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Inside: Tricks, Treats, and Tall Tales

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The Indy spooks!

Cover design by
Audrey Effenberger '19.

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As Harvard College's weekly undergraduate newsmagazine, the Harvard Independent provides in-depth, critical coverage of issues and events of interest to the Harvard College community. The Independent has no political affiliation, instead offering diverse commentary on news, arts, sports, and student life.

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Aries

Try getting to class on time this week. Honestly, just go to class at all this week. At least the classes that don't have recorded lectures because you didn't plan that far ahead but you live and learn!

Your Halloween costume:

Sexy HUPD officer. Instead of the Hotline Bling of yore, make sure your phone is charged up for all the hot group photos as well as the many calls from frantic freshman locked out of their room at 2 am.



Taurus

Text that cute kid you met during Opening Days but then lost touch with! They probably have broken up with that long-term SO from high school they were holding onto by now, what time better than the present! Invite them to your friend's Halloween party that promises to be extra wild now that you know someone over 21.

Your Halloween costume:

Pre-med student. You're going to see plenty of doctors and nurses throughout the night but it lines up with your lack of planning because of being a pre-med student that you didn't get a full costume. Instead, just emphasize the dark circles under your eyes and constantly remind everyone around you that you're pre-med. Randomly shout "MCAT" every 20 minutes to really sell the look.

Gemini

It has been a busy semester, but it's not over yet. Don't be afraid to ask for that extension, because you know that It's Just Not Realistic at this point. Don't worry, by now everyone has accepted that you're a hot mess but so are they! Just ask for help instead of melting alone.

Your Halloween costume:

Care package from your parents. These rare items that you only get as a freshman, before your parents ultimately admit to themselves that you belong to Daddy Faust now, always fill everyone with excitement. Make sure to wear clothes that don't fit (because your mom wants you to stay warm but still doesn't know that you have hips now) and carry around homemade food that you barely ate any of before your entire floor devoured.

Cancer

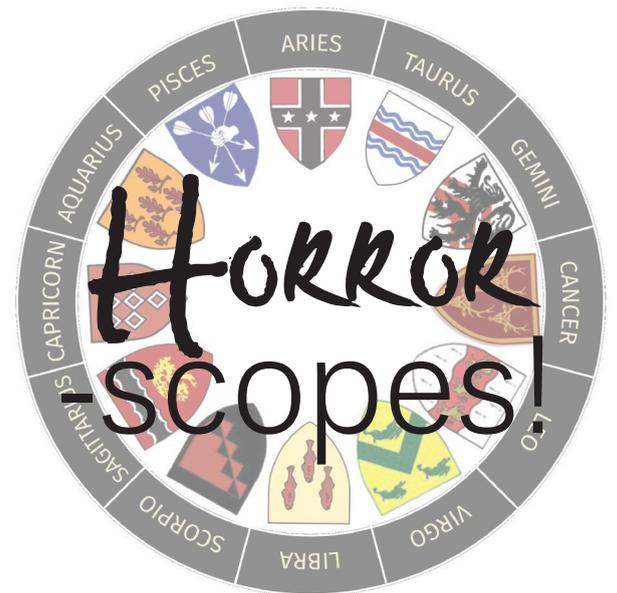
Take a break. Maybe you don't have to finish the comp this semester, but that's okay. You've been working so hard and it's going to pay off real soon! Good things come to those who suffer without making others suffer, too! Let your roommates know you're trying to figure your life out so they understand that you've only neglected to take back your dining hall plates and shower regularly and sleep more than 3 hours a night without them having to call your mom or a dean to exorcise you.

Your Halloween costume:

An empty Coke dispenser in a drink machine. Wear a red dress with "Coca-Cola" taped over it and proceed to walk around the room disappointing everyone as soon as they talk to you. Try finding the overworked dining hall worker that might be able to fix you.

Leo

Email your professor back already. Yeah, the only time you remember to do it is at 5 am and you know there's no way they believe you woke up that early but it's better than ghosting on them and avoiding eye contact during class.



By HUNTER RICHARDS

Your Halloween costume:

"Double Trouble." Just link arms with your roommate and remind everyone throughout the night that you're sophomores living in a River Central house, which explains why you're so used to never being more than 3 feet away from your best friend. When people bring up that you both live in doubles, learn how to say, "We'll have a shot at n+1 senior year!" at the same time.

Virgo

Go to office hours. You know that you were half awake through section and haven't been to (or even awake during) lecture in the past week.

Your Halloween costume:

Sexy mouse. As long as you're at a party in a River House, you're sure to not be the only mouse there but you can be the sexiest! You could also go as a dust bunny, which is just a sexy mouse that hasn't gotten much action since at least St. Patrick's Day.



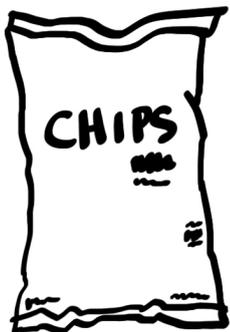
INDY FORUM

Horror-scopes, continued.

Libra

Take that nap you spent all lecture thinking about. You deserve it. Your roommates have class and meetings all day, so you'll have the suite all to yourself to indulge in the sweet, sweet sleep you've been fantasizing about.

Your Halloween costume:



Canada Goose. No, not the jacket! Wear all white and use the leftover Cheeto dust at the bottom of the chip bag you polished off after the CS pset you turned in late to powder up your nose orange. Walk around talking about "poutine," the annual "Fox Trot," and maple syrup, in between saying "sore-y," "a-boot," and "eh" to complete the look.

Scorpio

Go to your study break. Your advisors are starting to wonder if the next time they'll see you is at Harvard-Yale when they find out you transferred because why else have you gone MIA since Study Card Day?

Your Halloween costume:

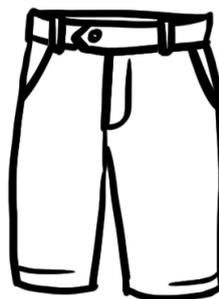
Freshman Five. Hit up the four people you've been casually feeling up this semester and spend the night walking around with a varying amount of who you started out the night with. To be the most realistic, outdo yourself and find at least 9 other people to join in by the end of the night.

Sagittarius

Pick up the UHS cold pack instead of torturing your classmates with stifled coughs all throughout lecture. We get it, you're really busy and don't even have time for lunch half of the time but if you sneeze while section kid talks again it's about to get a lot worse.

Your Halloween costume:

Fruit Fly. Gear up in your salmon shorts and boat shoes to sell that "I'm in the Fly because the PC didn't punch me but I'm not upset because at least I'm not in the Owl" aesthetic. Carry around the underripe pineapples the dining hall has been serving to complete this look.



Capricorn

Get some sleep, maybe? Whereas you used to be proud of your ability to pull an all-nighter, you now hide those dark circles in shame. Sleep is a human necessity, whereas that math problem set is doing absolutely nothing for your pores.

Your Halloween costume:

Harvard Epidemic. This is my favorite, because we've had enough that you really can customize your own! Mumps? Wear that giant scarf you found on sale and bought impulsively around your neck to cover up that extra swole neck, because you aren't ready to get locked up for quarantine! Hand, foot, mouth disease? This is the easiest because nobody actually has any clue what it is so you could honestly do just about anything to enhance whichever hand or foot is your favorite. Wear some bright makeup over your lips and you're good to go!

Aquarius

Give your roommates some slack. It's been a long month and everyone's just doing their best. So what if you took the garbage out twice this month - you're the backbone of the household and that's something to be proud of!

Your Halloween costume:

Harvard Turkey. This costume works especially well for those who aren't trying to hit more than a couple Halloween parties and definitely aren't planning to spend more than 15 minutes in any given location. The key is to wear the most obnoxious Harvard

gear that you own and just strut around the perimeter of every party you stop in at until you've got enough people taking pictures of you for their Snapchat stories. Then, once you're satisfied you've been documented, move on to silently taking up all the attention at a different place!

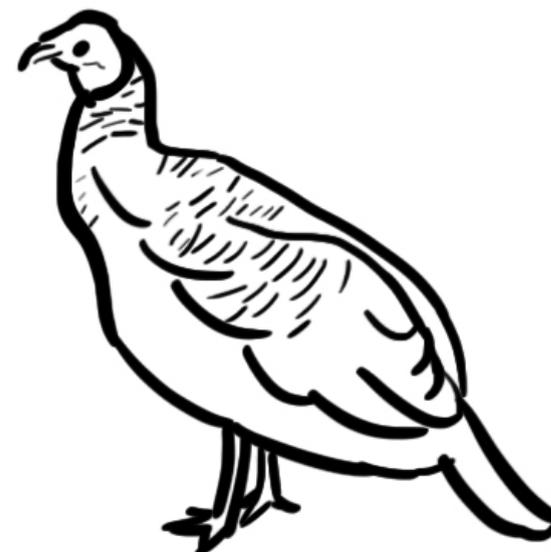
Pisces

Your friends are starting to worry that you don't even have a phone because of your failure to reply to any given text within a reasonable amount of time, or at all. It's one thing to leave them on read while you're struggling to make it over this tidal wave of deadlines you have coming up, but communication is key or else HUPD is going to be breaking down your door to make sure there's not a husk of who you once were locked in there.

Your Halloween costume:

HBOGo. Just don't show up. Harvard doesn't provide you anymore, much like this semester stopped providing sleep, fun, or free time.

Hunter Richards (hrichards@college.harvard.edu) is looking forward to an extra Extra™ Halloween.





Advice for **struggling** undergrads from a **struggling** undergrad.

Perhaps mistakenly taking for granted the gift that is University funded coffee, I spent ALL of my Board Plus 3 weeks ago (at which point the LamCaf barista laughed in my face) and now I am both cash-strapped and caffeine-deprived...How will I go on?

– Utterly Undercaffeinated

Dear Utterly Undercaffeinated,

I want to start off by expressing my deepest sympathies for your plight. I, too, have a love for coffee that knows no reason. My advice to you is a three-parter, so buckle up, Double-U.

For starters, I really do recommend the coffee that can be found in your local dining hall. I deeply enjoy bringing my own mug, filling it up with some Fogbuster and then packing it with tons of cream and sugar while no one else is looking (read: judging me). While I do recommend this free solution to your problem, I also recognize that there is indeed something truly magical about having someone else make your coffee for you.

That's where the second part of my advice comes in. If you don't already have one, you should really consider getting a job either on or near campus. I happen to know that taking a stroll along Mass Ave or JFK Street will result in the viewing of an almost overwhelming number of Help Wanted signs. You should also check out seo.harvard.edu, because there is a surprising number of establishments hiring on campus. Once you have a job and the dough starts rolling in, I recommend setting aside a reasonable (read: sizeable) portion of your income strictly for buying that caffeinated beverage that we both have admitted to a passion for. You could do that by transferring it to your Crimson Cash account, and then it almost feels like you're still using Board Plus to buy your coffee.

The final portion of my advice to you is this: never fear, for you have more Board Plus next year to look forward to. In the meantime, there are more ways to get free coffee, like going to the meet-and-greets that advertise the stuff via email spam. You'd be shocked at how many of them there are. I'm going to one this week.

Wishing you all the best in your quest for caffeine, ANA

• • •

A friend of mine has two roommates who go out partying every night & come home drunk. My friend is a very academics-focused person; how do I gently tell these party animals that my friend would like to pass their classes thank you very much?

– The Pennypacker Puffin

Dear Pennypacker Puffin,

I had a feeling an issue like this would find its way into my inbox, and I'm glad it did because I think that you are not alone in this issue. Assuming from your name that you are a freshman, I can see how a situation like this can feel delicate. For starters, the situation hits close to home for you because it involves a friend, but you still have some distance from it because you aren't the one dealing with the dreaded party animals every night. It can be tough to watch a friend be miserable due to inconsiderate roommates, but it is even harder to try to insert yourself into roommate drama that is not your own.

I really suggest that you avoid being the one to tell the party animals to ease up on the partying. You may find yourself caught in the crossfire between feuding roomies, and playing the beleaguered middle-man is no fun in situations like this. What you should do is one of these two things: tell your friend to be assertive, or tell them to go to a proctor and have them lay down the law. The first option makes a lot of sense here mainly because your friend needs to remember that they have as much a right to the space as their roommates, and that includes having the right to enjoy the room in a state of peace and quiet every once in a while. If your friend doesn't feel brave enough to be assertive with their roommates when something isn't okay, that is a sign that there is a serious problem with the

dynamic of the room and your friend should really consider getting a proctor to help out, even if it's just for the proctor to act as the aforementioned middle-man. That is, after all, part of their job as a proctor.

If neither of these options seem viable, I don't really recommend this, but you could always have your friend share this on social media of some sort and passive-aggressively tag their roommates in the post. At the very least, it will get a conversation started about setting some ground-rules for their space.

Wishing you and your friend luck in taming the party animals, ANA

• • •

I think my roommate is turning into Hamlet. She's taken to wearing black, carrying around a skull, and stabbing people hidden behind tapestries. I'm open-minded, but this is out of hand. Something is rotten in the state of Massachusetts!

– The Horatio of Harvard University

Dear Horatio,

I must say I've never come across a problem quite like this. Here's my advice: as long as the ghost of your roommate's father doesn't start making random unexplained appearances in your dorm room in the dead of night, you guys should be safe, so I wouldn't worry too much about it. I also think that maybe you should consider trying to gently ease your roommate out of her Hamlet addiction by hiding the skull and checking behind your tapestries daily to make sure that there aren't any people back there that your roommate may be tempted to stab during accusatory confrontations. If none of this helps, I encourage you to just roll with it. It would be really cool to tell your kids twenty years down the line that your college experience was literally like living in a Shakespeare play.

Expressing both concern and mild envy for your situation, ANA

ANA (forum@harvardindependent.com) loves giving semi-helpful advice, and looks forward to giving more in the future!

Ghosts of Birthdays Past

Halloween celebrations.

By KELSEY O'CONNOR

Like most people I know, my birthday is in October. I've always loved having a fall birthday. It falls right in the middle of the time between summer and Christmas, so it's something to look forward to in the middle of a long stretch of work and being busy. It's on a long weekend, so there's usually an extra day off. The leaves are changing, the weather is nice, and the possibilities for celebration are endless.

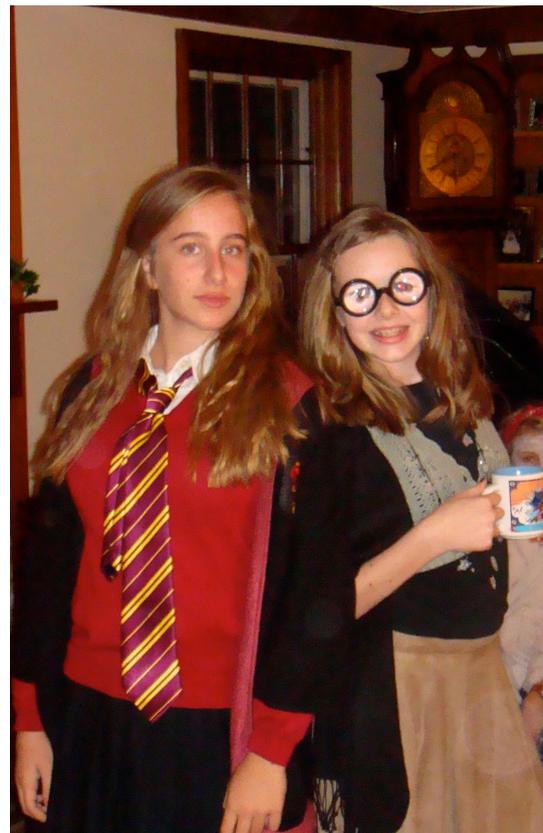
Growing up, I celebrated my birthday with Halloween. Because I am born in the first half of October, some might argue that this is cuspy. However, I like Halloween and so had my fair share of birthday parties around the holiday.

My family loves Halloween decorations. Everywhere you look there is a fake rat poking its nose out or a bat hanging from the ceiling or a life-sized witch lurking around the corner. That particular decoration made me jump every single time I saw it. Fake cobwebs were draped on the furniture and the grandfather clock in the corner of the living room, a black cat rug stretched in front of the kitchen sink. Dad was in charge of the fog machine, spooky lights, and ghoulish sounds that terrified my friends as they walked to the front door. We were experts in Halloween festivity.

I remember setting up brown paper bags filled with "eyeballs," "brains," and "finger bones" and watching as my friends in their witch costumes and candy-corn outfits squealed and scrunched up their faces at the gross, unknown feeling on their fingertips. In the background my Spooky Sounds CD provided incentive for the dancing crew. Classics like "Rock the Kasbah," "Love Shack," "Werewolves of London," and "Thriller" got our thirteen-year-old selves jumping around. One year we even decided to show a scary movie: Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*. Why we

decided to do this I do not know as I am, to this day, terrified of scary movies. I have a clear memory of watching as a cloud of birds took flight to reveal a destroyed corpse with its eye sockets empty.

Now when October rolls around my birthday comes with fun celebration with friends on the day of and Halloween looms in the distance as a weekend filled with parties and last-minute costume prep. Growing up I'd spend weeks planning my costume. (See below for the fabulous Professor Trelawney impersonation of 2008 with Hermione Granger completing the partner costume. We are still friends.)



Courtesy of Kelsey O'Connor '18.

Lately my Halloween costumes have been briefly planned. A witch hat in the closet? Perfect. Amazon Prime can have cat ears at my door in 24 hours? Great. Minnie Mouse headband lying around at home? Costume done. I am always impressed by the clever costumes I see on Halloweekend. One of the more notable ones was someone dressed as a box of Franzia complete with an active and functional tap! It seemed like the excitement of planning costumes was in the past; like the spookiness and anticipation of Halloween had given way to dorm parties and a loud base that had a little extra excitement provided by the costumes. Fun of course, but I was missing the extra-special festivity and tradition in which my birthday had allowed me to indulge.

This year I bought some mini-pumpkins to put around my room and there is a giant (giant) bowl of Halloween candy on the table ready to rot my teeth. I planned my Halloween costume in a fortuitous act of spontaneity earlier this fall. And when I get ready for the unmatched and infamous Halloweekend I'll be turning on the Monster Mash.

Kelsey O'Connor (kelseyoconnor@college.harvard.edu) will be handing out candy on Halloween to any nostalgic trick-or-treaters because adulthood shouldn't take that away from us!



Inappropriate Appropriation

Navigating Harvard's campus during Halloween amidst cultural appropriation.

By HUNTER RICHARDS

“I wish I had just gotten one of the easy costumes – like Native American!” Hearing friends discuss the costumes they were assigned to wear to Halloween events by their sports teams and organizations on campus, I started to remember Harvard is a bubble. Except, I was the one about to burst.

Unsure how to address such comments, I struggled against the acidic feeling in my stomach. I tried to make jokes, saying that they could have just asked to borrow my clothes if they wanted without needing to do it to dress like a Native American. Maybe if I reminded them that Native Americans still exist – that countless generations of attempts to wipe us out hadn't worked – they would remember the group existed outside of a week during elementary school history classes right before Thanksgiving. The people writing history books don't look like the people whose stories are being misrepresented.

The especially concerning Halloween costumes include those reinforcing harmful cultural stereotypes, assumptions regarding gender and sexuality, and poorly communicating sexual expression. As a minority student, it is hard to forget that Harvard wasn't built for us. Based on gender, sexuality, race, class... the institution wasn't created by or to be filled by us. The oldest institutions have darker histories than anything you'll see shown before reaching convocation. After the 2015 Yale debacle

concerning culturally insensitive costumes, college campuses became more responsive to critiques that they weren't supporting their minority students. Erika Christakis, a former Harvard faculty dean and, at that time, Yale residence hall administrator, sent students an email advocating for freedom to disregard potential offense or insensitivity when choosing costumes. With the recent uproar regarding “political correctness” and “fake news,” it is especially important to recall these moments and the following demonstrations advocating for free speech in cases where there's harm or offense being laid on an already marginalized group.

In past years, “A Happier Halloween for a Happier Harvard” sought to raise awareness for cultural appropriation via Halloween costumes. However, without a continued campaign this year, campus has seen a lack of events and opportunities for conversation regarding the potential for costumes to marginalize and harm underrepresented minority groups. The campaign, managed by the Race Relations, BGLTQ, and CARE Proctors with the FDO, included anonymous submissions from Harvard students regarding their personal experiences as well as social media presence emphasizing the importance of consent and respect.

As strict as Harvard's Ad Board threats are, cultural appropriation doesn't raise alarms. Native Americans are often easily forgotten:

Blame it on the low population that leaves the group too small to be counted in many collections of data, or blame it on the country's own foundation built on destroying them. Those headdresses you see at music festivals, the mention of “spirit animals” on everyone's Facebook feed, the use of dreamcatchers to market just about anything from companies pandering to teenagers. You could root for the Redskins football team in the same month that Native Americans were being hit with rubber bullets and tear gas while protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline. Every day, Native American students walking through the yard are reminded that Harvard once erected an Indian College to “educate” Native Americans in attempts to destroy their own cultures and replace them with European practices and norms. With dorms named after slave owners and the former title of “House Master” given to the premiere administrators, students don't get to forget.

On a campus with its own troubled past, it is important to continue raising awareness and creating spaces for discussion about cultural appropriation and the continued marginalization of minority groups.

Hunter Richards (hrichards@college.harvard.edu) looks forward to seeing her peers become more informed so Halloween can be more treats than tricks.



The cast. Courtesy of Linda Qin '19.

Chimerical

In light of Olive's defining moment, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* accomplishes something "visionary."

By MARISSA GARCIA

I suppose the old adage – the one any reviewer would wish to convey – would be something along the lines of, "It goes without saying that this musical left me breathless!" I consider it my humble duty to completely reject that notion and announce that, "It goes *WITH* saying that this musical

left me breathless!" For beginning the valiant attempt of saying this musical's title is an incredibly long-winded task (I dare you to try it... say all seven words in a singular breath!) and will undoubtedly leave you breathless.

Though long-winded, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* is also quick-witted. The hilarity that ensues from the absurd longevity of the title is an indicator of the other quirks

of jest that are to come. Six adolescent spellers are seated on the stage, comically crushed by the great weight of what it is that they are about to do: that is, compete for a spot in the National Spelling Bee. Through dynamic musical numbers with titles as alluring as "Pandemonium," as relatable as "I'm Not That Smart," as satirical as "Why We Like Spelling," we become oddly affectionate toward these six spellers, for these numbers make their oddities and eccentricities feel all the more personally endearing.

One such moment was felt by one of the musical's leading actresses, Sophie Bauder '21, who plays the role of Olive Ostrovsky. It was in her sophomore year of high school when she experienced her first listen of "The I Love You Song." This first listen also marked the first time she ever had cried so immediately in reaction to a song. And just like that, the impactful listening of this one song led to her listening to the whole cast recording, and her

INDY ARTS

Chimerical, continued.



initial captivation with a character turned into an adoration for the entire musical. And so, Olive became Bauder's dream role for a consecutive two and a half years. Similarly to how Olive is a character yearning to break through her qualms about her parents, Olive also is a role that allowed Bauder to break through her qualms about her own theatre experiences.

She recalls, "I also went through a long period in high school where I kept getting cast as a very particular kind of character. It just kept happening and I kept getting the same kind of role – and I was just getting *dissatisfied* with the experiences I was having. So, I knew – coming to college – I really, *really* wanted to try something a little different."

Olive was exactly that for her.

Though she had this longing to challenge herself by playing a new type of character, Bauder came into Harvard with close to no expectations about getting such a role, a fear common to many freshman, who frequently find themselves in a bit of a quarry when competing for roles against upperclassmen. Satiated with her enrollment in a freshman seminar about acting, though still voracious for an opportunity to perform, she auditioned for several shows, which culminated in her having to do six callbacks within just a day –

the first of which was *Spelling Bee*. The callback song was, but of course, the one that began it all, her trademark – "The I Love You Song." It is her "curveball," as she so describes, for it is a sudden shift in the otherwise light-hearted mood of the musical.

Director Gregory Lipson '20 shares a similar awe for "The I Love You Song," confessing that it is his favorite moment of the musical and that, "The very first time we ran it, I was almost in tears."

This is Lipson's directing debut here at Harvard, though his penchant for theatre began in middle school when his mandatory theatre class (luckily) forced him to write and direct a ten-minute play. Lipson recollects perhaps his most profound moment of middle school intellectual frustration: "I remember sitting in science class and staring out the window and being, "I don't care about the tectonic plates. I *just* – this moment in my show – they're not doing it *right!* What are they doing wrong?!"

Bauder and Lipson do not just have a favorite musical number in common – Lipson, with his strong theatre background, still struggled with getting roles his freshman year. Come January and the beginning of second semester, Madeleine Snow '20, the show's producer approached him with this

idea of having an all-freshman cast in the fall, an idea born out of the similar frustrations she faced while auditioning for several shows and only being selected for an ensemble. Lipson emphasizes that, "Our show is really for the actors... in their freshman year, when they are the least likely to get a character that they can really dig into and not just be in the ensemble." The all-freshman cast was very much a deliberate decision. *Spelling Bee* also lacks an ensemble, opening space for these actors' characters to truly be developed.

Not only is the all-freshman cast a revolutionary feature – but *Spelling Bee* will also be the first time in over a decade that a theatrical production take place in Lowell Lecture Hall (17 Kirkland Street, Cambridge, MA). The play will be for one night only, on Friday, October 27th at 8:30 PM. Tickets are free for all Harvard undergraduates and \$5 for non-HUID holders (tickets for which are at boxoffice.harvard.edu or at the Harvard Box Office (10 Holyoke Street, Cambridge, MA). The musical is in perfect timing for Freshman Parent Weekend.

In "The I Love You Song," Olive is asked to spell "chimerical," defined for her as "unreal, imaginary, visionary." This moment painfully reflects her desire to refashion her relationship with her parents from strained to supportive. And although this word is meant to denote her unfulfilled longing, it also carries with it a dash of optimism, as when Olive becomes autonomous and chooses to redefine the word herself. The freshman actors have done something similar in a sense – taking autonomy in the acting scene at Harvard and choosing to *spell* themselves – and, to me, that is the sweetest kind of chimerical.

More information on the one night showing can be found on the Facebook page and website.

Marissa Garcia (marissagarcia@college.harvard.edu) is considering writing her own I Love You Song, dedicated to *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*.

Poison

Based on a true story.

By ABIGAIL KOERNER



A sentinel watches. *Francesca Cornero '19.*

Glimpses of the afterlife haunted her as she ran from her demise. Sweat dripped down her forehead and arms swung as she ran! Through darkness, through Harvard Yard, past the Science Center, and onward. Like the Devil himself, her face morphed to shades of red. Eyes squished down by swelling of the skin. Legs moved underneath her but began to slow like stepping into quicksand. Quaky legs ran farther.

It would have been a curious sight to see her run. To see her pant as her throat closed and skin grew hot and red. Poison that spread through her body became visible underneath layers of clothing. Clothing meant to keep her warm in cool weather was made to induce some kind of heatstroke. She was burning up. But still, she ran away.

They found her. Got her. Picked her up and carried her downwards into a tiny room where she was strapped down. She was injected. Strapped and injected and hooked up to tiny tubes where liquid dripped down and entered her bloodstream.

“Poison,” she thought. Poison took over and knocked her out. She was paralyzed lying there without air to breath or space to move or legs to run. She lay naked under the spotlight of fluorescent bulbs that blinded her when her now tiny eyes attempted to blink. Blinks slowed and her face strained to hold her eyelids open until those tiny muscles couldn’t strain themselves any longer.

She woke up more tightly strapped than ever. Strapped to herself and to whatever held her high up from the ground. Prickling, itchy, waves of discomfort rippled down her spine. She grimaced when she felt the sharp pains of a needle pricking her arm. And another. And another. Blinks slowed and eyes closed and she slept on blood stained sheets. Sleeping beauty: pricked with no spindle or mystical fate. Men in long coats spoke in whispers of her fortune. Her throat would close and inch towards death.

She woke again with new straps and new needles. Beeps echoed the fast-paced beat of her heart. Tears flowed down her cheeks uncontrollably. Nothing in control. She made her hands into tiny fists. Tiny fists which tensed her muscles which shook uncontrollably. Uncontrollable. Her heart beat faster and eyes opened and needles rippled in her arms.

Under the lights, she felt strange – exposed and dazed. Dressed in unfamiliar clothing in an unfamiliar place and thoughts of walls closing in around her en route to hell or otherwise. Everything was white and only sounds of her beating heart filled the room.

In the hospital room she lay in her hospital gown and laughed. A taste of that damn peanut butter chocolate chip cookie sent her running and each glorious bite brought her closer towards death. Poison! Anaphylaxis and a whirlwind adventure towards the end of it all.

Abigail Koerner (ajkoerner@college.harvard.edu) writes short fiction, but not always after an allergic reaction!



Taking the Charles by the Head

Heavyweight Women's Team wins first place.

Courtesy of Sofia Donnecke '18.

By TUSHAR DWIVEDI

The Head of the Charles is oftentimes an opportunity for Harvard students to simply get away and enjoy a break from the swath of midterms, seemingly pouring in one after the other. Watching the team in Black and White sail by becomes a past time, cheering as roommates and teammates appear around a bend, laughing amongst friends. For freshman, this is often their first introduction to the riverside as a whole, finding their path down the River Houses for the first time and discovering the peace and calm of the Autumn leaves.

Of course, for Captain Hailey Novis '18, and the Women's Heavyweight Crew Team, the Charles has become a familiar home during her three years here at Harvard thus far. Gaining Novis's perspective offered a change of pace from the usual excitement of the spectators, and helped provide context from a co-captain of the group. Watching the team, it's easy to imagine the short five-minute and tighter one minute runs on the river during preparation the week before hand. The intensity of their focus paid off during the race itself, with the team finishing first with a time of just 16:27.044, overcoming challenges from Yale, Brown, and Syracuse, among other competitive teams.

Watching the Head of the Charles allows spectators to see their favorite teams passing by in isolation, which provides a unique experience for the team members themselves. Hailey explained the impact of the Head's unique format best, saying that: "Head of the Charles is a little different because it is a head race so you do not have competitors by your side. I think for us, it allowed us to really focus on our boat. We had a great coxswain who was dealing with the chaos around the start line with other boats and officials, and this allowed us to just get ready to race our race." And race their race is exactly what they did, even with fluctuating wind and weather factors impacting practice and predictions for the race. The sheer determination and effort that went into the team's victory was clear from Novis's responses.

Harder to understand, however, is maintaining momentum, with weeks oftentimes going by before going head to head with the teams from around the country. For Novis, the idea is simple: "Every day and every race is a chance to improve." As a result, each start and sprint, in practice or in an actual competition, takes a special significance for the team. Of course, support from the hometown fans can make all the difference. With the halfway mark of the race typically being the most exhaustive part, having

Harvard's Boathouse, with our own students' constant excitement and encouragement, provided the perfect boost the team needed to be able finish strong.

And finish strong indeed they did. Coming into the sprint, with passing Syracuse in their sights and winning the race a strong possibility, the team pulled together as one, taking their first victory in the event since 2013. With the team looking forward to the Foot of the Charles, again at home in Cambridge, on November 11th, the focus is clear: "This weekend for us showed some great improvements but I think you can always strive for more. I think our goal is to see how much of a margin we can build between us and the other Boston schools (who are usually the main competitors in the Foot)." When asked if she would change anything about the Head, her only response was a friendly desire to win by even more. The team's momentum going into the Foot could not be stronger, and the leadership from Novis, the other captains, and the upperclassmen only pulls the team closer together.

Tushar Dwivedi (tushar_dwivedi@college.harvard.edu) may be vegetarian, but the Head and Feet are too good to pass up during the Fall.

captured and shot



A pumpkin carriage on a student budget.

By FRANCESCA CORNERO