

BARBARA DANZA

Thanksgiving is a wonderful holiday, centered on the gathering of family and friends and the giving of thanks. It's the perfect prelude to the holidays to come, reminding us of what's most important.

From a parenting perspective, Thanksgiving comes chock-full of "teachable moments." Here are six ways to instill an appreciation for gratitude and a desire to give thanks this Thanksgiving.

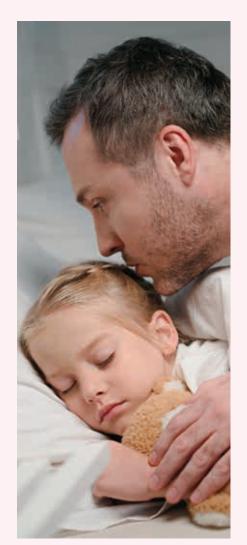




DRAW TURKEY HANDS

For the littlest turkeys, this familiar craft could not be simpler. Trace your little one's hand on a piece of paper, and as I'm sure you know, the thumb becomes the head, the fingers the feathers, and the palm the body of an adorable turkey.

Drive home the concept of giving thanks by having your child (or you if they're really young) write four things they're thankful for on each of the turkey's feathers. Then, give their artwork a place of honor amidst your Thanksgiving decor.



GIVE GRATITUDE

establish a habit of gratitude, as you

tuck your children into bed, ask

them what they were grateful for

today. Allow them time to think of

all of the things they were thankful

for and let those ideas linger as you

How fortunate that we have this

opportunity to teach gratitude to our

children and that we have so very

much to be thankful for. I'm thankful

for Thanksgiving and wish you and

AT BEDTIME

kiss them goodnight.

your family a happy one!

SAY 'THANK YOU'

Strengthen the habit of giving thanks, and recognizing all there is to be grateful for, by challenging each family member to thank someone else every day until Thanksgiving. A small gift, a handwritten note, a text, a hug, or a simple, verbal "thanks" can all be employed to show gratitude toward someone else for something they did or simply for who they are to you.



'GROW' A THANKFUL TREE

Feeling even more crafty? Place a few branches in a vase or pin a paper tree trunk to the wall, accompanied by a basket or jar of cut-out paper leaves. Attach the leaves each day inscribed with something you are grateful for. As each family member does this daily, watch your tree fill in with blessings. What a wonderful symbol come Thanksgiving of the season at hand!



Encourage a habit for yourself and your family of beginning each day with an entry in a gratitude journal. Simply name (or draw) three things each day that you are thankful for. Aim to continue this habit for as long as possible and enjoy the positive impact it has on your lives.





Teach your children the ideals of charity by giving to someone in need. Whether it is a local family going through a hard time, visitors to a soup kitchen, beneficiaries of a charitable organization, or a lonesome family member or friend, there are countless people who could use something to be thankful for.

Give of your time, your resources, or simply your compassion, to someone else in need. Celebrate how truly blessed you are by sharing that bounty with others this

PERFECTLAB/SHUTTERSTOCK

6 Ways to Simplify the Holidays

BARBARA DANZA

As the holidays come into view, it's all too easy to get swept up in the frenzy of shopping, planning, decorating, and to-do lists. Rather than racing to the finish line, relieved at the end that it's all done, consider a focus on simplicity this year. Instead of hustle and stress, opt for peace and joy.

Here are six ways to simplify the holidays and focus on what really matters this season.

Minimize Decisions

Decision fatigue is a term coined by psychologists that means the more decisions that are considered, the more the mind grows weary and ineffective at making decisions. If you've ever shopped for too long or researched anything extensively online or just gotten to the end of a day where you felt like you couldn't possibly make another decision, you

The holidays tend to add a large pile of extra decisions on top of the ering, trade the concept of a for-

normal decisions you're faced with each day, and it can be draining. A few ways to reduce the number

of decisions you need to make is to, first, simplify your regular routines. Eat the same thing for breakfast each day, simplify your cleaning routines, and set time limits on decisions to reduce burnout. When it comes to holiday-specific decisions, choose a theme for your holiday to reduce your options, and have your decor or the presents you give all fall under that umbrella. Wrap all of your gifts in the same wrapping. Give the same gift to multiple people. Wear the same basic color palette all season long. Pick a dish you'll bring to each holiday party you attend.

Wherever you can reduce the number of decisions or the complexity of your decisions, you'll be able to conserve your energy through the season with more ease.

Host Brunch Instead of Dinner If you're hosting a holiday gath-

mal dinner for a casual brunch. Encourage your guests to share a dish and serve everything buffet style. Brunch is fun, relaxed, conducive to a greater variety of dishes,

and promotes a casual atmosphere where you can enjoy real connections with your family and friends.

Renegotiate

Look at your calendar for December and January and identify the nonholiday obligations that are weighing on your mind. If it's possible to renegotiate these deadlines or appointments, whether with yourself or others, do so. Then, breathe out a sigh

Keep Fitness on Track

A sure way to complicate the holidays is to slack off on staying hydrated, eating nutritious foods, and not getting enough exercise.

Rather than viewing these things as time-consuming, recognize them as the fuel that keeps your engine going. Maintain a priority on your well-being and that of

your family. It's hard to be mer-

ry and bright if you're drained

could be to wrap presents in the same wrapping paper.

One example of minimizing decisions

Do a Little Each Day

Tackle the tasks of the holidays in small bites. Whether it's writing greeting cards, wrapping presents, decorating your home, or

planning fun activities, take an hour each day and make it your holiday hour. Turn on festive music, pour a cup of your favorite seasonal beverages, and enjoy the process.

Stay Focused on People, **Not Perfection**

It can be easy to buy into the image of a perfect holiday and the desire to provide that for your family. What your family most needs is connection and togetherness, not the perfect decor or Instagrammable moments. Embrace imperfection and focus on what's most important.

Even if things don't look perfect or taste perfect, welcome family and friends with open arms; recognize how precious time together is and ground yourself in the true meaning of the season.







Kevin and Sam Sorbo: Making Films That Bring Some Light Into the World

her down

for funding.

came aboard.

that affirms it."

Sam's idea was, what if the world's greatest

atheist had an experience that completely

challenged his worldview? She contacted an

Academy Award-nominated screenwriter

friend of hers, who immediately turned

But when Dan Gordon met her to hear

Two weeks later, out of the blue. Kevin got a

call from someone willing to fund the whole

movie before they had even started looking

The Sorbos flew out to pitch the film to

Sean Hannity, who had been looking for

a faith-based film project, and he quickly

"This just doesn't happen, it's just uncan-

ny," Sam said. "I think sometimes in life,

when you strike out in faith, God rewards

that action, and there's a blessing in there

The film, "Let There Be Light" also touched

on themes of grief, fatherhood, redemption,

"There are so many negative movies out

there right now, there's so much anger and

hate and divisiveness, and so much of this

is coming out of Hollywood, in television

and movies. All that does is encourage more

anger and hate," Kevin said. "And you're like,

wow, wait a minute, let's get back to movies

The Sorbos ended up doing a large part

of everything themselves, and the tiny, in-

dependent film debuted in the top 10 at the

box office. It even hit the second-highest

per screen average opening weekend, be-

and it's also a Christmas movie.

that people want to see."

CATHERINE YANG

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 48 2019

t used to be that people would stop Kevin Sorbo in airports and on the street because they'd seen him play Hercules, the long-running role that made him an international name.

He has since moved from Hollywood to independent films, keeping as busy as ever producing, directing, and starring in three to four projects a year, and he's found that fans are enthusiastic about the positive messages in his independent movies.

"Now people stop me all the time and tell me to keep making the movies I'm making," Kevin said.

In the past few years, Kevin and his wife, Sam Sorbo, have teamed up to do just that and have seen miracle after miracle happen.

What People Want to See

Much of the media—whether it's news or entertainment—depicts a world where corruption runs rampant and there are no consequences. It can get you down at the end of the day. This isn't the world people want to see.

So Sam thought that if she couldn't find the kind of movies she wanted to watch, it

was worth trying to make her own. "It was just like, 'Kevin, I have an idea for a movie. I think you'd be great in it, and I think we should try to get it done.' And then he kind of patted me on the arm and said, 'That's nice, dear," Sam said with a laugh. "Because getting a movie made is a very difficult process."

Yet things fell into place one after another.



1. The Sorbos in "Let There Be Light."

2. A scene from "Miracle in East Texas."

3. "Miracle in is based on the true story of two aging con men at the start of the Great Depression,

and the biggest oil strike in the world.

to make

offer hope.

We found our nichewe wanted films that uplift people and

Sam Sorbo

Sam and Kevin Sorbo

fore expanding the second week to twice as many theaters. "I started getting emails from people who were watching it again for Christmas," Sam said. "The messages in it are so timeless, and so people are watching it again and again and I'm getting these messages from people who say it took a different turn for us this year because of what we experienced and stuff like that. We found our niche—we wanted to make films that uplift people and offer hope." It brought them straight to their next movie, when someone heard them speak-

ing at an event and walked up with money to invest in another film in the vein of what they'd just done.

"We already had a script that we wanted to do, so we put it together and it's picking up right now in film festivals," Kevin said.

"Miracle in East Texas" is the story of two aging con men during the Great Depression and the world's biggest oil strike, based on a true story. The comedy, written by Dan Gordon, has won awards from Best Fam-

ily Film to Best Romantic Comedy to Best Narrative, and the Sorbos feel it speaks to the fact that these are stories for everyone.

"We're looking for movies that have a message; they don't have to be a straight faithbased movie, but we want to do movies that are positive, instead of negative," Kevin said. about the story, he agreed to be a co-writer. Sam said the story is about oil, but it's also about people who need forgiveness, and about redemption, freedom, and entrepre-

> neurship. "So in a sense, it's a reflection of traditional American values, and it's a comedy so it's a lot of fun," she said. They're working to bring the film to theaters next spring.

Impacting the Culture

Kevin saw a Shakespeare play at age 11 and never turned back.

"I was blown away and the seed was planted early for me," he said. "I wanted to make people laugh, make them cry, make them think. Just like it did for me."

Sam likewise started acting because she wanted to change the world—the two of them actually met on the set of "Hercules," when she played the princess Serena.

With plenty of experience and trust in each other, making good films in a time crunch on a shoestring budget isn't actually the

hard part. "We're doing movies that are pretty much the opposite of what Hollywood is doing, so it's a battle for us to get out there," Kevin said.

Instead of multi-million dollar marketing campaigns, they just have word of mouth. "People keep telling us to make more movies like this, well, help us, guys. We need the word of mouth to make these movies a success." Kevin has been working on several other

projects as well, like "The Reliant," which recently premiered in theaters in a one-day only event ahead of the film's DVD release in December. He's also worked on three documentaries, two of which have faith In addition to making more movies, Sam

has plans for TV as well. They'd actually started with TV ideas before the first film, but the series got shelved after they had

"We're living in a culture that is in decline, I think, and our media has a direct impact on the culture," said Sam, who is also a radio show host. They have a chance to positively impact the culture, so that is exactly what they are working to do. "We put our money where our mouth is, so to speak."

"We're just trying to put a little bit of light into darkness, a little bit of light and a little bit of hope," Sam said.





carry beside

I'm carrying

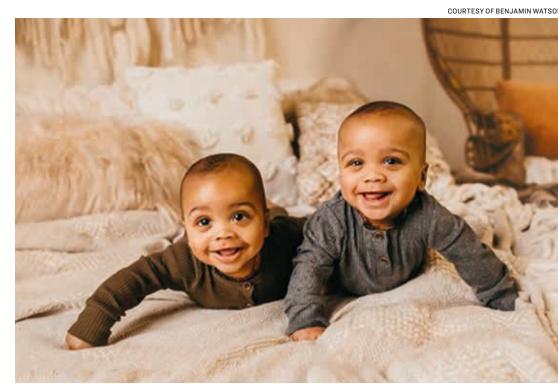
me into this

situation, that

this with

situation.

Benjamin Watson



CATHERINE YANG

s the oldest of six siblings and an athlete from a young age, following in his father's footsteps, Benjamin

Watson has always known that he was a role model. Even as a high school athlete, he knew younger kids looked up to him. Then, when he became a football player in college, the high schoolers looked up to him, too.

I always tell

people that

didn't have a

up that just

didn't, they

because they

the course of

the course of

generations

family by the

decisions that

they make.

Benjamin Watson

and their

father growing

can still change

history, change

And as an NFL star, just by virtue of being in the public eye, you're a role model even if you aren't seeking it out. And of course, as a husband and father of seven, he takes seriously the importance of being a role model for his children.

"I like to talk about all the stuff you're not supposed to talk about," Watson said with a laugh. "Race, religion, fatherhood, sanctity of life, abortion. Basically all the stuff that around the

water cooler they say not to talk about. "But what I've found is that in my sphere, in football, which is my workplace, these are all the things that people think about," Watson said. "Everybody has their work to do ... but we all live in the world and more specifically the United States, so we're all affected by certain issues of our day that come up: immigration, race, religion, taxes, freedom of speech—whatever comes up."

These issues that many feel need to be hushed up are precisely the ones that affect us the most. Watson feels naturally inclined to engage with people holding contrasting opinions.

"I like to engage with people and see what they're thinking, and I think that there is a way to do that," Watson said. "This civil discourse is something that is lacking on a broad spectrum, but personally I think it's something very important, in order to communicate and in order to show respect to people that you don't agree with and don't agree with you.'

One of his current projects is precisely

one of those topics that come with hugely emotional and divisive

"I'm working on a documentary called Divided Hearts of America and it's about the tonic of abortion—some. thing that is I guess almost a lightning rod topic right now," Watson said. "But it's something that is near and dear to many Americans' hearts."

It's the first time Watson's done something like this, and filmmaking is completely new territory for him, but in light of several new and very different abortion-related laws being passed in various states this year, he wanted to dig deeper and "navigate the truth

"Both on the liberal and on the conservative side," Watson adds. He is personally pro-life, but he didn't want to only speak with people who had similar opinions. He's interviewed legislators sponsoring both pro- and anti-abortion laws and listened to their stories, and sought out advocates and people who have had abortions to tell their own stories. He speaks to people not just in politics but also in academia, medicine, and culture.

"I think when we hear the statistics about where people stand and why, they can be very polarizing. I want people to see that there's a lot of gray," he said. "These are real women, these are real children, these are real men that are going through these decisions."

"I want people to see the commonalities that we may have with someone who seems to be the polar opposite of us politically, and see their humanity and their reasons for the stance that they have. I want people to be challenged in their views no matter what they may be. And I want people to be encouraged that they don't stand alone, if they're in opposition to what seems to be the prevailing view, they're not alone," he said.

Using Your Voice

Watson knew early on that the mainstream culture wouldn't always align with his values. A lot of it—film and television—is entertainment, so he doesn't begrudge it for that, but he is cognizant that what you watch and

listen to does become a part of you.

"Whatever you allow to come in is going to affect you in some way," he said. "If you're not affirming truth and reaffirming those values on the side, don't be surprised if your consciousness and your thought process start to slip in the other direction."

"Everything's not going to align all the time, that's to be expected. But in the same token, if culture is speaking with one voice, it's important that we speak with another voice, to counteract it," he said.

Watson's first role model was his father, and his parents are the kind of models who passed on their values both by living them and through instruction.

"My dad always said give 100 percent in anything you do," Watson said. It was not only about success but effort. "Did you prepare yourself? Did you work as hard as you could unto the Lord and not for me? That was really big in our

Knowing right from wrong, having integrity, good character, service, leadership, charity, and loving people who may not be like you were all values he grew up with as a child, and now instills in his own children. But Watson reminds us that even if we didn't grow up with parents who modeled certain things, "it doesn't mean that can't be your story."

"I always tell people that didn't have a father growing up that just because they didn't, they can still change the course of history, change the course of generations and their family by the decisions that they make," Watson said.

Family

Family is a big topic for Watson.

"The importance of family is not just internally, within the walls of a house, but how our family affects culture, how family affects politics and how it affects this country," he said.

Manhood and fatherhood are things that come up when you've been in a locker room as Watson has for the last 16 years in the NFL.

"Around 50-something guys, and we're having a conversation about guys having their first children and everything. And they're scared like I was having my first kid," Watson said. "And I'm able to encourage them that you have what it takes to be a great dad. And not only do you have what it takes to be a great father and to love the mother, but we need you to do that. The mother needs you. The child needs you. Society needs you to step into that role. And if I can encourage them and equip them, that's something that I always want to do."

Family isn't something that just happens. You have to work for it, and that's why it's rewarding.

Watson is asked for advice on everything, from how many diapers to buy to dating. After he and his wife had their second child, she encouraged him to compile all of this into a book. Eventually it did happen, and now he's able to hand his teammates a copy of "The New Dad's Playbook," which covers the first OBGYN meeting to medical terms to preparing a loving environment for the baby to come into and every-

thing in between. "It's also kind of encouragement to men, because I feel like culturally we live in a time where manhood is sometimes degraded or underestimated, or men feel like it's not important, or they feel like they simply can't be the man that they're needed to be. So that's part of the book as well," he said.

Watson is always ready to give realistic and honest advice perhaps guiding his children through every current event as a teachable moment has given him plenty of practice on that front as well. The Ferguson shooting, for instance, meant they talked about policing, killing, respect, race, and how you engage with people who don't look like you.

"We don't shy away from those things," he said. "We want them to have genuine respect for all types of humanity."

That includes having integrity, sticking to your word, understand-

ing their need for grace because at the end of the day they're human, and standing up for those who are mis-Faith is not treated. "If you see someone being mistreated, something we eing bullied or something, I expect

you to stand up for them. I expect you to us. There's a use your voice. We want them to grow up to be men and women who care misconception about other people," he said. And above all, the Watsons want their children to that your faith grow their faith and make the decision is here, in this themselves to follow God. The Watsons have seven children suitcase, and

the two youngest are twins who arrived just this April.

"We have fun together. Right now they're at the point where they're involved in different things, my daughter does ballet, my son does flag football, my other daughter likes to run and do track. We're starting to get to that age where we're a bus service sometimes, taking kids from practice to practice," he said with a laugh, adding none of this would be possible without his very orderly wife who keeps everyone on schedule.

Faith Is Not a Suitcase

downs, tremendous highs and lows. "You win, everybody loves you. You lose, everybody says you're terrible," Watson said. "I can't ride the wave of everyone's opinions."

As an NFL athlete, life is full of ups and

Watson is a self-proclaimed recovering perfectionist, and readily admits he's tied his football performance to his self-worth.

"Which is a very, very dangerous place to be in, in whatever field," Watson said. Luckily, he said, early in his career, he had a teammate tell him to leave work at work.

"You can't take the struggles, the disappointments, the trials, the victories or defeats from work, and bring it into your house, which is a safe place with people that love you for you, and take it out on them, whether it's good or bad," Watson said.

He gives the same advice in his book: maybe it means taking an extra 10 minutes sitting in the driveway and letting go of the day, but you have to learn how to do it. It won't be immediate; Watson

said it probably took two or three years to really learn how to do that, and his faith provided him an anchor with which to battle the highs and lows. "Faith is not something we carry

eside us," Watson said. "There's a

misconception that your faith is here, in this suitcase, and I'm carrying this with me into this situation, that situation." Faith is something inside you, insepa-

rable, and for Watson that provides perspective. Football requires a narrow perspective, with a focus on improving day by day, but God has an eternal, wide perspective, he said.

Eternal Value

"We're simply living this short amount, but eternity is all of this," Watson said with a gesture. "That means, what are the things that I'm doing now that are going to have eternal value? Playing football, the act of football does not necessarily have eternal value as important as it is, but the things that we do while playing, the conversations that we have, the way we can touch people's lives, the ability to advocate for what's true and righteous and just inside our country and globally, these thing are going to have eternal value."

Watson takes comfort in the fact that nothing catches God by surprise.

"When I got cut, it didn't catch him by surprise," he said with a laugh. "He already knew that was going to happen. I was surprised. I struggled with it. But he already knew that was going to happen, and so while as a human you go through those emotions, your faith allows you to follow in the fact that nothing catches him by surprise. And he's in control."

Football has always been tied to faith for Watson; it's his way of using his talents to honor God and have conversations about him. He and his teammates pray before every game, and a group of them will come together after every game, win or lose, to thank God for their health, the opportunity to play, and pray for those who were hurt as well.

"My faith is what's true, and my faith tells me what God really believes about me, when things are great, and when things aren't," he said.

and older sibling Watson has responsibility to be a good role model (Above right) The two youngest

members of

the Watson

family arrived

(Above left)

Benjamin Watson, number 84 of the **New England** Patriots.

Week 48, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES





1/2 inches by 511/2 inches.

"Plum Blossoms in a Muddy World" by Xiangyang Sun, 42 inches by 61

Pure Truth, Pure Kindness, and Pure Beauty

NTD holds 5th annual International Figure Painting Competition

CATHERINE YANG

ure truth, pure kindness, and pure beauty are the central theme of the 2019 NTD International Figure Painting Competition, whose ambitious mission is to revive traditional values. Now in its fifth year, competition organizers feel they are succeeding.

"The NTD competition is leading art to go back to traditional ways," said professor Zhang Kunlun, the head judge of the competition. "These contestants act like a bridge between viewers and tradition in reviving traditional art, restoring the glory of fine art."

"In today's society, persisting with traditional fine art is itself something remarkable," Zhang said.

Over the years, Zhang has corresponded with many artists participating in the competitions, and heard their stories of self-improvement and striving to better both their artistic skills and themselves. Through the competition, many artists say they have realized they have a responsibility to society and now work to create artwork that conveys traditional

values—like pure truth, kindness, and

Art is powerful, and a single image well composed has the ability to influence all who see it. Oil painting remains the most popular and influential painting method in Western art history, hence the art competition's focus on oil painting, and of the human figure in particular.

"Human beings are the center of society," Zhang said. "The human figure is also the most difficult to depict, and the best test of one's abilities."

This year, the competition received over 400 submissions, 103 of which were selected for an exhibition in New York City. Of the exhibited works, 47 of these paintings are for sale and an auction will be held on Nov. 30.

The finalist exhibition will be open to the public at the Salmagundi Art Club at 47 Fifth Ave. in Manhattan from Nov. 24 to Nov. 30. Winners of the competition will be awarded on Nov. 26, and auctioning of the works will take place on Nov. 30. For more information, please see OilPainting.ntdtv.com

Pictured here is a selection of the works that will appear at the exhibition.









Killing Persecution' by Yu-Jung Liu, 67 inches by 82 1/2 inches.

"Leaving" by Yu-Jung Liu, 46 inches by 36 1/2 inches.

"Milena's Friends" by Clodoaldo Martins, 311/2 inches by 23 1/2 inches.



"Maria's Wish" by Joseph Daily, 36 inches by 55 inches.

"July 20 - The **Evil Persecution** Started" by Yu-Hsua Lin, 82 1/2 inches by 511/2 inches.

FILM REVIEW: 'MIDWAY'

An Old-School, Heroic, and Supremely Well-Made War Movie

IAN KANE

s a military veteran, I was looking forward to a good war movie this Veterans Day weekend A few of the trailers for director Roland Emmerich's "Midway" sported some of the most impressive visuals I've seen in quite some time, but that wasn't much of surprise. After all, this is the same man who brought us spectacle-laden films like "Independence Day" (1996) and "The Day After Tomorrow" (2004). However, I was cautiously optimistic. I hoped that it wouldn't be a cornball fest like Michael Bay's "Pearl Harbor" (2001) or the original "Midway" effort from 1976. It wasn't.

The film retells the three primary events that led up to the now epic clash between the United States and Japanese naval fleets at Midway Island: the Japanese ambush at Pearl Harbor (December 1941), the Doolittle bombing raid over Japan (April 1942), and the Battle of the Coral Sea (May 1942). These three primers culminated in the eventual, decisive Battle of Midway (June 1942), when the U.S. Navy used guile and guts to turn back Japan's aggressive bid for the Pacific theater (and eventually the entire West Coast of



Luke Evans (L) and Ed Skrein as U.S. flyboys in "Midway."

North America).

During the film's 2-hour-and-18-minute runtime, we get to meet various U.S. naval heroes, including Admiral Chester Nimitz (Woody Harrelson) and Vice Admiral William "Bull" Halsey (Dennis Quaid), who is the commander of the USS Enterprise. Whereas the 1957 version of the film had an equally impressive cast, it focused more on these senior officers.

Here, the story is told primarily from the point of view of the lower ranks: namely, the cocky, gumchewing pilot Lt. Dick Best (Ed Skrein), and intelligence operative Lt. Cmdr. Edwin Layton (Patrick

Midway'

Director
Roland Emmerich
Starring
Ed Skrein, Patrick
Wilson, Woody
Harrelson, Dennis Quaid
Running Time
2 hours, 18 minutes

PG-13

Release Date
Nov. 8, 2019

* * * * *



A scene from "Midway," which has tremendous CGI effects.

Wilson). This approach makes the film much more immersive, as you get a more intimate look into the lives of the men who had their feet closer to the ground (or deck, as the case may be).

Fortunately, the perspective

on the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy and their legendary military culture is given a fair and balanced portrayal. Although the film touches on the outrageous atrocities carried out by the Japanese, particularly against the Chinese, it does allow for more historical complexity than painting the former with one broad brushstroke.

Emmerich's (along with writer Wes Tooke) retelling of the Pacific War is candid, without any of the sappy romances or convoluted subplots featured in the 1957 version. Their no-frills approach unabashedly celebrates honor, duty, patriotism, selflessness, and masculinity—straight up.

Week 48, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES

Thankfully, there is no trace of the hyper-political correctness that plagues modern films these days. Even the slower moments are terse and serve to describe the tremendous training of these brave naval pilots and the crucial intelligence gathering and strategic planning that their superiors



Of course, one of the main draws of the film is the battle scenes themselves. Instead of the overblown, cheesy silliness (but admitted fun) of "Independence Day," the CGI effects featured here look much more realistic and give a definite sense of gravitas to the life-and-death struggles unfolding on the silver screen.

Not only are the effects impres-

sive, but the cinematography is outstanding and engenders a sense of both exhilaration and jaw-dropping wonderment. Few war films really give me a sense of being there, but this one did. Especially during the final ballsto-the-walls scenes where Lt. Best and his cohorts go all out in their dive-bombing attempts on Japa-

nese ships. While Harrelson and Quaid are at their usual best, the rest of the supporting cast is also superb. As mentioned, Wilson is a naval intelligence officer (and codecracker), who is trying to convince his superiors that a major focused fury. Also impressive is Nick Jonas as naval machinist Bruno Gaido and Luke Evans as naval flyboy Lt. Cmdr. Wade McClusky.

"Midway" is even more impressive is Nick Jonas as naval machinist Bruno Gaido and Luke Evans as naval flyboy Lt. Cmdr. Wade McClusky.

sive than expected. It effectively

Midway Island, and soon.
Other standouts include Mandy
Moore as Best's dutiful wife, Ann,
who supports him in his effort
to transmute his brashness into

Japanese attack will happen at

ocused fury. Also impressive is lick Jonas as naval machinist runo Gaido and Luke Evans s naval flyboy Lt. Cmdr. Wade IcClusky.

"Midway" is even more impres-

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To see more, visit DreamFlightEnt.com

sidered a classic war film

The Impermanence of Outer Beauty

ERIC BESS

Is outer beauty a blessing or a curse? It's easy to look at the curated displays on our media feeds and feel we aren't beautiful enough or that we are somehow lacking.

It can become easy to lose ourselves in a visual world altered by Snapchat and Instagram filters. So perhaps we should ask ourselves who we are despite how we are (or wish to be) perceived.

Hans Baldung's painting "The Three Ages of Woman and Death" asks where outer beauty fits in our lives.

Hans Baldung and the 'Dance of Death' Baldung was a 16th-century German artist who studied at Albrecht Dürer's workshop. In his 20s, Baldung became concerned with the inevitability of death and often depicted a motif referred to as

the "Dance of Death (Danse Macabre)."

The Dance of Death was popular throughout the late Middle Ages when death, considered the great equalizer, was depicted alongside the beautiful and powerful with the message being that all—even the young, beautiful, and rich—cannot escape it.

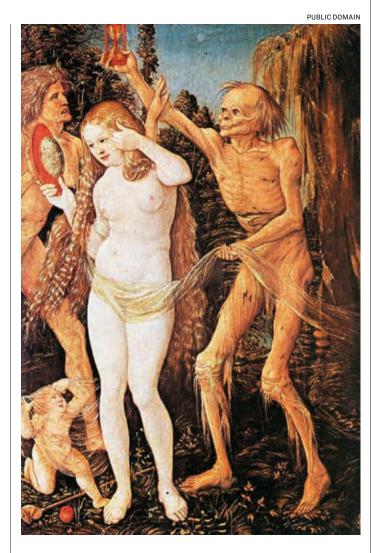
In "The Three Ages of Woman and Death," Baldung presents four figures in a landscape, with three of these—the child, the youth, and the elder—representing three stages of life. The fourth figure is Death, who accompanies them.

The child is shrouded in a sheer cloth that wraps around the young woman as well. The child looks only at the young woman, who looks only at her reflection in the mirror she holds. Is the child interested only in becoming the young adult?

The young woman adores her own reflection in the mirror. She no longer sees herself as a child, nor does she see her impending future. She is turned completely away from Death, who tries to remind her that her time is short by holding an hourglass above her head. Does her self-absorption prevent her from seeing beyond herself?

The old woman uses one hand to support the mirror, while at the same time, she moves toward Death with a look of angst on her face. Is her movement toward Death voluntary or is it compelled? She tries to block the hourglass

Are smartphones (with embedded selfie-taking cameras) and social media the modern equivalent of the mirror in Baldung's painting?



that Death holds over the young woman's head. The old woman looks only at the hourglass and ignores Death. Does her preoccupation with time and resistance toward Death prevent her from making peace with the inevitable?

Death, holding the sheer cloth that threads between the young bodies, looks only at the hourglass but ignores the surrounding figures.

Balancing External Beauty With Beauty Within

To reduce this image to the suggestion that outer beauty fades would be to miss its nuances. What timeless attributes of the human spirit can we glean from this painting?

The child is only able to see as far as the young woman. Though we are often introduced to death at a young age, how real does it really seem to us? How close does death seem to the average child in the Western world? Children can feel like they will be young forever. Ironically, however, many children can't wait to be older. How often do young children want to be like their older siblings or like the "free" adult? The old woman supports the mirror

and attempts to block time. Is she trying to maintain the beauty of her youth? Our later years in life may result in us wishing for our youth again. We may try to defy time to remain beautiful and young forever.

In this sense, the beauty of the young adult is the fixation for those this side of death, that is, for all those who are alive. Both the child and the old woman wish to be the young woman, and the young woman adores herself.

Death, however, does not care about our individual wishes or endeavors. In the painting, Death does not look at any of the figures but only at its consort, time. The outward beauty of youth is unable to tempt or deny Death.

Baldung seems to suggest that we can't find true beauty by searching outside of ourselves. Despite our efforts, external beauty forever fades under the banner of time; death always looms like the hourglass.

The danger of selfishness in relation to external beauty is that we can confuse outer beauty with inner worth. Sometimes, we wish to be beautiful and own beautiful things to the detriment of others. We spend our time wishing to be more beautiful or pursuing more money to possess more things.

"Three

Ages of

1510,

Baldung.

Collection.

Private

Woman and

Is this what feeds the addictive nature of smartphones and social media? Are smartphones (with embedded selfietaking cameras) and social media the modern equivalent of the mirror in Baldung's painting? Is social media's endless potential for customization causing us to turn our backs to reality and to unattractive things that we must confront at some point?

I began with the question "Is outer beauty a blessing or a curse?" Maybe it can be either. Maybe what is most important is our mindset toward beauty. Maybe we can appreciate external beauty as long as we don't forget to cultivate beauty within.

Eric Bess is a practicing representational artist. He is currently a doctoral student at the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (IDSVA).

Are We Making Heroes of Our Villains?

JEFF MINICK

"I am human, and I think nothing human is alien to me."

—Terence, Roman playwright Nothing human is alien to me? Really?

What do we think about that statement? True or false? How might our culture reflect Terence's famous line?

To examine these questions, let's shine a light on our contemporary concepts of heroes and villains.

Throughout history human beings have looked to heroes, mythical and real, as models for emulation. The Ancients took fictional figures like Achilles, Hercules, and Aeneas, and used them as ideals of comparison for their own deeds. For living models of virtue, they turned to philosophers like Socrates, warriors like Alexander the Great, and rulers like Solon and Cincinnatus. The Middle Ages admired Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, El Cid, Beowulf, Charlemagne, Alfred the Great, Thomas Becket, and a bevy of knights and saints.

Lionhearted Moderns

In our modern age, we too have created such mythological heroes: Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Spider-Man, the Avengers, and others. Superman's slogan, "Truth, Justice, and the American Way," may have grown worn and hoary with age, but we still like to see our superheroes as the good guys, as men and women we could take as models for our own lives.

Some movies also feature realistic heroes. Mel Gibson's "Braveheart," "The Patriot," and "Hacksaw Ridge" give us central characters who are heroic in ways that earlier generations would have understood. In "To Kill A Mockingbird," Atticus Finch is presented as a man without flaws, a hero both to his children and to the good people of his town.

Unlike previous generations, we seem in short supply of real-life heroes these days. Figures from American history who once inspired young people—Washington, Lee, Clara Barton, Edison, Amelia Earhart, and so many more—either fail to meet our politically correct standards or are simply left out of our classrooms and schoolbooks. Other than a few entertainers and sports figures, famous living Americans also rarely win universal acclaim.



"The Coronation of Charlemagne" by Raphael. During the Middle Ages, Charlemagne, as well as others such as Alfred the Great, were looked to as heroes.

Color Them Gray

With the rise of antiheroes—a protagonist who conspicuously lacks traditional heroic qualities—the distinction between heroes and villains in literature and film has become less obvious. The novels of Lee Child, for example, feature Jack Reacher, an ex-military policeman who helps those in trouble but who also leaves behind a platoon of corpses. James Lee Burke's fictional Dave Robicheaux, a Louisiana private detective, kills fewer people, but his sidekick, Clete Purcell, has no problem acting outside of the law when he believes the occasion demands instant justice.

In film, antiheroes run the gamut from Clint Eastwood's ex-outlaw and killer William Munny in "Unforgiven" to Michael Douglas's enraged white man in "Falling Down." On television, we see this same ambiguity of character in such shows as "Breaking Bad" and "Mad Men."

Which leads us next to the bad guys.

Muddied Waters

Do we still recognize villains? Or is the line between villainy and heroism becoming blurred?

Americans once believed that such was

the case. In the 1930s, various moviegoers became concerned that Hollywood was portraying gangsters as heroes. These protesters feared young people might watch these films and attempt to copycat the actors. As a result, the Hays Code was put into place, a Hollywood production code that sought to curtail violence, sex, and the glamorization of gangsters in the movies. Hollywood responded by continuing to make films about gangsters, but now the good guys—the police, the FBI—were the heroes.

Unlike previous generations, we seem in short supply of real-life heroes these days.

In our own time, we occasionally take villains from myth and fairy tales, and give them a more humane face. In "Grendel," for example, a best-selling novel of the 1970s, John Gardner presents the monster that devoured men and fought Beowulf as a sympathetic character. Films like "Maleficent"

and the gory "Joker" turn myth and fairy tale upside down, again, like Gardner, allowing evil to make its case, to appear tragic, and so attract our understanding.

In the November 2019 issue of "Chronicles Magazine," film critic George McCartney recognizes the danger of these topsy-turvy portrayals, writing of "Joker," "there's something desperately wrong with comic book films that insist on portraying their super heroes and villains as if they were real people. It not only strains our willingness to suspend our disbelief, but also encourages young viewers to venerate these freaks." In other words, we give our young people villains as models of emulation.

We see this trend in movies that don't feature superheroes. If we travel all the way back to 1972 and look at one of my favorite all-time movies, "The Godfather," we find Marlon Brando as Don Corleone, a mobster who has committed murder and makes his living by intimidation and force. Yet the Don wins the admiration of many viewers for his devotion to his family and his sense of integrity in his "business." He becomes a

So now a question: What are we to make of villains becoming antiheroes, or even worse, heroes, in our culture?

A Canyon That Needs No Bridge

We can understand evil at an intellectual level. I can read, for instance, about a mass murderer who is either insane or ideologically corrupt, and understand on that level his motives for shooting people. I can grasp his motivations.

But inside my heart, that shooter appalls me. His murder of innocent people—men, women, and children—is abhorrent and

sickening.

There is a canyon of difference between

understanding and acceptance.
If we have arrived at the point where we build a bridge across that canyon, then count me out. Some things done by human beings are wrong and wicked.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C., Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See Jeff Minick.com to follow his blog.

And they are alien to me.

JEFF MINICK

For the first time in our history, many politicians and candidates label themselves socialists, as if that title were a badge of honor. Many of their young constituents doubtless find something just and romantic in the idea of socialism. Some believe, too, that socialism would provide them with "free" education, "free" medical care, and in some cases, a guaranteed income.

To those of us who stand opposed to a government-controlled economy, this thinking seems at times infantile, and also dangerous. The bloody history and economic failures of socialism—here I include fascism—and of communism in the 20th century should rebuff the starry-eved.

And yet socialism is growing in its appeal. So how do we combat that disease, other than in the voting booth?

Here is one small way to begin: education. We start in our homes with our children. It doesn't matter what schools they attend public, private, or homeschools. Through reading and discussion in the home, we can teach our young people of all ages the evils of socialism. Below are just a few possibilities.

1. "The Little Red Hen" This nursery room tale imparts the same lesson taught by Captain John Smith to the idlers of Jamestown: "He that will not work shall not eat." We can aid the impoverished, the disabled, and the jobless among us, as we do now, without resorting to the evils of socialism. The Little Red Hen teaches the values of initiative and work.

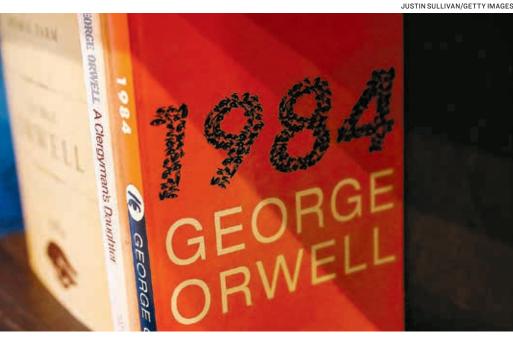
James Clavell published this short, frightening tale of what might occur in an American classroom taken over by socialists. Given the current state of American education. many might argue that "The Children's Story" has already occurred. Here is a good book for the family to share, a timely warning about the dangers of dictatorship in our modern age.

3. "The Gods of the Copybook Head**ings"** "Robbing selective Peter to pay for collective Paul:" So writes Rudyard Kipling in this poem. "Copybook headings" refers to certain morals or inspirational quotes printed at the top of a student's copybook in the 19th century. The poem reminds us of the eternal verities, like 2+2=4. Socialism is not one of those truths.

4. "Animal Farm" George Orwell's classic rebuttal of Soviet communism can be easily read and understood by middleschool students. In this allegory, Orwell demonstrates that the real beneficiaries of socialistic and communistic governments are the planners and bureaucrats. Like the communists in Russia, the pigs in this novel become even worse oppressors than the farmer they drove away.

5. "Tanstaafl" An acronym for "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch," probably coined by Robert Heinlein in his novel "The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress." "What you get, you pay for," Heinlein wrote. True in 1966 and true now.

6. "I, Pencil" Leonard Read's explanation **2. "The Children's Story"** In 1989, novelist of how an ordinary pencil comes into be-



"1984," a book every high schooler should read.

ing and appears on store shelves remains a classic explanation of the workings of free enterprise and the "invisible hand" that brings our goods to market.

7. "1984" Back to George Orwell. Every high school student in our country should read "1984." Published in 1949 as "Nineteen Eighty-Four," this novel introduced words like Big Brother, newspeak, and unperson. From communist China's "social credit" policy to our practice of political correctness in the digital age, we are fulfilling some of Orwell's prophecies.

8. "Darkness at Noon" Arthur Koestler's masterpiece regarding the show trials under Stalin, a scenario we are currently reliving in the efforts to impeach Donald Trump. In this novel, Nikolai Rubashov, a revolutionary past his prime who has run afoul of the system, gets a bullet to the back of the head. Today we are more civilized. We dox those we dislike, de-platform them, or smear their reputations.

9. "The Black Book of Communism" Here the authors diginto the "Crimes, Terror, and Repression" of communist regimes in the 20th century. From the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, communism worldwide has killed up to 100 million people and deprived millions more of basic human rights. Time to end that madness.

10. "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Socialism" Chapter Two of Kevin Williamson's examination of collectivism is titled "Yes, 'Real Socialism' has Been Tried—And It Has Failed." Yep. It has been tried in Russia, China, North Korea, Venezuela, and dozens of other countries, and always it has failed. Why on earth anyone wants to repeat the experiment here in America is unfathomable

It's time to bury socialism forever. Using these resources and others, we may yet reverse this move toward a failed ideology that increases poverty, represses freedom. and gives control of the economy and the government to a small set of elites.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C., Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.

FOR KIDS ONLY THE EPOCH TIMES

The New-England Boy's Song about **Thanksgiving Day**

by Lydia Maria Child

Over the river, and through the wood, Over the river, and through the wood, To grandfather's house we go; The horse knows the way, To carry the sleigh, Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river, and through the wood, To grandfather's house away! We would not stop For doll or top, For 't is Thanksgiving day.

Over the river, and through the wood, Oh, how the wind does blow! It stings the toes, And bites the nose, As over the ground we go.

Over the river, and through the wood, With a clear blue winter sky, The dogs do bark, And children hark, As we go jingling by.

Over the river, and through the wood, To have a first-rate play -Hear the bells ring Ting a ling ding, Hurra for Thanksgiving day!

Over the river, and through the wood -No matter for winds that blow; Or if we get The sleigh upset, Into a bank of snow.

To see little John and Ann; We will kiss them all. And play snow-ball, And stay as long as we can.

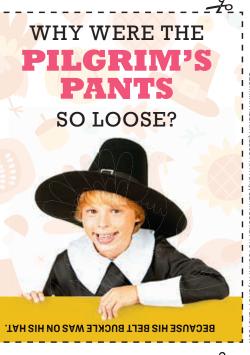
Over the river, and through the wood, Trot fast, my dapple grey! Spring over the ground, Like a hunting hound, For 't is Thanksgiving day!

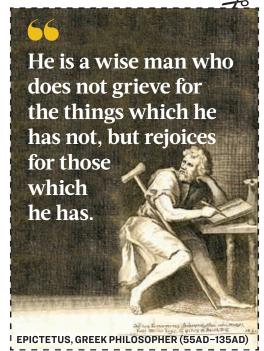
Over the river, and through the wood, And straight through the barn-yard gate; We seem to go Extremely slow, It is so hard to wait

Over the river, and through the wood, Old Jowler hears our bells; He shakes his pow, With a loud bow wow And thus the news he tells

Over the river, and through the wood -When grandmother sees us come, She will say, Oh dear, The children are here, Bring a pie for every one.

Over the river, and through the wood -Now grandmother's cap I spy! Hurra for the fun! Is the pudding done? Hurra for the pumpkin pie!







n Nov. 21, 1620, the first framework of government ever enacted in what is now the United States of America was signed. It was called the Mayflower Compact because it was signed aboard the English ship Mayflower, prior to its landing in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

IS SIGNED

Mayflower passengers had set out to land in the Virginia colony, but conditions at sea forced them off course, headed to Massachusetts instead, outside of the jurisdiction of Virginia. The colonists feared that living without an established rule of law would lead to chaos.

And so, a document was drafted by pilgrim leaders like William Bradford and William Brewster with the purpose of forming a government. Signers pledged to follow any laws that would later be established "for the general good of the colony."



"The Mayflower Compact, 1620" by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris

5 Life Lessons From Charles Schwab

NEW YORK—When Charles Schwab stares alongside Hispanic agricultural workers, intently at his smartphone, you can be sure of one thing: He is checking the stock

The 82-year-old has been in a heated love affair with stocks and capitalism ever since starting his brokerage back in 1971. Schwab sat down with Reuters to talk

about his latest book, "Invested," in which he talks about the bumpy, winding, unlikely path that landed him where he is today. A few key lessons he learned along

the way:

1. While you're young, get out there and work every job you can. You might be surprised to learn some

of the wacky gigs from Schwab's teenage years: Plucking duck feathers, raising hens, collecting Coke bottles from under grandstands, driving a tractor at a sugar beet farm, working as an oilfield roustabout. Those early moments taught him as much about human nature as anything else in

"Dealing with people on that level, you get a real understanding of them," he said. "When I was working on the beet farm

they may not have been able to speak any English, but they were real people with real families and real feelings. I've been lucky to have experiences like that, and I think all parents should get their teenagers out doing that kind of stuff.

2. Take the risk—even if you are not totally ready. When trading commissions

were first deregulated decades ago, no one-including Schwab himself—truly knew how a lowcost brokerage strategy was going Charles Schwab. to play out. But he went for it, and his current \$7.8 billion net worth (according to Forbes) indicates how well that bet paid off.

His motto: "85% ready is good enough," he says. "If you're 85% of the way there, then make the decision to go for it. Hesitation doesn't do anybody any good."

3. Turn your weakness into advantage. Many might not know that Schwab is dyslexic, and still reads slowly today. Even at 82.

you can tell that his childhood experience cut him to the quick. "Dyslexia wasn't even defined when I was a kid." he said. "You were either slow, or stupid. People

said things like, 'Why don't you do better? Just work harder!'" But a remarkable number of people with learning differences, such as Virgin Group's Richard Branson and Apple's Steve Jobs, turned into extraordinary business leaders perhaps because of that ability to look at things differently, process events in new ways, and see things

4. Do the hard things.

Another of his lowest career moments: When the Schwab board let go former Chief Executive David Pottruck. Not only because it was a delicate situation with a longtime colleague, but because it meant Schwab himself had to reassume the title of CEO. "That was a really down time," he remem-

others don't see.

bered. "It felt like a fire hose of water coming at my head, becoming a CEO again at By Chris Taylor sixty-something." But a public company's

primary responsibility is to its shareholders, and even though it wasn't comfortable or easy, Schwab did what he felt had to be done.

5. Do not think in terms of family dynasties. Schwab has five kids and 13 grandchildren, so you might think that he envisions an army of next-gen Schwabs taking over the company after he's gone. Not so.

"They have to follow their passions, whatever that might be," he said. "If you want to be a teacher, be a teacher. There's no need for them to work in finance. In fact only one of my children is in the business—my eldest daughter Carrie, who runs our foundation. She actually started for us as a file clerk."

For whoever ends up running the show, he hopes that this new book can be a sort of GPS, steering them in the right direction. "I know full well that there is an end zone out there for me someplace," he guipped. "I wrote this so that employees and customers would know where we came from, and understand the values we talk about.

From Reuters

THE TURKEY

By Aidan Danza, age 13

Wild female t's Thanksgiving time, so it's only traditional that I write about the traditional Thanksgiving dinner—the turkey! These birds are plump, succulent, and delicious, especially when gravy is added, but of course, I shall be talking about turkeys in their

Wild turkeys have long necks, tails, and legs, and when they're wild, they don't eat as much as a domestic turkey bred for eating, so they're not especially plump compared to their

> table cousins or their more distant relatives, the chicken. Their head is small, and they can be four feet tall, and five to nineteen pounds, with a four-foot wingspan. Both males and females are dark brown, but they also have a green sheen on their feathers. A male turkey's head has a very pink neck and bluish head, which

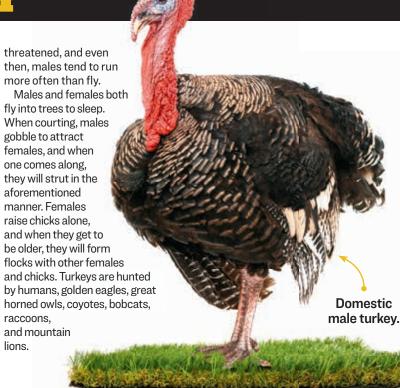
turns brighter when they're breeding, and has no feathers covering it. The wings are black barred with white, and the tail is brown. Each individual tail feather is tipped with beige, the rest of the shaft is brown with black flecks. When the tail meets the body, the feathers

turn beige again.

A male turkey displaying is something to see. They put their tails up and fan them, they puff out their feathers, and they strut. Wild turkeys eat mostly plants, such as acorns, beechnuts, cherries, and seeds. They also eat some insects, such as snails, beetles, and salamanders. Wild turkeys

don't fly very much, only when

then, males tend to run more often than fly. Males and females both fly into trees to sleep. When courting, males gobble to attract females, and when one comes along, they will strut in th aforementioned manner. Females raise chicks alone, and when they get to be older, they will form flocks with other females and chicks. Turkeys are hunted by humans, golden eagles, great horned owls, coyotes, bobcats, raccoons. and mountain lions.



2 Bread bits (5) **3** Gravy morsels (7)

4 Spread (5)

5 Bass, e.g. (4)

11 Turkey filling (8)

15 ___ and cheese (3)

16 Supper (6)

19 Tossed dish (5)

6 Hosts at the first Thanksgiving (9)

8 Marinara and soubise (6)

12 Arrangement on the table (11)

17 Orange ones are sweet (6)

Homer Simpson, the Unlikely Moral Exemplar mediately to mind.

ANDERS KOSKINEN

Homer Simpson is far from a good person. Among his many defects are alcoholism, sleeping on the job, a general disregard for the law, a gambling problem, and child abuse in the regular strangling of his son Bart.

While jobs, hobbies, and friends have come and gone for Homer, there is one way in which the Simpson family patriarch has continuously outshined many of his sitcom brethren over the past 31 seasons. In spite of his many moral shortcomings, there is an area in which Homer has remained rock-solid: his commitment to and love for his wife.

Homer and Marge have weathered innumerable storms over more than 650 episodes of "The Simpsons." While temptations to

infidelity have surfaced, as well as many other fights and circumstances that would test the most durable marriage, these two have remained utterly devoted to one another.

Marital faithfulness is a theme utterly lacking in most modern sitcoms.

Gone is the propriety of widower Andy Griffith and the wellmatched marriage of Rob and Laura Petrie. Instead, sitcoms delve into the seedier sides of how men and women relate. This is seen in how many shows now handle these topics, as well as the frequency with which these topics arise.

Certainly, there are still some examples of devoted sitcom husbands. Tim Allen's characters in "Home Improvement" and "Last Man Standing" spring most im-

Meanwhile, however, two of the most enduringly popular, and longest-running, sitcoms of recent memory exemplify the trend away from traditional marriage, and toward the meaningless sex that has become so commonplace in our culture today.

Rather than a cute story about the journey toward marriage and parenthood, "How I Met Your Mother" is more so "the story of every woman I slept with before your mother." Alongside main character Ted Mosby's various failed relationships is the continuing bedpost notching of playboy do-nothing Barney Stinson. As an added disappointment, the titular mother dies of an unknown disease, Barney and Robin divorce after just two years of marriage, and Ted ends up returning

to his first love interest of the show's run.

Perhaps even worse is the neverending circle of failed relationships and one-night stands that pass in and through the titular group of "Friends." From the thrice-divorced Ross, to the multiple pregnancies that see parents either unmarried or in process of divorce, to Phoebe's surrogacy of her brother's triplets, to Monica sleeping with a high school student, this show is a never-ending circle of life-draining pleasureseeking, regardless of who might get hurt along the way. A committed relationship is practically the furthest thing from the mind of any character on the show.

In comparison to these sorts of behaviors, Homer Simpson is a right proper gentleman! It's perhaps concerning for the

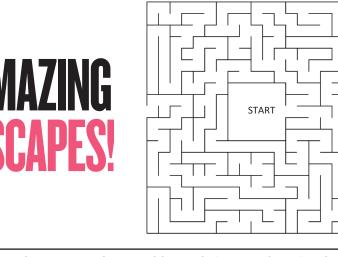
soul of modern American sitcoms that Homer Simpson stands above so many of his contemporaries in this regard, and that he has done so for three times longer than any of the aforementioned series.

Homer isn't someone who can often be accused of self-control. Lest we forget, this is the man who intentionally ballooned up to a level of obesity that allowed him to claim disability status so he could work from home. What does it say about the

"funny" shows that, in the realm of sexual morality, they have less self-control than our favorite vellow-skinned lummox?

non-animated characters of our

Anders Koskinen is an editorial associate at Intellectual Takeout. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.



USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: $6 + (7 \times 3) + 1 = 28$ and $1 + (7 \times 3) + 6 = 28$

11

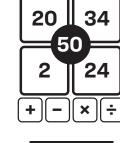


6-9+9×9

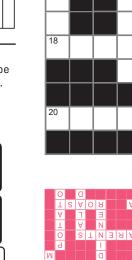
| + || - || × || ÷ Solution for Medium 1 9+4+9×11

6

6



50 × 5 + 34 - 54





7 Nature's Thanksgiving decorations (6)

14 One of the Three Sisters (6)

1 Autumn, typically (7) 18 Frequent Thanksgiving hosts (12) 9 Frank's accompaniment (5) **10** Boston ___ (13) 13 Fall (6)

20 The New World (7) 21 Cooking method (5)

See What 1.4 Billion in China Cannot See



Reviving 5,000 Years of Civilization

Based in the U.S., Shen Yun is able to present on the world stage authentic Chinese culture untainted by communism.

Exquisite beauty from the heavens, profound wisdom from dynasties past, universal values from timeless legends all spring to life through classical Chinese dance, enchanting orchestral music, glamorous costumes, and patented digital backdrops. Shen Yun offers an immersive experience that will uplift your spirit and touch your soul. It's 5,000 years of civilization reborn!

"A fascinating insight into what China's culture used to be and what I hope one day will be restored to China."

-Edward McMillan-Scott, former Vice-President of the European Parliament

"It is **breathtaking!** I am walking away deeply inspired and profoundly moved!"

—Rita Cosby, Emmy Award-winning journalist

"Powerful choreography... Truly magical. A must-see!"

—IN New York Magazine



DEC 20–22, 2019 Best Holiday Gift

Prices: \$100-\$200

Prices: \$80-\$165

TICKETS

The Performing Arts Center, Purchase NY 735 Anderson Hill Road, Purchase, NY 10577

DEC 25–27, 2019 Best Holiday Gift

The Palace Theatre, Stamford CT 61 Atlantic Street, Stamford, CT 06901 MAR 4-29, 2020 **Lincoln Center David H. Koch Theater**

20 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023 Prices: \$80-\$300

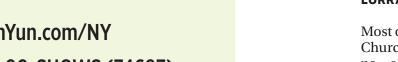
APR 23–29, 2020

New Jersey Performing Arts Center 1 Center Street, Newark, NJ 07102 Prices: \$85-\$200

ORDERING

ShenYun.com/NY 888-90-SHOWS (74697)

Early Purchase Special Code: *Early20* Get the best seats & waive fees by 11/30/2019



from 1922 until October 1964, a few months before he died on Jan. 24, 1965. Katherine Carter, project curator at Chartwell, shared in a phone interview more about Churchill's time at Chartwell.

THE EPOCH TIMES: How important was Chartwell to Churchill? KATHERINE CARTER: First and foremost, Chartwell was his

it was the place from which he worked in terms of his writing—writing having always been his primary source of income. These were the writthe Nobel Prize for Literature just books. It was correspon-

family home. But in addition,

this real flow of words—some of which have become among the most quoted in the English language—they have their origins here at that time.

For his first few years of living at Chartwell, Churchill had been chancellor of the exchequer, one of the highest offices in our country.

dence, articles, and speeches, so | Continued on Page 16



HISTORY

At Home With Winston Churchill

LORRAINE FERRIER

Most of us know Sir Winston Churchill's very public persona—a man of great charisma, achievements, and vision. Chartwell House, the Churchill family's country home, offers visitors a hint of how Churchill and his family lived behind closed doors.

Churchill lived at Chartwell

ings that would ultimately feed into the reason he was awarded in 1953. And this writing wasn't

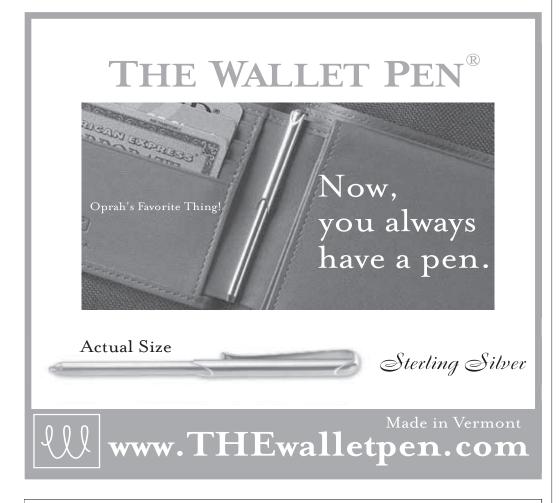
Nov. 30 marks the 145th

anniversary

of Winston

Churchill's

Online: ShenYun.com/NY | Hotline: 888-90-SHOWS (74697)





HISTORY

SHOWMAN AND KNIGHT:

Emperor Maximilian I

'The Last Knight' at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

JANI ALLAN

EW YORK—Those who remain enchanted by the notion of chivalry and the medieval rules of knighthood will find the new exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art a source of wonder.

"The Last Knight: The Art, Armor, and Ambition of Maximilian I" relies on the life of Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519) to look at the deeply rooted significance of European armor at the onset of the Renaissance.

The ambitious North American exhibition on view at The Met coincides with the 500th anniversary of the emperor's death, and includes 180 objects on loan from some 30 public and private collec-

It is both magnificent and profoundly thoughtfully curated.

The exhibits chosen reveal the complicated character that was Maximilian: showman, narcissist, and knight. His projects speak to his ceaseless exploration for inventiveness and theatricality.

The exhibition is both magnificent and profoundly, thoughtfully curated.

An Extravagant but Noble Knight

In the first gallery is the suit of armor that the young Maximilian commissioned in his first foray into battle. He was to marry where all the tournaments were held. the princess Mary of Burgundy, and he intended to defend his future wife's inheritance from an attack by Louis XI.

Maximilian had no troops or money. But the suit of armor he commissioned conveyed a different message. The suit is intricate and tiny. It is like a piece of iewelry. Indeed, that is what it was—jewelry for battle. The gold edging, the exquisite pierced work, and the ribs and fluting indicate a man who put no restrictions on what he would pay for fine workmanship and detail.

Receipts for the armor have been preserved. Today, this suit would cost tens of millions—enough to go some way toward buying a New York townhouse.

The first battle of Guinegate took place on Aug. 7, 1479. The French troops of King Louis XI were defeated by the Burgundians led by Maximilian.

fought on foot. Traditionally, he would have fought mounted, but along with 200 of his nobles, he joined the infantry. Although sometimes lesser-ranking nobles were known to fight on foot, the fact that the archduke was doing so was remarkable. His act of bravery served as a role model for the local

The Theater of Battle Each gallery displays the various ways in which Maximilian ensured that

nobility and his troops.

his legacy would be lasting. "He who makes no memory of himself during his lifetime



will have none after his death, and will be forgotten with the tolling of the final knell. Therefore the money I extend on perpetuating my memory will not be lost," a museum wall plaque quotes him as saying.

And each gallery, too, expands on his arena of messaging, that is, on his broadening of influence and personal legend by writing, commissioning art and armor, and his knightly pursuits especially in tournaments.

Tournaments were a favorite activity. When, with his second wife, he moved to Innsbruck, where he had inherited a palace, he built a loggia from which Augsburg, Germany. He was 18. This was he could look down at the main square

> The tournament was not just for watch ing, though. It was the ideal setting for large crowds to see his skills as a horseman and a jouster. He competed and was constantly injured. Maximilian was constantly imagining

> different and more theatrical events. The Joust of War, developed by Maximilian. was hostile jousting with sharpened rather than blunted lance tips. The goal here was to splinter the lance or throw the other knights off their mounts. The knights wore ferocious armor

> > and carried gold-tipped lances.

Luck by Design

Similarly, suits of armor were constantly commissioned and constantly innovated on. As he advised his offspring, luck is the residue of design.

> Three breastplates in the collection have spring-loaded mechanisms designed to eject the shield, dispersing it into the air like fireworks. Maximilian collaborated with, but micromanaged, clockmakers and goldsmiths in Brussels. There is even a helmet which, when needed as a face defense, has shutters that could be activated.

The ingenuity is spectacular. For Maximilian, arms and armor were not only functional. His aim was to have an audience experience the theater of

There are suits of armor covered in gold, suits of armor for teenagers, and suits of armor that replicate cloth and have skirts like a fashion statement of the day. There are suits of armor with telescoping legs and arms, allowing for intricate

There is a suit of sensational horse armor, embossed, stippled, and engraved with pomegran-



ates. Made of silver foil and gold, the armor must have created a vision of the horse that literally dazzled. Maximilian gifted it to Henry VIII.

Armor for Maximilian was a way of retelling stories of heroic deeds. It was armor as commemoration. It was important that people knew what he had done.

Leaving a Lesson After Death

It is said that Maximilian was morbidly depressed. From 1514, he traveled everywhere with his coffin. For penitential reasons, he gave very specific instructions for the treatment of his body after his death. He wanted his hair to be cut off and his teeth knocked out. His body was to be whipped, covered with lime and ash, wrapped in linen, and "publicly displayed to show the perishableness of earthly glory."

This is of deep interest because during his lifetime, Maximilian's unparalleled passion for the trappings and ideals of knighthood served his worldly ambitions and imaginative stratagems to forge a lasting legacy.

For him, whether in this life or when considering the next, ordinary effort would yield only ordinary results.

Jani Allan is a South African journalist, columnist, writer, and broadcaster.

1. Maximilian I in imperial regalia, after 1508, by Bernhard Strigel. Oil on wood. Tyrolean State Museum, on long-term loan from a private collection (Gem 136).

 $2. Field \, armor \, of \, Maximilian \, I, \, 1480, \, by \, Lorenz$ Helmschmid of Augsburg. Steel, copper alloy, and leather. As mounted: 70 5/8 inches tall. Sallet: Private Collection, New York; all other elements of the armor: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Imperial Armoury (A60).

3. Inventive armor with telescoping arms, for the Joust of War of Maximilian I. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Imperial Armoury.

4. Ceremonial armor of Charles V. circa 1512-14. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Imperial Armoury (A 109).

5. Foot combat armor of Maximilian I, before 1508. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Imperial Armoury (B 71).









DORRANCE.

Our staff is made up of writers, just like you, and we are dedicated to making publishing dreams come true.

Publishing Services

FIVE EASY STEPS TO PUBLICATION:

- 1. Consultation
 - 4. Distribution
- 3. Promotion
- 2. Book Production 5. Merchandising and Fulfillment

Call now to receive your FREE Author's Guide 877-655-4006 or www.dorranceinfo.com/epoch

Churchill's bedroom at Chartwell House Churchil produced most of his work late at night and in the early morning hours. Staff would sometimes stay at one of the estate guest houses and watch for when he turned on his bedroom light That was when their work began.

CHARLES THOMAS/NATIONAL TRUST



(Above) Sir Winston Churchill wearing his robes as chancellor of the exchequer, 1925, by John Singer Sargent. Charcoal drawing on paper.

(Top) The terraced garden at Chartwell. The house sits proudly above the gardens. Churchill's home from 1922 where he helped to dig the lakes, one of which is pictured in the foreground.







The Churchill children planned the Golden Rose Walk at Chartwell as a gift to celebrate their parents' golden wedding anniversary in 1958.

HISTORY

At Home With Winston Churchill

Continued from Page 13

Then the change in government resulting from the election saw him lose that office. It would certainly have been difficult for him to have this sudden lack of influence after decades of having a great deal of it. A number of people thought, "Well, that's it. Churchill is finished."

During his political wilderness years from 1929, Churchill was voicing a number of opinions which weren't in line with the prevailing consensus at the time. By the time that his attention turned toward Nazi Germany, there were a lot of people who were no longer listening to him. But through the 1930s, Churchill was exposed to more and more information that dem onstrated that Germany was preparing for war.

Chartwell had a nickname at the time as "the most important country house in Europe." It was where people who had the information around Germany's preparing for war could come to see Churchill because it would be far too risky for them to be meeting him in London, where it would be very possible they could be seen and followed. Chartwell almost became like a Kent-based branch of the foreign office in terms of this information that was reaching him here. Chartwell became the base from which he began to create this narrative against Nazi Germany and against appeasement in the later 1930s, so it was particularly vital in terms of that role of preparing him for war.

He had very few allies in Westminster at that point in time. That would've been especially frustrating for him because he had the evidence: He had the statistics around German rearmament demonstrating that the was just being ignored for most

There's a quote of Churchill's that I love, as he reflects on being appointed prime minister on May 10, 1940, which is, "I felt as if I were walking with destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and this trial." Those years in the wilderness at Chartwell were particularly immediate in preparing for him for that trial.

There was, of course, the lighter element of Chartwell life. We've got to remember that this was where he was spending time with his family, entertaining close friends, painting beautiful views of the garden, and building a brick wall. Those elements really were the antidote to the darker side of what he was having to deal with, what he was being made aware of, and the fight that he was going to have to have in Westminster.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What propelled him through those times? MS. CARTER: I think for Churchill, he had such a sense of his own destiny. In 1891, when he was 16 years old at Harrow, one of his school friends was asking him what he foresaw for his future. Churchill had the most astonishingly prophetic reply. He said: "Great upheavals, terrible struggles, and wars such as one cannot imagine; and I tell you London will be in danger I shall be very prominent in the defense of London. ... I shall be in command of the defenses of London and I shall save London and England from disaster."

You get this feeling that he's absolutely sure of the fact that he is destined to have a key role in leading our country at some point in the future.

terms of the Treaty of Versailles | **THE EPOCH TIMES**: Please tell us | ful gift from the children would his children.

MS. CARTER: Churchill and Clementine's marriage was a very long and happy one. I think that they were utterly devoted to each other. Mary, the Churchill's youngest daughter, once said of her mother that Churchill came first, second, and third.

For Clementine, being the wife of Winston Churchill was unto itself a hugely important role and particularly because Churchill's focus was always outward: It was always toward Westminster, or his publisher, or whoever he was liaising with Whereas the running of the house itself, which was so vital for Churchill's well-being, came down to her. She did a phenomenal job with looking after this very expensive, high-mainte-

nance house and home. I think Churchill wanted to be a very different father from his own. He famously had a comparatively poor relationship with his father. His father would write to him at boarding school calling him a "wastrel" and saying that "he would never amount to anything in life." That had a real

impact on Churchill. When Churchill was made chancellor of the exchequer, his first response was that he had his father's robes from that role and how he would now wear them. For Churchill, there was always this sense of walking in his father's footsteps but having never been able to truly gain his approval. When Churchill came to raise his own children, there's a much warmer dynamic between them and a real care and affection, I would say.

When the Churchills' golden wedding anniversary was looming, Randolph, the Churchills' only son, thought that a wonder-

be to give them an avenue of golden roses, which to this day is still in the garden here at Chartwell. Because the anniversary fell in September, which isn't an optimal time for roses to be in bloom, the gift on the day was a wonderful book of artists' illustrations, drawings, and paintings of golden roses that the children had commissioned. The following summer was when the avenue in the garden itself came into bloom.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Can you tell us a little about Churchill's relationships with people? MS. CARTER: Churchill had a remarkable ability to connect with people, and that's something that we certainly see during his visits to bomb sites during the blitz—that ability to connect with people across all areas of society. Of course, being the grandson of a duke, spending a great deal of time at Blenheim Palace growing up, there was a certain world into which he was born. But I think his charisma and his sense of humor and his phenomenal ability with words just meant that he could connect

with people. The fact that Churchill allowed a Romany widow to live on Chartwell land, after the local council evicted her, is demonstrative of his kindness. I think that's a trait of his that doesn't get as much focus. Of course, Churchill is famous for his leadership, courage, and oratory, but he was also a very kind and

This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

caring person as well.

To find out more about Chartwell House, visit www. NationalTrust.org.uk/Chartwell

For Clementine, being the wife of Winston Churchill was unto itself a hugely important role.

Katherine Carter, project curator

Keeping Chartwell

stewardship of the

National Trust with

the proviso that the

live there as long as

Churchills could

they pleased.

House In 1946, a group of admirers purchased Chartwell House after they heard that the Churchills found the upkeep expensive. Carter said they felt "it would be a travesty for this man, who in their eyes had saved Western civilization from tyranny, and yet was at risk of losing the home that he loved so much." They passed the house to the



(L-R) John Strange Spencer-Churchill, his mother Lady Randolph, and Winston Churchill, the future British prime minister.

HISTORY

Mothers and Sons: Jennie Churchill and Winston Churchill

The Hand That Rocks the Cradle

JEFF MINICK

On battlefields around the world soldiers have cried out for their mothers as they lay dying. And memorably, Abraham Lincoln once said, "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother." In "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle: Mothers and Sons," we will look at a number of famous men strongly influenced by their mothers. Not all these women were angels, but their love, disposition, and sense of principle left an indelible stamp on their sons.

American-born Jennie Jerome Churchill and her British husband Lord Randolph would never qualify for any Best Parent of the Year award.

Though Winston adored his father, Lord Randolph rarely displayed any affection for Winston, considering him lazy and dimwitted. The distance between father and son was enormous. In "Churchill: Walking With Destiny," biographer Andrew Roberts reports that after a family dinner in the 1930s, Winston said to his own son, "We have this evening had a longer period of con-

tinuous conversation together than the total which I ever had with my father in the whole course of his life." Despite this note of condemnation, Winston revered the memory of his father.

GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

Winston also deeply loved his mother, but once again found those boyhood affections ignored or pushed away. The beautiful and vivacious Jennie was as caught up in the social swirl of her time as her husband was in his politics.

During his school years away from home, Winston wrote repeatedly to his mother, begging her to visit him, but was usually ignored. Turning again to "Churchill: Walking With Destiny," Roberts tells us that "from 1885 to 1892, Churchill wrote to his parents seventysix times; they to him six times. The huge majority of Churchill's letters were not asking for anything except, between the lines, for love and attention. Their letters to him on the other hand contained constant remonstrations."

Enter Miss Everest

Because of her busy social life, and like so many others of her class, Lady Churchill turned the rearing of her two many acquaintances in publishing and sons—Winston had a younger brother, Jack—over to nannies, including Winston's favorite, Elizabeth Everest.

It was Miss Everest, whom Winston he would participate in one of the Britcalled "Woom," who showered her ish Army's last cavalry charges and young charge with love, cared for him in his illnesses, and often provided him comfort and counsel. Of her, Churchill later recalled, "My nurse was my confidante. It was to her I poured out my many troubles."

Later, after her death, he wrote, "She into Parliament. friend during the whole of the twenty years I had lived." When she was dying, he sat with her and held her hand until she passed. He attended her funeral, erected a tombstone in her memory, and paid for the care of her grave for as long as he lived.

In contrast, Winston wrote in his autobiography "My Early Life" of his mother "She shone for me like the Evening Star. I loved her dearly—but at a distance."

A Maternal Sea Change

All that changed in 1895, when Lord Randolph died. In his absence, the relationship between Jennie and her 21-year-old son took a 180-degree turn. In "The Last Lion: Visions of Glory," historian William Manchester conjectures that "... she would slowly transfer her devotion to her brilliant, eccentric son. Her passion would run deep and strong, and it would be of immeasurable benefit to him, though it could never be mistaken for maternal love."

Because of her many social connections—she was known for her wit and charm, had earned a minor reputation as a writer, attended parties and balls, and had also taken a series of lovers— Jennie was able time and again to use her influence and help Winston attain

those successes he so furiously sought. This new bond between mother and son was particularly strong during the years 1895 to 1900. After Winston's graduation from Sandhurst, Britain's West Point, Jennie pulled some strings and helped win him a coveted spot in the Fourth Hussars. A writer herself, she used her contacts in the world of print and arranged for Winston to pen dispatches about the fighting he saw in India for the Daily Telegraph. In doing so, Jennie launched him on a writing career that would provide him with economic sustenance for the rest of his life and would eventually win him the Nobel Prize in Literature.

She acted as both agent and publicist for his first book, "The Story of the Malakand Field Force," again using her

politics. She later appealed to the prime minister, Lord Salisbury, for Winston's transfer from India to the Sudan, where would write another book, "The River War: An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Sudan." On his return from these and other adventures, she worked tirelessly to put him in touch with politicians, hoping to boost him

On winning election to Parliament Winston wrote a note to Jennie stating, "I could never have earned it if you had not transmitted the wit and energy which are necessary."

'A Great Believer in Your Star'

Jennie demonstrated that wit and energy through the letters of encouragement she sent to her son. She supplied him with the books he requested while in India. She sent notes filled with advice and admonitions. In late 1915, after Churchill's idea of attacking Germany through the Dardanelles had failed and he was serving on the Western Front, Jennie wrote to him, "I am a great believer in your star."

Even in practical matters she proved invaluable. She gave assistance in furnishing his rooms, finding a secretary, and assisting personally with his early political campaigns.

Of this period in his life, Winston later said, "My mother was always at hand to help and advise, but I was now in my twenty-first year and she never sought to exercise parental control. Indeed, she soon became an ardent ally, furthering my plans and guarding my interests with all her influence and boundless energy. She was still at forty young, beautiful and fascinating. We worked together on even terms, more like brother and sister than mother and son."

When Jennie Jerome Churchill died in 1921, her son arrived at her bedside too late to say goodbye to the woman who had meant so much to him in his youth and had promoted his ambitions. After all the ceremonies, the man who went on to become the greatest of England's prime ministers stood alone beside his mother's grave, wept, and dropped a spray of roses onto the coffin.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C., Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF AMAZON STUDIOS

THEATER REVIEW

A Tragedy: A Production That Comes So Close to Wonderment

'Oedipus Rex' at Chicago's Court Theatre

SHARON KILARSKI

HICAGO—Any time a theater produces a classic that ultimately says, ills, that we should look within our murdered his father and married own breasts—that the search for inner truth is paramount—this is a theater we should treasure.

Court Theatre should also be congratulated for planning its community-based approach to staging the whole Oedipus Trilogy this season. As the program notes explain, the hope is to explore, with the city's predominantly black South Side residents, the themes of fate, justice, and re-

My praise stated upfront, the production of the first of the three plays, "Oedipus Rex," misses as often as it hits its mark, though not for a lack of talent, and not because the creators didn't try to be true to

Driven by a Quest for Truth King Oedipus had once saved The-

bes from that cursed monster the Sphinx. Now, years later, through his heartfelt desire to relieve the suffering of his plague-stricken people, the king tries to discover exactly who murdered the previous king of Thebes. Why this quest? An oracle from the god Apollo commands that the murderer be found and punished so that Thebes can be delivered from pestilence.

But the deeper reason for Oedipus's search is spiritual. Not only is it a king's duty to protect his people, but a god has made Oedipus's path clear, and moreover, this particular king feels compelled to seek the truth, even if it costs him dearly in a worldly

The king simply wants to know the truth, and it is this desire (through a series of interviews) that propels all of the play's action despite the fact that everyone he talks to seems intent on stopping him. This includes the prophet Teiresias; a shepherd; and even his wife, Queen Jocasta.

Sophocles's "Oedipus Rex" is rightly considered a model for economy of plot. In just a few scenes, the protagonist moves from ignorance to full knowledge of his sins—that he his mother—and there is little in it that is extraneous. Given how distilled it is, the play jabs, punches, and can leave one breathless.

The Production Highs

The late Nicholas Rudall's translation masterfully accommodates our modern ears. It's powerful and, at times, beautiful. The cast is more than able to

make the script sing. Kelvin Roston Jr. as Oedipus handles the language, carries himself with requisite nobility, and has the depth to carry the emotional trajectory from compassion to anger to anguish. Much the same can be said of the rest of the cast.

Surprisingly and much to its credit, the script allows the actors to wring out humor. Who would think that the blind prophet Teiresias, terrorized by an incensed king, could draw laughs? But Christopher Donahue's impeccable timing does just that.

Timothy Edward Kane as Creon elicits chuckles when he tries to persuade the king that, as the king's brother-in-law, he reaps all the benefits of royalty with none of its headaches. So why would Creon undermine Oedipus to gain the throne? Hard to argue with that.

And when Oedipus and Jocasta learn, mistakenly, that he could not possibly have killed his father and married his mother, director Charles Newell has Roston and Kate Collins as Jocasta howl with laughter in relief. It's a brilliant choice, and it's a scene that rings as contemporarily apt and yet eternally profound.

Other acting standouts include Mark Spates Smith, who radiates wisdom as the choral leader; Sheldon D. Brown as a priest whose beautiful voice enthralls us; and Stef Tovar as the shepherd, who quakes in the desperate king's

Complementing the action are

With a fine script, sumptuous accessories, and a cast that shines, how could this production

miss the mark?

'Oedipus Rex'

Court Theatre 5535 S. Ellis Ave.

Running Time 1 hour, 10 minutes (no intermission) Closes Dec. 8 **Tickets**

773-753-4472 or

CourtTheatre.org

Kelvin Roston Jr. as

Collins as Jocasta in

Oedipus and Kate

"Oedipus Rex."

a compelling opening. We buy it. Throughout the opening scene, they continue to physicalize their reactions. For example, when a character mentions the despised word "Sphinx," they, as Theban

costumes by Jacqueline Firkins.

The gauzy white scarves and tu-

Oedipus in a magnificent magenta

With a fine script, sumptuous ac-

cessories, and a cast that shines,

how could this production miss

Let's Throw In Some Modernism

The set is the clue that this produc-

tion will tend toward expression-

ism—the strain of modernism that

externalizes emotions. The stark

white walls of the unit set look like

a royal padded cell—beautiful, yes,

with its glistening finish, and I sup-

pose one could make the case that

what Oedipus endures could drive

lights first come up and the chorus

silently process to their places, they

go down on all fours and begin con-

tortured plague victims. They offer

anyone to madness.

robe. All are gorgeous.

the mark?

twitches of horror. This meaning

is clear to the audience.

We are even treated to the chorus's nics of the chorus contrast with the frantic actions amid strobe lights to opulent sheen of the royal garb: Jo-show us Oedipus's inner turmoil. casta in gold, Creon in silver, and But believe me, we don't need it. setting him dramatically apart, The play and actors are more than capable of transmitting it to us.

Oedipus (Kelvin Roston Jr.)

and his daughter Antigone (Aeriel Williams) (center)

moments of "Oedipus Rex."

and the cast, in the final

Week 48, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES

As the play progresses and each choral scene becomes more and more stylized with expressionist movement, externalizing for us what we would best be internalizing for ourselves, the meaning becomes increasingly difficult to decipher.

This is not to say that theater, any more than any other art, should spell out everything. It would be a lecture then, and not art, and art should capture some of the mys-

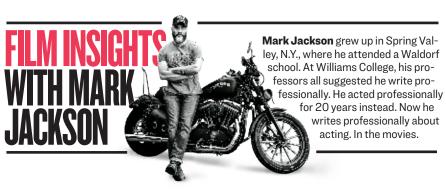
But there's just too much of mystery here, and we are focused on it for too long. As a result, we are The Greek chorus uses expres- thrown out of the searing action sionism throughout. When the that provokes the heart into the cerebral landscape of whys: Why are two of the chorus actors holding lit orbs? Why is the actress rolling vulsing in a rhythmical pattern as on the floor with an orb and acting like a child with a ball? Is this orb Apollo's sun? Is this meant to break the tension before the awful truth emerges in the next scene?

In the following scene, when the storyline re-emerges and Oedipus stands again before us, we've uncitizens, react with simultaneous fortunately lost our connection to what we've felt for him and must wait to feel it. And this happens over and over again.

I watched the chorus members in these scenes—the scenes with the actual storytelling—and I envied them. They were actually feeling

Oedipus's pain. I could not. The saving grace for this production comes at the very end. Oedipus, his daughter Antigone (Aeriel Williams), and the choral leader (Mark Spates Smith) sing together, harmonizing in pianissimo tones. The music restores to us, to some degree, the feeling of compassion for this man and his fate.

But I can imagine just how much more powerful the story would have been if the actors and the scripts had been trusted.



'The Report': Apparently Waterboarding Doesn't Work

MARK JACKSON

nemember Donald Rumsfeld and all the waterboarding that went on when the United States was after Bin Laden? "The Report" is about that CIA/ Rumsfeld/Cheney-sanctioned torture, which produced no results and was then covered up. Top-notch movie. Right up there with "Spotlight," my top pick of 2015 that focuses on another mega-scandal.

Torture doesn't work? Really? I've read a bunch of special-operations military thrillers, where bad guys get tortured, and the authors suggest it does work. And these are books written by actual former Navy SEALs, Delta Force, and even CIA black-ops operators: men who know war. The James Bond books are full of torture; Bond, of course, is superhumanly stoic and never talks. So I'm confused. More on this later.

Tough Assignment

Daniel J. Jones (Adam Driver) is a young staffer assigned by boss Senator Dianne Feinstein (an outstanding Annette Bening) to lead an investigation into the CIA's EIT program (Enhanced Interrogation Techniques) that was designed and implemented post-9/11.

"The Report" is about Jones's journey of exposing a conspiracy by top government officials to manipulate the law, destroy evidence, and hide from and deny to the Amer-

ican public the truth of the CIA's brutality. It's not information that many in the government, naturally, would care to have come to light. As one character tells Jones "They asked you to build a boat, but they had no intention of sailing it." From waterboarding to sleep deprivation, confined spaces, stress positions, deafening nonstop death-metal music, and so on, "The Report" depicts the PTSD-inducing trauma, injury and ultimately, the death of prisoners that

the United States was responsible for. Given that we were looking for answers regarding our 2,977 people murdered on 9/11, probably even the most pacifistic of Americans, subconsciously, deep in their souls, sanctioned at least a little bit







(Top) Adam Driver as Daniel J. Jones, a staffer assigned to investigate the CIA's use of torture, in "The Report."

(Middle) Annette Bening as Senator Dianne Feinstein. (Left) Jon Hamm in "The

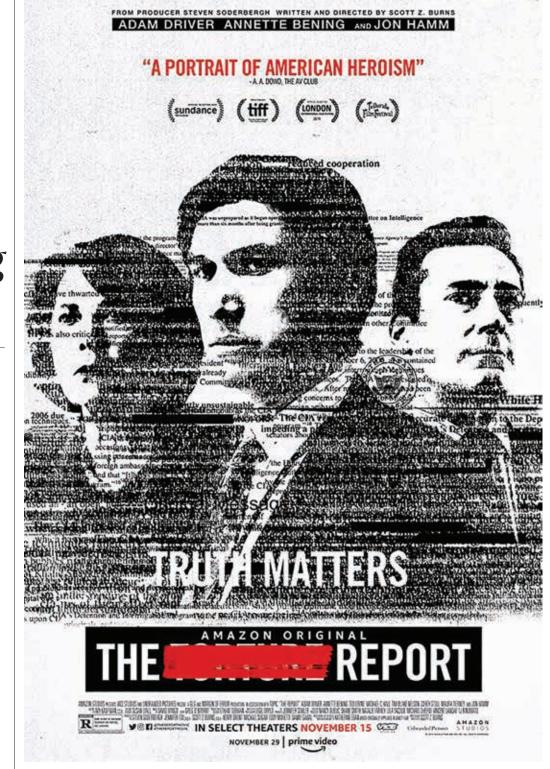
'The Report

Director Scott Z. Burns **Starring**

Annette Bening, Corey Stoll, Michael C. Hall, Maura Tierney Victor Slezak

Rated

Running Time



A poster for "The Report."

Colonel Jessup from "A Few Good Men") "... deep down, in places you don't talk about at parties; you want me on that wall, you need me on that wall!"

Probably most of us were feeling a little bit of —whatever it takes. I wonder if TV's during that time period, with Kiefer Sutherland's Jack Bauer running around torturing people and getting tortured, had any relation to all of the above.

What We Weren't Aware Of

What we hadn't counted on was for the | what got the info that Jones unearthed to been hatched by a couple of zealous, CIA- his righteous whistleblowing. And this is appointed pseudoscientists. It's slightly un- | ultimately a nonpartisan issue; it's about fortunate that in "The Report," these fools | transparency. It's about America returning are depicted as exactly that: a couple of | to its early, pristine morality. What would bozos, who, had they actually acted and talked like that, would have immediately gotten the whole scheme called into ques-

tion, under intense scrutiny. Word would have spread. Because, one more step and they're in Rex Kwon Do from "Napoleon Dynamite" or John Ratzenberg
Driver and especially er-as-Cliff on "Cheers" territory: "What you got here is yer enhanced interrogation tactics, guaranteed to elicit full disclosure of the whereabouts of yer Osama Bin Laden" (not an actual quote).

It's mildly funny, but the self-aggrandizing bamboozlement by these two led was no science happening, just made-up results rejiggered to fit the narratives they wished to promote. These "facts," along with Weapons of Mass Destruction, make a good argument for this being the starting the CIA come off rather badly.

What Goes On

The deeper Jones dives, the more his outrage mounts, to the point where he is doing nothing but eating, sleeping, and breathing the hunt for truth in an underlit, airless, basement workspace. What's keeping him up nights is locating the black sites where torture took place. And the whitewashing, misleading, and spinning that had the American public going, "Yup—apparently waterboarding is highly uncomfortable, but they're getting results; they're gonna find Bin Laden!" (Not an actual quote from anybody.)

Jones investigates the tortures of a long line of prisoners, chewing and munching his way methodically though a giant salad of sheer paper tonnage of CIA communications meant to wear him out, which became his 1,000-page "Torture Report." They thought he couldn't stomach it all. But he did.

Wore his help out too; they begged him to stop. They'd had enough of the basement and the endless redacted paper-grazing. The best part of the film is the CIA's even-

of torture. As in (to quote Jack Nicholson's | tual burgling of the office, which leads to someone saying a line to the effect of, "The CIA is not allowed to spy on the oversight committee that's supposed to be in place to stop the CIA from spying on it!!"

Performance-wise, Driver and especially Bening will get Oscar mentions. Bening "24," which was wildly popular and aired | for channeling Dianne Feinstein's solemn righteousness, carefulness of speech, and her balancing of the explosive exposure of war crimes that could foment a massive political roiling.

Speaking of which, the democratic system envisioned by the founding fathers wasn't the attention of the American public. It was founding father George say? He'd say this:

Performance-wise, Bening will get Oscar mentions.

"Should any American soldier be so base and infamous as to injure any [prisoner] ... to people getting killed for nothing. There | I do most earnestly enjoin you to bring him to such severe and exemplary punishment as the enormity of the crime may require. Should it extend to death itself, it will not be disproportional to its guilt at such a time and in such a cause ... for by such conduct gun for America's entry into the post-truth | they bring shame, disgrace, and ruin to era. Needless to say, the whole thing makes | themselves and their country." —George Washington, charge to the Northern Expeditionary Force, Sept. 14, 1775

> In the past, war was different; war had a different set of ethics. It's probably too late to return to such quaint views. But humanity should try.

> Still ... all those war-hero authors writing about the effectiveness of torture? If all that torture proved ineffective, maybe Ian Fleming was trying to sell more books?

Because according to Patrick Cockburn's excellent article "CIA torture report: It didn't work then, it doesnt' work now": "Torture always produces tainted information because it comes from somebody trying to avoid unbearable suffering. The interrogator is happy that he or she has uncovered conspiracies and plots, and happier still when these are confirmed in elaborate detail by other torture victims. Having unmasked these demonic intentions, which would not have been revealed by other means, interrogators come to discard all information not provided under extreme duress.

This distorted way of thinking became prevalent in the CIA."

FILM REVIEW

A Decent Race-Against-Time Cop Thriller

IAN KANE

Whenever I hear of a new cop feature film, I maintain a sense of cautious optimism. The standard "bad cop" trope has really been done to death, and the real-life folks in law enforcement have a tough enough time serving and protecting the public without negative publicity broadcast about them in our country's theaters.

Fortunately, the new cop thriller "Line of Duty" doesn't necessarily follow this hackneyed formula, but it does fall into another familiar category—that of the disgraced cop who has to redeem himself.

Screenwriter Jeremy Drysdale's script has a distinctly 1980s vibe to it, harkening back to fluffy cop dramas such as "Lethal Weapon" and "Red Heat," and combined with Steven C. Miller's loud and raucous direction, proudly wears its retro trappings on its sleeve.

Aaron Eckhart ("The Dark Knight," "The Core") is Officer Frank Penny, a cop with a murky past who gets caught up in circumstances that verge on the fringes of ridiculousness. In the film's first act, he becomes involved in the chase-in-progress of a male suspect and ends up cornering the man in a dead-end alleyway. (We've never seen that before.) The suspect does an almost perfunctory pause while drawing a pistol out of his waistband and turns to fire on Penny, who of course drops him with his own gun.

Officer Penny's superior, Chief Volk (Giancarlo Esposito), isn't too happy about the suspect's death: The man was the only lead in the disappearance of his daughter. Hence, Penny catches hell and his career is thrown into jeopardy. The only way to redeem himself is to find out where the chief's daughter is and rescue her from

'Line of Duty' is hampered by a boggy script.



Aaron Eckhart in "Line of Duty."

'Line of Duty'

Director Steven C. Miller

Starring

Dina Meyer, Aaron Eckhart, Giancarlo Esposito

Running Time 1 hour, 38 minutes

Rated

Release Date Nov. 15, 2019

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To see more, visit DreamFlightEnt.com

drowning in a box that is gradually filling up with water.

The main problem is that Penny's been ordered to take a sudden leave of absence due to the shooting mishap, something that makes his effort to solve the case a rogue affair. Going rogue, of course, means disobeying orders from on high in his desperate bid to find the young girl.

Along the way, he meets up with a shrewd reporter named Ava Brooks (Courtney Eaton, "Perfect," "Gods of Egypt"), who has a penchant for live-streaming her news reports.

The film does feature some of the silly back-and-forth dialogue that we've all witnessed in retro cop dramas from the '80s and '90s, mainly in the form of wisecracks that Officer Penny and reporter Brooks cast at one another. There's nothing tongue-in-cheek here. It's all handled pretty straight-nosed, as opposed to being clever or strewn with moments of irony.

Saggy Script but **Great Action Film**

I feel for both Eckhart and Eaton, both capable actors, who try to make the best out of a rather saggy, boilerplate script. Penny's shady past is served up right on time when Brooks discovers that he accidentally caused the death of a young person. From there, she becomes increasingly suspicious of him since he also killed the suspect in the alleyway. Is this a pattern?—she wonders.

At various junctures, Brooks seems to be unrealistically shoehorned into the half-baked storyline. It's as Drysdale wanted to make a buddy-cop film but tried to be self-consciously different because he wanted the strong female trope, but without her being a cop. As a cop, she would have been more complicit in Penny's sketchy, morally tenuous actions.

Ben McKenzie ("Gotham" TV series) stars as main bad guy Dean Keller and does what he can with his cheesy lines; his character is pretty mono-dimensional.

Esposito rises to the occasion and manages to convey a frantic father trying to get to the bottom of who kidnapped his daughter and why they did so.

To the film's credit, Miller is able to flex his directorial muscles with tense, adrenalinepumping action scenes. You can tell that this is the same man who brought us noisily fun actioners such as 2017's "First Kill" and 2016's "Marauders."

In the end, there's not a whole lot to "Line of Duty," which is hampered by a boggy script that has all of the directorial subtlety of a jackhammer. The acting is decent and there are a few laughs to be had with some of the corny oneliners, so the film does perform decently as a straight-ahead cop thriller. I just wish that it would have been a little more clever and nuanced.



Enjoy big-time Internet speeds without spending big bucks!

Get Connected for as low as

 $\textbf{HyperLink}^{\texttt{TM}} \,\, \texttt{High-Speed Internet}$

• 50X faster than DSL!!** • High speed with fiber optic technology · Fast download time for streaming videos, music and more!

Get Connected for as low as

Satellite Internet

• Fast speeds up to 25 Mbps • Available everywhere

· Larger data allowance (up to 50 GB per month)

What you get with HughesNet Satellite Internet:

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL AUTHORIZED RETAILER

855-402-6500

Speed performance allowing you to stream & download shows, music, photos, large files and more on multiple devices



sNet is a registered trademark of Hughes Network Systems, LLC, an EchoStar company The HughsNet Cen5 service plans are designed to deliver download speeds of 25 Mbps and upload speeds of 3 Mbps, but individual customers may experience different speeds at different times of the day. Speeds and uninterrupted use are not guaranteed and may vary based on a variety of factors including: the configuration of your computer, the number of concurrent users, network of Internet congestion, the capabilities and content of the websites you are accessing, network management practices as deemed necessary, and other factors. When you connected to HughesNet service using Wi-Fi, your experience will vary based on your proximity to the Wi-Fi source and the strength of the