

OXFORD, OHIO:

A COLLECTION OF ONE

ACTS

EDITED BY
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Oxford, Ohio: A Collection of One Acts

Welcome to Oxford, Ohio! While Oxford may initially seem like a small town just like any other, you'll soon come to find that the people and places within Oxford are truly one of a kind, each with a rich story to share. Follow along, through a series of monologues in one act that highlight small pockets of Oxford and the many perspectives that lurk within the town's rich culture and history.

Oxford, Ohio: A Collection of One Acts

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Oxford Community Arts Center

Synopsis

As Abby journeys through the historic Oxford Community Arts Center (OCAC), she reflects on the building's secret history. From presidential connections to women's rights advocacy, the OCAC is a testament to the resilience of education and art rural communities. Born out of necessity, the OCAC has housed the Oxford Female Institute and Miami University dormitories throughout its long life. Today, the OCAC is the home to Oxford's community theatre, artists-in-residence studios, Opening Minds Through Art, and various other art programs for all ages.

Characters

Abby Showalter: A senior Professional Writing and Economics double major who specializes in design, analytics, and strategy. She plans to work in Entertainment as a lawyer and strategist, later moving to legal work and advocacy within actor's unions. In her free time, Abby enjoys cooking, creating, and being outside with her dog, Fred.



Miami University Libraries - Digital Collections. (2025, April 13). Caroline Scott Harrison Memorial of D. A. R. Flickr. https://www.flickr.com/photos/muohio_digital_collections/14143154431/in/album-72157640827183273.

Scene- Oxford Community Arts Center

The Oxford Community Arts Center, an arts organization serving the greater Oxford area (Butler, Preble, Franklin, and Union counties). Their mission is “To ENRICH lives and build community by providing, celebrating, and promoting a diverse array of cultural and arts programming, performances, and exhibits; carefully PRESERVE the historic Oxford College building and campus as a welcoming environment offering classroom, studio, rehearsal, concert, theatre, and meeting spaces; and ENSURE the OCAC's ability to serve future generations as a catalyst, connector, and magnet for emerging and established artists, performers, students, visitors, and arts organizations.”

ABBY SHOWALTER

(Standing in front of the Oxford Community Arts Center)

While the OCAC is small, they are not alone in their aim of reaching out to Oxford residents, ensuring the community is a more lively place. Partnering with over twenty different nonprofit partners in Oxford alone, including Opening Minds Through Art and the Oxford Area Community Theater, many programs fulfill their mission of bolstering community involvement and collaboration, such as an annual gala and a range of art classes. These programs and the collaboration they invite within Oxford and the Greater Cincinnati community cement the OCAC as a cornerstone of Oxford, as well as opening a door to the community's past.

ABBY SHOWALTER

(Inside OCAC)

After graduating from Yale, John Witherspoon Scott was a Presbyterian minister and professor in mathematics and natural sciences who accepted a teaching position at Miami University in 1828. However, John Scott was fired from Miami University by university president George Junkin in the early 1840s for opposing Junkin's pro-slavery views. While facing persecution in the Oxford community for his progressive beliefs, John Scott briefly left Oxford to teach at Farmer's College in Mount Healthy, Ohio for five years. After their five year sojourn in Mount Healthy, the Scott family returned to Oxford in 1849 to see John Scott charter the Oxford Female Institute within a small two-story brick building on the corner of College and High Streets.

Scott was motivated to found the Oxford Female Institute when his daughter, Caroline, was refused admission to Miami University on the basis of her womanhood, thus—his daughter Caroline enrolled at the Female Institute, bringing with her paramour—and future twenty-third president of the United States—Benjamin Harrison to enroll at Miami University.

By 1856, a new three-story building was constructed south of the original school—joining the existing structure with a latticed walkway. By the end of the 1800s, the two buildings were fully connected with additions including a north wing, library, chapel, and other rooms.

Miami University’s board of trustees did eventually approve a resolution to permit the admission of women in 1887, five years before Caroline’s passing in 1892. Within that same year, five women were admitted to Miami as “special students” by trustee resolution with Miami admitting seventeen women in 1891. However, the first women would not graduate from Miami University until 1900, when three of the sixteen women at Miami were awarded bachelor’s degrees.

During her time at the Oxford Female Institute, Caroline studied languages, music, and drawing. She graduated in 1852. After being secretly engaged for a year, she and Benjamin married in Oxford before settling in Indianapolis, where Benjamin worked in the legal community and Caroline taught Sunday school, music, and art. During the Civil War, Caroline and Benjamin distinguished themselves in the Indiana legal scene with their involvement in politics, devotion to philanthropic works, and opposition to slavery.

Later, Benjamin Harrison became president, and the Harrison family moved into the White House in 1889. Caroline suffered from lung-related health issues throughout her life and, thus, spent a lot of time at home in the White House, driving her to improve the building. Caroline, working with architect Frederick Owen, designed a new and improved version of the White House interior which included more office and living spaces for the expanding staff, along with an enclosed garden and wing for an American art gallery. While this entire plan never came to fruition during her lifetime, parts of her plans were used in future renovations and expansions. Caroline Harrison also improved many of the service spaces inside the White House, including installing electricity in 1891, completing as many renovations as congress would fund, and eliminating a rat infestation through the use of ferrets.

Due to her interest in history, Caroline began an inventory of all the art and furniture from previous administrations to be archived, preserving a key look into the infancy of our government's executive branch, along with a complete redesign of several rooms on the State Floor. She took an active role in designing the first ever White House china set for the Harrison State Service (a tradition later upheld by every first lady since), held art classes for other cabinet and congressional wives, and decorated the White House with her own art, taking inspiration for new pieces from the White House's Conservatory.

Caroline also continued her love for art and music by teaching throughout her life and working as an artist in her own home studio, exhibiting her work locally in Indiana. Along with her efforts in art and music education, Caroline was a lifelong philanthropist. She not only founded the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) in 1890, serving as the first national president general, but also raised funds for Johns Hopkins University medical school on the condition that they would allow women to enroll—along with volunteering throughout her young life. Sadly, two years after founding the DAR, Caroline fell ill with tuberculosis in the summer of 1892 and died the following fall while her husband was still in office—the second first lady to do so.

As a long-time progressivist, Caroline was an early supporter of Women's Rights and brought the issue into the mainstream after her husband took office. As an Oxford native, she revolutionized the position of First Lady by going above and beyond her duties to set the groundwork for those after her.

The history of the Oxford Female Institute continued after Caroline Scott's graduation. In 1867, The Oxford Female Institute and the Oxford Female College were merged and eventually re-chartered as the Oxford College for Women in 1906. In 1902, the Ohio General Assembly passed a bill by Charles Seese, a representative from Akron, mandating that all Ohio public schools, including Miami University, become coeducational. In that same year, the Ohio legislature also authorized the Ohio State Normal School at Miami, a teaching school which would produce Miami's first black student graduate, Nellie Craig Walker. The Ohio State Normal School would later become Miami's College of Education, Health, and Society. While Miami's Board of Trustees had already approved a resolution to admit women to the university in 1887, after closing the university from 1873 to 1885 due to debt from low enrollment after the Civil War, Seese's bill protected this resolution by law to ensure women's access to education for generations to come.

By 1928, Miami University acquired the Oxford College building and remodeled it through architect Robert Harsh who unified the different parts of the building with a Gregorian façade to match the rest of Miami's brick campus buildings, tearing down the signature Victorian turret structure on the corner of Beech and High streets. Miami turned the building into a women's dormitory, known informally for the next sixty years as "Ox College". The ballroom, the final addition to the building, was added by Miami University in 1929 with the help of funds raised by the DAR in honor of Caroline Scott Harrison.

In 1976, the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and listed by its original name—the Oxford Female Institute. The building continued to be used as a women's dormitory until the mid-1980s, when it was converted to graduate student housing. Miami University closed the building in the early nineties, which sat vacant for several years after—until members of Oxford's theatre community first suggested the idea of building a community arts center to the City of Oxford.

Soon after the building's closing in 1998, Oxford residents came together to establish an arts center and begin work on preserving the historic building. In 2001, the group of residents and Miami University signed a fifty year lease with a twenty-five year renewal clause. Incorporating the Oxford Community Arts Center (OCAC) in 2001 saved the historic building, repurposing the structure into an arts space for adults, children, families, and seniors living in the greater Butler County area. The original clause was updated in November 2022 for a renewal date of April 30, 2052—making it clear that the OCAC was there to stay. Today, the OCAC is a multi-generational gathering space with over 11,000 participants annually, about half of Oxford's total population. Many organizations find their home in the OCAC, like Opening Minds Through Art (OMA), an intergenerational art program for students at Miami University and people with dementia founded by Dr. Elizabeth Lokon at Miami's Scripps Gerontology Center.

The Oxford Area Community Theatre (OxACT) also finds its home in the OCAC. OxACT had been performing its three-show season at a variety of Oxford venues until finding its home at the OCAC in 2005. OxACT began performing in the OCAC at the end of 2004 with their production of *Guys and Dolls* on platforms in the ballroom, with audience members sitting in folding chairs, before the building was sufficiently heated for a winter production. Since the 2005-2006 season, all three productions of OxACT's yearly seasons have been presented in the OCAC, with a brief hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

OxACT rests at the heart of the OCAC, as the organization continues to stay true to its founding principles and commitment to the community.

Since 1998, the OCAC has provided the Greater Butler County area with a theater, ballroom space, classrooms, along with dance and art studios. In fact, the whole third floor of the OCAC is still lined with dormitory doors, only instead of living spaces the rooms contain artist-in-residence studios for artisans to continue their work. Like a dream world, each door is decorated in the medium of the artist that lies behind it, creating a hallway of color and whimsy that fills one with curiosity and wonder. Further, artists are able to sell their works to the community in the OCAC's art shop and community gallery. There are currently twenty-nine artists, writers, and musicians in Resident Artist Studios—with a year's long waitlist. The OCAC puts no limit on how long residencies last but are limited as to how many spaces they can offer due to the building's second floor being unrenovated. The second floor—a stark contrast to the bright, welcoming, updated first and third floors—looks like a long-abandoned construction site and storage area, with old computers from the mid-nineties, missing wood panels, and open rafters. While the OCAC has been applying for grants, accepting donations, and slowly reaching towards their goal of remodeling the second floor, this journey has become costly to achieve, given all the other existing costs of supporting the OCAC and its staff.

The storied history of the OCAC along with its notable community support demonstrates the need for the arts to be supported in rural communities across the United States. In the state of Ohio, there is large public support for funding the arts. According to a statewide survey by the Ohio Arts Council, 83% of Ohioans know their tax dollars are supporting the arts and 91% believe they should be. Despite these very high numbers and the fact that the funding is present, it is used to pit school districts and creative organizations against each other to compete for the funds.

Access to the arts creates a butterfly effect of opportunity. However, when only major cities are regarded as artistic hubs, people in rural communities are excluded from valuable resources and educational opportunities provided by artistic expression. Not only are one-third of the nation's schools in rural areas, but according to the National Endowment for the Arts, "rural areas have slightly higher poverty rates than urban areas... Students attending schools in high-poverty communities have a lot less access—and sometimes no access—to arts education.

While there are many obstacles to arts education for rural students like distance, weather, lack of transportation, educator retention, and funding—one of the greatest barriers to increasing arts access is lack of economic opportunity.

In rural areas, oftentimes residents are unable to find creative outlets for self-expression or observation. This is especially true in the United States, where artistic literacy is extremely low in comparison to the rest of the “western world.” From a perspective within the public grade school system, many schools do not offer any form of artistic education, and for those that do, the experience is not well-rounded in the major fields of art. According to the NEA, among all public high schools, 88% of public schools offer at least one art course in any discipline, 12% of public high schools offer no arts instruction, 12% offer only one of the four arts disciplines, and 17% offer all four major arts disciplines. This staggering statistic showcases how limited the artistic experiences of young people are, not necessarily just producing art, but being able to observe it.

While the economy can be well supported by an emphasis on the arts, it is important to recognize how essential the arts are for the people. Art impacts all ages and people of all backgrounds. In Oxford, with about 43% of the population being college-aged students, this leaves a greater focus on implementing arts exposure for young children and older residents. A 2017 study published in the *Journal of Education and Training Studies* states that exposing children to arts at a young age increases their ability to socialize appropriately and develop necessary developmental skills. Denying the exposure of art to members of a community also has significant impacts on both mental and physical health and lessens the creation of a more well-rounded community. Especially in mid-size towns like Oxford, “engaging in art, especially forms that promote empathy and understanding, can support meaningful discussions that can promote connectedness and the use of mental health resources,” according to Community Health Equity and Research Policy. Even four years after the COVID-19 pandemic, where the World Health Organization reported a 25% increase in the general public’s anxiety and depression, exposure to art is now more important than ever.

The arts are a larger segment of the nation’s economy than most people realize. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the nation’s arts and culture sector is an \$878 billion industry that supports 5.1 million jobs. In fact, rural communities are reaping these economic benefits of the arts.

In the 18 states in which 30% or more of the population lives in a rural area, the arts added \$72.8 billion to those state economies and employed 636,815 workers. Artistic centers provide economic and cultural benefits to their community. In fact, rural arts organizations draw 31% nonlocal audiences compared to urban arts organizations' 17%, according to the National Governors Association.

Small, rural towns depend on arts funding for economic development and impact. According to the NEA, "Between 2010 and 2014, when the average population of rural counties was 391 people, those counties that hosted performing arts organizations saw an increase of 2,096 people." A study done regarding the greater Cincinnati area and its arts impact mentions how the "\$751 million capital investments since 2015 have generated an additional \$842 million in indirect economic impact" and "...8% of earnings in the construction industry in the Cincinnati region can be attributed to capital investments made by arts organizations."

Overall, in America, a high-quality arts or creative curriculum is often limited to privileged communities, especially in middle and high school. In fifteen states, more than half of all schools reside in rural areas. "Adding to What Works in Rural Education: A Look at the Working Paper Leveraging Change" is a new working paper funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). This paper adds to what is known to work in rural education, with a specific focus on arts education. Within the working paper, the authors, Lisa Donovan and Maren Brown, note how the arts are being identified as a powerful strategy for revitalizing rural communities.

Moreover, research has shown that all students, regardless of career path, can benefit from arts education. In-school arts programs have been shown to correlate with improved academic performance, increasing students' odds of graduating from high school and enrolling in college. However, when rural districts can't afford in-school arts programs, access to the arts falls on the community at large. According to the NEA, among students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, those who had deep engagement with the arts in school performed better on almost every studied measure than their peers who didn't.

Funding the arts in a rural community can have unexpected positive values as investing in rural educators means improving rural student outcomes. For example, according to the Cultural Center of Henry County, Ohio: residents of arts-rich communities earn incomes up to \$6,000 higher than residents of rural counties that lack performing arts institutions. There is tremendous opportunity to ensure arts education is part of the solution to create jobs, to address the impacts of poverty, and, according to NEA contributors, to “participate in community networks to build strong communities”. The arts are a cause people can get behind— after all, 72% of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity.

What’s more, research by the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that in rural counties, the number of innovation companies rises proportionately to the presence of local performing arts organizations. Especially in small, tight-knit communities, the arts provide valuable talent that businesses need to thrive. According to the same U.S.D.A. report, two-thirds of rural business leaders have reported that not only are the arts vital to attracting employees but retaining those workers whose talents businesses need in order to prosper.

Consistent with the NEA’s data, technology is key to providing equity and access for students in rural areas as it offers the resources they might otherwise find impossible to access. Having relevant technology available in a central, public community building has a positive impact on the surrounding rural areas by making computer access available to a large number of residents who may otherwise not have access to the internet— especially for creative use. The arts often suffer from funding and space issues as opposed to other programs, like athletics. This problem is only made worse in rural areas which often have less funding for community programs than larger, more urban areas. This means that local artists have nowhere to go to create and share their art with people in the community and community members have nowhere to go to learn about and experience the importance of the arts.

All in all, the arts act as a fire starter for local economies, a small investment that provides innumerable returns. By providing shared experiences in public places, classrooms, and even back at home can unify spread-out, rural communities.

END

Trails in Oxford

Synopsis

Within Oxford's rich forested landscape, Alaina saunters along the winding trails that snake along the periphery of Miami University's historic campus. As Alaina notes the various foliage and plant life that surround her, she dives deep into the sensory experiences she encounters on the trails, as the passing seasons fade behind her.

Characters

Alaina Fitch: A senior Creative Writing and Professional Writing double major with a minor in Communication Design. After graduation, she plans to work in book publishing and develop a career as an editor. Outside of her academics and work, Alaina is an avid hiker, weight lifter, writer, and fine artist with an affinity for all things to do with nature and God.



Fitch, A. (2025). Trails In Oxford [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Trails in Oxford

The trail holds pools of rainwater in its divots. Budding trees are cast in the reflections, where a squirrel scurries up one of the trunks in a rippling blur. Each traveler's footfall sinks slightly into the worn path while the clouds slowly unweave and allow a few threads of sunlight to lighten the world below. A Pileated Woodpecker taps on a tree in the distance. It echoes through the woods, melding with the steady sound of a nearby creek. The wind pulls a few loose leaves—left over from autumn—across the path and into the small patches of grass that are beginning to gain their color back, as if getting over the sickness of the winter. It is Spring in Oxford.

VOICE

(Offstage)

American Sycamore. *Platanus occidentalis*. Platanaceae

ALAINA FITCH

(Standing under the foliage of an American Sycamore, gesturing at its majesty, soft light slipping between the leaves.)

The first of our flora cast, with white, skeletal limbs extended towards the sky, the American Sycamore is a symbol of time. As it grows, it sheds parts of its bark, revealing the smooth bones of its trunk. These figures loom over you as watchful beings as you meandering on the paved path of the Dewitt Peffer trail. The other trees seem to sink into a sea of green, but the Sycamores stand as if already faded and worn into floating driftwood.

Starting in Peffer Park, where a grassy area and pavilion welcomed you to the trailhead. Before catching your first glimpses of the Sycamores, you wandered under a bridge, the traffic of route 27 rumbling above. With Collins Creek on your right and a few abstract foxes running across the cement of the bridge wall on your left, you slowly entered a new world. You pass benches, disc golf baskets, and a few groups of people who nod and say “hello.” Then, the tall Sycamores begin to appear, leaning towards you and beckoning you with their zig-zagged twig fingers. The trail turns, following Four Mile Creek upstream. Still, the skeletal beings watch you—here and there, hidden up on the slopes towards Western Campus of Miami, or rooted near the water of the creek. They aren't unsettling, at least anymore. As you walk, you come to understand them as the pioneer

species that they are—welcoming and restoring, guardians and greeters of their home along the trail.

Alaina Fitch walks along a path on stage as Dewitt Cabin comes into view—old wooden boards and mortar—then the horses in their pasture. Birds flutter between the trees in the enclosed area of the Bird Blind. The breeze smells earthly, the rain from a few days before still intermingling with the dirt and the pollen scent of spring.

A cyclist passes Alaina and the path diverges into other gravel ones. Alaina follows the paved one marked Four Mile Creek. A few runners pass her, their headphones covering their ears.

The pattering of their cadence fades in the distance. Cardinals and finches chirp. A robin hops on the forest floor searching for insects to eat. The branches of trees creak and crack. A tree comes from backstage, overtaking the scene.

VOICE
(Offstage)

Bur Oak. *Quercus macrocarpa*. Fagaceae.

ALAINA FITCH
(Pointing to the enormous tree that's just appeared)

A Bur Oak with a trunk so thick you wonder how many measures of your arm width it would take to wrap around the tree in an embrace. You believe it to be wise. It was here before the Bonham Dewitt trail was carved. What did it see of the wild things before us runners and cyclists and walkers arrived?

The damp woodlands above Four Mile Creek, which the spring storms and spiraling winds have been unable to touch, tall stems of green sprout from the ground. Atop them, yellow, orange, and white tubular coronas with a crown of petals. ALAINA slips down the muddy hill, momentum carrying her until the roots of a Black Cherry tree jerk her back with a halting shudder. She gathers a breath and assesses the mud that has been painted on their pant legs, noticing familiar spots of yellow in the distance.

VOICE

(Offstage)

Common Daffodil. *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*. Amaryllidaceae.

ALAINA FITCH

(Kneeling down next to a patch of flowers)

You saw the fields of Daffodils near Conrad Formal Gardens and the Marcum Hotel before your adventure into the woods, right? Something about the little patches among the shade of the trees along Marcum Loop make the flowers even more endearing to me.

At the bottom of the ravine, crossing a few wooden bridges along the way, Alaina Fitch points out another patch of flowers near the water, their yellow faces gazing at their reflection in the flowing creek, quite in love with their little slice of Oxford.

They trek up the sloping paved path, where the sun breaks through the trees as it sets in the west. The sound of rushing water fills the air. They follow the curves of the new Peffer Woods trail, evergreens prominent in the surrounding area. The air is still—it smells sweet and hopeful.

(A man and his border collie pass Alaina Fitch, heading back to the parking lot. They wave. The dog wags its tail and pants, mouth stretched in a playful smile. After a few more curves of the path, they venture off on one of the unpaved trails that branches back to Collins Creek.)

VOICE

(Offstage)

Eastern Red Cedar (the Juniper). *Juniperus virginiana*. Cupressaceae.

A Juniper—the greenest thing around among the trees still getting their grasp on spring. Little green cones yet to mature are sprinkled in the awl-like needles of the tree. With time, the cones will change and become a dark blue. The light of the day continues to fade into dusk..

ALAINA stops at a bench, watching the silhouette of a hawk cross the darkening sky, before continuing with their walk—and their lives—just as the evergreen Juniper promises.

From the earth grows two-by-six boards in lines. They tilt upwards in a gradual slope, forming a boardwalk that curves and weaves through the trees towards Four Mile Creek and the marshier bits of the bank. The Ruder Preserve Boardwalk. Over the edge of the railing, the underbrush of the forest floor flourishes in greens and flower buds. The White Trout Lily colony is especially eye-catching near the creek. Its mottled leaves reach skyward while the stamens in the center of its petals tilt down towards the damp dirt below. A few bees buzz around the petals, bobbing through the leaves and undergrowth.

VOICE
(Offstage)

White Trout Lily. *Erythronium albidum*. Liliaceae.

ALAINA takes a seat on one of the wooden benches to pause on her way to the Black Covered Bridge just north of Yager Stadium. The air becomes warm in the late spring sun, and she finds her chin dipping to her chests. Like the lily, she droops in a peaceful slumber among the sounds of nature.

ALAINA FITCH
(At trails end, gesturing to surroundings)

From dog parks to people parks, bird blinds to boardwalks, paved paths to tumultuous trails, the natural areas that encircle Oxford are meant to be explored. Meander on a trail, illuminated with summer sun. See the flourishing trees blot out the deep blue sky and the clouds that dot the expanse. Each of your steps will press softly into the Oxford soil, which will stick to your soles in little flecks of earth. You may hear a Wood Thrush whistle above you. The sound will carry on the warm breeze, blending with the ensemble of bird songs deeper in the trees. The wind will pull a few loose flower petals—left over from the peak of spring—across your path and onto the soft green carpet of grass.

It beckons you to wander, to explore. Welcome to Oxford in summer.

END

Oxford Lane Library

Synopsis

Driving on South Locust Street in Oxford Annabel highlights the Oxford Lane Library, a modern building serving as a vital community hub beyond just offering free books and media. She details the library's inviting interior, diverse collections spanning physical and digital formats, and extensive free services. Howe emphasizes the library's crucial role in providing free educational and social programming for all ages, including children's storytime, teen tutoring, adult book clubs, and other creative workshops, as well as preserving local history, making the Oxford Lane Library an invaluable resource and a welcoming space for both long-time residents and Miami University students alike.

Characters

Annabel Howe: A third year student at Miami University majoring in Literature with a minor in Rhetoric/Writing. She is on staff with Happy Captive Magazine, and a member of the Phi Nu chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. After graduating, Annabel hopes to pursue a career in publishing to share her love of reading and storytelling. Outside of academics, she enjoys bullet journaling, drinking coffee, and spending time with friends.



Howe, A. (2025). Oxford Lane Library [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Oxford Lane Library

ANNABEL HOWE

(Driving car)

As a child, one of my favorite activities was going to the library. I would beg my parents to take me to the old brick building near our house, where I'd spend an hour browsing the stacks and walk out carefully because the pile of books in my arms was obstructing my vision. It wasn't until I got older that I realized this magical place of endless free books was so much more than a haven of literature. Libraries provide books and media free of charge, but they also offer services, programs, and events that help support citizens and bring together communities. They are more vital than many people realize, acting as a center for care and connection in areas all across the country, and Oxford is no exception.

ANNABEL HOWE points to locations outside of the car.

Here we are—South Locust Street—and there it is, Oxford Lane Library! Across from it are Kroger and T.J. Maxx. The library was built in 2015 with a modern and inviting interior full of natural light and cozy nooks. On the first floor are the front desk, children and teen sections, DVDs, and new releases. The second floor has both adult fiction and nonfiction, as well as study spaces and event rooms. There are so many shelves to explore and books to flip through—if, like me, library browsing was one of your favorite childhood pastimes, you'll be satisfied. They also have associated locations in Hamilton and Fairfield that offer access to even more books available upon request. However, there is much more to gain from the library than just books, wonderful as they are.

ANNABEL HOWE

(Entering the library doors)

The library offers free Wi-Fi, printing and copying services, meeting rooms, and online databases and research support. Patrons can use and check out books, audiobooks, e-books, magazines, DVDs, and CDs, as well as items like sewing machines, instruments, puzzles, board games—even seeds for starting a garden! Additionally, the library staff puts on a multitude of events throughout the year for all types of audiences. They have weekly storytime for kids and tutoring for teens. For adults, there are multiple recurring book clubs to join.

There are all kinds of creative classes and workshops offered, as well as special events like author visits, educational lectures, and (my favorite) a monthly used book sale. I've never visited the library when there hasn't been some sort of programming going on. There are always new interactive exhibits or topical book displays to explore. It is clear that much time, energy, and care go into making the library a place for education and community.

ANNABEL HOWE

(Mounting staircase)

In a history class I took my sophomore year, I was lucky enough to visit the Smith Library of Regional History located on the library's second floor. The Smith Library houses an archive of Oxford and the surrounding area's local history, with everything from books and records on the area's development to the personal collections of local families. In my class, I worked on a research project that gave me the chance to comb through some of these collections containing photographs, newspaper clippings, personal writings, family genealogies, and more. Learning about Oxford's history and working with the tangible evidence of that history was an incredible experience. The Smith Library is a vital piece of Oxford, representing centuries of life and love. The archives contained within the walls of the Oxford Lane Library solidify its role in the community as a hub of learning, culture, and connection. It is available to anyone who may be interested in the archives—the staff is friendly, incredibly knowledgeable, and excited to share all they know about Oxford's history. It is also an excellent resource for students to use in research projects or class assignments, offering a chance for local and regional archival exploration.

ANNABEL HOWE

(Reentering the car)

The Oxford Lane Library is a hidden gem—many Miami students don't realize that they are eligible for its services. Yet anyone with an Oxford address (even a temporary one) can get a library card. Even without a card, students can visit the library to study or attend an event. The King Library on campus is wonderful, but Lane Library has an entirely different vibe and is more community-oriented. The second floor is an excellent study space, featuring plenty of tables and chairs, desktop computers, study rooms, and a beautiful ceiling skylight.

One of my favorite things about being in the Lane Library is sharing the space with Oxford locals—parents bringing their young kids to peruse the children’s section, young adults typing away at their laptops, elderly folks reading newspapers. It’s easy to feel trapped within Miami’s campus bubble; going out and exploring the Oxford area can be a much needed break from school and stress. Supporting the library is also a great way for students to give back to the community that so generously receives them. I have always felt welcome and appreciated there—it is a place for all.

Libraries are more than just books, and they are more than just spaces. Lane Library provides services for a free or reduced cost that people may not be able to afford elsewhere. It offers educational and social programming for all demographics, bringing people together and fostering connection and learning. And it preserves local history through the Smith Library, ensuring that Oxford’s legacy is not forgotten. The library’s doors are open to everyone. It is a space where people can feel safe, comfortable, and cared for. In a time where library funding all across the country is in question, it is more important than ever to show support for our local library and advocate for its preservation. Whether you are visiting Oxford or looking to make a home here, consider stopping by to explore, talk with the staff, or attend an event. The Oxford Lane Library has been a community hub for years, and continues to serve Oxford with love and appreciation.

END

Skipper's Pub

Synopsis

Eager newcomer Benny begins his first shift at Skipper's Pub, fixated on learning their chipotle ranch recipe, but his true identity as "Bagel Benny" and his underlying motive to uncover the source of Skipper's legendary ranch soon become apparent. Despite manager Mark's welcome and initial tasks, Benny's persistent inquiries about the coveted sauce and Aslynn's strange remarks about its past origin, a natural reservoir near Bagel & Deli, ignite his suspicion.

Characters

Aslynn Wetzel: A third year Professional Writing and Creative Writing double major at Miami University. After graduation, she would like to pursue a career in marketing or graphic design. When she isn't staying up too late watching Korean dramas on Netflix, Aslynn enjoys doing everything crafty, from embroidery to book binding.

Benny: A young student at Miami University who is about to start her first shift at Skipper's Pub.

Mark: The manager at Skipper's Pub.



Wetzel, A. (2025). Skipper's Pub [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Sene- Skipper's Pub

A chilly afternoon, BENNY approaches the neon-lit windows of Skipper's, eager to begin her first shift.

BENNY

(Striding in a new employee T-shirt, BENNY approaches the renowned red fence. Neon signs glow promising opportunity and knowledge)

I never thought I would see the day.

Two sun faded signs that read "NO BAGELS" flank the double doors, like hostile guardians protecting a noble castle.

Taking it all in makes me want to cry, but I need to keep it together. Today will be the day I learn the secret to customer happiness. Today, I will learn the Skipper's chipotle ranch recipe.

BENNY passes through two sets of double doors and makes it inside taking a deep breath. The place smells of fryer grease, sticky beer, and bleach towels—the smell of unadulterated success. BENNY heads to the back and is received by MARK, the manager, wearing glasses and a red Skipper's-branded polo. HE tosses BENNY an apron.

MARK

Welcome, I'm Mark. Let's get you clocked in and I'll show you around. Then I'll leave you with ASLYNN for the rest of the shift. Since it's slow, you'll do prep work until it picks up. *(He points at a smeared white board on the wall with a list written in shorthand)*. Start with the more urgent stuff, and then—

BENNY

Excuse me, but when will I learn how to make chipotle ranch?

MARK

You'll learn as you go. We need a couple tubs portioned this afternoon, so maybe

you'll find out today.

MARK leads BENNY down to the basement and shows the stockrooms, walk-in freezer, and beer cooler. It's all pretty standard, except for the chipotle ranch in the beer cooler. Filled with little cups of chipotle ranch, the tubs are piled into wobbling towers beside other portioned sauces. After the tour, MARK brings BENNY back upstairs to ASLYNN in the kitchen, sending out an order.

BENNY

(Once Mark is out of sight)

Mark said we need to make chipotle ranch.

ASLYNN ignores BENNY, looking at the front patio. A GROUP OF PEOPLE sit outside eating from those unmistakable foil wrappers. Bagel & Deli. ASLYNN shakes his head and grabs the overhead microphone.

ASLYNN

(Over Microphone)

The patio is for Skipper's customers only. Unless you're eating a gyro or buying a beer tower, GET. OUT.

THE GROUP gathers their things in shame and sits down on the steps of The Den next to Bagel & Deli.

BENNY

That was overkill. Not everyone has a gated space like you guys.

ASLYNN

(Shrugging)

Bagel has their own tables.

BENNY

(Irritated)

If no one's at Skipper's, why can't you just let Bagel customers use your tables if there's nowhere else to sit?

ASLYNN

(Grabbing empty tubs that look identical to the ones in the basement and handing them to BENNY)

Think of it this way. Say we let a couple Bagel customers take up a table on the patio. Another group sees them and decides to join. Soon enough, the whole patio is full of bagels, and there are no tables for our customers.

BENNY

(Rolling eyes)

It's not Bagel's fault that it's popular. And it's not Skipper's fault Bagel has a smaller patio.

ASLYNN

Look, if it really breaks your heart to kick people out, ask someone else to do it. Just don't come crying when someone walks up to you pissed you're letting someone who didn't pay to be here take up the last table."

ASLYNN opens the walk-in fridge and pulls out a large five-gallon bucket, smacking it down on the prepping table.

BENNY

What's that?

ASLYNN

(Prying open the lid of a tub revealing a speckled orange sauce)

Chipotle ranch.

BENNY

(With heavy disappointment)

Why is it already made?

ASLYNN

Someone must have made extra yesterday when they portioned. Good for us, we won't have to make any. Go get some portion cups and lids.

BENNY slowly turns away, dragging her feet across the kitchen, returning with portion cups and lids.

BENNY

(To herself)

Maybe it's not over yet. Maybe I can still learn the chipotle ranch recipe before the shift is over. Maybe I can get him to tell me.

ASLYNN

(Sensing BENNY's disappointment)

Cheer up, this is a gift. Just like the old days—we didn't have to make our own chipotle ranch.

BENNY

(Surprised)

What do you mean?

ASLYNN

I mean, we didn't have to. We just collected the stuff in buckets and portioned it out later.

BENNY tries to press him further without looking desperate. ASLYNN just shakes his head.

ASLYNN

If I tell you, I'm gonna have to kill you. It's ancient Skipper's history. Caused a huge scandal and everything.

ASLYNN

If I tell you, I'm gonna have to kill you. It's ancient Skipper's history. Caused a huge scandal and everything.

BENNY nods along and waits to see if he tells her without any further prompting.

BENNY

(Acting disinterested in an attempt to manipulate ASLYNN into revealing more)

You mean we outsourced the chipotle ranch from someone else? That's no big deal. Mark told me the bosses used to drive all the way to Chicago to pick up the right brand of hotdogs.

ASLYNN

No, no. It's bigger than that.

BENNYWETSEL

Then where would we collect chipotle ranch from?

Finally, ASLYNN cracks. He glances around with hesitation before turning to BENNY.

ASLYNN

When the owners opened up shop in Oxford forty or so years ago, they kept having this leak in the basement. It came from the ground in the back next to the freezer. Every time it rained, it got worse. Well it turns out that leak came from a massive reservoir of natural chipotle ranch. Pure as gold. They hired someone to dig down and install a well.

BENNY

(In awe)

Well, what happened to it?"

ASLYNN

Dried up, I'm sure. The stuff was so popular, they ran out in five years. I bet it was magical.

BENNY mutters in agreement, lost in an experience she will never have.

ASLYNN

Y'know—that reservoir was pretty close to Bagel & Deli. Sometimes I hear the bosses talk about Bagel's owner; he's always complaining about a sticky leak he just can't get rid of in the basement. I wonder if he'll ever figure it out.

Abruptly, BENNY tears away the shirt from her chest, revealing a bright blue one beneath. The Grateful Dead bear on her sternum grins wickedly at ASLYNN as his eyes transform from surprise to betrayal to anger. BENNY takes out the everything bagel she had crammed in her back pocket for good luck and chucks it at ASLYNN.

BENNY

(Roaring, cackling, and beelining for the exit)

BAGEL ALWAYS FINDS THE HOLE!

ASLYNN watches the Bagel guy trip over the fence attempting to jump it just as Mark returns from the office upstairs.

ASLYNN

Did you get it all?

MARK

(Holding up a USB with the camera footage from the afternoon)

This one didn't even try to be subtle. Another day defending the great and noble Skipper's. Terry and Andy will be so proud.

END

Sesquicentennial Chapel

Synopsis

Amidst the formidable white pews of Sesquicentennial Chapel, tour guide Becca Blanco reflects on the non-denominational structure built to promote religion, that fewer students actively practice. "Ses Chapel," as students affectionately call the building, is frequently rented for non-secular events, exemplified by a recent a-cappella gathering where pizza and casual conversation replaced religious ceremony. Becca humorously parallels this modern use to historical gatherings in places of worship, suggesting that the chapel continues to serve its fundamental purpose as a space for community, connection, and the celebration of life, even if the "congregation" now arrives in muddied "bar shoes."

Characters

Becca Blanco: A third-year Professional Writing, Creative Writing, and Spanish triple major at Miami University. She spends her free time reading, writing, hiking, rewatching Star Wars, and filling the walls of Sesquicentennial Chapel with her a cappella group's arrangements. In the future, she hopes to find a fulfilling job in the field of editing.



Voelker, O. (2025). Sesquicentennial Chapel [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene: Sesquicentennial Chapel

Sunday afternoon, muddied bar shoes kick absentmindedly on the formidable white pews of Miami University's central chapel. Hear the creak, creak, creak, of the moment, feel the wobbly elegance embodied in this loyal beacon of hope, or religion, or something?

VOICE

(Offstage)

Built in 1959, Sesquicentennial Chapel was constructed as a non-denominational gathering space to celebrate an array of spiritual events on campus. The donors wanted a constant reminder of the importance of religion in rounding out an individual and instilling morals.

BECCA BLANCO

(Dressed as a tour guide, speaking with a megaphone)

Many pass the structure and admire its architectural beauty—others avoid its haunting religious gaze. Located directly across from the Armstrong Student Center, it reminds the passersby of sweltering afternoons spent plunked in the pew of their own neighborhood's church/mosque/synagogue. Its religious anonymity allows it to chide students from all walks of life. They may even begin to count on their fingers the weeks it has been since attending a service. Like a reproachful mother, it stands unwavering through the seasons and the times, chiding the viewer without saying a single word

Fewer and fewer students report practicing any kind of religion in the year 2025, yet the chapel remains in frequent use. Its gracious donors of good intention would likely be annoyed by how casually it is rented out, and for what ceremonies it tends to be the vessel of.

VOICE

(Offstage)

Miami University was founded in 1809. The United States of America was only 32 years old at that point—not even old enough for a midlife crisis. Consisting of only 17 states, it is safe to say that the university was borne of a young and ambitious nation.

To celebrate Miami surviving the test of time, Sesquicentennial Chapel's completion in 1859 served to honor its whopping 150 years as a place to provide prestigious higher education. So, "sesqui-" meaning "one-and-a-half", coupled with "-centennial", meaning "of 100 years", solidifies the building's importance and place in history.

BECCA BLANCO

(Still over megaphone)

Sesquicentennial? What Kind of Name is That? The second, if not first, eye-catching aspect of the chapel is its sixteen-letter long namesake. Sit on its stone steps for long enough, and one will overhear a passing student's garbled attempt at pronouncing it. *Sesquintissential? Sesquintennial?* Then a couple of laughs and the shrug of a shoulder.

Ballroom dancers, singers, and sorority members alike refer to the building affectionately as "Ses Chapel, as though a friend's house or an ideal hangout spot. Or maybe they are not sure how to pronounce the name, and they would like to go the safe route. Regardless, for those looking for a shortcut, "Ses", is a succinct alternative.

Two weeks before this tour, the chapel's wooden altar was adorned with pizza, cookies, and different kinds of flavored beverages. It was seemingly a new era of peace offerings to some sort of god, and I couldn't help but laugh at the irony of the altar's dinner table capabilities. Though some might consider it sacrilegious, I think I may call it biblical. Did Jesus not offer himself up at a dinner table, inspiring Catholics everywhere to construct ornate altars for celebration? For the breaking of bread and fast together?

To open the pseudo-ceremony, we students gave signs of peace, greeting one another in the only way that undergraduates know how.

BECCA BLANCO

College students, often primed by the ice-breakers and get-to-know-you's from classes, may find themselves lacking in the conversation-starter department. Luckily, one commanding phrase always holds true and gets the job done right. (Sardonically) Okay, so like, everyone go around and say your name, major, year,

and where you're from.

Following this sign of peace wherein each attendee anxiously awaited their turn, college students broke bread (pizza), and I counted myself among them. The congregation consisted of singers—half from Miami, and half from Vanderbilt University—who all came together to share their love of music and a cappella arrangements of whatever's on the radio. We sat and got to know each other, chatting on and on about altos and baritones and beatboxing skills.

We then sang, worshiping the music itself and bringing the reunion to a close. Harmonies echoed off of the dome (surely the acoustics were considered in the architectural plans on this sacred place), and we led our mischievous procession outside, bar-bound.

One might argue that the concept of bar shoes (shoes reserved only for patronizing the stickier-floored establishments of Oxford, Ohio) are staples of the modern college experience. Consumerism begs fresh faces of the economy to purchase a certain something for everything, but bar shoes can be the perfect excuse to finally embody the slogan on those blue bins seen in many classrooms. Transform *class shoes*, formerly *walking shoes*, into *bar shoes*, and one day you will find them in the most random of places. Sticky floors, slippery tiles, even Sesquicentennial Chapel's plush red pulpit.

Over 2,000 years ago, Jesus and his disciples donned their strapped sandals in countless temples, their feet regularly caked with such grime that before Jesus passed, he took it upon himself to clean those of his closest friends (I'm paraphrasing, but the point will follow).

Places of worship were not always spotless and pristine. It was not irreverent to be there in everyday clothes, to laugh, even. They were places to gather, to celebrate, to praise the forces that have continued to grant human beings life. They were a shared space for celebration, but the connections forged before, during, and after said ceremonies were just as important as the purpose for gathering itself. People came to be together, to see each other routinely, to *love one another*, as most religions implore.

Once a place to celebrate the highest of high, the bar shoes of many now chip away at the brittle wood of each pew in Sesquicentennial Chapel.

People gather, laugh, sing, and make memories that they will fondly look back on in the years to come. Under this roof, in this house of praise, people come together and celebrate life. I like to think, then, that the chapel is still being put to good use.

END

Upham Hall

Synopsis

For Caleb, Upham Hall proved a stark contrast to its welcoming reputation, becoming a sight of repeated othering. Like a constant "masquerade" Caleb's experience eventually leads to disillusionment with the university's espoused commitment to diversity. While the institution fulfilled its basic functions for other students, Caleb's experiences fostered a hard-won resilience and a pragmatic understanding that the so-called promised sense of belonging and lifelong memories at Miami are not equally accessible, ultimately revealing a gap between the university's rhetoric and his lived reality within Upham Hall.

Characters

Caleb Chun (he/him): A senior undergraduate student at Miami University, majoring in Professional Writing and History with a minor in Anthropology. He is interested in East Asian history and translated Asian historical sources.



Seewald, J. (2019). Upham Hall [Photograph]. The Historical Marker Database.

Scene-Upham Hall

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

Upham Hall, a landmark of Oxford with its unforgettable arch. A hallmark of Miami University and, if we're being honest, a symbol of Oxford itself, a place filled with the memories and nostalgia of all who have seen it. A place that can turn a potential student into an attending student. A place where you can take the perfect graduation photo. A place where romance turns to marriage. A place where dreams become reality. There's nothing in Oxford quite like Upham Hall.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN walks up the few stone steps that lead into the arch, looking through the space and further into campus, reflecting on his time spent with in halls of the beautiful brick building

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

At least, that's what the tour guides will tell you. However, if you ever attend Miami and go to Upham, perhaps your thoughts will change. But who knows? Instead of conjuring up hypothetical experiences, allow me to regale my own. While Upham Hall is indeed a place at Miami University, for me, it's a place of forced conformity, forgotten history, and performative advocacy.

CALEB walks through the double doors on the left side of the building and into the poorly lit hall, tracing the room numbers until he stumbles upon the classroom he is looking for. He then walks into the room and finds a desk near the front, sets down his book bag and plops into the old, uncomfortable chair. He ponders his expectations for today's class.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

You're used to it, don't worry. So what if it's the fourth time a history professor cold calls your name because you're the other in a sea of whiteness? It makes sense, right? I mean, from his point of view, I might as well be a get-out-of-jail-free card.

PROFESSOR enters from offstage.

PROFESSOR

Surely, this student must know about The Chinese Exclusion Act—it doesn't matter that they're Korean, they're Asian!

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

(Aside)

Alright, calm down, just answer and go through the model minority charade that's kept you safe your whole life. Relax, he called you Chinese; it is what it is. So what's one more performance?

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

Ah, of course, professor, here's some generalized Asian history to spice up the lecture.

PROFESSOR exits.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

Take the praise and move on... just another day at Upham Hall.

Look, does any of this really matter? I mean, who cares? Just live your life; look how privileged you are— you're attending a university. Does it really impact you that much that they don't provide any Asian history courses? (With sarcasm) In the words of one of my closest, dearest, and most amazing professors, "If you're passionate about it, just do it yourself." What wonderful advice this is. What was I to expect? That Upham Hall, the hub of the humanities at Miami, with its leaking windows and cold prison-like walls, would be able to offer me a cosmopolitan selection of history topics? Perhaps my expectations for higher education were a bit too high.

After class, CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN stands up and bolts out the door, tearing through the sea of students, reaching for a breath of fresh air awaiting him right outside those double doors. After breaking free, Caleb continues to think about his feelings as he walks home.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

One day, though, it'll happen—the masquerade will crack. It's not a matter of if but when—who knows what made it happen? Was it the tenth person who asked you where you're from?

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN gestures offstage and THE TENTH PERSON WHO ASKED YOU WHERE YOU'RE FROM enters. THEY assume positions as if they have been in conversation for a few moments.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

Oh, I'm from Atlanta.

THE TENTH PERSON WHO ASKED YOU WHERE YOU'RE FROM

Oh, that's cool, but like, where are you from?

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

(Aside)

Maybe it's the seventh class where only two or three other students are different. Or, perhaps, it's when someone confides in you:

THE TENTH PERSON WHO ASKED YOU WHERE YOU'RE FROM

(Bellowing with laughter)

I'm glad that there are finally fewer Chinese students on campus. Do you remember a few years ago? Oh my god! You get it right; you can speak English!

THE TENTH PERSON WHO ASKED YOU WHERE YOU'RE FROM exits.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

Regardless, whatever moment, it'll happen. As the accumulated hairline fractures finally start to collapse, turning into a chasm, Upham's practiced facade becomes too heavy to hold, killing the public service smile. The desire to constantly translate yourself into something that's not other is suddenly not worth it. The mask slips, not dramatically, but in a quiet withdrawal. The cost of

the masquerade just becomes too high. And their response?

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN stands back to receive a line of unnamed Miami University students entering from off stage. Each student files past CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN to exit off the opposite side of the stage.

UNNAMED STUDENT 1

I was just asking a question.

UNNAMED STUDENT 2

It's not that big of a deal.

UNNAMED STUDENT 3

Just chill out.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN
(*Now, alone on stage*)

And, in the end, nothing will change– it's just another day at Upham Hall.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN starts walking, past the Miami University Seal and through the academic quad.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

What you won't realize, after four years of saying "it's just another day," is that something did change. Unbeknownst to you, calluses have formed, amassed into a cruel jadedness, invisible until needed most. The meritocracy? Promises of inclusion and a commitment to diversity? You realize these were nothing but empty promises, all to bolster the ethos of an institution indifferent to you all along, with Upham Hall simply acting as its tempting mirage. All in the hopes of securing one more admission, one more plus for the board of trustees.

While the institution may tout its commitment to diversity, when confronted with uncomfortable lived realities of students, the response is often a shrugged dismissal, demanding silence. While there are great people, inevitably, when

the masquerade just becomes too high. And their response?

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While the institution may tout its commitment to diversity, when confronted with uncomfortable lived realities of students, the response is often a shrugged dismissal, demanding silence. While there are great people, inevitably, when

faced with adversity, the infrastructure that supports them will crumble. The cracked masquerade isn't just a personal unraveling, but a stark exposure of the gap between rhetoric and personal experience.

In that realization, a strange kind of clarity emerges. The disillusionment turns into a pragmatic understanding as Upham Hall, and perhaps Miami University as a whole, is no longer viewed through the idealistic lens sold to you as a teen but for what it truly is—a series of spaces not built for you, a place that touts acceptance until the point of action. In its failure to be what you wanted it to be, Upham Hall became a crucible, forging a resilience you didn't know you possessed. While the constant need to perform within its walls was emotionally taxing, it snapped you out of a blissful ignorance.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN turns sharply, walking the Slant Walk, continuing past the brick facades of Miami's academic buildings.

CALEB SAEBYUK CHUN

This forced awakening, while jarring, becomes a catalyst. Your rose-tinted glasses lose their tint as the energy once spent maintaining the masquerade now redirects, fueling a sharper awareness of your reality. This newfound clarity, born from disappointment, ironically empowers you. The discomfort, while persistent, etches its lessons in your understanding of the world and your place within it.

In this sense, Upham Hall did fulfill what it originally promised you. It is a place where students become graduates, where memorable photos are captured, and where budding romances even turn to marriage— It is undeniably a place where dreams come true. Just one thing about this realization, these dreams and memories were never meant for you, and no matter what you do, they never will be.

END

Center for Performing Arts

Synopsis

Cassell Presnell reflects on Miami's Center for Performing Arts, a "singing" brick building, noting how its very structure seems imbued with the history of countless performances and the memories of its namesakes. Exploring its sunlit mirrored rooms adorned with vibrant performance photos and the vast, expectant theater with its partially set stage, she observes a homesick student finding solace in the building's quiet presence. The center, with its creaking beams and soft light, offers a sense of belonging, whispering reassurance and acting as a home for artistic expression and emotional resonance for all who enter its heavy doors.

Characters

Cassell Presnell: A junior at Miami University with a Creative Writing and Psychology double major and a minor in Rhetoric/Writing. She writes fiction and poetry, and loves all things fantasy, backstage theater, and true crime. After a 2026 graduation, Cassell hopes to pursue law school in her home state of South Carolina.



Presnell, C. (2025). Center For Performing Arts [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Center for Performing Arts

CASELL PRESNELL walks through the arts quad, coming upon a large, brick building. She turns to give a monologue reflecting upon the impact of the structure within the university.

CASELL PRESNELL

There is only one building on Miami's campus that sings. Its music lives not just in the air, but in the lofty walls, the frequented halls, and the very bones of its foundation. The panelled stairs seem to hum with memory, as if every note ever played there has soaked into its stone. Even the edge of the roof reaches like an ear toward the sky, catching whispers of harmony and scattering them like petals across the brick-laden quad. Even in silence, it all pulses with a quiet rhythm—a breath, a heartbeat, a cherished song yet to be written.

CASELL PRESNELL takes time to study the structure before her and admires the nature surrounding her.

CASELL PRESNELL

This building stands flat against a cluster of dogwood trees, their arm-like branches outstretched like dancers mid-pose, blossoms unfurling in a burst of stark white each spring. The petals glow, delicate and defiant, like snow caught in sunlight. A litter of leaves brushes over the porch, flipping gently in the wind, kissing pink cheeked students in greeting as they shuffle into the entryway. Beside the shimmering floor-to-ceiling windows stretching across this building's face, a plaque divulges the building's history: dancers floating gracefully on pointed toes, singers belting rousing melodies, and performers inhaling bouts of passion to bow deep into audience hearts. A cluster of lives remain, immortalized in stone: Governor Celeste, President Shriver, Director Sexton, and architect Hilmer.

The building ribbon fell in 1971. When its sister was erected in 1986, its entrance only a few yards away, Miami celebrated 57 years of art. Since, time has known 38 more years of starry eyes and over 250 showtimes, flitting with energetic smiles and soaring elation as we celebrate 95 years of art.

CASELL PRESNELL begins to walk to the building, feeling the urge to explore

what's within the walls. She comes upon the doors.

CASSELL PRESNELL

The doors are heavier than need be, as though the building is attempting to hold its breath, expectant of our arrival. Their weight resists like a hush before a crescendo, a held note trembling at the edge of release. Inside, the structure vibrates with life, saturated with the echoes of footsteps. Every surface—from the waist-high marble statues, to the counters stacked with playbills—hums faintly like a struck tuning fork, resonating with a life of its own.

CASSELL PRESNELL begins to walk through the different areas in the Center for Performing Arts.

Although nobody stands in the mirrored room, framed on all sides by windows exposing the world, several smiling faces loom from a string of vibrant photos on the walls. A group of students in capes, grasping wands, hug on their knees with their eyes squeezed shut. Another, two girls in pink and yellow hoop skirts prepare midair to land in the splits. And then, a boy in early 20th century overalls sits on his knees, center, and weeps into his hands. These moments are displayed within a museum of voices and symphonies, a glimpse of the past still in motion: stuck, yet fluid.

Sunlight splinters from the arched windows, pouring in with a softness that nearly feels sentient. It doesn't simply enter the room—it glides, lingers, and plays. It ricochets off the polished wood and brushed metal, tracing long, slow arcs across the floor as the day marches forward. This light is pale and tender, like the underside of a petal or the quiet before the refrain of a lullaby, draping itself across shoulders, curling around ankles, and warming fingertips. It simply embraces. This light brushes visitors in warmth, soaking into their skin and settling into their bones, friendly and insistent. It fills a quiet, home-shaped ache that newcomers often carry, as if it recognizes their longing and knows exactly how to answer it.

To the left, a door stands slightly ajar, as if extending a quiet invitation. Its plate displays: "Rows K- L- M." Beyond, lies the theater, vast in all its glory with four-hundred red-cushioned seats, worn from decades of hushed expectations, fan out in arched rows. The light is dim, as if the building is dozing off, awaiting the electric start of a new story. The air is thick with the echo of applause, of

whispered lines and held breaths, just distant enough to be unsure whether or not it's truly happening. Onstage, the great red curtains are parted just enough to reveal a half-built set of giant tree trunks with mossy paint— frozen in anticipation like a crowd moments before the climax of the show. The space seems to exhale softly. Even without music, even without motion, it all sings, quietly humming its history into the velvet and wood. Quivering with talent, both old and new, the building only awaits someone who will listen.

As CASSELL PRESNELL enters the theater, in a far back row, a homesick student sits with her hands crossed in her lap, shoulders curled inward like she's trying to take up as little space as possible in the grandiose room. She gazes at the empty stage, eyes tracing the outline of the wood panels lining the floor, watching dust swirl like peaceful storms under the overhead lights. The quiet wraps around her— soft, like a blanket tucked in by an invisible hand. Her chest aches with the familiar weight of missing, and suddenly, she wishes she were home.

Then, from somewhere in the hush, the building answers. Not with words, but with presence. With creaking beams and soft groans of wood stretching after a long day, as if the walls themselves are sighing in quiet understanding, a warmth begins to gather, slipping in through the crack of the door and is carried on the last rays of the sunset outside. The light seeps slowly across the floor, painting the entryway in gentle hues of amber and rose. The air thickens with the faintest whir, a reminder that, even in silence, the building hears her, and it has heard all who have come before her. In a gentleness that hardly brushes an ear, the building whispers not to worry, the student has found a home— not the same one she had left behind, but one that finds you when you need it the most.

CASSELL PRESNELL finds peace in her thoughts, and feels satisfied with her time in the building, she meanders back to the doors, stopping before exiting. She looks ahead to the entrance.

CASSELL PRESNELL

The Center For Performing Arts.

A voice offstage sings "Once Upon a December while another sings A Midsummer Night's Dream.

CASSELL PRESNELL walks through the doors and back out to the art quad. She begins her trek home, making sure to peak back at the Center for Performing Arts building one more time.

END

King Library

Synopsis

Djay Shorter takes us on a detailed tour through the halls of King Library. He brings us to all three floors and introduces us to the various services that are provided, along with the diverse collection of books. Djay takes us through the history of the building, along with how it continue to influence the students at Miami University on a daily basis. This act depicts a wonderful journey through a well-loved building filled with resources for every unique individual.

Characters

Denton (Djay) Shorter: A junior Professional Writing major and a Creative Writing minor.



Shorter, D. (2025). King Library [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- King Library

DJAY SHORTER

When talking about Oxford's attractions, one would be remiss not to mention one of the town's most eminent: King Library. Named for Edward King, who was in charge of Miami's libraries from 1922 to 1956, King Library is open from 7pm to 1am, resting at the pinnacle of Miami's historic academic quad. King Library, commonly known by students as "King", is host to a bevy of books and various other media, to suit just about any of the peruser's purposes. Boasting a wide array of tools and resources across three floors, the amenities of King Library are suitably traditional, while resting subtly on the cutting edge.

Originally, Miami University's dedicated undergraduate library has a history spanning 70 years. Thousands of books are available throughout King Library, including documents, music, films, and other resources, as has been the case for the past several decades. However, King has more than its original litany of writing to offer. Refurbished for the modern day, and actively being improved upon, the King Library has since incorporated fixtures to facilitate contemporary student lifestyles.

DJAY SHORTER

(seated at a study table on the first floor)

It's helpful to know the layout of King Library to effectively find what you're looking for. With three floors and a basement, works spanning the breadth of humanity are conveniently organized across the building's span. While this system can be learned, it is best practice to visit the first level, which has a spacious lobby wherein a staff member will be able to offer their assistance. Alternatively, patrons may use the various kiosks preceding the isles, to search the library's vast network.

DJAY SHORTER

(standing in a row of bookshelves)

Regardless of which college your majors and minors place you in, King Library can easily help you achieve and excel. Not only in the variety of academic works available, but in the valuable tools they offer.

King's unique archives include: the Walter Havighurst Special Collections, the Miami University Archives, and the Western College for Women Archives. Not only is King the sole home of these curated academic resources from alumni and incorporated universities, but host to countless other facilities that promote a student's success.

Through King's website, patrons can "check-out" access to both the Microsoft Office and the Adobe Suite, from their own devices. For a more specific statistical task, SSPS and Minitab are available through the library as well. Even if what you're looking for needs to be presented outside of a two-dimensional document, King Library bestows you with audio and visual editing tools. Further, if something physical needs to go digital, or vice-versa, King Library has the means to facilitate.

DJAY SHORTER

(sitting at one of the computers)

King Library's contemporary technology is not limited to software. A student can opt to make use of the various tools that the library boasts.

On the first floor, one will be greeted by the spacious Sidley Lounge, and further in, the Center for Information Management (CIM). A computer lab that affords high-end tools that enable your digital productions. The CIM can also help you with analog conversions. (Walks to the Howe Writing Center)

You will also find the Howe Writing Center. Stationed in King, here you can broaden your writing horizons with the speakers, projects, and tutors throughout. The writing assistance one can gain from immersing themselves in the HWC is invaluable.

(He walks up to the third floor)

Going up to the third floor, King Library hosts other facilities that help students realize their goals. The Center for Digital Scholarship. The MakerSpace is an experimental, hands-on laboratory that emphasizes the freedom of the student. With access to the laboratory, you can make use of the available laser cutters, engravers, 3d printers, and textile machines. These are only the cursory tools one has access to, as the lab is host to even more than this.

The audio/visual lab allows for an environment where use of the aforementioned AV editing tools are at their most effective. A dedicated podcasting station allows one to record in a sound-tailored space. Working with visuals, a backdrop, camera, and microphones all enable you to create whatever you need to put on the screen.

DJAY SHORTER walks down to the basement level, and stands near the exit facing King Cafe.

King Library is host to many study rooms. Students are free to make reservations in person or digitally at their leisure, for any reason that demands the tranquility of King's quietude. And for a break, one can go down to the lowest level, where King Cafe's refreshing coffee libates a student no matter how busy.

DJAY SHORTER walks outside King, leaving the troves of books and student resources behind him.

DJAY SHORTER

Dedicated to ensuring the help it can provide is always relevant, King Library continues to iterate with plans for the future. As part of a comprehensive plan, King Library finished the restructuring of its first floor, focusing on the Sidley Lounge.

King Library has since seen additions to the Inez Kamm Electronic Classroom, and the CIM. The first floor has also seen the introduction of a new conference area, with a new classroom and breakout room to accompany. Subsequent phases of renovation will continue to facilitate the proclivities of modern students, with changes such as freer access to the lounge, and a refitting of the windows.

King Library is Oxford's treasure trove of knowledge, and familiarizing yourself with the library's resources first-hand is more effective than any alternative. Whether one is a potential visitor to the town, or a Miami attendee, making the trip is worthwhile. If you're looking for a great way to realize your endeavors, visit King Library.

END

Arthur F. Conrad Formal Gardens

Synopsis

Throughout Elizabeth's trip to the Arthur F. Conrad Formal Gardens, she stands among a serene and historically significant campus landmark at Miami University, embodying the City Beautiful movement's integration of nature into urban life. Beyond its beauty, she details other facts along her brief stroll of the memorials she passes, including the rose garden donated by Gamma Phi Beta. This central oasis provides a tranquil escape for students and visitors, fostering relaxation, recreation, and lasting memories, thus remaining an integral part of the university's rich history.

Characters

Elizabeth Smith: A fifth year senior transfer student at Miami University, studying Professional Writing and Journalism. Her career ambitions are to pursue a position in either a journalism field or a position in a publishing company. She's a lifelong fan of classic literature and people watching, hence her chosen career paths.



Smith, E. (2025). Arthur F. Conrad Formal Gardens [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Conrad Gardens

ELIZABETH SMITH walks toward Conrad Gardens, taking in the astounding nature around her. She comes here at least 4 times a week, and has done plenty of research on her favorite part of the campus. While walking within the gardens, she reflects on her knowledge.

ELIZABETH SMITH

The Arthur F. Conrad Formal Gardens has been a serene staple of pure bliss for many students throughout the years. Located on Miami University's Oxford campus, the gardens were established in 1931 by Arthur F. Conrad, the university's groundskeeper with a passion for enhancing the campus's natural beauty. Since then, the gardens continue to create a picturesque and historically significant spot on campus. Over time, the gardens have become a symbol of the university's commitment to incorporating nature into everyday campus life. Also serving as a historical landmark, the gardens also play a role in the university's traditions.

Conrad began working at Miami in the 1920's, where he held a vision to create a space that provides a serene, tranquil environment for the university community. Influenced by the national City Beautiful movement during the late 19th and early 20th century, the movement addressed rapid urbanization and the industrialization of American cities by the integration of nature through parks, gardens, and tree-lined streets into urban areas. Through City Beautiful, the growing dreariness of industrialized cities and urban areas was counteracted with the passion of nature and the goal of uplifting the human spirit. Conrad's passion and dedication to beautify the campus has resulted in one of the most beloved spots on campus. Sitting near the center of the Oxford campus, the gardens host an array of carefully placed plants, pathways, koi ponds, flower beds, and stone archways. The meticulous planning of the gardens is a testament to Conrad's belief of the importance of nature in university life.

Though the beauty of Conrad Gardens is a significant aspect of Miami University, the garden holds important history. The remains of Robert Hamilton Bishop, the first president of Miami University, were moved to the gardens in 1959. Bishop had originally been buried in College Hill, Ohio, at Farmer's College—a precursor to Miami University. However, after the closure of Farmer's college, his remains were relocated to the Conrad Gardens in Oxford. This was a significant moment in Miami's history as it acknowledged the importance of Bishop's role in founding

the early years of the university. In his honor, a monument was placed in the gardens, known as the Bishop Memorial Stones. The Highland Pipes and Drums of Miami University helped bring the stones over from Scotland to the campus, honoring the school's past while embracing its future.

The gardens are also dedicated to honoring Miami alumni, faculty, and students who have passed away. The gardens have been home to many memorial services and tributes, marking the spot as a place of celebration and reflection. The tranquil atmosphere of the gardens provides a home for those seeking peace or the remembrance of a loved one.

Moreover, the gardens host a variety of ornamental flower beds, pathways, annual, and perennial plants. The rose garden is a beautiful feature of the gardens and was donated by the Beta Epsilon Chapter of Gamma Phi Beta sorority in 1974, in honor of their centennial. The rose garden hosts many events, particularly weddings, due to its romantic beauty and fragrance. The donation of the rose garden is another example of the community's enduring support of campus beautification. In the garden's total, there are around 30 types of annual flowers, 50 varieties of trees, a collection of shrubs and other plants. The garden's thoughtful design invites visitors to stay for a while, whether enjoying a book or strolling through the gardens. The gardens' open areas invite group activities and celebrations.

As an escape from the hustle and bustle of university life, many students flock to Conrad Gardens for a moment with nature. Students can be seen stacking hammocks in scattered clusters of trees around the garden, picnicing in the open areas, and playing harmless catch and release activities at the koi pond. The beauty of the gardens and its central location on campus gives visitors a place to gather; celebrate important events, share experiences, and create memories. The garden's careful design ensures everyone has a place to enjoy, without feeling crowded.

ELIZABETH SMITH begins her trek home, thinking about her time within the garden. As she walks home, she has her final thought about the gardens before stressing about future assignments. She will come back tomorrow.

ELIZABETH SMITH

The Arthur F. Conrad Formal Gardens is an integral part of the lives of students,

faculty, staff, and visitors of Miami University, as a cherished place of rest and relaxation. From its creation in 1931 to today, the gardens continue to reflect the university's commitment to the integration of nature and beauty into everyday life. Whether you're a student seeking a place to de-stress or a couple tying the knot, the Conrad Gardens are a valuable place for everyone to enjoy and make memories.

END

Hefner Museum of Natural History By Emma Estridge

Author Byline

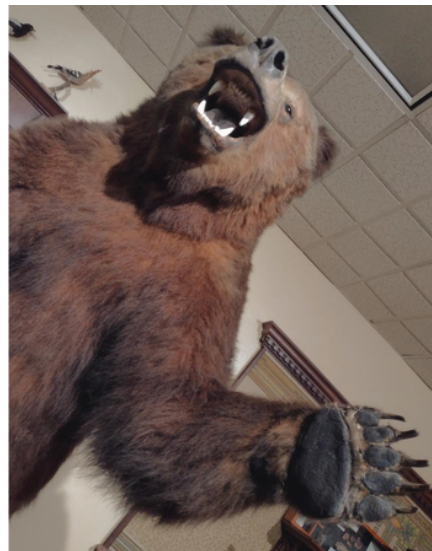
Emma Estridge is a second year creative writing and professional writing double major and Spanish minor. She is also the Co-Editor in Chief for Inkings Arts and Letters. She hopes to one day work as a developmental editor (or, in some strange and ideal future, become the most famous author of all time).

Synopsis

Startled by a taxidermized bear, Dorothy McBride, tasked with a biodiversity paper she admittedly paid little attention to, breaks into the Hefner Museum of Natural History seeking information. Inside, she's unnerved by the piped-in recordings of animal sounds and the silent, staring taxidermized creatures. She misidentifies animals and finds the static displays unsettling, until suddenly fleeing the museum in a panic, abandoning her research in a horrifying, unexplained twist.

Characters

Dorothy McBride is a student at Miami University who is a master procrastinator and her emotions easily overcrowd her ability to complete school work. Although studying the field of animal biology and currently researching taxidermy, she is easily startled by dead animals.



Estridge, E. (2025). Hefner Museum of Natural History [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Upham Hall Museum

DOROTHY MCBRIDE creeps down the hall of Upham, startling upon seeing a taxidermied bear. Then, she stands erect and turns toward the audience.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

The first thing I noticed was the bear. Of course the first thing I noticed was the bear because noticing a bear—standing on its back legs, paws raised, and mouth open in a roar—is human 101. If you don’t notice a bear like that, you won’t be around to notice things much longer. *(soft chuckle)* If I didn’t know any better, I’d think the bear was about to drop to all fours and chase me down the long Upham hallway. That was, if I didn’t know any better.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE turns away from the audience and resumes her spy-like slink down the hall.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

(While creeping)

I’ve always wondered how people get into taxidermy. I’m too squeamish to ever look into it—those are not images I’d ever be able to get out of my head. What calls someone to that profession? Or is it more of a hobby? And what calls someone to a museum of taxidermy, scratch that, a museum of natural history?

DOROTHY MCBRIDE, again pauses to speak to the audience—this time before a door.

What called me, at least, was a paper. It was about biodiversity or the importance of local ecosystems or something that sounded sort of like that. I, maybe, was not paying the most attention in class. Which is to say that I was playing The New York Times’ puzzles on my laptop. I’d check the details later.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

(Turning from the audience, attempting to pick a lock and speaking to herself)

I just needed to get in, copy some information down, and get out.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE successfully unlocks the door and opens up the notes app

on her phone before walking inside. There are birds chirping somewhere inside.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

(Again turning to the audience)

I wondered if they had any live animals in the museum too?

DOROTHY MCBRIDE turns from the audience, swinging her head around looking for an enclosure of some kind. She glances at the ceiling to see if a poor bird had flown in and gotten stuck. The bird chirps again, high-pitched and tinny. It doesn't sound right. It's a recording, playing from somewhere in the ceiling. She shudders. She doesn't like the piped in sounds. It makes her feel like she isn't alone.

To her left, is a capital "I" shaped cabinet with bones lined across the top of the nearest horizontal section. They form a long vertebra, with slightly curved ribs running along its length.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

(Looking at skeleton but speaking to audience)

I didn't know enough about anatomy or animals to recognize what I was looking at, but, if I had to put money on it, I'd say it was some kind of marine creature. Maybe a whale?... A dolphin?... A shark?... Do sharks even have bones?

DOROTHY MCBRIDE glances at a placard of some kind that explains what creature had a spine the length of her entire body, but ultimately ignores it, turning to the audience.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

I wasn't there to learn about marine creatures that probably weren't sharks. What I needed had to be more local.

Hanging above the shelf were half a dozen ducks and geese, their wings spread to mimic flight. Three penguins of varying heights, arranged small, medium, and large stood on top of the vertical section of the cabinet. The smallest and largest penguins looked blankly forward, while the middle sized penguin looked up at the larger one, like it was waiting on the answer to a question, from its

larger kin. Over on the furthest horizontal section, were some herons or cranes or something. All that mattered was that they had long necks, long beaks, and long legs.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

(To audience, gesturing at birds)

These kinds of birds always give me the creeps. They seem to know more than they let on.

The biggest bird's neck is coiled back, ready to strike into the heart of a fish swimming at its feet. Except, of course, there is no water, nor fish, nor thought behind its eyes. DOROTHY MCBRIDE looks away. She returns to the bear.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

(Reading the placard in front of the bear)

Kodiak bear. Huh. I didn't know that was a kind of bear. In my mind, bears come in three types: polar, panda, and grizzly.

To the Kodiak's right, Emma's left, is a slightly smaller bear standing on its back legs. It looks less threatening than the first and more curious instead. To the smaller bear's left, Emma's right, is a coyote and something that looks like a coyote but bigger and all white.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

(To audience)

Probably a wolf.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE snaps a picture with her phone as a frog croaking noise plays from the ceiling.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

(to herself)

I could write about bears for my paper.

VOICE
(Offstage)

Kodiak bears only live in Alaska and northern Canada.

The museum starts getting on DOROTHY MCBRIDE's nerves as she has this lingering feeling that she is being watched. The animal noises, seemingly played at random, make her jump each time one breaks the silence. The sounds are so realistic, DOROTHY MCBRIDE expects a frog to jump past her feet or a bird to swoop past her head.

Some big cats lounge on the right side of the museum, watching DOROTHY MCBRIDE move around the room, lazily stalking their prey. A peacock stands on a shelf above them. Its tail feathers were closed at its side.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE
(to audience)

I would've arranged them all fanned out and pretty, but maybe that would take up too much space or something. Still seems like an awful waste to me.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE walks away, shaking her head, as if she were some kind of expert on birds. She enters a semi-separate room to the left called the Hall of Ungulates, whatever that means. It is a vaguely circular room with two rams standing proudly in the center. The rest of the wall lined with the mounted heads of various deer, antelopes, moose, and elk.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE
(To audience)

Growing up in Ohio, I've had seen my fair share of stag heads and antlers hanging from walls, but I had never before seen a deer displayed with its head, torso, and two front legs out of the wall, like it was just phasing through.

DOROTHY MCBRIDE

A water bison and a buffalo head hang by themselves on the left. There is something sad in their sideways glances. There is also a rhino head, not mounted on the wall, but sitting up on the floor. Its head pointed toward the ceiling; its

severed neck was on the ground. Somehow, that is what creeped her out the most. DOROTHY MCBRIDE creeps toward it, crouching down slightly. Her fingers inches from its leathery skin.

RHINOCEROS HEAD
(loud, human-like, pained)

EEEEEEEEAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRGGGGGGUUUUUUUHHHHHHH

DOROTHY MCBRIDE bolts from the room, past the bears, the coyote, the geese, and the whale bones. She doesn't dare to look back to check if the bear is chasing after her.

END

Kumler Chapel

Synopsis

Emma Henderson finds a unique charm in Kumler Chapel, a Gothic structure on Miami's Western Campus reminiscent of a French church. She appreciates its warm, wood-filled interior, especially the balcony view, and is captivated by the Romanesque stained glass windows honoring Biblical women and the arts and sciences of the former Western College for Women. Despite its age, Emma notes the chapel's continued vibrancy as a venue for weddings, concerts, and student events, its grounds alive with activity throughout the changing seasons.

Characters

Emma Henderson: A sophomore at Miami University. She is majoring in linguistics and professional writing with minors in creative writing and English literature. After college, she hopes to edit fiction books.



Henderson, E. (2025). Kumler Chapel [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Kumler Chapel

A swinging, rickety bridge leads from the manicured lawns of the main Miami campus over a creek and into the pond-ridden, tree-filled woods of Western. The stone crossing tower of Kumler Chapel, rises over the hillside. Perched precariously at the top of the hill, the side of the building is covered by trees, but the windows poke out like little eyes between their trunks. Built between 1917–1918 by architect Thomas Hastings for the Western College for Women, Kumler Chapel, with its Transitional Gothic style has become an aesthetic fixture of Western Campus.

EMMA HENDERSON

Kumler Chapel was originally dedicated on November 10th, 1916 by sisters Anna Kumler Wright and Ella Kumler McKelvy, both alumnae of the Western College for Women. They built it in honor of their parents, Reverend Jeremiah Prophet Elias Kumler and Abbie Goulding Kumler. The chapel replaced an older chapel on Western campus. Construction on the building began in 1917, but met an abrupt halt at 4:20 PM on February 26th, 1918, when the building's iconic tower suddenly crumbled and collapsed.

The tower was rebuilt and construction resumed in June of that year, and it was finally completed in September of 1918. November 28th, 1918 became Kumler Chapel's official Dedication Day, where the site was declared completed and a piece of ivy from nearby Peabody Hall was attached to the east side of Kumler. The chapel was originally used for church services, baccalaureates, and convocation for the Western College for Women.

EMMA HENDERSON

Hastings' inspiration for the chapel's design came from a church called Église-Saint-Pierre in Bazoches-au-Houlme, Orne, Normandy in France. The church dates back to the 9th century, and looks nearly identical to Kumler Chapel.

The exterior of Kumler was built with gray fieldstone, a naturally-occurring stone collected from the surface of fields. It is laid in a fishbone pattern similar to Église-Saint-Pierre. From a bird's eye view, the chapel is in the shape of a Latin cross. It has a steep slate roof. Surrounded by the trees and greenery of Western campus and coupled with the close proximity of the serene Freedom Summer '64

memorial amphitheater, it seems like the kind of place they'd film movies at. There are several dark wooden doors set into the sides of the building, begging passing college students to go in and explore.

EMMA HENDERSON opens the chapel doors and enters.

in contrast to the cold gray exterior of the building, the inside whispers warmth. The building is only one story, but there is a balcony. The balcony is my favorite vantage point to view the chapel in its entirety, though the journey up to it isn't the most desirable. The stairs to it are hidden in the shadows just inside the front door. There are no lights, and the steps are barely wide enough for a foot. I try not to think about how many spiders hide in the corners.

EMMA HENDERSON

When I go to Kumler, I like to stand in the balcony, to look up, to look down. There is wood everywhere in the chapel. Between the doors and the front of the church are rows of bare wooden pews, enough to seat 235 people. The floorboards creak underfoot with each step when you walk across them. From the balcony, you get a good view of the ceiling, too: dark wood constructed into soaring arches with heavy beams, chandeliers hanging intermittently along it with lights that look like burning candles. The ceiling always reminds me of the belly of a viking ship, flipped over and sat on top of the church, enclosed under the sloping roof.

The pulpit and choir seating are nestled into the rounded end of the chapel, and to the left is the grand organ. The original organ was built in 1918, but after a steam leak and subsequent damage, nothing was played on it for 30 years. While there is a new organ, some of the original pipework remains, and the new organ incorporates some of the vintage sounds. On the wall behind the choir, five stained glass windows are set into the wall, perhaps the greatest beauty of the entire chapel.

EMMA HENDERSON

(Standing in front of a window, gesturing)

The style of the windows dates back to the Romanesque period: Gothic pointed arches with an absence of tracery. Three of the five windows behind the choir depict Biblical symbols, focusing on women of the Bible.

EMMA HENDERSON

The center one depicts Christ with Mary, Martha, and Mary Magdalene below him and an inscription that reads “But His teaching Christ brought the meaning of true womanhood to every woman of every nation and every home.” This window was dedicated by the Kumler sisters to their father.

EMMA HENDERSON gestures to her left.

EMMA HENDERSON

The western window represents the Old Testament, showing the Prophetess Deborah with her listeners. It was dedicated to the sisters’ grandfather, Elias Kumler.

EMMA HENDERSON gestures to her right.

EMMA HENDERSON

The eastern window represents the New Testament and displays love expressed through Christ. This one was dedicated to their mother. The other two windows focus on the women of the Western College, depicting the arts and sciences.

EMMA HENDERSON gestures across the church.

EMMA HENDERSON

Opposite the organ, the Tillinghast Window is situated in the west transept. Previously a fixture in the library of the old Alumnae Hall, it won a gold medal in 1893 at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Other memorial windows line the sides of the chapel, looking over the pews.

EMMA HENDERSON walks out the side door of the chapel, towards Western College Drive with Kumler Chapel standing proudly behind her.

EMMA HENDERSON

Today, Kumler Chapel is used as a venue for various events, such as weddings,

special church services, and concerts. Ceremonies for Miami's student organizations and Greek life are held there as well. Though the fuse box is filled with cobwebs and the piano sits unplayed most days, waiting patiently in the corner, people swarm around the grounds in every season. In the spring, girls in white dresses swirl around the outside of the building, heels dipping into the wet, muddy grass. In the fall, the spirit of Halloween fills the halls, spooky stories told from the pulpit echoing from wall to wall. And in the winter, it is a place for choir concerts, with the dim glow of candlelight and the hum of choral music as the snow starts to fall outside.

END

Bachelor Preserve

Synopsis

What do you do as a college student that isn't ready to head back to your dorm for the night? Head to the nature preserve! Fay Smith and her friends tell the story of how to get to this enchanted piece of land, along with things you can do once you arrive. There are several walking trails, hidden nature and wildlife, and lots of mysterious noises to investigate. This trail is perfect for a nighttime adventure, as long as you aren't scared of what's within the woods.

Characters

Fay Smith: A creative writing and professional writing double major with a film studies minor. When she graduates she will pursue writing in any regard, but one day hopes to become an author.



Smith, F. (2025). Bachelor Preserve [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Bachelor Preserve

A group of college students is hanging out and laughing, walking along their tree-lined campus.

FAYE SMITH

It's late, but you're having too much fun with your new college friends and none of you want to go back to your dorm just yet; what is a group of college students to do? Head on down to the local nature preserve that doesn't have a closing time! For twenty years Dr. Joseph M. Bachelor worked at Miami University, all the while he purchased land around the campus. When he died in 1974 he dictated that 416 acres of that land would be given to the university, which turned it into the Bachelor Wildlife and Game Reserve we know today. The land hosts around seventeen miles of hiking, three trails loaded with various terrain and creative bridges, while also connecting to many of the other nature trails located around campus. As college students, Bachelor Preserve became the site for my friends and I's favorite hobby: night hiking.

FAYE SMITH and the other students turn into a parking lot.

FAYE SMITH

The parking lot is easy to miss, past the stables and down a tiny down-hill turnoff right after a bridge, we passed it many times until it became a staple of our nighttime adventures. Next to it is a large sports field, perfect for watching a full solar eclipse from. Near the entrance to the park is a map of the available trails, and occasionally, a port-a-potty nearby for those who need it.

FAYE SMITH

(Standing at trailhead)

The first and easiest trail you'll find is the Bachelor Preserve East Loop, the one my friends and I spent the most of our time on. It begins at the first fork in the road, one path continues forward while a second one composed of concrete stepping stones beckons across the Harkers Run creek. With a flashlight, they're easy to cross in the dark, though they can be treacherous after rain or snow; it's the last jump to land that is the most difficult because after rain, the creek swells and the gap can become much larger than before.

Once after a rainy weekend, my friends and I discovered that the water was too high and the gap was too far to attempt a jump. Luckily, some logs had become lodged between the stones and the land and we were able to cross that way, though it was a slippery endeavor.

THE STUDENTS continue down a path, through clusters of trees and fallen brush.

FAYE SMITH

The trail then leads up a hill dotted with thin trees and past a few fields. Along the way, you also pass a few fenced-in patches of woods that are part of a study involving deer and their grazing habits, along with the growth of invasive plants. Here, the hiking is a light, uphill trek that leads to another fork in the road. To the right is a small looping trail that leads right back to the fork, to the left continues the East Loop. Unfortunately, in the dark when you're busy talking with friends, it's easy to take the wrong turn. On many of our hikes we found ourselves inexplicably in the middle of bushes and undergrowth that ended just above our heads, and oddly out from under the cover of trees, all the while an unseen generator filled the air with an ominous hum. Every single time we turned around.

THE SAME STUDENTS, noticeably younger, navigate the East Loop trail together – discussing Miami's 2023 rivalry win over the University of Cincinnati.

FAYE SMITH

On our last hike before the winter hit during the fall semester of 2023, we had just passed this trail divide heading further down the East Loop when three of us heard it—a growl off in the bushes. It was like a scene from a movie, the three of us freezing in our tracks while the fourth kept going on as if he'd heard nothing. We whispered to him to get back, didn't he hear it? Hear what? The bobcat of course. Needless to say, we booked it out of the woods that night.

THE STUDENTS continue down the trail to a stretch of coniferous forest. Halfway down this stretch of trail, the forest around changes significantly. The many maples, filling the rest of the forest, fade away and start to resemble less of a deciduous forest, and instead more of a coniferous one.

Moss lines the path, but only for a short time. This natural diversity is what leads many nature classes to take their students there for hands-on learning, to see examples of plants in their natural environment.

The East Loop trail peaks in a large pool of water, the Bachelor Pond, with the trail continuing all around and branching off into multiple other paths to take. At night, the pond is impossible to see across, but there is a bench to sit on. There's a shorter trail that connects from a gravel parking lot from which the pond is easier to access, and makes for a nice quick hike and an easy place to get wood photos.

FAYE SMITH

Oftentimes at night we would turn back, but in the day we'd continue forward. The loop continues on a quick downward path with a slippery patch beneath a pine tree, the needles making the quick downward slope a falling hazard, and goes on to a dramatic section. Where the trail was smooth and mostly consistent before, this section has many ups and downs, along with a few plank bridges to cross, but the biggest one comes where the trail crosses back over Harker's Run. A suspension bridge, perfect for scaring your friends on, spans the creek's width and must be mounted via a steep set of stairs resembling a ladder more than a real stairway. Once on it feel free to jump at random, just remember if you can do it to your friends, they can do it to you.

FAYE SMITH and THE OTHER STUDENTS are about to finish their walk as they enter the last stretch of the East Loop.

FAYE SMITH

The last stretch is a pleasant, easy hike back along the creek spanning a little over a quarter of a mile. It connects back to the initial trail split and leads back to the parking lot, where surely, by now there's nothing left to do but head home. Don't worry, it'll be here the next night, and the one after that. Explore the big open field on the other side of the entrance, check out the DeWitt cabin along the paved path leading in, explore the other trails in the woods. No matter what you do, make the most of it, and enjoy the outdoors while you're at Miami University.

END

Kofenya Coffee

Synopsis

Kofenya is housed in one of the oldest building in Oxford, OH. There is so much history that fills it's falls, along with the tasteful scent of delicious coffee. Kai Green takes us on an adventure to Kofenya, by documenting a day within the coffeeshop. Kai observes the details of the small room, along with giving us a taste of the wonderful menu.

Characters

Kai Green is a senior Professional Writing major with double minors in Creative Writing and Business Management. In their free time, Kai is one of the Co-Editors-in-Chief for Happy Captive Magazine and a member of Phi Chi Theta, a business fraternity. They enjoy hiking in the woods, rock climbing, and writing fantasy fiction short stories. After graduation, Kai is moving to California to pursue a career in Sales Management with PepsiCo. A fun fact about them is that they have a cat named Lumi. She's a menace to society.



Green, K. (2025). Kofenya Interior [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Kofenya

KAI GREEN

(Standing outside Kofenya)

Kofenya stands as one of the oldest buildings in Oxford, Ohio. It was constructed in 1900 at the turn of the century, and boasted one of Oxford's first businesses: horse stables. In the 1970s, the building was converted into a hardware store and operated until it went out of business. The cafe we know today was bought in 2004, renovated, and officially opened as Kofenya. Its storied history is seen in the photographs that dot the interior walls of the coffee shop and through the old wood flooring.

KAI GREEN

Springtime in Oxford is filled with basic Midwest weather: unpredictable winds, rain, and the occasional sunny, 70° day. Today, Mother Nature has decided on sideways rain and twenty-mile-an-hour winds that threaten to topple you as you hurry down the cement sidewalk.

The red and blue Open sign beckons. Kai ducks beneath the overhang, prying the coffee shop's door open to escape the weather. It's comfortably warm in the cafe and the smell of ground coffee, fresh pastries, and old wood permeates the air.

.

KAI GREEN

There are fewer people here today, understandable with the weather outside the way it is.

Kai scans the room, looking for an empty table to drop their book bag, and spots one in the front corner of the room. It's a two-person table. One seat for Kai. One for their bag. They smile and weave through the other tables, some filled with people, some not, to get to theirs. Once they've placed their bag down, it's time to head up to the counter to order.

KAI GREEN

The menu has changed recently, new spring flavors replacing the old winter ones. That's one of my favorite things about this place—there's always something new to try.

THE BARISTA greets KAI warmly, and KAI takes a second to look through the menu.

KAI GREEN

The options can be a bit overwhelming sometimes..

(Aside)

Brewed coffee? No, don't need the extra caffeine right now. Cold brew? Same as before. Hot chocolate? Could be yummy, but too sweet for my current mood. Tea? Huh. Tea could work.

KAI GREEN

(Browsing the tea menu, noting the multiple flavors)

English Breakfast, Earl Gray, Peppermint, and Green Tea. Wait, Peppermint might be the one.

THE BARISTA waits patiently for KAI GREEN to decide, and they finally come up with a 16-ounce cup of hot peppermint tea, a chocolate croissant, and a piece of avocado toast. THE BARISTA hands KAI GREEN their croissant, mentioning that it can be heated up in the microwave to the right of the counter. THE BARISTA rings KAI GREEN up, and the machine beeps when they tap their credit card.

BARISTA

Your order will be out in a few minutes

THE BARISTA turns away to make Kai's drink.

KAI GREEN

Thank you!

Deciding not to heat their pastry, KAI moves back across the room to the table, the old wood flooring creaking lightly with each step.

KAI GREEN

Most tables are within viewing distance of the counter, so when your drink is ready, you can see the barista set it out. They also have a sugar and creamer station with all the fixings, straws, and lids.

KAI GREEN's tea gets set out and they grab it. The smell of peppermint is potent, and KAI GREEN sets the cup down next to the sugars to grab a packet or two. The cafe doesn't have the 2% milk set out.

KAI GREEN

(to the barista)

Do you have 2% milk?

The BARISTA grabs the milk. Once the drink is made up, KAI GREEN takes it to the table, and as they sit down, the avocado toast is announced.

KAI GREEN

One last trip to the counter, and then you can enjoy your snack.

KAI GREEN arranges the food on the table to make room for a computer and iPad. Scrounging around in their bag, KAI GREEN pulls out an Apple Pencil and noise-canceling headphones. KAI GREEN waits to put on the headphones, content to listen to the indie and pop music mashups on the cafe's speakers and the buzz of conversations around the room.

Time slows as people enter and exit the cafe. Two women, college students by the look of their stuffed backpacks and Miami University sweatshirts, type ardently at their computers, occasionally giggling at a sparsely interchanged word or joke. They sip at their drinks, and snippets of conversation about some sorority event they will attend over the weekend can be heard. An older man reads through a stack of papers. His hand moves to fix the glasses perched on the edge of his nose, and then he sips his drink, one of the smaller mugs with a design on the top of the coffee.

KAI GREEN's stomach grumbles, pulling them from people-watching, as they begin to cut up the avocado toast before them. The toast crunches beneath the knife, covered in avocado and microgreens. Some sort of seasoning is sprinkled on top of the spread. It adds a bit of zing to the whole bite. KAI GREEN hums, savoring the bite, then reaches for the headphones.

KAI GREEN

You might as well organize a playlist or work on something creative while I eat. The cafe is a haven, a creativity booster, and I always come out of it feeling accomplished, whether I wrote something for my creative hobbies or finished a homework assignment.

KAI finishes eating, shuffles an indie pop study playlist, pulls up their iPad, and reviews a list of assignments.

KAI GREEN

I could probably finish two or three of these in the next few hours, let's pull up the first one and get started.

Time passes quickly, as they jot down notes or scribble reminders for themselves. People move in and out of the cafe. The thunderstorm outside worsens, and the thunder sounds through their headphones. KAI GREEN takes a moment to admire the storm.

KAI GREEN

The rain always brings a fresh start, and the flowers around campus, mostly multi-colored tulips, begin to sprout in the spring.

With this in mind, they continue to work, keeping an eye on the rain, so when it lightens up, they can make a break for their car parked behind the shop.

A little while later, the rain lessens, and KAI quickly packs up their supplies, placing their plate and tea mug in the dirty dish bin by the counter, before walking to the door. Bracing for the wind and rain, KAI GREEN pushes out the door into the spring weather. The cafe that has become Kai's creative haven bids them farewell until the next time.

KAI GREEN

(walking out of the front door, turning to face Kofenya)

See you soon, Kofenya.

KAI GREEN

(to the audience)

Kofenya is a wonderful place to stop by at any time of the day. If you need a pick-me-up or just a place to relax between errands, the cafe provides a welcoming atmosphere with seating of every type: booths, chairs, sofas, and picnic-style benches. You will feel right at home amongst the crowd, and the bar staff are kind and helpful. Whether you are a permanent resident, a student, or a visitor, Kofenya has something for everyone.

END

Upham Hall 180

Synopsis

Kathryn Keeley guides us through Upham Hall 180, the central hub for Miami University's anthropology labs, showcasing the distinct learning environments within. In 180A, she highlights discussions on sociocultural intricacies through various media. In 180B, Kathryn points out the primate specimens used to explore human evolution and the unique opportunities offered, including primate field research and the Primatology Club. Finally, in 180C, Kathryn describes the hands-on archaeology work with artifacts and the Collections Management group's innovative use of 3D technology. Through Kathryn's tour, Upham Hall 180 emerges as the vibrant heart of Miami's anthropology programs.

Characters

Kathryn Keeley: A senior student studying Anthropology and Professional Writing. After graduation, she plans to spend her summer studying primate vocalizations in the Amazon Rainforest. In her free time, she is a member of the Miami University Equestrian Team, enjoys spending time in nature, and listening to music. Her favorite flavor of ice cream is Moose Tracks.



Keeley, K. (2025). Upham Hall 180 [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene-Upham Hall 180

The center of all anthropology labs. Split into three separate rooms, each space is distinct in subject and practice, while seeking to instill a broader perspective in all Miami University students. 180A, 180B, and 180C bustle with life and opportunity entirely unique to the Department of Anthropology.

KATHRYN KEELEY

First, let's explore 180A, the first room you encounter after walking into the labs' central space. Here, you can find cultural and linguistic anthropological lab sessions taking place, wherein students discuss various media, such as ethnographies, documentaries, and even forms of popular media, like songs and films. Students and professors engage in back and forth discussion and analysis in order to further our comprehension and appreciation of the complex sociocultural intricacies of our world. Developing a holistic understanding of our environment is an increasingly important skill that can help our students navigate the ever-changing and evolving world.

KATHRYN KEELEY walks into the next room, UPH 180B.

KATHRYN KEELEY

Our second stop is at 180B, the biological anthropology lab. The atmosphere here is immediately different—primate specimens fill the cabinets, line the walls, and can often be seen atop the lab stations. Each week, students in the introductory course learn first about primate variation which then leads to human evolution—following physical differences through primate anatomy reveals much about humanity's past and closest relatives. These specimens speak volumes about human evolution, adaptation, and our interconnectedness with the primate lineage.

KATHRYN KEELEY begins picking up various skulls and inspecting them, tossing them over her shoulder and letting them crack on the ground after momentarily glancing at them.

KATHRYN KEELEY

This is one of the largest courses in the Department of Anthropology—as it fulfills a biology requirement. Students from a wide range of majors take this course to

avoid the standard courses offered by the Biology Department. Once students arrive, they meet Dr. Kelsey Ellis and the number of academic opportunities she offers.

Every semester, she takes on a number of Undergraduate Assistants for this introductory course, allowing previous students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience instructing courses and managing labs. Such experience is extremely valuable, especially for students interested in furthering their education. Additionally, Dr. Ellis takes a small number of students interested in primatology to the field with her every summer, allowing them to gain field experience in primate observation and study. This allows students to develop their own research project which they manage entirely independently, save for the guidance Dr. Ellis offers. Spending the summer studying primates in the Amazon rainforest is an opportunity few undergraduate students will ever get to experience, but here at Miami University, the first step to doing so is just inside this room. 180B is also the home of the Miami University Primatology Club—members meet biweekly to discuss primatological areas of interest, and the club organizes events such as trips to the Cincinnati Zoo, as well as attending the Midwest Primate Interest Group's annual meeting each Fall Semester and the Academic Association of Biological Anthropologists annual meeting each Spring Semester. These conferences are a great opportunity for members to socialize with graduate students and researchers working in their own fields of interest. Along with networking, students also have the chance to present any undergraduate research projects of their own.

KATHRYN KEELEY moves onward, to the third and final anthropology lab. She begins moving about the room and talking, inspecting every object she encounters.

KATHRYN KEELEY

The third and final room we encounter is 180C, the archaeological lab. Artifacts cover the counters, and students can be seen taking measurements and recording data during class. All the courses that meet here are taught by Dr. Jeb Card, who keeps courses fun, yet engaging. A couple of the courses you will find in here include the foundational archaeological course, which introduces students to basic the methods and practices of archaeology, as well as introducing students to the study of artifacts. Another course would be the archaeological practicum, where students gain hands-on experience with

excavation as they conduct a dig of their own behind McGuffey. Then, they complete an analysis of the artifacts collected from the site, gaining skills on dating and analyzing artifacts. The Department of Anthropology has over 12,000 artifacts, most of which originate from North and South America, within their collection. Though a good amount of these artifacts can be found in 180C, the rest are stored in the lower level of Upham Hall. Anthropology majors interested in artifacts can join Dr. Card's Anthropological Collections Management group, a small number of students that meet weekly to catalog, restore, and analyze artifacts. Additionally, members of the management team work with 3D scanners to create 3D images of our artifact collection which are then made available online. Members of the team also work with 3D printers to print either copies of our own collection or copies of artifacts from other universities or museums.

KATHRYN KEELEY walks back out to the hallway.

KATHRYN KEELEY

Upham Hall 180 serves as more than just a physical space for learning; it symbolizes the heart and soul of the anthropology experience at Miami University. The diverse activities and specialized instruction offered within rooms 180A, 180B, and 180C equip students not only with theoretical knowledge but also with practical skills essential for future academic and professional success. Whether your interests lie in exploring diverse cultures and languages, understanding biological evolution and primatology, or uncovering the hidden stories of past civilizations through archaeology, Upham Hall 180 provides unparalleled opportunities for growth, discovery, and scholarly engagement. We invite you to immerse yourself fully in these labs, embrace their unique offerings, and become part of our vibrant anthropology community at Miami University.

END

Hawks Landing

Synopsis

Hawks Landing is an apartment complex located just over a mile away from campus. Although a hike from the academic buildings, Hawks landing offers irresistible amenities, including a luxurious pool and fitness center. Kayla Angus gives us a personal tour of the apartments and certainly promotes the aura of the location.

Characters

Kayla Angus: A second year student at Miami University with a double major in Strategic Communication and Professional Writing, and a minor in Creative Writing. She is a current poetry and prose editor for The Femellektual publication on campus.



Angus, K. (2025). Hawks Landing [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Hawks Landing

KAYLA ANGUS, Full House-esque, comes out from a welcoming apartment door wearing a beaming smile, destined to sell.

KAYLA ANGUS

Are you searching for an apartment in Oxford? One of the many options is Hawk's Landing: a preferred off-campus housing commitment for Miami students. Located on Brown Road, the complex is just over a mile away from the campus and is easily accessible by the U4 bus route.

KAYLA ANGUS, beaming with pride, struts through the lobby, gesturing to all of its amenities.

KAYLA ANGUS

Constructed in 1994, this modern apartment complex provides one to four bedroom housing for students. Each apartment has a kitchen with granite countertops, a washer and dryer, and a communal living room. Rooms have locks, but the central living area is designed to encourage a sense of community while still respecting privacy. The lease also includes access to a 24-hour fitness center and printer, swimming pool and hot tub, basketball and volleyball courts, and a central dog park. Apartments are allowed pets with a small upcharge to accommodate the pet.

KAYLA ANGUS

Being one of the further complexes from campus, Hawk's Landing provides a rather calm environment, and is somewhat secluded. This creates a relaxed, peaceful atmosphere, with friendly relations and few disturbances at night. The complex also occasionally organizes community events such as free breakfast or a taco bar, encouraging resident interaction and comfortability.

KAYLA ANGUS, driving, pulls into a parking spot and rolls down her driver's side window to speak to the audience.

KAYLA ANGUS

While Hawk's Landing provides ample parking for its residents, it is also within walking distance to all the relevant Oxford amenities such as grocery stores, restaurants, and coffee shops. It is close to everything, but still enough distance away to feel private. The U4 bus route passes through the area at frequent intervals to enable those without cars to move about the town.

KAYLA throws a tennis ball for a perfect-looking golden retriever.

KAYLA ANGUS

Central to the complex is a large dog park enclosed by a chain fence. This greenspace effectively promotes community, as this pet-friendly residency houses many dogs. While certainly practical, the park also provides a natural meeting place for the residents and pets alike to socialize and get acquainted.

KAYLA walks a wide path between buildings at Hawk's landing.

KAYLA ANGUS

The general layout of Hawk's Landing mirrors the atmosphere of the dog park. There is a large amount of open space between buildings, complemented by winding paths and the occasional bench to sit on.

KAYLA, bursting out of the couch cushions of a Hawk's landing apartment, while a scrawny student on a nearby chair plays video games.

KAYLA ANGUS

(Out of breath)

While it is easy to promote Hawk's Landing on paper, its true character can be found through the voices of its residents. For instance, according to the Hawk's Landing official website, 98.8% rate the property five stars in almost every aspect (Parking, Noise, Construction, Grounds, Maintenance, Staff). Many have specifically praised the staff for their attentiveness, efficiency, and willingness to respond to any maintenance issues, as well as their general approachability. The staff seem genuinely invested with the welfare of the residents, only furthering the complex's peaceful nature.

KAYLA ANGUS, now standing in the apartment, continues speaking like nothing out of the ordinary happened.

KAYLA ANGUS

Reviewers also commend the layout of the complex for fostering a community spirit while still providing peace. The private units allow for quiet study time or relaxation, while communal areas encourage socialization and interaction.

KAYLA, bursting out of the door of a washing machine, continues talking about Hawk's Landing compared to other facilities.

KAYLA ANGUS

Hawk's Landing offers a balance of facilities, convenient location, and a community spirit. It has a more contemporary feel when compared to other apartment complexes that were built in the years prior. They may not provide the same pet-friendly atmosphere or modern convenience that can be found in Hawk's Landing.

KAYLA ANGUS is now walking through a weirdly empty dog park.

KAYLA ANGUS

While some housing options prioritize affordability over amenities, Hawk's Landing offers a variety of benefits that justify its pricing. The fitness center, pool, and outdoor spaces combined with spacious apartments make Hawk's Landing more than just a place to sleep. The dog park in particular also sets it apart from other student housing, such as Campus Commons or The Verge. For those who prefer a quieter environment, Hawk's Landing provides that luxury as well. While other complexes may be busier, Hawk's Landing offers a peaceful alternative with an emphasis on community.

KAYLA ANGUS opens the door to an apartment and begins walking through, continuing her speech while interrupting a birthday party.

KAYLA ANGUS

While Hawk's Landing may appeal to a large variety of residents, its features make it an especially excellent choice for upperclassmen who want to establish their independence.

The apartment complex provides the perfect environment for residents who want to experience independent living away from campus, while still enjoying peace and quiet. Residents find everyday comfort through the fully furnished housing, in-unit laundry service, and high-quality kitchen facilities, as well as 24-hour amenities that support an active, healthy, and social lifestyle.

KAYLA ANGUS, without stopping her speech, begins rifling through people's bathroom cabinets and drawers.

KAYLA ANGUS

Hawk's Landing stands out as an exceptional housing option for pet owners in the area. Pet ownership at the complex is encouraged, with each apartment allowing two pets at most. This, combined with the inclusion of the dog park creates a close-knit sub community, along with a convenient outlet for rowdy animals. The vast greenspaces and walking paths lend themselves to an extremely pet friendly lifestyle.

KAYLA ANGUS grabs a small dog at the apartment, and walks out the front door with it, seamlessly continuing her speech.

KAYLA ANGUS

Hawk's Landing demonstrates its commitment to community and functionality through its thoughtfully designed facilities. The location provides convenient access to campus, but maintains enough distance for residents to experience independence along with the privacy and personal community that comes with living on their own. The apartment complex provides students with stability during the whirlwind that is college, allowing a welcoming home to return to each night. The combination of its amenities, greenspaces, and community-focused design makes Hawk's Landing an ideal residential choice. Hawk's Landing stands as a residence worth highly considering for those who plan to make Oxford their future home.

END

Goggin Ice Center

Synopsis

Kylie Mullis showcases the Goggin Ice Center as a vibrant hub for Miami University and the Oxford community, home to nationally recognized hockey and synchronized skating teams, a thriving figure skating club, and extensive community programs like Learn to Skate and intramural broomball. Beyond sports, Goggin uniquely transforms into a graduation venue, symbolizing a full-circle moment for student-athletes. In essence, Kylie portrays Goggin as more than just an ice rink; it's a cornerstone of campus life, embodying Miami's spirit, community, and a place where athletic excellence and shared experiences converge.

Characters

Kylie Mullis: A senior undergraduate student studying English Literature, Professional Writing, and Creative Writing at Miami University. In her free time, she is President of the Miami Ice Skating Club, reads a variety of fiction and fantasy novels, and loves writing poetry and short stories. She has also been a consultant at Miami University's Howe Writing Center and the Howe Center for Business Writing for three years.



Mullis, K. (2025). Goggin Ice Center [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Goggin Ice Center

KYLIE MULLIS stands outside the front doors of the Goggin Ice Center, facing Oak street.

KYLIE MULLIS

The Goggin Ice Center, affectionately known as “Goggin,” opened its doors in 2006 as a state-of-the-art replacement for the original Goggin Ice Arena. Located on the Recreational Quad of Miami University’s campus, the facility honors Lloyd Goggin, a former school vice president who helped build the original arena. Today, Goggin is not just a home for the university’s nationally recognized ice hockey and synchronized skating teams—it’s also a space where students, athletes, and community members can gather for competition and camaraderie.

KYLIE MULLIS walks into Goggin, allowing the noises within to escape through the front door. She begins walking inside, past crowds of people waiting for a Miami University Hockey game to start.

KYLIE MULLIS

When you walk into Goggin, especially on game days, the energy is impossible to ignore. Students and locals crowd the lobby, dressed in red and white, ready to cheer on the RedHawks in the Steve “Coach” Cady Arena, also known as “A Pad.” Named for the founding coach of the hockey program, Cady was instrumental in the creation of this newer building. The arena seats up to 4,000 people, with a student section, general admission spots, club-level seating, opera suites, and private boxes. There’s even a dining area, known as the Club Lounge, for fans who want dinner with a view of the ice.

KYLIE MULLIS continues walking, now surrounded by figure skaters spinning around and jumping on stage.

KYLIE MULLIS

But not every day at Goggin is game day. On a typical afternoon, skaters from the Miami Ice Skating Club and the Varsity Synchronized Skating program take to “B Pad”—the second rink in the building, dedicated primarily to figure skating. Between them, the rinks represent four teams: the Intercollegiate Freestyle

Team, the Open Collegiate Synchronized Skating Team, the Miami University Synchronized Skating Senior Team, and the Collegiate Team. These athletes train year-round and compete at the highest levels, making the figure skating program one of the most decorated in Miami University's history.

The senior synchronized team has represented Team USA in international competitions for over two decades, winning medals at events like the ISU World Championships and the Leon Lurje Trophy. The collegiate team has claimed more national titles (23) than any other team in the country. The Open Collegiate team is the three-time and reigning Midwestern Sectional champion. The freestyle team is equally impressive, sending skaters to national collegiate finals each year and balancing academics with high-level training.

THE FIGURE SKATERS glide off stage as KYLIE MULLIS continues pacing on stage. KYLIE MULLIS is now surrounded by LITTLE KIDS falling over in helmets and playing in hockey pads.

KYLIE MULLIS

Outside of varsity and club-level skating, Goggin also offers a Learn to Skate program for all ages— serving as the starting point for many lifelong skaters and future competitors. Skating lessons run year-round and are open to students, faculty, and Oxford community members. The university also offers an Introduction to Ice Skating class, often taught by Goggin's own Skating Director, David Goodman. Additionally, ice shows and holiday exhibitions bring in families and alumni from all over.

KYLIE MULLIS now sits with a crowd of Miami University fans, cheering on hockey players who run on and off stage.

KYLIE MULLIS

One of the coolest things about Goggin (no pun intended) is how many people it brings together. Over 500 intramural teams sign up every year, with more than 8,000 students participating in hockey and broomball. The leagues are divided by skill—Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, and Elite—so whether you have played your whole life or can barely skate, there's a space for you. The same goes for broomball, which is a Miami University favorite and somehow just as competitive as any varsity sport.

KYLIE MULLIS continues talking as the hockey players running on/off stage swap their sticks out for brooms.

KYLIE MULLIS

If you have not heard of broomball, here's the lowdown: it's like hockey, but instead of skates, players wear tennis shoes, and instead of a puck, they use a ball. The game is fast, fun, and surprisingly intense, with teams sliding and scrambling across the ice to score goals. It doesn't use the entirety of the rink, instead, a divider is lowered to make the "arena" easier to navigate.

A crowd of much smaller hockey-playing children and teens replaces the hockey players and begins skating in front of the risers as KYLIE MULLIS and the fans cheer.

KYLIE MULLIS

Goggin is also home to the Jr. RedHawks youth program, Talawanda High School's varsity team, and a number of summer camps and clinics. In March 2013, it even hosted the USA Broomball National Championships, where Miami won the collegiate division and a Minneapolis team called Furious beat Barrie's Tavern of Syracuse 3-2 in double overtime.

KYLIE MULLIS walks out of a door, now outside the back of the large building.

KYLIE MULLIS

Goggin was designed by 360 Architecture and GBBN Architecture and took 104 weeks and over 41,000 man-hours to complete, making it the most labor-intensive project in Miami history. The center was constructed alongside a 500-car parking garage that ensured the facility would be one of the most accessible and spacious venues on campus.

When stepping inside the lobby of the building, you'll be immediately surrounded by Miami hockey history. Thirty-eight jerseys line the walls, each one honoring an alum who made it to the NHL. Nearby, large printed photos pay tribute to the six former RedHawks who went on to hoist the Stanley Cup. But centered amongst the red-and-white pride is a fun little secret—on one wall, a massive RedHawk logo proudly faces left. It's the only RedHawk on campus that

does.

KYLIE MULLIS has stepped back inside the back door and into Goggin, she continues talking in the lobby.

KYLIE MULLIS

At the end of each academic year, Goggin undergoes a transformation that adds yet another layer to its legacy. Both sheets of ice are melted to make way for the graduation ceremonies of several colleges, including the College of Creative Arts, the College of Engineering and Computing, and the College of Liberal Arts and Applied Science. This is particularly special for students from the hockey and skating teams, many of whom belong to these colleges. For them, graduating in the same space where they spent countless hours training and competing adds a profound sense of closure and pride to their accomplishments.

KYLIE MULLIS enters the conclusion of her monologue, centering herself on the stage.

KYLIE MULLIS

The Goggin Ice Center is more than just a venue—it's a tradition. From the excitement of cheering on the RedHawks to the thrill of skating with friends or trying broomball for the first time, Goggin embodies the heart of Miami University's spirit and community.

It represents the long practices, the early mornings, the thrill of making it to nationals, and the simple joy of skating under bright lights on a cold winter evening. It represents a championship-winning team and a local youth program. It represents everything listed here and more, cementing the facility as a symbol of excellence, passion, and pride.

As the site of countless moments, big and small, Goggin is truly a cornerstone of campus life. It brings together not just the Miami community, but the school's core values of "Love and Honor," with a touch of slapshot action and a whole lot of heart.

END

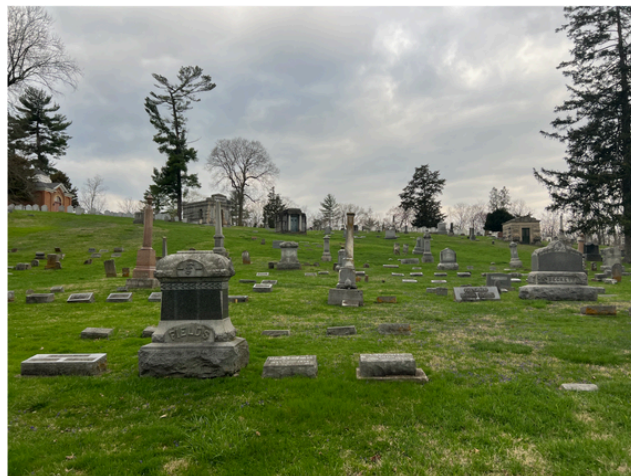
Oxford Cemetery

Synopsis

The Oxford Cemetery has an intricate history, beginning in Ancient Greece. In this act, Letha tells the story of her connection to cemeteries and how her mindset has shifted throughout her life. She leads us into her thoughts about heavy topics while also describing the details of the history of the Oxford Cemetery. Letha's beautiful story telling creates a perfect scene of her emotions and thoughtfully illuminate her memories.

Characters

Letha Blair: A Professional Writing major at Miami University with minors in Fashion and English Literature. Their plans after graduation are to take a gap year before attending graduate school for English Literature. A fun fact about them is that they are named after their great-great grandmother who was accused of witchcraft.



Blair, L. (2025). Oxford Cemetery [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Oxford Cemetery

LETHA BLAIR can be seen standing, pensive and alone, with the setting sun shining faintly behind them, looking at a large mausoleum. They turn to face the audience.

LETHA BLAIR

The story of the Oxford Cemetery actually begins in Ancient Greece with the birth of Lethe.

CHARACTERS act out LETHA BLAIR's words on stage

LETHA BLAIR

Lethe, the river in Hades that makes the dead forget their past lives, or Lethe, the Greek personification of oblivion, daughter of Eris, the Greek personification of strife. It is there in the cradle of the underworld that the story of the Oxford Cemetery really begins. I would know best after all, considering that my name, Letha, is derived from the very same Lethe of Greek myth and was gifted to me by a dead woman.

CHARACTERS come off stage, leaving LETHA BLAIR alone.

LETHA BLAIR

In addition to my lethal name, I have always felt a peculiar affection for cemeteries. Perhaps because one of my first memories takes place in one or, more accurately, in a line of cars on the street outside one.

LETHA BLAIR steps aside as VARIOUS CAST MEMBERS come onstage, reenacting a small funeral.

LETHA BLAIR

It was my great-grandmother's funeral, the first funeral of many I would go on to attend—at least one for every year I spend on Earth. My only memory of my great-grandmother before seeing her in a casket is of her limbs and fingers, gnarled like old trees by decades of physical labor, barrelling down a flight of

stairs. Seeing the blood ooze from a wound on her forehead, blood pooling under the paper-thin wrinkled skin of her knobby legs, sadness blooming on her face as a once vigorous farmer and moonshine smuggler is brought low by a measly staircase and the looming spectre of death.

I also remember being very perplexed by the idea of death while waiting in the car to attend the funeral. My parents being atheists further complicated the whole affair. What is a person supposed to do with death when there is no spiritual explanation for what happens to the soul when the body expires? I imagined my great-grandma's consciousness eternally trapped in the darkness of a wooden box, buried under endless inches of soil, unable to move her limbs, frozen inside her mind forever and all time. I did requisition god—whom I pictured as Zeus from Disney's Hercules at the time—to watch over her and ease her pain if there was such a thing as the afterlife. I was still not very convinced, but it was this first brush with death that would begin my love story with cemeteries. After that first encounter with a cemetery, I remember driving past others and imagining oily tentacles reaching up from the graves to the sky beckoning to me. Instead of being afraid, I felt a strange melancholy as if I was supposed to be amongst the number of the dead resting in a coffin in the dirt.

FUNERAL RE-ENACTORS come offstage, while LETHA BLAIR remains onstage. TWO GIRLS come on stage and are walking around the stage and miming conversation, silently, while sharing a string of earbuds.

LETHA BLAIR

As I got older, though, the cemeteries began to take on a less fantastical notion. Touring cemeteries became a thing with my little sister. Whenever things started to get bad at our house— and they often did— we would walk to the cemetery and spend hours moseying around, taking turns adding songs to the queue on my phone, before taking a preliminary pass by our house to make sure one of our parents' cars was gone. If they were both still at home, we would go back and walk a couple more laps on the cemetery path until the coast was clear.

TWO GIRLS run offstage, LETHA BLAIR remains.

LETHA BLAIR

So there were a lot of memorable cemeteries for me, and memories in

cemeteries, and general fascination with the concept of a cemetery, but what about THE cemetery, Oxford Cemetery? I might have exaggerated a bit when I *said that its story began in Ancient Greece.*

LETHA BLAIR comes center stage, pausing continuing their monologue.

LETHA BLAIR

The story of Oxford Cemetery, for me, actually began rather inconspicuously in the cab of a black 2015 GMC Canyon parked in Miami University's Ditmer Parking Lot, a commuter student parking lot, as I was a commuter student at the time. Class was just concluding over Zoom and I was asked to stay after by my professor who wanted to ask if I was okay.

LETHA BLAIR moves side stage as a YOUNGER LETHA and PROFESSOR come onstage, reenacting a Zoom session.

LETHA BLAIR

It wasn't something I had really considered before— my okayness. I was living a particularly unmiraculous life. An hour drive to the university and an hour drive back home each night, soundtracked by The Smiths' album *Strangeways, Here We Come*.

Strangeways, Here We Come begins playing softly in the background.

LETHA BLAIR

(CONTINUED)

Work every Tuesday and Thursday morning before class, closing shifts Friday and Saturday, open to close on Sundays. Homework on my lunch breaks. It seemed as though I was living the most okay life to ever take place, yet, when asked if I was, I began to hysterically sob. As it was happening, I thought it was funny to be crying in my car while a person miles away watched me sob on a computer screen. But it was there, on a Zoom call in a university parking lot, that my life was ended by a Miami University English Department Faculty with one sentence:

PROFESSOR

What you're experiencing sounds like domestic violence.

LETHA BLAIR

And I did the only sensible thing you can do when a life has ended. I went to a cemetery—the closest one being Oxford Cemetery.

YOUNG LETHA BLAIR and PROFESSOR come offstage, LETHA BLAIR remains. The audience is brought back to the cemetery, but LETHA BLAIR has remained in the cemetery throughout the monologue.

LETHA BLAIR

Now, you would think that being told you might be a victim of domestic violence by one of your professors would be the really life-changing part of that chain of events, but it wasn't. It wasn't until I had walked through the black metal gates of the cemetery and past the plaque reading "Oxford Cemetery Est. 1855" that the gravity of the situation really struck me. It was on the paved path of Oxford Cemetery—barely wide enough to fit my truck—amidst the tall spires of the ornate gravestones that I ceased to be a normal person as I had been and became a person adjacent to being a victim of domestic violence. I still struggle with calling myself a victim of domestic violence or thinking about myself in that way because what I experienced doesn't feel real enough to be worthy of such a title. Still, the framework with which I had been living my life had been completely obliterated and, as I had been prone to do since I was a child, I turned to the cemetery for solace.

Over the following year, as I moved out of my domestic-violence-adjacent situation, I began to visit Oxford Cemetery with increasing frequency. Perhaps with even more frequency than any of my other favorite cemeteries. Every time that I began to feel insane or like the circumstances of my life were too intense to bear, I would drive to Pepper Park, park my car, and walk up the hill to Oxford Cemetery. No matter the level of bone-reverberating emotional distress I was experiencing, walking through the gates of Oxford Cemetery and feeling the air would almost instantly balance my mind and settle my soul. And despite being in the company of the dead, I found that being alive was just a little bit more bearable.

LETHA BLAIR walks out of the cemetery, off stage.

END

Hall Auditorium

Synopsis

Known on campus as a large auditorium meant for large events and shows, the story Hall Auditorium is retold by Liz and her almost supernatural experiences with the building. After leaving her phone behind the locked glass doors one night, Liz gets the chance to explore the building in the eeriness of the night. She becomes obsessed with the vibe of the place, and takes us along for the emotional ride.

Characters

Liz Stevens: A second year student at Miami University with majors in creative writing, professional writing, and Spanish. She loves all things language, communication, writing, and anything that allows her to be creative.



Stevens, L. (2025). Hall Auditorium [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene- Hall Auditorium

LIZ STEVENS stands motionless in front of the looming doors of Hall Auditorium, shrouded by an almost surreal darkness.

LIZ STEVENS

The pavement beneath my feet was the only thing I was sure was real as I stood in the long, dark shadow stretching feet behind my head past the sidewalk and into the grass. A shadow that was leaving me cloaked in a darkness I knew I should step out of, should run from, should never look back on. And yet there I was, out in the middle of the night when it was nearly freezing with nothing but a light jacket and pajama pants on because I couldn't get that feeling out of my head. That beckoning voice I was sure was a sign I was going insane. I needed to get inside, I needed to see what lay beyond the walls of Hall Auditorium.

LIZ STEVENS continues to ponder the building, almost turning back.

LIZ STEVENS

(Continued)

The music students could say it was just a place to perform, nothing but a stage and a few rows of seats where parents and friends would crowd themselves to listen to the sound of finely tuned performances. But if that were true, if there was really nothing to it beyond pressing the keys of a piano or blowing into the mouthpiece of a flute, then why couldn't I get the place out of my head? Why, since the first day I'd walked past its soaring pillars and worn brick exterior, could I not get the place out of my head?

LIZ STEVENS lets out a heavy sigh as she stops her incessant pacing, eyes narrowing as she peers to those glass doors with their wooden frames and brass hardware, barely clear in the night. But she knew them, she knew them all too well, just like she knew every brick that built the outside of the place. LIZ runs a hand through her mess of hair, glancing down at the device she'd just pulled from her pocket.

LIZ STEVENS

I was typing before I could even understand what was happening, eyes wildly

scanning the screen until I'd found the number I needed. I pressed call without another thought, holding the device to my ear and not letting the building out of my sight the entire time.

DISPATCHER

(Offstage. The voice on the other end is bored and tired reminding Liz that she was making the call after midnight on a Wednesday)

Oxford Police Department, how can I help you?

LIZ STEVENS

Hi, I uh, I'm just calling about my phone.

Liz's throat tightens, a layer of sweat building on her skin as she buries her nails into the palm of her free hand.

LIZ STEVENS

I left it inside one of the academic buildings. Hall Auditorium?

As the name leaves her dry mouth, LIZ STEVENS waits for some sort of sign. An uptick in the dispatcher's voice, a shake as they speak, a trip over their words, anything at all. Something to tell her she isn't the only one who knows there is something different about the place.

DISPATCHER

You need it tonight?

It is the skeptical question Liz should have expected, but still somehow leaves her insides feeling like they're on fire. Like she was burning from the inside out.

LIZ STEVENS

Yeah, yeah, I'm sorry

LIZ STEVENS takes a moment to catch her breath.

LIZ STEVENS

I need to keep in contact with my family, grandma's in the hospital, and—

DISPATCHER

Yeah, we'll send someone over. Just wait by the door, they'll unlock it for ya.

LIZ STEVENS thanks the officer, quickly shoving her phone into a pocket in an effort to hide the device for when help arrives. She'd already concocted another story about borrowing a stranger's cell who was walking by.

LIZ STEVENS looks down at her feet that feel nearly buried in the cement by that point, but quickly lifts her head, knowing she can not afford to let her eyes leave the building for too long.

LIZ STEVENS begins her monologue to the building, as if it can hear her.

LIZ STEVENS

By that point, I'd stopped willing myself to think of anything but Hall. All the overdue assignments I had piling up, the papers I wasn't writing, or the quizzes I wasn't finishing because there was just something much more important. The laundry I wasn't doing and the showers I wasn't taking because I needed this, I needed to see what was behind those doors. Not in that auditorium, not in that lobby, but beneath the surface. Down that spiraling staircase, far from the Philosophy department or any concert being put on. It didn't matter if no one else could feel it, the heat that engulfed my body every time I passed this place.

Heavy footsteps pull LIZ STEVENS from her thoughts, causing her head to whip over her shoulder as she takes in the sight of a man raising an eyebrow at her. His eyes drag over Liz's unkempt figure, jaw moving lazily as he smacks on a piece of chewing gum.

CUSTODIAN

(Calling from a few feet away, like he couldn't stand the thought of being any closer to her)

You the one who called about the phone?

LIZ STEVENS nods, and the CUSTODIAN lets out a sigh as he approaches the door. LIZ STEVENS watches as THE CUSTODIAN pulls a set of keys from his pocket, flipping through the clanking metal until finally he reaches the thing that would bring LIZ STEVENS to the end of her torment. The end of agonizing hours spent wondering why me, why am I the one who can sense this dread when no one else can?

LIZ STEVENS listens to the creak of the door, waiting for the CUSTODIAN to step inside with her, but he simply nods ahead. He wants her to go in alone.

LIZ STEVENS draws in a deep breath as her feet roughly drag against the tile floor, her head nearly spinning as she turns in all directions. She can hear each beat of her heart as she takes in the sight of the cream walls, can feel her lungs emptying and refilling with air as she stares at the unlit light fixtures, all while sensing heat rising up from the surface of the ground below.

LIZ STEVENS allows her feet to guide her, not a second thought as to how long she might be gone or if she'd ever return at all. Within a minute, she stood at the mouth of a spiraling staircase, looking down into the never-ending abyss of darkness, willing herself forward.

In this early hour of the morning, she will uncover the true purpose of Hall Auditorium.

END

Hueston Woods

Synopsis

Hueston Woods State Park is a large wooded area located very close to campus. Along with its vast forest, the area has a lake and a gorgeous lodge to explore. In this act, Maddie gives us a piece of her experience within the park and explains how even a bored college kid can have a good time in the silence of the woods. Her recommendations are unique but provide interesting adventures for anyone who dares to try them.

Characters

Maddie Lee: A Human Capital Management Major with an English Minor. She plans on furthering her education by going to grad school to become an elementary school teacher. She enjoys taking long walks on sunny days.



Armstrong, D. (2011). Hueston Woods [Photograph]. Flickr.

EXT. HUESTON WOODS STATE PARK - MORNING

As the sun rises over the water, Hueston Woods is awash in sunlight. MADDIE comes onstage, ready to hit the outdoors, while patrons begin slowly walking around behind her, enjoying the park and its amenities.

MADDIE LEE

Before I begin storytelling and revealing the best ways one can explore the state park, I want to give a brief overview of the land itself. Hueston Woods State Park is a hilly, beautiful piece of land hidden within the flat fields of Oxford, Ohio. Only about a ten-minute drive from Miami University, the state park covers 3,000 acres of wooded area, including a shallow man-made lake for fishing, boating, and swimming. Within this serene nature area, there are several hiking paths fit for everyone. Those looking for a workout can hike multiple trails sprawling the steep hills throughout the park, while those looking for a peaceful stroll can enjoy the flat land near the lake. Those exploring the land can also witness the amazing wildlife that lives within the park. From white-tailed deer to wild turkeys, there are several creatures you can find wandering the hills of Hueston Woods. There is even a nature conservatory where visitors can admire the rescued wildlife native to the park. Bird watchers can spot resident and migratory species, and if you're lucky, you might even find a bald eagle.

MADDIE LEE

(While straying into other park goers paths, she talks while facing the audience)

Along with observing the stunning nature and diverse wildlife, visitors can experience several manufactured structures within the park. One of which is Hueston Woods Lodge. Built in 1968, the lodge is a rustic, wooden building that overlooks Acton Lake.

INT. HUESTON WOODS LODGE - DAY

Inside, there are cozy rooms, a large indoor pool, spacious conference rooms, and a restaurant. MADDIE walks around the lodge.

MADDIE LEE

Just down the road from the lodge, there is a small campground packed with camper spots and small cabins. Besides the various overnight stay options, you can also find other unique structures within the park.

The Hueston Woods Covered Bridge spans 108 feet and overlooks Four Mile Creek. It is filled with signatures and messages from past visitors, and connects to one of the hiking paths along the creek. Hueston Woods is the perfect location for those looking to explore the outdoors. There are so many adventures waiting for all visitors, some of which may be hiding in plain sight.

INT/EXT. HUESTON WOODS LODGE - DAY

MADDIE continues her stroll around the lodge, onto the deck, gesturing to features outside.

MADDIE LEE

Throughout my four years at Miami University, I have been able to find some of these secret activities, and now I would like to share them with you. As a homesick freshman, I was constantly looking for things to do to take my mind off my worries. As a result, my friends and I frequently went exploring in Oxford and the surrounding areas, allowing us to stumble upon Hueston Woods. We would drive around and take walks on the trails—the usual activities—until one day we stumbled upon the lodge. Of course, we went inside and began exploring the building. We immediately noticed that the doors to the indoor pool were unlocked and could be easily accessed by individuals who were not actually staying at the lodge. So we decided that we would come back the next day and attempt to swim in that pool. Thankfully, we were successful. We only went to that pool twice overall, but it was a unique experience that was extremely enjoyable. So if you are ever looking for a pool to hang out at, try Hueston Woods Lodge, but you didn't hear it from me.

On a less risky note, you can also swim in Acton Lake. While I have only done it once, there is a fairly clean beach where visitors can sunbathe or swim in the water. There is sand within shallow areas of the beach, so you would not be navigating much and rocks. While the residents of Oxford are usually crowding the area, you can typically find a spot to relax and take in the sunshine. I would recommend doing this on a hot day at the beginning of fall semester, or the end of spring semester, so unfortunately, swimming in the lake is out of commission for most of the year. Fortunately, there are other fun things to do at Hueston Woods besides swimming.

EXT. HUESTON WOODS LODGE - AFTERNOON

MADDIE sits beside a fire, roasting a s'more with materials she is taking from nearby, defenseless, children who run off in tears.

MADDIE LEE

On the same side of the lake, we found another interesting adventure. Cooking s'mores. At the lakeside park near the beach, there are a few fire pits. As bored sophomores, we decided we could try out these grills and attempt to cook s'mores over the heat. We didn't know that these grills required firewood, so most of our night was spent searching the park for pieces of wood and attempting to start the fire. Eventually, we got the fire started and cooked delicious s'mores while chatting and taking in the sunset illuminating the lake. So my advice is: if you want to attempt grilling out at the Hueston Woods beach, bring a couple pieces of firewood.

MADDIE sits down on a picnic blanket with a young couple, neglecting to realize they are clearly on a date, and continues her speech.

Hueston Woods is also a great place for dates. Whether you are taking a long walk in the woods, watching the sunset over Acton Lake, or even hammocking late at night, the park is well equipped with romantic activities.

The young couple gets up and leaves, leaving Maddie alone on the blanket, who begins to spread out and get comfortable.

MADDIE LEE

Over our four years in college, my friends and I were actually successful in all three of the mentioned activities, except the hammocking. When my roommate went hammocking in the woods, a car drove up, shined it's headlights into the hammock, and pretended to drive into them. While I think that was a once-in-a-lifetime event, be wary of crazy townies if you go hammocking at Hueston Woods. I'm sure there are other spots throughout the park that would be suitable for dates that we will unfortunately not have time to try out before graduation.

MADDIE gets up and begins dusting herself off, to face the audience one final time.

MADDIE LEE

While Hueston Woods is not necessarily on campus, it is still an exciting place to check out. I hope that after reading this, you will take my advice and try out some of these activities. And if you find even better ways to experience the wonders of Hueston Woods, make sure to spread the joy. When you go to school in a small town, sometimes you have to find interesting ways to have fun during the week (the weekend life is the only thing that keeps us going). Thankfully, a gorgeous state park is right down the road.

END

Silvoor Biological Sanctuary

Synopsis

On December 14th, Mandy walked into the Silvoor Biological Sanctuary and immediately felt a connection to small plot of untouched land. Even though she decided to explore the trails during the heart of winter, Mandy found solitude in the snow covered ground. She takes us through the details of her journey, beautifully describing the nature and persuading the reader to step into the stillness of the sanctuary.

Characters

Mandy Holiday: A senior at Miami University, double majoring in English: Professional Writing and Media & Communications. She works as the Student Communications Associate for the College of Engineering and Computing, where she puts her love for journalism to use. As she prepares to graduate in May 2025, she hopes to pursue a career in the publishing industry as a copywriter or marketer.



Holiday, M. (2025). Silvoor Biological Sanctuary [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

EXT. SILVOOR BIOLOGICAL SANCTUARY - MORNING

On December 14th, MANDY HOLLIDAY walked into the Silvoor Biological Sanctuary wearing a wool sweater and thick-soled boots that had seen better days. The ground was half-frozen, somewhere between crunchy and soggy, littered with dead, ice-laced leaves thawing at the edges. It was the kind of cold that doesn't look particularly threatening but still finds a way into your joints and fingertips, sneaking past every layer you thought was warm enough. A handful of other students had shown up for the honeysuckle removal— bundled up, tools in hand, a puff of fog billowing with every breath.

MANDY HOLLIDAY

Even in winter, the trail felt alive. I followed it past the first bend, loppers in hand, where the trees grow close together and the underbrush dips low. There was no snow, just the muted palette of late semester: bare branches, leaf litter, and a few lingering red berries too stubborn to drop. Even in the hush, you could hear the place breathing. The occasional crack of a twig. Bird wings flickering just out of view.

MANDY AND THE OTHER STUDENTS begin to scatter out, pacing about the sanctuary.

MANDY HOLLIDAY

Silvoor is small, only about 2.5 acres, but walking through it never feels brief. Dr. Robert Hefner and his wife, Ilo, spent years transforming what was once Oxford's town dump into a haven for native plant life. With time and care, Silvoor grew from a lot once littered with trash into a trail that brims with quiet beauty. In 1980, the Fitton family added more land to the space, with the promise that it would always remain part of the sanctuary. That area sits just behind a row of campus houses, where backyards descend right into the mouth of the trail. The moment you step down them, it feels like crossing a threshold. The stillness creeps up on you. Just a few steps in, and you feel miles away from everything.

That day, MANDY and her peers were clearing honeysuckle— specifically, Amur honeysuckle, an invasive shrub that pushes out native species by stealing sunlight and soil.

MANDY HOLLIDAY

I'd learned in my botany class how relentless that stuff can be. The job is simple: cut it as low to the ground as you can, and try to yank out the roots so it can't grow back. I picked a slope near the edge of the trail, where the branches tangled into each other like wire. Some bushes came free with a tug; others held firm, like they'd decided they belonged there.

There's a kind of meditative rhythm to it: kneel, cut, pull, step back, make room. You start to notice things once the brush is cleared—small trees you hadn't seen, patches of moss softening the ground, prints in the dirt from deer moving through earlier in the morning. The smell of exposed soil. The way the light shifts. It's the kind of work that feels repetitive, but not empty. You're removing something not to erase, but to make space. To give something else a shot at life.

Scene: Silver Biological Sanctuary - Late Afternoon

MANDY, alone, is seen walking around the sanctuary, transformed with yellow flowers all over the place.

MANDY HOLLIDAY

I didn't think much of it at the time beyond the task. But months later, I came back. It was early spring, late March maybe, and the same trail had transformed. Daffodils grew in bundles everywhere. They lined the path like a procession—bright and a little unruly. The trees still hadn't fully leafed out, so sunlight poured in freely, catching on every new sprout and petal. And it wasn't just daffodils. The wildflower garden—home to over sixty species—was beginning its show. The springtime special: mayapple, bloodroot, Virginia bluebells. Even Dutchman's breeches, their delicate white buds hanging like tiny laundry strung between stems.

MANDY HOLLIDAY

(As she continues walking about the sanctuary)

Some of them bloomed in the very places we'd cleared. Places where nothing had grown before—not because it couldn't, but because the honeysuckle had left no room. There's a lesson there, if you want to find it, about growth and what it really looks like. It's not always about adding more. Sometimes, it's about removing what no longer belongs.

Making room. Cutting something down not to destroy it, but to see what might grow in its absence. I think winter makes that easier to understand. It gives you the pause you need to see the scaffolding beneath everything else—the bones of the forest, the architecture of potential. I don't mean to romanticize the work, though. Cutting honeysuckle is cold, tiring, and repetitive. It leaves your hands raw and your legs scratched. But there's satisfaction in it—the good kind. The kind that makes you feel more like yourself afterward, like you've made something right even if no one was there to see it.

Silvoor isn't dramatic. It's not a national park or a vast, sweeping forest. It's a modest patch of reclaimed land behind a row of tiny homes. But it holds multitudes. You can walk it in twenty minutes and still come away with something new—an unfamiliar bird call, a glimpse of a fox at dusk, the sound of water moving over smooth rocks just out of sight. A sense of quiet that stays with you. It's the kind of place that doesn't ask for attention but rewards it anyway. And that feels rare.

MANDY HOLLIDAY

(Turning to face the audience)

I don't know what the trail will look like in another ten years. Maybe more daffodils. Maybe different birds. Maybe the honeysuckle finds its way back again, and someone else has to start over. That's the thing about sanctuaries: they aren't static. They're constantly negotiating with time, with weather, with whatever we bring into them. But for now, I think about the stretch of woods where I knelt in the frost and cleared space. I think about how it looked then—bare, tired—and how it looked later, blooming and unbothered. I think about how we get attached to what we can see, forgetting sometimes that it's the space in between that does the most work. We don't always get to witness the outcome. But sometimes we do. And when we do, it looks a lot like wildflowers.

END

Shriver Center

Synopsis

Shriver Center has been the heart of community engagement since it was opened in 1957. The old student center offers a variety of services for both students and residents of Oxford. Inside, Shriver holds a Mail and Package Center, several conference rooms, a catering service, a Starbucks and so much more. In this act, Mikayla walks us through the building and gives us a detailed tour of each unique service the building has to offer.

Characters

Mikayla Clinger (she/they): A current English Literature student at Miami University. She adores reading and writing just about every genre from neoclassical fantasy to dystopian horror. When not writing, Mikayla enjoys singing, talking with their family, exercising, and being out with their friends and partner.



Clinger, M. (2025). Shriver Center [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene: . Shriver Center

MIKAYLA CLINGER

Miami University's Shriver Center was opened in 1957 under its original name, the University Center, and was intended to act as the heart of community engagement. The Shriver Center is named after Phillip R. Shriver, who served as Miami University's president from 1965 to 1981. His leadership played a crucial role in shaping the modern identity of the university. Since then, it has undergone two major construction additions and a variety of smaller renovations. Campus population quickly outgrew the space that Shriver provided, prompting the construction of Armstrong Student Center.

Scene: Shriver Center

MIKAYLA CLINGER

Nowadays, Shriver is a bustling hub of activity, acting as the home to the Rinella Learning Center, Brick & Ivy Campus Store, Admissions Center, Miami Catering, Mail and Package Center, and many multi-purpose rooms available for event rental. It is located in a central part of campus, making it a convenient meeting point or spot to cool off on a hot day.

Scene: Rinella Learning Center

MIKAYLA CLINGER

(walking through the center)

Focused on academic support, the Rinella Learning Center offers tutoring and other methods of supplemental instruction in order to assist students in achieving their goals. Their staff consists of learning specialists and graduate students, ensuring that there is a person able to assist students with most topics. The tutors are even known to act as accountability partners if that's what their pupil finds most useful. The Rinella Learning Center also houses the testing center that may be used by students with registered disabilities. Students who qualify for testing accommodations are encouraged to use the Rinella testing center in order to lessen the stress and anxiety that comes with test taking, though there are policies and students must coordinate with their professors to schedule tests and exams.

Scene: Brick & Ivy

MIKAYLA CLINGER

As the first and only merchandise store on campus, Brick & Ivy is always teeming with new students and their families at the beginning of the year. Other than Miami swag, they also offer school supplies and act as the only book store in Oxford. Textbooks can be easily purchased through the Brick & Ivy website by entering the titles of the books you're looking for or by simply entering the names of the courses you're in. If a professor has submitted their required readings, the texts will be automatically added to your cart.

Scene: Brick and Ivy East Door

MIKAYLA CLINGER

Brick & Ivy can be accessed from the front of Shriver, through the East-facing door across the street from Armstrong, or from the back by going through Shriver Center's Starbucks. One of three Starbucks locations on campus. Brick & Ivy's wares rotate frequently throughout the year, so every time you enter the two-story shop you can expect to discover something new. One of the more interesting things that has been added this year is Miami's branded coffee, Miami Grind. It is used by all the dining halls, and now anyone can purchase it to have a taste of Miami at home too.

Scene: Miami University Office of Admissions

MIKAYLA CLINGER

(popping up from behind the front desk)

Other than handling prospective student applications, faculty of the Admissions Office at Miami University organize campus tours, schedule recruitment and outreach events, provide statistical information about our institution, and handle student orientation. Student tour guides and SOUL leaders are hired and trained through the Admissions Office. It is located on the first floor of Shriver, and is often the first indoor location prospective students see on campus. The welcoming environment of the center helps prospective students gain insight into what makes Miami unique.

Scene: Miami University Package Center

MIKAYLA CLINGER

(crawling out of a large package cubby)

Opening for use in 2017, this facility serves as a central location for students to receive and send mail and packages. With the increasing reliance on online shopping and shipping services, the Package Center plays a crucial role in ensuring that students have a reliable and efficient system for handling their deliveries. Before this addition to Shriver, students had to wait in long, slow lines to receive their mail. Equipped with secure storage, package lockers, and staffed service counters, it provides convenience and accessibility for students living on campus. Especially because the smart lockers are available 24/7.

Scene: Miami University Catering Facilities within Shriver Center

MIKAYLA CLINGER

(dressed as a chef, accidentally lit her sleeve on fire at the stove)

Miami's catering service operates mainly out of the kitchen located on the second floor of Shriver. They provide almost daily professional catering services for university events, meetings, and special occasions. Whether serving small gatherings or large conferences, Miami Catering offers a diverse menu featuring fresh, high-quality ingredients. From buffet-style meals to plated dinners and grab-and-go options, catering ensures that events held at the university are well-supported with excellent food and service. Miami Catering is a great resource for faculty, student organizations, and external guests looking to host events at Miami University. Not to mention it's one of the better paying student jobs on campus at 14 dollars an hour.

MIKAYLA turns to face the audience, still actively on fire but unfazed, while other kitchen workers collect the fire extinguishers to help her.

MIKAYLA CLINGER

Miami University's Shriver Center stands as a testament to the university's commitment to student engagement, academic success, and community-building. Through its tutoring options, event spaces, bookstore, and admission center, it plays a pivotal role in shaping the Miami experience.

MIKAYLA is doused in fire extinguisher foam.

A white, translucent curtain falls over the stage, obscuring MIKAYLA behind it.

MIKAYLA CLINGER (V.O.)

Whether as a space for learning, networking, or relaxation, the Shriver Center continues to be a cornerstone of campus life, reflecting Miami's dedication to providing a well-rounded and enriching environment for its students and visitors.

END

Bachelor Hall

Synopsis

Bachelor Hall is an old brick building that rests at the end of Spring Street. It has served as a home for Mathematics and English classes since it was built in 1978. In this act, Nick describes all of the exceptional qualities this building possess, along with the personal memories he has made as a student that spent a significant amount of time in its classrooms.

Characters

Nicholas Bermudez: A Professional Writing and Creative Writing double major. In addition to his undergraduate degree, he is pursuing a career in law. His favorite dessert is chocolate chip cookies, and his dream vacation is Milos, Greece.



Bermudez, N. (2025). Bachelor Hall [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene: Exterior of Bachelor Hall

NICK BERMUDEZ

Bachelor Hall, situated at the very end of the long-reaching Spring Street, its white-capped belltower is the first thing many students see on their daily commutes to campus. Built in 1978 and named after Harvard University graduate Joseph M. Bachelor, it served as the home of countless student's (doubtlessly) favorite subjects: English and Mathematics. With this in mind, Bachelor Hall may very well be like any other academic hall on campus—an insignificant building for a class that you woke up too early to attend or stayed up too late to work for. It is nothing to be paid particular attention to—and since the renovations began in 2024—this place of afterthoughts has been stripped to its bones like an empty insect's shell.

Nick points at the once bustling building, now wrapped with wire fences and red tarps, reminiscing on time spent there.

NICK BERMUDEZ

Here it is, Bachelor Hall. The memories that I have of this place have gone past any concept of ordinary, and those wonderful experiences live on in its walls. By the time that I graduate, I will not see how it has been transformed. I will probably not walk Bachelor's halls again for a very long time, and if I do, there will be no telling how it will have changed. So, I am writing this as a eulogy: to the place that I knew, to the people I have met, and to the warmth that I have known.

NICK BERMUDEZ (Flashback)

Bachelor Hall, as aforementioned, is dedicated to one Joseph M. Bachelor. A Miami undergraduate, he went on to earn an English Master's and Doctor's degree at the prestigious Harvard University, before returning some time later as an associate professor of English. After 17 years of innovative teaching (and exceptional enthusiasm regarding a presentation of Shakespeare), Bachelor was promoted to a Professor of English. He would retire in 1946 and died a year later, leaving his 400-acre farm to be used by Miami as the Bachelor Preserve, and cementing his legacy for years to come. By the time of 1979, Miami University held a dedication ceremony for the passed professor, and crowned the new communications building Bachelor in his honor.

Of course, I am sure there is no feasible way that Professor Bachelor could have seen what would come of his legacy. There ought to be more to tell, for a man that seemed so passionate for his craft, but I take comfort in the fact that his hall is not just a place for students to disregard. I know that my friends do not see it that way, at least—let's go to them now, and dig into the meat of my experiences.

Scene: Third Floor of Bachelor Hall

NICK BERMUDEZ (Aside)

When coming to Miami University, I had in my mind fanciful dreams of wearing a white doctor's coat, pressing forward with what I had long believed was my passion. Having wormed my way out of the primordial ooze of Intro to Bio, however, I faced down my personal twin titans of disaster: Chemistry and Physics I. I passed them, of course. But if my father was anything to model myself off of, it was that I needed far better than passing to go to medical school.

Questions of my true passions swam in my head daily, all as my Junior year was rapidly approaching. With little time to my name and few places to call home, I found the one thing that I knew I liked to do: write. I entered into the Association of Creative Writers as an anxious sophomore, and proceeded to spend the rest of my Tuesday and Thursday nights enshrined in the third floor of Bachelor.

Scene: Interior of Bachelor Hall

This was my introduction to Bachelor as a place, and not just a simple building. I don't think I can ever think of Bachelor Hall without going back to my days in the Association of Creative Writers. All of this, of course, was the precursor to my eventual change in major: I got far more

time in the building as a Professional/Creative Writing double major, frankly, than I ever asked for. In fact, there was one semester where most, if not all of my classes were in Bachelor. I would go down to the stuffy ground-floor classrooms for my morning workshop, then climb to the third floor for the Literary Workshop in the very same room I would have club in a few hours later.

A strange sensation, to say the least. I don't want to claim that I did not fall to flights of boredom in my classes during those times, or succumbed to drowsiness from a paper I spent too long writing for.

There were times where I would enter Bachelor Hall and dread seeing the white buildings peeking over the hilly roads of Spring Street, or find the ancient, stuffy classrooms too uncomfortable to pay attention in. For all of its charms and the wonderful memories I have had there with my friends in the ACW, Bachelor Hall is, at the end of the day, a hall.

But that doesn't mean it hasn't stuck with me. The frequency with which I visited that place, the mixture of coursework and camaraderie that helped me come out of my shell has fixed a unique association in my mind. Any other place at Miami, any other hall or situation, and I might have passed it over as unremarkable. In some ways, Bachelor has grown with me. I have come to know it as I grew in my own right as a student, and as I came to know the countless wonderful people who made a home there too. A very dear part of my college experience has been made in Bachelor, and by extension, Bachelor has been an experience in itself.

NICK BERMUDEZ (Aside)

Bachelor will never be the same as it was for me. If you get the same chance that I did to walk its halls, there's no telling if you'll find the same security and warmth that I felt while within it. All the same, though, if you're thinking of a place to host your club—or to find one to join—I cannot recommend this place enough. With any luck, you might just find the members of the ACW lurking on the third floor, caught in a storm of laughter and pen-scribbles. Give them a hello for me. With any luck, you might find Bachelor as a whole new home for yourself: just like I did.

Bagel and Deli

Synopsis

There are six intricate steps to get into the wall of fame at one of Oxford's most famous locations, Bagel and Deli. This popular breakfast spot offers a vast menu, filled with 96 different types of bagels. To combat the intimidation of the unique menu items, Bagel create the wall of fame. In this act, Olivia takes us through the details of the menu, along with the way in to the hall of fame.

Characters

Olivia Voelker: A junior at Miami majoring in creative writing and professional writing with minors in Spanish and political science. She dreams of one day attending law school. Outside of class, she can be found listening to music, reading, or spending time with friends. Her guilty pleasure is watching reality television and yelling at the people on screen as if they care what she has to say.



Voelker, O. (2025). Bagel and Deli [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene: Exterior of Bagel & Deli in Oxford, OH

OLIVIA VOELKER

(OLIVIA sits on the Bagel and Deli patio)

When adopting the goal to appear on one of Oxford's most famous locations' walls of fame, there are six steps that should not be taken lightly in order to accomplish this feat.

First, Know where you're going: In order to learn as much information as possible about Bagel & Deli—located at 119 East High St. Oxford, Ohio—you can talk to almost anyone in the small town about this highly recognizable establishment. Founded in 1975, it quickly gained popularity for transforming a well-known breakfast food into a cuisine consumed for not only breakfast, but lunch, dinner, late night snack, or even dessert. However, their menu, which has vastly expanded over the years, can come with some intimidation, causing people to retreat into the familiarity of what they get every time. To combat this, and to encourage the consumption of some of their less ordered menu items, the wall of fame challenge was created.

Scene: Interior of Bagel and Deli in Oxford, OH

OLIVIA VOELKER

(OLIVIA walks inside Bagel and Deli, standing next to a stack of menus to her right and a wall of frames to her left)

Second, Know what it is: Bagel & Deli has approximately 96 different bagel sandwiches on their menu, all of which are a variety of the different bagels (see 2a), spreads (2b), meats (2c), cheeses (2d), toppings (2e), and condiments. While this extensive menu does inevitably bring along a bit of intimidation, the step by step challenge of trying to conquer every combination that Bagel & Deli has to offer is one many attempt but few succeed at. So at this point, the question may arise: What is the motivation to complete such a feat? The answer lies in a coveted Bagel & Deli sweatshirt. Retailing for \$49.95, this piece of clothing can frequently be spotted on Miami University's campus, more likely than not being worn by a sleep-deprived undergraduate. If that is not enough motivation, upon the completion of the challenge, a Bagel & Deli employee will snap a picture of the freshly minted bagel all-timer. This picture will join the wall of fame, joining a select group of only 26 other participants who have succeeded throughout the company's fifty years of existence.

OLIVIA VOELKER

(A big band begins playing offstage as the Bagel and Deli ingredients form a stage-wide kickline, slowly progressing further and further on stage. Behind Olivia, actors dressed as comically large Bagel and Deli ingredients begin to dance behind her in the order she lists them, beginning with the different types of bagels. Each group of ingredients dances around the stage with their own personality.)

Banana nut, blueberry, bialy, jalapeno, combo/everything, egg, garlic, onion, plain, pumpernickel, raisin, sesame, sourdough, rye, tomato, whole wheat, and gluten free

(The spreads and schmears begin to dance on stage, following the various bagels.)

Plain cream cheese, veggie cream cheese, spinach cream cheese, and hummus

(the various proteins are coming up behind the spreads)

Turkey, ham, bacon, pepperoni, salami, sausage, meatball, roast beef, corned beef, and chicken salad

(Following the proteins, the cheeses dance onstage, each with their own spunky personality.)

American, Pepper Jack, Provolone, Swiss, Smoked Cheddar, and Colby

(After the cheeses, the vegetables jazzily dance on stage in ballroom style, dancing with wild abandon. They saunter and flip behind Olivia, creating a beautiful, colorful salad)

Lettuce, tomato, avocado, spinach, banana peppers, onion, cucumbers, green peppers, and pickles

(Behind the parade of dancing vegetables, crewmembers leap and bound onstage, ribbons dancing behind them)

Barbeque sauce, honey mustard, 1000 Island dressing, Italian dressing, mayonnaise, spicy brown mustard, hot sauce, pizza sauce, parmesan peppercorn, horseradish, oregano, cinnamon, peanut butter, jelly, salt, pepper, and butter

Scene: Ext. Bagel and Deli Oxford, OH

OLIVIA VOELKER

(OLIVIA hangs out the apartment window above Bagel and Deli)

Next Up, Live where it is: If one is attempting to have their picture on the iconic, maximalist wall of fame inside one of Oxford's most populated eateries, it is preferable that they live in Oxford, work in Oxford, or, ideally, both. This could include attending or teaching at Miami University, or generally residing in the surrounding area. Now, this might not seem like a necessity, but if one's goal is to consume all 96 of the bagels needed to have their picture on the wall, a residence, as well as family, friends, or colleagues, in the aforementioned 6.7 miles of land in southwest Ohio is preferred.

OLIVIA VOELKER

(OLIVIA looks below at patrons and toppings entering and exiting Bagel and Deli, all while theatrically dancing in a spectacular marriage of personality and cuisine.)

Fourth, Know who to go with: To accomplish eating over ninety bagels, it is highly recommended that the adventure be undertaken in the presence of good company. Not only will ego motivate one to continue their quest when they feel as though they can't look at, let alone eat another bagel, but the challenge will also allow for the strengthening of relationships. It is a well-known phenomenon that sharing a meal can greatly aid the development of human connection, and make the experience of gorging on bagels infinitely more enjoyable. It is possible that going with different people might invite a variety of orders, but it's also possible that one could hear multiple orders of the same thing. There's a fair chance that a Crunch and Munch bagel—their most popular order—which consists of turkey, cheddar, lettuce, tomato, honey mustard, parmesan peppercorn, and the customer's choice of Doritos. Regardless of the orders of any family or friends, or any temptation that may come to order the same thing as the last time, it is crucial to remain focused on the mission if one wants their picture among Bagel legends.

Fifth on my list, trust me on this one, have a stable source of income: This one may seem a bit out of place, but Bagel & Deli, though greatly beloved, is not known for their low prices. A singular bagel with nothing on it is sold at \$2.50; the various different combinations of toppings, meat, cheese, or condiments can cost up to \$10.75.

Prices will vary depending on what bagel is ordered, but it's reasonable to deduce that these small expenses will add up, and could be detrimental to one's finances if there is no proper source of income to fund bagel-buying habits.

Scene: Ext. Bagel and Deli

OLIVIA VOELKER

(OLIVIA, now seated on the big black bench outside below the Bagel and Deli front window, becomes the only figure onstage as the rest of the toppings dance off around her, left with slow music playing and tension building as she nears her first bite.)

Lastly, plan out your visits: It is not this writer's place to police the time of bagel consumption; however, it would be most beneficial to spread the visits out at different times of the day. Opening at 8:00 a.m. sharp every day and closing after most bars to catch those seeking a late night snack, it is recommended that if one is accepting this challenge, the times that the bagels are purchased should vary. This challenge in and of itself encourages people to employ variety as the spice of life, so why not add even more variation with the time of the day the bagels are consumed? That being said, it can be reasonably inferred that certain bagels will suit certain times of the day. When rolling out of bed for the first time at 11 a.m., a Sam's Sunrise might be your best bet (scrambled eggs and American cheese on an egg bagel). If one is taking a friend from back home to lunch in Oxford, an All-American (ham, American, lettuce, and mayo on a plain bagel) may suit your fancy. If a sweet bagel is what's being craved, a Cookie Monster (cream cheese, cinnamon, and a chocolate chip cookie on a blueberry bagel) could be the right fit. Whatever time is chosen, it rings true that to make that wall of fame, it is crucial to keep the flavor of variety alive in the quest.

(OLIVIA bites into the sandwich with her eyes closed, joyfully experiencing all the flavors coming together. The once quiet band, plays a triumphant finale offstage while the toppings, sauce ribbons, and other ingredients come back to dance all around the stage, in a complete melee. The ingredients and store patrons dance around Olivia like it's the greatest day of their lives as she euphorically consumes her bagel.)

END

CJ's Bar

Synopsis

Not only does Sophie explain her extensive family connections to Miami University, she tells us the story of her own personal connection to the beloved CJ's Bar. By walking us through her favorite memories in the bar, Sophie embodies the culture of CJ's, including illuminating the value of the merchandise.

Characters

Sophia DeVillez: A junior at Miami University double majoring in creative writing and professional writing as well as triple minoring in arts management, entrepreneurship, and literature. She plans to pursue a career in marketing and/or copyediting after college. She is currently attempting to publish her debut young adult fantasy novel.



DeVillez, S. (2025). CJ's Bar [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene: CJ's Bar, Upstairs

SOPHIE DEVILLEZ

(SOPHIE walks through the front door of CJ's, letting the sun come in from the alley behind her.)

I have an extensive family history when it comes to Miami University and Oxford itself. My grandpa was a professor of zoology and lived with my grandma in Oxford, who attended Miami for her associate's degree. Ever since, my uncle, three of my aunts, my parents, two of my cousins, my sister-in-law, my two brothers, and myself have gone to school here. My parents started their collegiate careers at Miami University in 1982. Because of my dad's upbringing, I too grew up with a great appreciation for Oxford. While I've heard many stories from my family over the years, a place that has always held my parents' hearts is CJ's Bar.

My dad, Joe DeVillez, started working at CJ's his sophomore year, when he was nineteen, serving only beer, as the law allowed this at the time. For the past few decades, the manager of CJ's has been a student, and my dad was the first one, giving him not only more responsibility, but also many stories to tell for years after.

Scene: Int. CJ's, Basement Mural

SOPHIE DEVILLEZ

One of the most well-known parts of this bar is the full-wall mural of its logo. I have always found it very entertaining that I am one of the very few to know the true story behind it. At the time, a lot of companies would hand out match boxes with their logos on them as a form of marketing.

CJ's did this as well, and one day, my dad gave one to my mom.

SOPHIE DEVILLEZ

My dad pointed at the logo and told my mom to paint it on the wall. The famous mural is still there to this day, where students are constantly writing their signatures all over it, marking their fun nights.

SOPHIE DEVILLEZ

One of the greatest memories I have of my college experience so far is of my twenty-first birthday when my brother came up to celebrate. The two of us went to CJ's and signed our names on the mural, later trying to convince the workers there to give us a discount on a sweatshirt due to our family history (time and time again, we have sadly failed at this). We sent the photo above to our parents, who were so thrilled we were together in a place that meant so much to them at our ages.

Scene: CJ's Bar, Upstairs

CJ's has always been a popular location in itself and is therefore a great spot for students to hang out with friends. Even the merchandise from the bar can be seen on students all over campus. My parents know this as well, which is what created what is now a core memory and embarrassing story for my siblings and I.

As shown in this photo, the first place my parents wanted to go one family weekend was CJ's. Something to know about my dad is he is ridiculously outgoing and can have absolutely no filter, which is a horrible combination when he, on top of this, wanted to show off his knowledge of the bar to the current workers. So you can imagine the reaction my brothers and I had when the first thing he did was go right up to the bouncer and ask:

JOE DEVILLEZ

(JOE addresses a generic college boy in a CJ's Staff t-shirt)

Hey, is CJ dead?

He and my mom then got into a deep conversation with them, trying to get free shirts out of their visit. When they failed, they bought some anyway. Long story short, it's always a unique experience when they come to campus.

SOPHIE DEVILLEZ

I often don't think people realize that CJ is a real person, as I have never heard him referred to as such, only the bar. However, according to my dad, CJ sounds like he's had a very interesting life.

He played football for Bo Schembechler, who went on to be arguably the most famous coach in Michigan history after his career at Miami. This caused my dad to hear a lot about what was happening with Miami's football team, as CJ's was also a popular spot for them.

My mom also had many incredible and memorable experiences, as she would go to CJs after classes to see my dad everyday. In fact, many of her friends also worked there, and when they could not be there, she would fill in for them. However, she was never actually paid, only given a pitcher of beer including the time she painted the mural.

She has so many entertaining stories, as CJ's appears to be where my parents and their friends spent most of their time. They are even able to tell me how they'd make even the smallest moments at this bar fun. One story that was mind blowing to me was when she told me about the last game ever played at Miami's old football field. Until recently, before the university took it away, the previous field's goal post hung in CJs for around thirty years. This is because at the last game ever played there, my mom and many others somehow pulled them down, marched to CJs with it, and put their signatures all over it.

Everywhere I go in Oxford, I am reminded of a story from my parent's experience at Miami. But CJ's is by far the most memorable place for them, truly highlighting the most sentimental and lighthearted moments from their time here. Whenever given the opportunity, I mention these stories so others can get a glimpse of Oxford in the 1980s, particularly what my parent's student life was like because I've never heard them say anything negative. They truly enjoyed the lifelong memories they made, which is something I have kept in mind throughout my time at Miami as I hope to do the same.

END

Slow Idaho

Synopsis

Slow Idaho is a quaint, yellow house located on East Walnut Street where Taylor Morgan and her roommates plan to live during their senior year of college. In this act, Taylor gives us a detailed tour through the house, pointing out areas of remembrance and significance. Also, Taylor dives into the history of the house and discusses the culture behind the boldly named houses that line the streets of Oxford.

Characters

Taylor Morgan: A junior at Miami University studying Strategic Communication and Professional Writing. She is both a blog writer and a layout designer for the publication UP Magazine and the Newsletter Editor for Miami University Dance Theatre. Aside from that, she is also the VP of Committees for her sorority Phi Mu Beta Eta and a member of Miami's PRSSA chapter.



Morgan, T. (2025). Slow Idaho [Photograph]. Author Owned Image.

Scene: Slow Idaho

TAYLOR MORGAN

(Standing in front of a pale yellow house, with a plaque titling it “Slow Idaho”)

In the bubble of Oxford, Ohio, thousands of students live in houses and apartments scattered throughout uptown and its various neighboring streets. These houses—or homes, rather—entertain some of Miami University’s richest traditions and student body cultures. One aspect that makes the college houses of Oxford stand out from other universities is a unique plaque and name attached to the front of each house. Throwing addresses out the window, the name of a home and the four walls holding it up seep into one. These names stand as an ode to the group of college students who first christened the house and bestowed a name upon it. In this case, each time the name “Slow Idaho” is yelled through an alley or stands as the answer to the question “where do you live?”, it represents so much more than the current group it houses.

Scene: Past, Present, Future

TAYLOR

(To the past, present, and future residents of Slow Idaho)

It has been 20 years since the house at 115 East Walnut Street was bought, painted a pale yellow, and named Slow Idaho. With some quick math, this means it has been called home by around 140 college students throughout the years; 20 odd groups of twenty-somethings who will always have a year of their college lives defined by Slow Idaho. So, I’m writing to let you all know that not much has changed around here; there are little pieces of all of you etched into the walls.

Scene: The Porch

TAYLOR

(walking up to the porch)

To start, the house is still yellow, and the front door remains a bright, firetruck red. On the warm days that live in the first weeks of fall semester and the last weeks of spring semester, there is almost a 100% guarantee that the front door will be propped open, an invitation to any and all passing by.

The front porch continues to exist as the first place of getaway when a house resident is feeling stressed, in need of some vitamin D and fresh air, or simply wants to enjoy the beloved porch swing; white painted wood with navy cushions, the porch swing is still hanging sturdy under the weight of endless morning chats and evening homework sessions.

Scene: The Living Room

(TAYLOR opens the door and walks into the living room)

After walking through the red front door, you'll look to your left and see a wall scattered with memories of the current residents. Posters that indicate where each of the current eight girls who live there are from, some Cleveland, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Columbus, to name a few. Every school year, a new couch, a new television set, a new rug, and new decor are moved into the Slow Idaho living room, and while the room's appearance may change, its purpose stays true as a place to come together.

The sentiment of never being alone at college proves to be one of the truest statements. College students will spend entire summers collecting furniture and decor for their bedrooms, just to spend 90% of their time at home in the living room. The living room of a college house is a host to weekly movie nights, parents getting to know each other on Miami's Family Weekend, hangouts, and the in-between moments where roommates get to simply exist together.

Scene: The Pink Kitchen

(TAYLOR walks into the kitchen)

Soon after moving past the living room, you'll be greeted by the one and only pastel pink painted kitchen. In some instance between Slow Idaho's conception and the current date, the single kitchen of this college home was painted an opaque light pink that stops anybody in its tracks; a fitting addition next to the pale yellow exterior, red door, and banana yellow bathrooms of the home. There is often an addition or edit made to Slow Idaho when each new group of residents calls it home. The kitchen was painted pink by one specific group of girls, and it has stayed and become one with the house, and the bright orange couch that sits below the balcony was placed years ago by one group and then left to forever live in Slow Idaho.

(Walking over to the Glass Bottle Wall)

There is a specific essence to college that calls for tradition. Regardless of whether the purpose is to create unity, a community, a place of belonging for students far from home, or it simply boils down to humans being creatures of habit. Tradition lives within Miami University. There are big traditions, like each and every student avoiding stepping on the seal at the hub of campus, believing that if you step on the seal, you will fail your next exam. Traditions also run deep within the large Greek community on campus, where students spend weeks of the school year dedicating themselves to their respective philanthropies and getting the entire campus to join in. The Greek community has its own traditions, particularly in terms of a housing procedure called “Passdowns”. These are Oxford houses that are consistently lived in by someone of a specific sorority or fraternity—Slow Idaho being a strong standing passdown. Just three years after its naming in 2005, Slow Idaho became a Phi Mu Beta Eta passdown and continues to be so today.

With the passing along of a house like Slow Idaho from group to group comes mini traditions and memorabilia that are collected. One specific reference of memorabilia that Slow Idaho is well-known for is the Glass Bottle Wall, a tradition that started when Slow Idaho was given its name. When you walk through the pastel pink kitchen, you will be presented with an entire shelved wall of glass bottles that have been collected and preserved by all of the previous tenants. This serves as a little reminder of all the people who have come before.

So, as I stated before, every resident's impact on Slow Idaho shines just as brightly as the house's impact on you all. To the past residents of Slow Idaho, I am glad to report that your legacy lives on as a standout Oxford college home. To the current residents, take as many pictures and make as many memories as humanly possible—living at 115 East Walnut Street is a one-of-a-kind experience. Lastly, to all the future groups of Slow Idaho residents, we ask you to foster the traditions and embrace memorabilia.

From,
Slow Idaho

END

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