sara was the first to hear the rumor. After she heard the rumor she told us, "Hey, guys! One of the boys in my math class just told me this awesome rumor of a haunted house on Witch Drive."

"Which boy told you?" my friend Mark asked.

"Coady. Why?" Sara wondered.

"I just wanted to know," Mark said.

"It's just a rumor which means it's probably not true," our friend Andrew pointed out.

"True, but wouldn't it be cool to see the house any way!" I said so excitedly.

"Yeah, let's go see the house after the party!" Sara yelled.

## II

After the party we went to the house. "It's soo big!" I exclaimed.

"And scary," Sara shuddered.

"If there are any ghosts in there we'll never find them," Mark said.

"Let's go in," I suggested. So we went in. It was dark, scary, and there were cobwebs everywhere.

"It's so dark," said Andrew.

"I brought flashlights," replied Mark.

"Great!" Sara exclaimed.

"Let's see what the house looks like," Andrew said.

"Ahhh!" everyone screamed. They saw a spider at least six feet tall.

"That was a huge spider," Mark said exhausted.

"Yeah, at least it didn't follow us," said Sara.

"Where's Andrew?" I asked.

"You mean he's not here!?" Sara gasped. I shook my head too frightened to speak.

"The spider got him!" yelled Mark.

"He probably just ran home," Sara added.

### III

We thought he had run home, but he didn't. He died. How were we supposed to explain that to his mom?

"We should leave," said Mark.

"No way, we still need to find a ghost!" Sara yelled.

Mark yelled back, "You find the ghosts, I'm getting out of here! Are you coming Chris?" I didn't know what to say. All I knew was that Andrew had died and I didn't want to be next. So I just said yes. As Mark and I started to leave, we all heard this moaning, and it was getting closer and louder. After a few seconds of moaning, a ghoulish looking figure appeared. It was horrible. Blood was dripping from its transparent body leaving a puddle of fresh looking blood on the floor. The ghost was a woman with a blunt, cracked knife in her heart.

Right before Mark ran, he yelled, "We found a ghost. Now let's leave!" He made it half way down the hall, before the ghost took the knife in her chest and chopped off Mark's head, and then she disappeared.

"Mark!" I yelled.

"Forget him! We have to get out of here!" Sara screamed. She was terrified, and I didn't blame her, because so was I.

### IV

Sara and I wanted to find the back door in case the spider was still guarding the front door. We found the back door, but the ghost of a little boy appeared. He was holding his head under his arm and dark red blood with a ghostly white mist was pouring from his neck. Sara and I had to find another way out. We started to run away, but the ghost chased us down the hall with his head rolling on the floor with sharp jagged teeth showing. We ran up the stairs in the Grand Hall to the second floor. The first door we saw we ran to trying to escape the ghost. The boy floated right past the door not knowing where we were.

We turned around to see where we were, and we saw the third ghost in the house. He, like the others, was bleeding a dark, red blood, but his was coming from his head where a sharp

axe was embedded. He took the axe from his head and more blood started pouring out like a waterfall. He threw the axe at us, but missed. Then we opened the door and ran back down the stairs. The ghost grabbed the axe and chased us into a room that looked like a greenhouse with all the plants and rocks around us. The last ghost disappeared leaving us in the greenhouse.

“Let’s find an exit in here in case the little boy ghost is still looking for us,” Sara said.

“Good idea Sara,” I said. We wandered through looking for a door, but instead of a door, we found two lions that looked starved. “Sara, run!” I yelled and then we started to run through the trees. The lions were gaining on us. We found a mountain surprisingly and started to climb up. I was able to escape, but Sara wasn’t so lucky. The lions had caught her.

“Ahhh!” Sara screamed. It was the worst thing I had ever heard. The lions finished eating her, and then looked up the mountains for me. I hid behind some rocks until they ran away.

“Good they’re gone.” I sighed with relief. Climbing down the mountain was harder than climbing up. There were vines and thorny bushes trying to grab me, leaving cuts and scratches. I finally made it down and started searching for an exit. Trying to avoid areas the lions could be hiding. There was a hole in one of the walls just big enough for me to crawl through.

## V

I was able to escape and make it to the end of the driveway. I looked back at the house one last time before running away. There staring at me from one windows in the attic were the three ghosts of the dead family. I was screaming all the way home. When I made it home, I told my parents what had happened. They didn’t believe me and neither did anyone else I told. A few years passed and everyone forgot what happened except me. I could never forget. It was the most horrifying thing I had ever seen, but things started to return to normal. Well, at least until today when four other teenagers went to that same house and never returned.

Well, that’s my story. You may or may not believe me, but that’s what happened, and I’m sticking to it. I have one last thing to say: **HAVE A FRIGHTFUL, SCARY, and HAPPY HALLOWEEN!**



## **Running Away**

BY VICTORIA J.

I have to get away, now! Dropping my hastily packed and unzipped bag on the ground, I take off at a sprint across the vast expanse of my neatly trimmed lawn. The cool night air stings my flushed face as I push my legs off the ground and pump my arms fiercely at my sides. My mind is blank as I just run, away from oppression and into the freedom the night holds. I vaguely hear yelling coming from the open second story window, but my hearing is mainly consumed by the blood pumping through my ears in a harsh, rhythmic beat. My legs burn and my side cramps causing me to grimace, but I continue to push myself until I'm in the safety of an old, familiar porch light.

Breathing heavily and pressing my side in an attempt to alleviate the pain radiating from there, I plod up the porch stairs. Exhaustedly, I lean against the doorbell until I hear it echoing through the dark house, and then I slide down to sit on the ground. When the ancient and de-

crepit door creaks open, I see the familiar silhouette of Tara, my best friend, with her eyes still glazed in sleep and her hair an unkempt birds nest. After rubbing her bleary eyes, she finally focuses on me.

“Manda? What’s wrong? It’s, like, two in the morning. What are you doing here? You look like crap,” she rambles off while still half asleep. Typical Tara, able to get to the point and insult how I look after being woken up at the ungodly hour that it was.

“Umm... Sorry about waking you up. It’s really cold, and I don’t have my bag with my hoodie in it. I lost it on the way over. Do you think I could come in?” I question quietly. My breath was coming out in little puffs and now that the adrenaline had worn off from my spontaneous flight, I could feel the goose bumps forming on my bare arms and unconsciously started to rub them. She nods her assent and holds the door open so that I can step into the old, cluttered house that always smells of the fresh flowers that were placed on every table. Shuffling over to the chair, I collapse into it and carefully avoid the questioning gaze Tara was sending my way. After a minute of awkward silence, she let out one of her famous growls and stared talking.

“Okay, so what’s up? You’re really worrying me, what with the showing up at two in the friggen morning, looking all pale and scared and like you actually ran which is a sign of the apocalypse in itself. You had better start explaining missy, or my non-caffeinated butt will kick yours to Timbuktu and back and don’t think I won’t. Well?” She spews the words out in rapid fire succession as if she were a drill sergeant and idly I muse if she even took a breath but decide I should probably start talking before she goes through on her threat.

“Sorry hon, but I had to leave. You know it hasn’t been a good place for me at home since mom up and left. Dad was being a jerk again, and I just can’t take any more of it. I just need

someplace to crash while I figure something out and I promise I won't stay long and that I'll leave as soon as you ask," I profess to her in the most apologetic, desperate, pleading tone that has ever come out of me. I feel her eyes burning into mine and I keep eye contact, showing everything in my usually guarded eyes that I couldn't vocalize. I was going to get out of that house, and she could really help. I logically know that because she's my best friend, she would do this even if I didn't ask, but I've always been insecure in any type of relationship I have. Finally, she nods her head.

"Of course you can chill here. You know you're the sister I never had. Stay here as long as you need. Just don't touch my coffee," she says with a soft smile but ending in a mock glare to keep it from turning too corny for either of us. With a final goodnight and a "we'll talk in the morning," she heads up the stairs to her bedroom, knowing me well enough to realize that I want to be alone. Sitting in the comforting dark with the calming scent of flowers relaxing me, I feel a frown tug at my lips. Everything about tomorrow was going to be hard as I embark on a new road in my life, and it was making me very apprehensive. I brood on this for a while before coming to a realization. I have people who will want to help and others, such as Tara, who have been there all along and won't take no for an answer. I take what's left of the night and fall asleep with the first, albeit small, genuine smile that has appeared in my face in a long time.



**Kathe Kollwitz**  
**Woman with Dead Child**  
**1903**  
**etching**  
**National Gallery of Art, DC**

## *Woman with Dead Child*

BY KRISTEN O.

Throughout history artists portray their feelings and emotions through their artwork. Some are less effective than others, but most get their point across to their viewers. Incredibly, the works of art affect the viewer by making him feel the emotion which is being revealed in the

piece of art. One of these unbelievable artists, creator of *Woman with Dead Child*, is Kathe Kollwitz.

Filled with emotion, this particular drawing almost jumps off of the page. The dark shadowing around both people shows the gloomy state of emotion they are in. The child, bald and figureless, illustrates the importance of a child to a parent whether they are male or female. The relationship between a parent and child does not adjust for mothers, fathers, sons or daughters. A parent's love is unconditional. One of the most devastating incidences that a person can experience is the loss of a child.

Holding the child, pale and limp, the woman's face tenses with grief and anger. The muscles in the mother's arm bulge as she squeezes her lifeless child. She squeezes her child as if she'll never let go. The dark shadows consuming this picture express the heartache and sorrow overwhelming the mother as she copes with the recent death of her child. Anger rising, passion exploding, the parent suffers over the child's unconscious body.

Simple forms of art, such as sketches, sometimes show more emotion and passion than a description or a live picture. Kathe Kollwitz clearly conveys the pain this mother is enduring while holding her dead child in her arms. *Woman with Dead Child* does not include clothes, money, or anything else about the mother and child's life. It simply shows the misfortune and tenderness of losing someone, especially a child to whom she has given life.

In the black darkness  
I wait patiently for you  
To return to me



## **The Student Who Wouldn't Learn**

BY BRIAN R.

Nearly one year ago, there was a seventeen-year-old student named Jakenstein. For the most part, Jakenstein was an ordinary kid. He played videogames, watched TV, and didn't like going to school. Probably the only unusual thing about Jake was that he had an I.Q. so high, it was impossible to calculate by any modern intelligence test. Despite his immeasurable intelligence, Jakenstein did incredibly poorly in school. He would constantly procrastinate and skip school on every occasion that presented itself. The teachers would constantly remark that if he put even a small amount of effort into his studies, he would probably be a doctor within a year. The real problem was that because of his incredible intelligence, Jakenstein could come up with ridiculously intricate plans to make sure that he could avoid going to school.

One day in June, the school decided to hire Mr. Ed, a specialist teacher whose sole task would be to get Jake to learn something. Mr. Ed decided to tell Jake that he would be giving him a single decisive test, the results of which would either allow him to graduate high school,

or flunk him out of the school. Naturally Jake whipped up another one of his schemes to avoid the test completely. The plan was executed flawlessly and Jake managed to spend the whole day relaxing on the roof of the high school building. Unfortunately, for the first time in his high school slacker career, Jake had over looked one small detail. The next day, the second that Jakenstein set foot into the school; Mr. Ed walked right up to him and held out the test and a pencil. It was at this exact instant that Jake realized that this wasn't a test that could be missed by merely skipping a day. After one second of standing there staring at the teacher, Jakenstein threw together his plan. Before anybody knew what had happened the sprinkler system and fire alarms were going off, and the entire school was being evacuated. The sprinkler system had soaked the test paper, so Jakenstein was confident he wouldn't have to take it anymore. Despite these optimistic beliefs, Mr. Ed was far from finished. As Jake turned to see the look on his teacher's face he found that he had underestimated the teacher once more. As he watched, Mr. Ed opened his waterproof suitcase and produced yet another copy of the test. It was at this moment that Jake realized that he would need to take more drastic measures. Jakenstein decided that he needed a little vacation in Europe.

It had been one month since Jake had come to Berlin, Germany, and he had adapted to the culture flawlessly. Jake had learned everything from how to speak German with virtually no accent, to how to pick the pockets of people on the streets so he didn't get caught. Jake had been staying in a fancy hotel during his whole "vacation." One day, as Jake was returning from his little "hike" through the upper class district, he opened the door to his hotel room and nearly had a heart attack. He closed the door and ran out of the building. Jake knew what he saw. Sitting on his bed with his waterproof suitcase in his lap was none other than Mr. Ed. From then on, Jakenstein decided it would be too dangerous to stay in any one country for any longer

than a week.

From then on, Jakenstein kept moving from country to country, learning the language and customs of each country that he visited. Months flew by as Jake continued to move on, always looking over his shoulder. Then one day in Switzerland, as he was walking down the street, Jake spotted the teacher once more. After this close encounter, Jake looked back at his progress and tried to figure out where his mistake was. The answer came to him almost instantly. The food bills, hotel bills, and other receipts he had been collecting immediately came to mind. His teacher had somehow managed to track him by means of his paper trail. Instead of trying to figure out how some random high school teacher could accurately track his progress, Jake simply decided to start making purchases that had no receipts.

Jakenstein continued to move from country to country, now without leaving a paper trail. Jake would no longer stay in any one place for more than three days. The incredible thing was that despite spending less than half the time in any location; Jake was still blending into each community he visited flawlessly. After nearly two months of moving around Europe at this accelerated pace, Jake found himself exhausted. Jakenstein decided to sit down at a bench in the local park for just one second. Jake closed his eyes and took one deep breath. When he opened his eyes he found Mr. Ed sitting next to him. “H-h-how are you doing this,” Jake asked with his mouth hanging opened. As his reply, Mr. Ed simply held out Jake’s test and a pencil. Jake may have been stubborn, but he knew when he was beat. Most unwillingly, Jakenstein finally took the test paper and pencil out of the teacher’s hand and looked at it. To his amazement, the test only consisted of one question. *“If you’re finally done running, would you like to put that intellect of yours to good use and become an agent of the CIA?”* Jake stared at the question for a few minutes before saying to the teacher, “I don’t understand.”

“Jakenstein,” said Mr. Ed “You’ve just run across forty-two countries, blending into each one perfectly. You are exactly what we’ve been looking for.” “Wait,” said Jake, “So you’re really a CIA agent?”

“You didn’t think some ordinary district specialist teacher could chase you through Europe, did you? We’ve been keeping an eye on you for quite some time. Well some time before this little chase,” said Mr. Ed with a grin. “I manipulated this entire event just so we could test just how smart you really are. So what do you say? Do you think you could finally start using that big brain of yours to do some good in the world?”

After a few minutes of deep thought, Jake finally finished the test with one word.

*“Sure.”*

**2/27/08**

BY KELSEY T.

I can't sleep

I close my eyes and the memories pour out

Like needles in my brain

I can't ignore

I can't forget

My stomach is twisted

With lies and lost hope

My head is pounding

Failure

My energy, my time

Ignored and forgotten

Swirling in the last sip of his beer

Warm backwash

Travels down his throat, his body

And soon exits

As did my trust

And all of my love.

**3/9/08**

BY KELSEY T.

Lines of acne from my eyes to my chin

A reminder of countless tears

The constant notion of lost love

The feeling of failure and gullibility creep back under my skin

Like a carnivorous earwig

Feeding on my pain

And chewing on my fears

The promises left empty

Repeat themselves in my unforgiving mind

This broken record

Has left me organless

Nothing but a storage unit remains

Consumed with misplaced faith and fidelity

When will I ever learn?

*(J.V.W. III)*  
BY KELSEY T.

With love  
Comes risk  
Ignorance *was* bliss  
Until the pain set in  
Became steady;  
Constant  
She should have known better  
With his past reputation  
Ten months  
Thrown away  
Like yesterday's trash  
Like all the others  
She believed him when he lied  
He would always push her back  
Assuring every fabrication  
She committed herself  
Even states away  
Gave up so much  
For love  
Drinking his life-his love, away  
Still, she couldn't leave  
But he could  
He did  
Seven days before her birthday  
She remains content  
She put *love above all*  
And fate has followed

*(happy valentine's day)*

# Midnight

BY ARIA C.

In retrospect, the whole operation wasn't as well-thought out and organized as Stefen had initially thought and could've been plotted out better. But his mind didn't quite work as well when he was frantic or panicked or under stress for some reason; his mind became irrational and immediately chose what came to his first and immediate impulse. The first impulse tonight had been to take a running leap off of the boat his platoon was being transported on. The impulse won out. At least, the running part did. When he reached the railing at the end of the boat, he froze with his hands placed on the icy metal railing and staring out at the black water of the Seine River. It was tempting... and he probably would've followed through with the impulse were it not for the sudden image in his mind of himself getting sucked under by the propeller and having the thing tear him into shreds. He rested his head on the railing and sighed. The war had long ago tired him out and it had only gotten worse when he saw his general killed right in front of him.

Here they were: fifteen thousand of his country's finest soldiers all on one boat heading towards their deaths. That's how Stefen saw it anyways; all that "glory and honor" stuff no longer impressed him. He wasn't willing to let himself die; he had no wife, no kids, nothing. He actually wanted to have a life, not hear his own eulogy at such a young age. Sure, it was considered noble to die for one's own country and if he deserted them now, his file picture – the one where he looked slightly psychotic and completely out of it – would undoubtedly be held up in the pep talks from the officers to soldiers. He'd become the definition of "cowardice" amongst the military, both present and future generations. But in an odd way, it was sort of worth it. He'd get out alive, wouldn't he?

He still wasn't thinking too clearly because of his nerves. He walked over to the side of the boat closest to the riverbank and stood on the lower railing, trying to keep himself from falling over prematurely. He put one foot on the topmost railing, almost falling onto the deck on his back. He perched precariously on the railing, looking over his shoulder and struggling to stay balanced. Just after these few boats. Then he'd jump.

“Hey!”

Stefen cursed mentally. No time for waiting; two of his officers were already beginning to run over to his side to try and pull him backwards. Hesitating a few seconds, he leapt off the railing, praying that it'd be a clean jump. A sudden bang, something whizzing past his ear made him flinch; his officers were *shooting* at him! If these were the people who were supposed to be on his side, he'd hate to see what the enemies acted like.

He hit the water and he immediately went under. His black uniform became soaked, the already-heavy material and the water weighing him down. He wished he had taken a deep breath before jumping. *Stupid me*, he thought, fumbling with the buttons of his jacket in an attempt to shrug it off underwater. It felt more like a straitjacket now, a deadly one. He flailed about, trying to get his arms out of the sleeves before impulse won over again and he opened his mouth to take a breath. Finally, the jacket with its many silver buttons and attachments fell from his shoulders and he swam frantically upwards, muscles trembling and his body beginning to convulse and trying to get himself to breathe in.

He finally broke the surface after what seemed to be hours of swimming, gasping and gulping for air. His arms and legs still trembled as he swam to shore, and when he tried to stand and walk up the bank, his legs buckled out from underneath him. *Maybe it's a good idea to just sit here and pant for a while*, he thought, even if the idea of lying down in wet river dirt and

who knew what else vaguely disgusted him. Then again, if he had stayed on that boat, he would've been shooting at enemy soldiers and that was worse than river dirt and the miscellaneous garbage.

Right now, going to sleep right there on the river bank sounded great. But he knew that the river bank wouldn't be the best place to just fall asleep. His sword may have been the only thing he had on him that was of any monetary value, but that cost was amazingly high on the right markets. He knew from past experience.

Legs still weak and trembling, he made himself stand up as he coughed. He shivered; the only thing he wore on the top half of his body was a now wet sleeveless white t-shirt and the early spring night's wind made his skin stand up in goose bumps. He needed to find somewhere warm, somewhere where he could relax for a little while before he continued on his way, some place to get his bearings and figure out where he was going next.

His wish came true in about a minute of walking. He stopped in front of a café, the outer and inner walls painted an obnoxious sunshine yellow and a huge arc of the cobblestones in front of the café's terrace painted a dark and almost calming blue. A massive lantern hung on the wall near the arches of the café entrance, the light reaching outwards in a huge halo of bright light. The light stabbed into his eyes, and he blinked as he shielded his eyes from it. People were there, and they stared at him as if he was insane. He probably looked that way. He was half-dressed in his black uniform and boots, drenched in water and his head had been completely shaved only a week ago leaving the top of his head bald. He hated having his head shaved; it made him feel vulnerable and, besides, he felt that his head was too angular to have it shaved. Having it shaved would only make him look uglier than he already considered himself to be.

He sighed and sat down at the nearest table on the terrace, putting a hand to his forehead. He was in Paris, he knew that much. He just didn't know *where* he was in Paris.

"Yeah..." he muttered. "I could've probably plotted this out better than I did..."

"Plotted out what?"

A voice behind him made him jump and almost fall out of his chair. He turned around and looked into a pair of bright green eyes. A man in a long dark coat stood behind him, bent over slightly so that he could look Stefen in the face with his hands clasped behind his back and so close to him that he was infringing on Stefen's personal space. A second man who looked to be taller than the first stood behind him and to the left, wearing a similar dark coat and looking up at the sky with an unconcerned expression on his face. "Bastian," he sighed in a tone reminiscent of a petulant youth, "can we go now? I've had enough of this stupid café."

"Relax, Reinhard," Bastian snapped, looking back at his companion. Reinhard eyed him with contempt, but said nothing further and kept staring at the night sky. "Anyway," Bastian said, turning his attention back to Stefen, "you look like you're in a little bit of trouble. I think we can help." Reinhard gave a snort of laughter that he barely managed to turn into a cough.

Stefen eyed the two of them suspiciously. He wasn't sure if they could assuage and ameliorate his current situation; if they could, it'd easily transcend the few kindnesses he had been paid in his lifetime so far. Bastian sensed Stefen's hesitant hiatus and shrugged, standing up straight. "Well, if you don't need our help, fine by us. We were only suggesting..."

"*You* were only suggesting," Reinhard said in the same stringent tone. "What's with this 'we' drivel?" he asked.

Bastian shot him a glare, but didn't say anything to him. "Listen," he said, attention to Stefen, "we commiserate with you. I think I know where you're coming from, and I would be

willing to help. And, by verbal agreement, Reinhard has to help me help you.”

Still, Stefen hesitated.

“We even have a job for you and everything if you want it,” Bastian assured him.

The idea of a job was enough for Stefen. He just wanted a normal one after the occupation of war doctor and soldier. “Sounds fine. What is it?”

Bastian shrugged. “Just a few simple cleaning jobs here and there. Shouldn’t be too hard to do.”

Stefen nodded slightly, then followed them as they began to walk. They left the well-lit café behind and the three of them disappeared into the dark streets of the city of Paris.

## Analysis of *The Tragedy of Othello, The Moor of Venice*

BY KELSEY T.

The brilliantly composed play of *Othello* by William Shakespeare is written masterfully in old English with an intriguingly ominous tone that brings new meaning to the genre of tragedy. This world-wide studied tale of deception, lost faith, the power of suggestion and one man's inner battle with his jealousy proves itself worthy of the years of praise it has received. William Shakespeare brings to life the reality of the undeniable, sometimes destructive side of human nature and emotion that lives within all people.

Shakespeare eloquently travels through his main character, Othello's deterioration of faith and fidelity of his beloved wife, Desdemona. His use of foreshadowing is made evident from the start of the play when Othello, a black, well-respected general approximately in his 40's, elopes with Desdemona, a young white, Venetian woman. The elopement is immediately criticized by a former suitor and Desdemona's father who is convinced the only way his daughter would marry Othello is if he used witchcraft. The reader can infer from this scene that the two lover's marriage is doomed from the very beginning.

The introduction of the antagonist Iago, a narcissistic, two-faced, manipulative Machiavelian, is accompanied by his obvious hatred and resentment towards Othello for giving another man the title of lieutenant. Iago's character mirrors the devil, as he has absolutely no regard for others and will do anything and everything possible to get what he wants. He manipulates and lies to every person he comes in contact with throughout the entire play by gaining the trust of others through deceptions and often acting as though he is doing them a favor, just being a good citizen and trying to help them out. When in reality, he is

plotting against Othello and simply using everyone else as pawns in his constant game of revenge.

Shakespeare's dynamic main character Othello is extremely well developed from beginning to end in this tragedy. Othello's character is initially very trusting and opinionated, and not easily veered from his own thoughts and views. He holds his wife, Desdemona, to the highest of standards, as she is a strong outspoken and honest woman untypical of her era.

The plot thrusts forward in this five act play with Shakespeare's explicit use of an array of ironies, including dramatic, verbal, and situational giving the reader a strong sense of Iago's deception, and at times confusion among the characters themselves. Iago constantly abuses the use of irony, not only in dialogue with other characters, but also in various asides and soliloquies. For example, "as I am an honest man" (II, iii, 285), "I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness" (II, iii, 347-348). Much of the irony in the play is also used when referring to Iago; multiple times the reader sees lines such as, "honest Iago" etc. when it is made clear from the start that Iago is far from being honest.

The characters seem to be given false hope in the possibility of a "happy ending". Iago's lies tend to provide this hope, masking his motives under the false pretenses of helping each of the characters feel at ease and comfortable with the suggestions he proposes to fix their problems, when in actuality his recommendations are just to further his hateful revenge for Othello. Iago's acting is so convincing that he is able to persuade everyone to follow through with the advice he has given. Each character is truly put under a deceptive spell and thrown into a wicked web of dishonesty spun by none other than Iago enabling them to form opinions of their own by his constant pushing of fictitious "facts". Iago brilliantly puts himself in charge as a

trusting man and uses his spurious personality to manipulate every situation he encounters, often using irony known only to himself.

Excessively heinous acts continue, however, unexpectedly not only by Iago, but by Othello and Roderigo as well. The reader is able to see just how strong the power of suggestion can truly be, especially pertaining to Othello. Othello's character goes through a transformation, one almost seemingly impossible as Othello starts out as a strong man who is moral, truthful, and trustworthy and at the end of the play completely consumed by anger caused by his blind jealousy over Desdemona's supposed infidelity. Othello's transition is one of the most intensely intriguing in the history of Shakespeare's literary work, creating a sense of rushed assumptions which lead to a rash, drastic decision by Othello to kill Desdemona.

Othello vows in the first act of the play to be lead not by jealousy, but love, and even at the denouement he is convinced that the smothering of his wife is for the good of the state and that his jealousy is not what led him to commit the vicious act, but the desire to keep a, "strumpet" of a woman off the streets and to prevent her from hurting other men. A true moment of clear personal tragedy to Othello is his never fully realizing, even at the point of his death, the extent of his pure, undiluted jealousy which led him to murder an innocent. "O perjured woman, thou dost stone my heart/ And (mak'st) me call what I intend to do/ A murder, which I thought a sacrifice!" (V, ii, 78-80).

Othello's conflicts also play a large roll in his mental deterioration. He is constantly battling against outside forces, and at times unknown to him, stripping him of the ability to fight back. Othello is made an outsider because of the color of his skin, as being a high powered black man was not common nor was it widely accepted in that era. Not only is Othello put up against his outer most self, but also his inner self; his undeniable, self destructive jealousy and

his lifelong training to, “protect and serve.” While Othello is in the mist of his various, confusing (even to himself) personal struggles, he is being plotted against by Iago, who enlists the help of Roderigo, a former suitor of Desdemona who was left heartbroken when informed of her elopement with Othello. Iago’s cruel and demonic plan to destroy every aspect of Othello’s life is unknown to Othello, who is ironically convinced of Iago’s honesty, which enables Iago to ingratiate himself to Othello and furthers the dark, intense tone of the tragedy that becomes Othello’s life.

Much of the play’s drama and vehemency stems from the vivid imagery used in each act, creating a clearer and many times crude view of the situations at hand. Shakespeare’s use of copious imagery paints more of a severe mental picture to support the catastrophe, “Would you, the (supervisor,) grossly gape on,/ Behold her topped?” (III, iii, 452), “Swords out, and tilting one at others breast,/ In opposition bloody” (II, iii 195-196). Not only does Shakespeare use the intense imagery for the reader’s benefit, but for the manipulation of Othello and the impact on the mood and atmosphere. The motif of light versus dark is repeated, especially and mainly in reference to Othello being a dark skinned man and Desdemona, a picture of pale perfection. “Even now, now, very now, an old black ram/ Is tuppung your white ewe” (I, i, 97-98). Shakespeare also works the tragic theme with the motif of blood and animals, at times inferring bestiality; “your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs” (I, i, 129-131)

In addition to unifying motifs, the symbolism of a handkerchief given to Desdemona from Othello, who received it from his mother to pass on to his faithful love, is woven through the play to provide unity. The handkerchief is a symbol of Desdemona’s love and fidelity to Othello and his to her. So when Desdemona accidentally drops the handkerchief and by convoluted means it ends up in the hands of Cassio, the man given the title of lieutenant over Iago.

Iago immediately uses the handkerchief as physical evidence to prove to Othello that Desdemona has committed adultery with Cassio. The handkerchief incident is Othello's final breaking point. Now Othello is convinced of his wife's infidelity and vows revenge.

The confusion of the characters (with the exception of Roderigo, who eventually understands Iago's true motives but continues to assist him) by Iago culminates to the deaths of the ensnared including: Desdemona, Roderigo, Emilia, and Othello. Othello finally realizes his gullibility and the wrongful murder of his wife, and with such awareness, he thrusts a knife into his own body, knowing he will be damned. Iago is left in the hands of Cassio to be tortured and severely punished for his actions that resulted in the deaths of four people. Although the tragedy ends with the depressing demise of the innocent, the reader is left with the satisfaction of Iago's finally being seen for who he truly is and the eerily comforting knowledge of his mind and body coming to a painful, yet deserved, end. Ironically the play ends as it began. Iago's punishment is to be dealt out by Cassio, the man Iago was hell bent to destroy. Under certain circumstances and given the master manipulator that Iago is, he could have ensnared any one. The once noble Moor says, "Then must you speak/ Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;/ Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,/ Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,/ Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away/ Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes" (V, ii, 403-409). Finally, he gained some wisdom. He had an inkling of the cost of his depth of love which eschewed his rational thought. Iago's once foolproof machinations atrophy to complete failure and he is forced to recompense for his unforgivable transgressions with the ultimate and most appropriate punishment-the loss of his life.

## Faeire Woods

BY VICTORIA J.

“Get away from me! You are a wretched, dishonorable, and disgusting filth of a man and I never wish to see you again!” the young maiden inveighed against the man who just seconds ago was her betrothed, but most defiantly wasn’t now. Why all the upset? The young maiden, Elizabeth, had always been an unctuous child and was far too loud and opinionated, which was quite unbecoming for a woman of her era and her rank as a daughter of noble blood. Her parents were forced to intercede many times in order to keep her out of trouble. This fact and her personality had made it very hard for her parents to find a suitable young man for their daughter to marry, and, unfortunately, made them pick (and bribe) a man who while of the right heritage, had a somewhat questionable reputation, one that Elizabeth just heard, and witnessed, to be true.

“How dare you yell at me, you ungrateful wench! You should be kissing my boots because I am even with you at all! I am the man, and as such I can do whatever I desire!” the man, Richard, yelled (and slurred) back while fumbling to pull his pants back up. This was not their first argument, and he was starting to wonder if the money he was getting was really enough to put up with her.

“Not when I have to marry you, and you sleep with some harlot you picked up off the street. I mean, honestly, I don’t need the lurid details to know what happened. Besides, who knows what she could have picked up where.” It really was a very genuine concern for Elizabeth. She knew of some of the disease that could be picked up by such promiscuous activities and she would be damned if she ever got one. Neither Elizabeth nor Richard paid any attention

to said harlot, who prided herself on not having any diseases, as she covered herself and left in a hurried huff.

“I have had enough of your yelling! You aren’t worth it, you miserable cow! Get out of my house and don’t even think about coming back. Good luck finding someone when you realize you’re an old spinster!”

“Spinster? Spinster?!? Why I never! Fine, but you shall get what’s coming. Mark my words, you shall regret the day you ever crossed Elizabeth Anne Beth McManfrock!” she yelled back, before turning and storming out. She slammed the door so hard the entire frame shook, and the mice scurried back into their houses. Richard glared at the door for a moment before wobbling to his bed and passing out. He didn’t notice that his money purse had been used in its entirety to pay for the worst lay the poor ‘diseased’ harlot had ever had.

Muttering under her breath, Elizabeth stomped through the streets, having no real direction but steam almost literally coming from her ears. She was so absorbed in her cursing that she was unconsciously making wild hand gestures, flailing in a way that reminded watchers of a seizure as they ducked out of the way. While most got out of the way, poor Doctor Joe was tragically struck then trampled by the raging bull named Elizabeth and his funeral will be held Saturday. Eventually, she was forced to either stop or run into the trees that marked the beginning of the woods, and she came to a halt.

Now, let’s take a moment to talk about the town in which all this takes place. It was a very small and close-knit community called Largefalls. The town was neither large, nor did it have any falls, but it did have an unusual number of churches. Since it was a small community, it was very prone to gossip, especially among the elderly churchgoers. Most of them were women, and all were highly suspicious. There was a strict no tolerance policy about any talk of the occult or

fantastical creatures, laid down in the fear that if such things were talked about, then they would appear. One of the unspoken rules that was expected to be followed as part of the policy was that the forest was strictly off limits to everyone, with pain of the unknown to fall upon any who dare to step foot inside. Everyone learned this rule when they were little, including young Elizabeth. Yet, her propensity was to break the rules.

Now that Elizabeth had reached the woods, she was faced with a quandary. She could either go forward or back. If she turned around, where would she go? Certainly not back to her horrible ex-betrothed, not after the way they had parted. He would consider it as a triumph for him, and that just wouldn't do. She didn't have any friends because no one would associate with someone with her attitude, and her parents would be horribly cross with her for arguing with Richard yet again. So then she was forced to consider entering the woods, but even she was a smidgen nervous to do so after hearing all the stories of what could happen in there. So there she stood, with her hip popped out and arms crossed, stroking her chin, with thoughts running through her head, about to unknowingly make a decision that will decide her fate forever. After a quick game of enie-minei-minei-mo, she chooses to go in.

Carefully stepping into the woods, she made her way through the dense trees. Ducking under branches and stepping over roots, she resumed her angry muttering. She was still stuck with thoughts running with along the theme of how dare he, and I listen to no man. Had she not been so absorbed in inventing creative ways to punish Richard, she might have noticed the rustles that weren't made by her and the faint whispering of small voices. Had she not been distracted, she would have noticed the whispers seemed to grow more excited as she approached a small clearing with a ring of mushrooms. She would have recognized the ring to be a faerie ring and would have remembered that you are never supposed to step inside the circle. Unfortunately for

Elizabeth, she was distracted, and she failed to notice any of this until it was too late. She did notice when she was suddenly stopped by an invisible wall and fell backwards hard, landing painfully on her bum. This did not aid in turning her mood around to say the least.

“What in the bloody hell? What’s going on here? Let me out!” she yelled, banging her fists onto seemingly nothing and screaming so loud her face turned a very unhealthy shade of red. Leaves that were before only rustling started to swirl all around her, circling higher and higher, making her start to feel afraid, although she would rather face a millennium in hell than admit it. Then they all stopped abruptly, making the leaves fall gently to the ground, revealing a large group of blue faeries surrounding her. Some were pretty and looked like tiny children with large gossamer wings, while others had mean faces with almost goblin like features. They were all only about half a foot tall, blue, and staring right at her. “What do you want with me?” she manages to get out. She gave herself a mental pat on the back for not stuttering.

“Yousa stepped into our ring, our realm. Yousa give us a reason usa should join us or wesa can just eat ya. Think quick like, wesa are very hungry,” said what appeared to be the lead faerie in a low, almost hissing voice that was anything but friendly. The others surrounding her looked on in interest, some arguing with each other in their own language over who would get what body part and others commenting happily on the fact that she had some fat on her. It was very good Elizabeth couldn’t understand that particular conversation since the last time she got a comment about her slightly large frame, the speaker left with a bruised ego and broken nose.

While the faeries talked, Elizabeth thought quickly about what she knew about them. She knew they weren’t known to be nice or kind, but rather that they had a reputation for being tricksters and loving a laugh at someone else’s expense. They were known for flinching family heirlooms and being generally fractious. If she joined them, she would get to do the same,

which was very appealing to the rebellious girl. Then a thought struck her, causing an evil grin to slowly spread across her face, making the faeries stop and look. They were very surprised she wasn't panicking like all their previous victims.

“If I join you, then you can help me get revenge on the scum that I was supposed to marry. I know you like to cause trouble and so do I. I am very inventive when I want to be and I know you will enjoy it as much as I will,” she proposes. After quickly discussing it and recalling what they had heard her saying to herself, they agree to make the angry, mean girl one of them. Elizabeth's face sets into a determined look, and a pleased glint enters her eyes as she starts to walk back to the town. The faeries rushed around her, sprinkling her with their dust and already making her the same blue as they. Poor Richard will most certainly regret the day he made his betrothed decide she would rather be a faerie than marry him.

## **For M (The World)**

BY JOSH P.

The world- it was turning.

The villages- burning.

Nations at war,

And families torn-

Torn apart by hate

And destruction they made.

We were not like them- they're not the same.

You and me;

We would dream.

Dream of a world that they can't conceive.

Dream of a beauty that they can't believe.

Dream of a peace, a love, and a time-

A time that ran out for those left behind.

A peace that would come in a matter of time.

And a love that lasts forever, in your heart and mine.

We spoke of our families, the distant and above-

How they talked with us often and taught us of love.

We spoke of the world,

Covered in ash-

A planet unforgiving, vile, and rash.

Then spoke of the future

And what is to come...

Hatred,

Disaster,

And death is for some.

But marriage, and honor, and love is for us.

For we are not like them.

We are not lost.

Lost in this world,

Surrounded in dark,

One is most doomed

Without a spark.

A spark lights a fire

And when fire ignites,

It takes all it touches,

Yet gives us light.

And light gives us guidance.

And guidance provides faith.

And faith shows us partners,

With love we must make.

And today I am happy,

For when I sparked my light,

Who should appear  
But you in my sights.  
So perhaps the world is not evil,  
Just misunderstood.  
If they knew love like us,  
The world would be good.



## Oh How Cliché

BY KAITLYN H.

When you bury a hatchet,

Don't dig it back up.

Half empty, half full,

It's how you see the cup.

With or without you,

How do I live?

Forget all your grudges,

Learn how to forgive.

Inhale the lies,

And exhale the truth.

Forget about your future,

Live in your youth.

Drop all the drama,

Leave it at the door.

Block out their talk,  
Learn how to ignore.  
Don't just open your eyes,  
But open your heart.  
You can put it together,  
Or pull it apart.  
Close your mouth,  
And open your ear.  
Watch what you say,  
You don't know who can hear.  
Thank God for today,  
There may be no tomorrow.  
Don't practice self pity,  
Or dwell in your sorrow.  
What goes up,  
Must always come down.  
Things could be worse,  
Just look around.  
Accept the things you cannot change,  
And change the things you can.  
Life is just a complex circle,  
You end where you began.

My love for a certain Irish girl  
Is growing everyday  
It seems as though my life unfurls  
As I do not get my way  
For love undoes my feeble heart  
As it surges through my veins  
I am hoping for a brand new start  
For this feeling of love has caused me many pains  
I'm hoping that my heart's desire  
See all my love an passion  
I hope to set her heart on fire  
In a very hasty fashion  
This maiden instills in me a feeling of love  
That is like being visited by an angel from above

-BRENDAN F.