

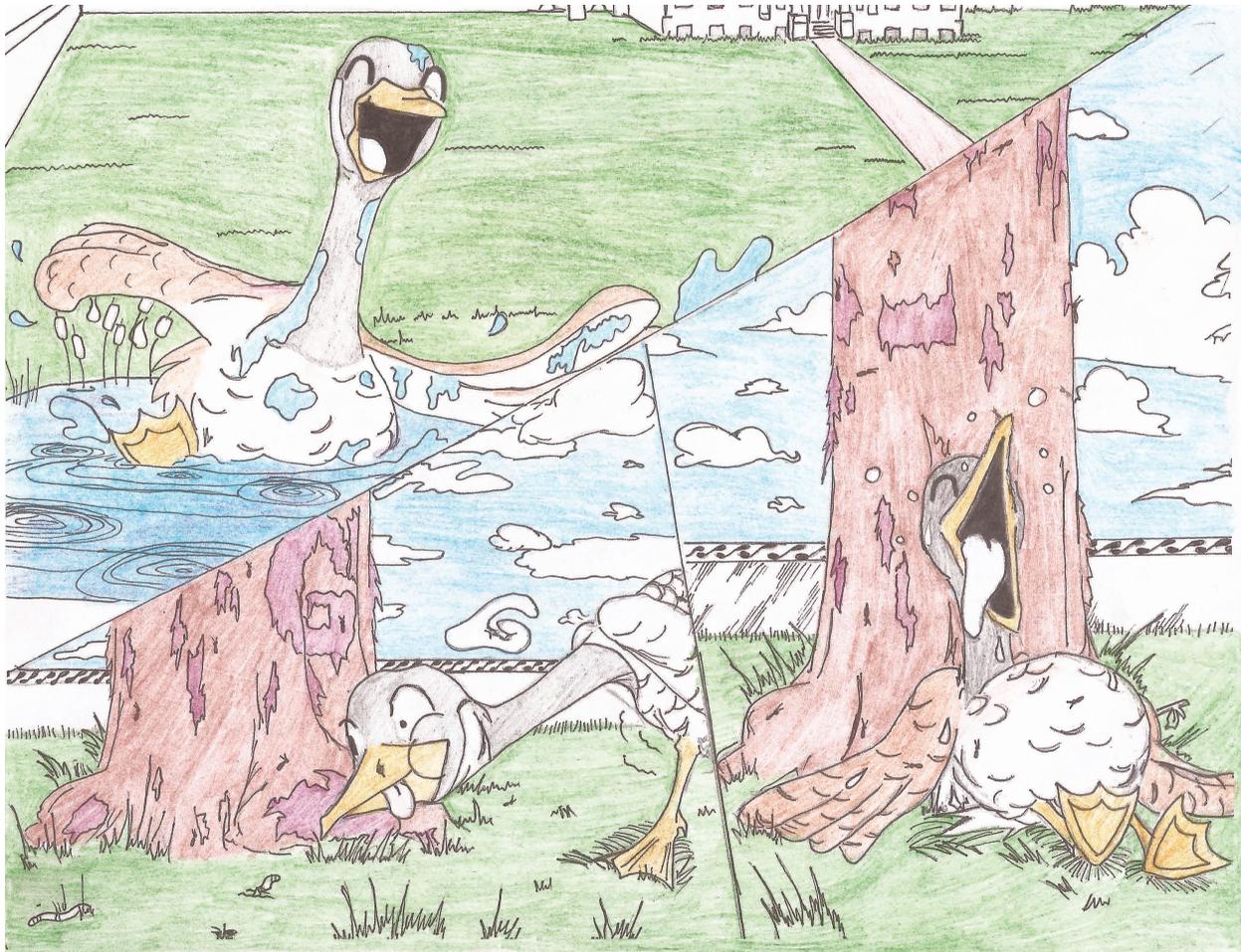
Chapter 7: Griffy the Goose

Art made Mya Davis, age 13

What do you do on hot and sticky summer days? Maybe you lick sweet popsicles and go swimming whenever you can.

Griffy the Goose cooled himself in similar ways. He sipped and splashed in any water he could find, whether in a river, pond, or fountain. He was a young Canadian Goose who particularly enjoyed lunches of leaves and grasses. He always found plenty from the grounds around the home where President Madison lived.

This home had many names. Some called it the President's Palace, or the Presidential Mansion, or the President's House. A few people started calling it the White House, probably because of its white color. Maybe it was called the White



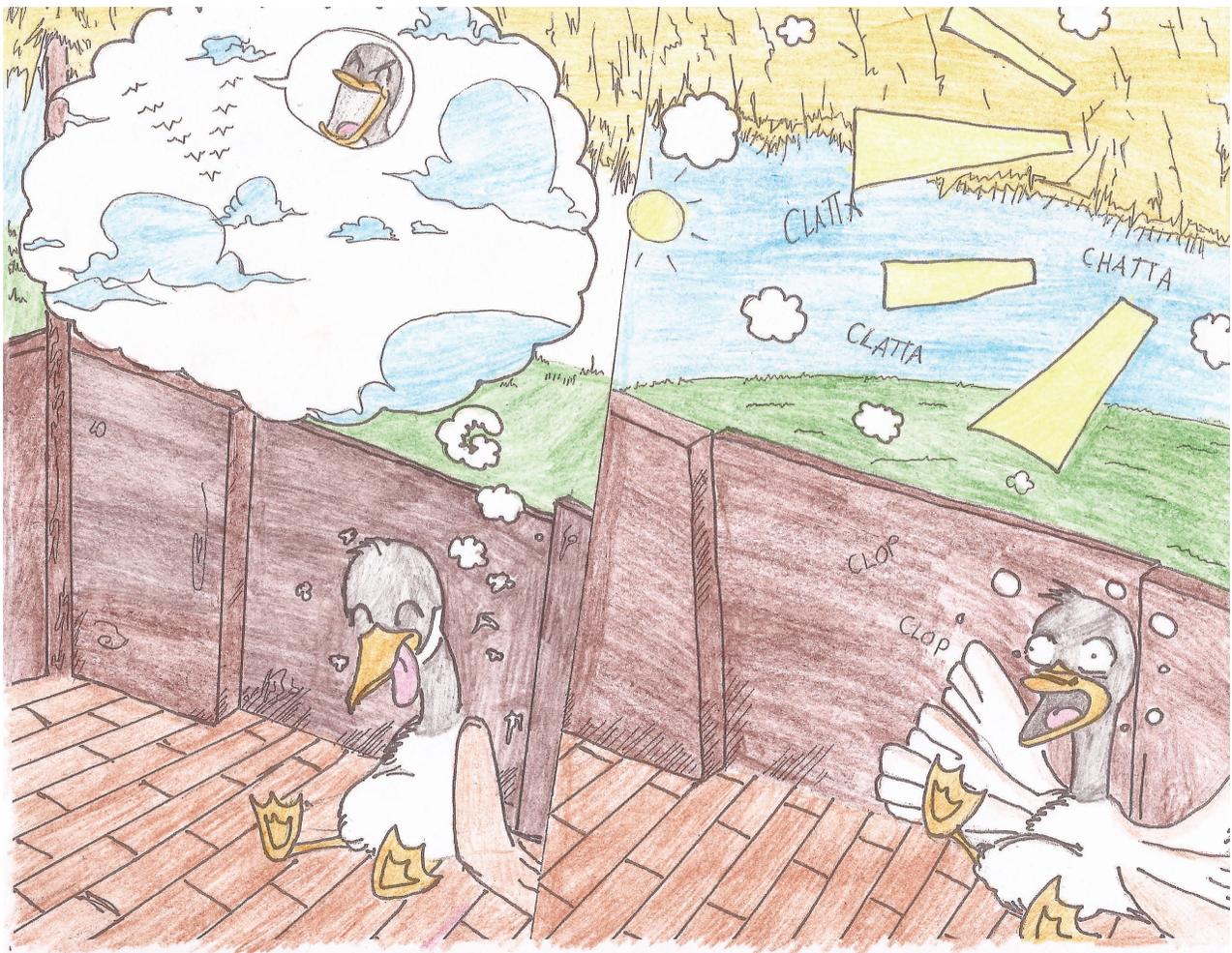
House because that was the name of Martha Washington's home when she was younger. Remember George Washington, the first official president of the United States? Well, Martha was his wife.

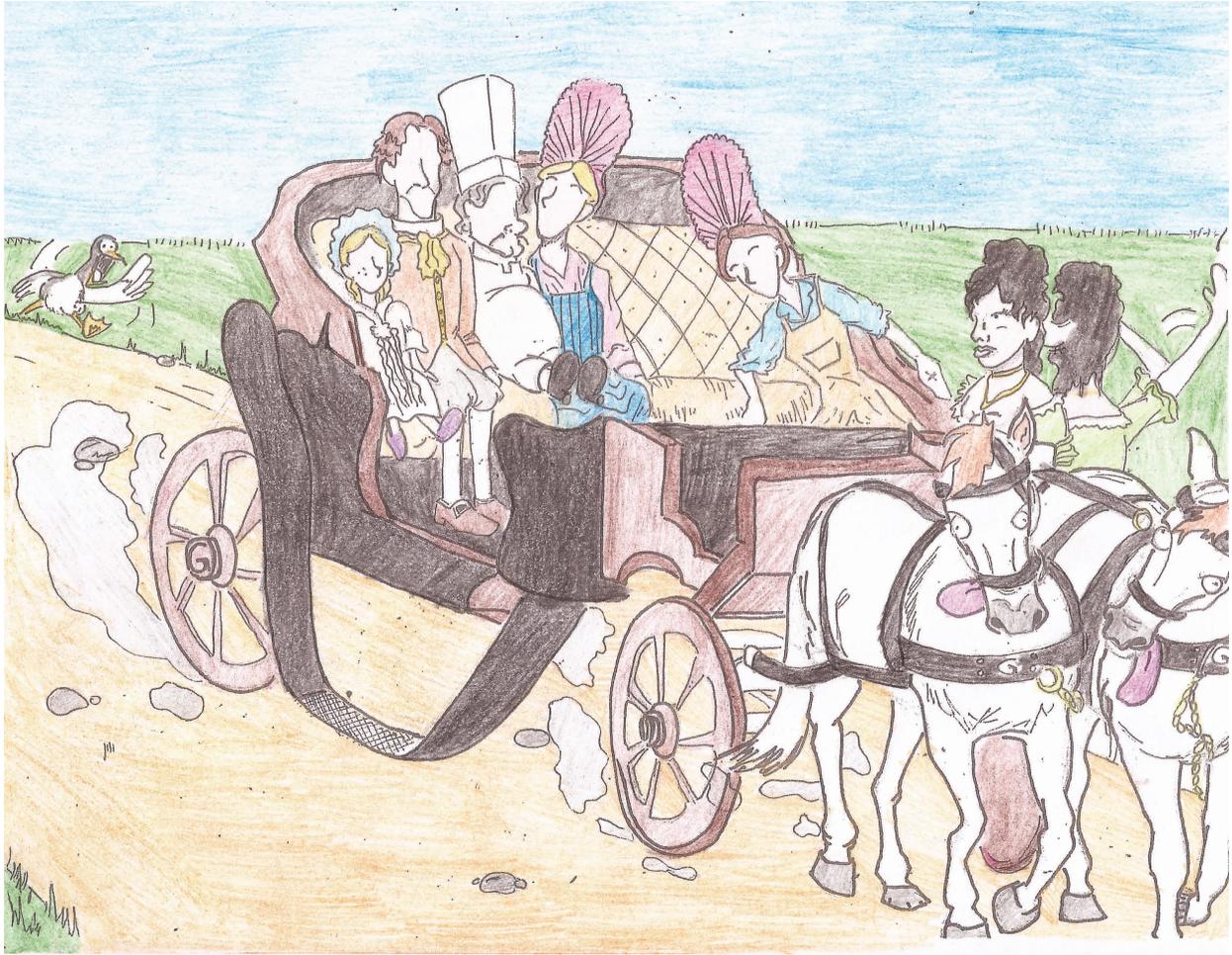
Many years ago, in the summer of 1814, the sweltering heat was almost unbearable! The mosquitos swarmed every which way, the people slumped in their homes, and the geese rested in the shade. Griffy, however, had discovered something you would only dream about in exciting adventure stories of shipwrecks and deserted islands. He had found a tree house built by President Madison's son, John Todd, who was away with relatives for the summer. This little house was like a palace for a bird. Before you could enter, you would climb a set of creaky steps that led to a swinging wooden bridge with handrails made of thick rope. There were windows and shutters that opened and closed. The roof was covered with a thick layer of dried grasses from which a skylight stuck up on top.



Well, this young honking waterfowl with a black head and neck couldn't stay in the tree house forever. He needed to eat! He grazed in the fields all summer long until he was quite stuffed! He grasped blades of grass with his bill, then tore them with a jerk of his head. He settled into a soft patch of weeds and herbs in the shade of a tall, towering tree. There he dozed off into a dream of flight with the best friends a bird could ever hope for. His dream of flapping those strong wings while lined up in V-formation was interrupted by the shuffle of feet and urgent calls. A group of people were jumping into a carriage.

Startled, Griffy jolted awake from his happy dreams, sprang up on his webbed feet, and darted for the carriage with a waddle-waddle-skip, then a waddle-skip-skip. He wanted a better view, and he wanted to know what the fuss was all about.



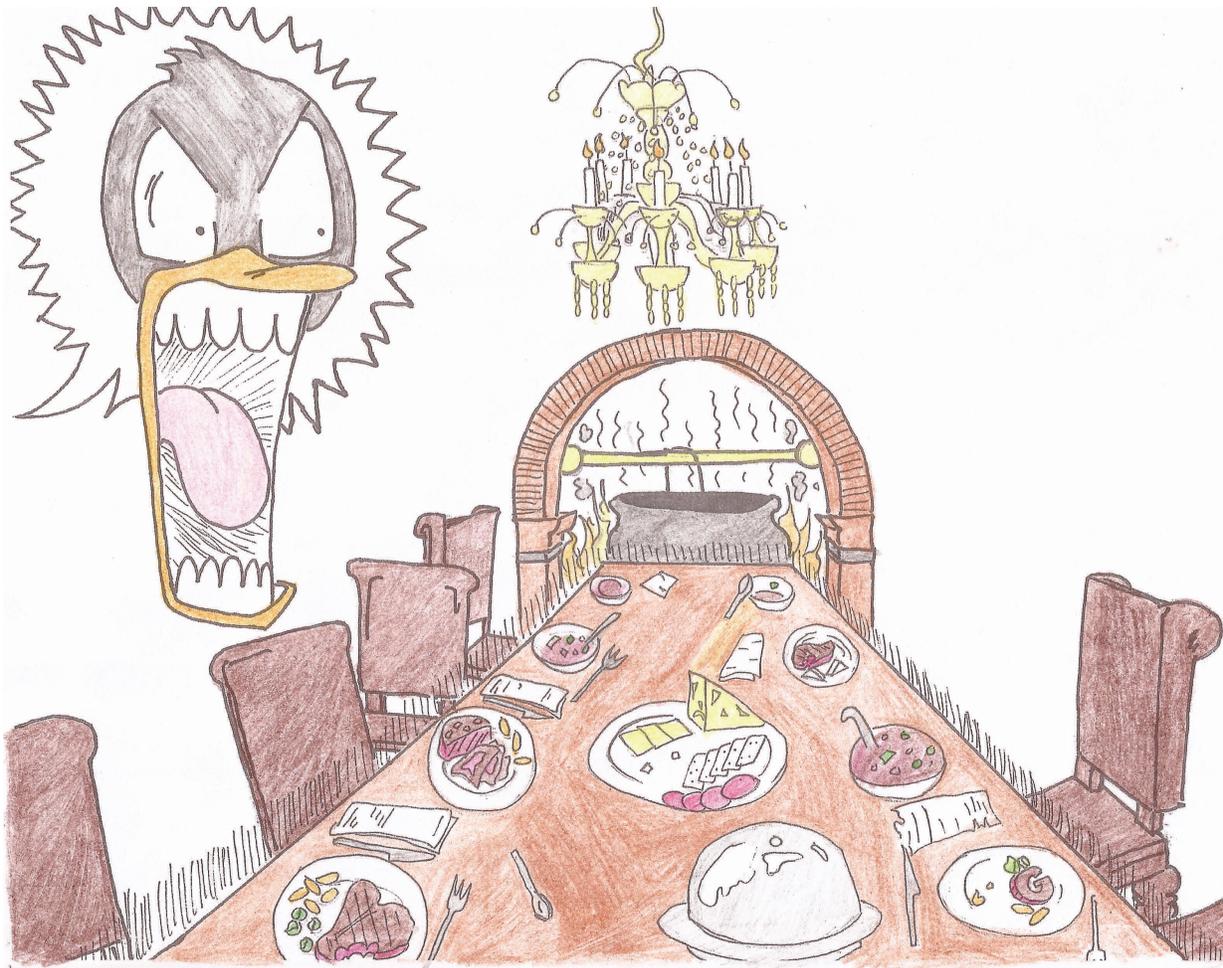


First Lady Dolley Madison, President Madison's wife, was rounding up the others working in the White House to help them escape. The British were coming! In no time, the anxious people were seated in the carriage with a large portrait of George Washington that had been torn from the wall. They were dashing off toward the nearby Potomac River.

Griffy watched the hooves of the horses fiercely gallop away. He pondered whether to flap his wings and leave the area too, but he decided to stay and watch over the big, white house. This had always been his home and he had to stay. He nervously walked around the house and let out a honk every now and then. When he heard pounding footsteps coming down the road, he stopped his pacing. When loud shots rang in the air, he decided it was time to get a better view from a safer spot, high in the tree house.

He knew there was trouble coming. For the past two years, the United States had been battling the British, who had been taking American sailors off their ships and forcing them to work for the British. These men from across the Atlantic Ocean also wanted to control what the Americans could buy and sell. Sounds like they needed another reminder that the United States did not belong to Britain! The British were now headed right toward Washington, the nation's capitol!

Griffy was not prepared for what he would see next. The soldiers were taking important items from every government building they came to, then setting the buildings on fire! They did the same to military store houses and boats. Griffy became furious and started honking up a storm when the soldiers tramped through the door to Mr. Madison's dining room. The dining table was set with dishes, plates, knives, forks, and spoons arranged for a dinner party. There were meats cooking on spits and soups in pots over an open fire. They sat down for a fine feast and then, to Griffy's horror, set the house on fire once they were outside again!



If only there were some American soldiers to defend this city! Sadly, they were fighting another battle a few miles away!

Poor Griffy. He looked down on the smoky roads where the burning buildings shot brilliant red flames into the sky.



What now? Was their plan to attack the whole city? Well, something amazing and unbelievable happened. Drip-drop, drip-drip-drop, drip-swoosh-swoosh. A thunderstorm appeared out of nowhere!

Not just a storm, but a tornado zoomed through and picked cannons up into the air and dropped them down again! Many of the terrified troops ran away!



One of Britain's last defeats came a month later as they tried to bomb a fort in Maryland. But, after a whole day of shooting at the fort, they were not able to destroy it. The American flag kept flying. A man who watched from a nearby ship wrote the words:

**“And the rockets’ red glare,
the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night
that our flag was still there.”**

You should ask the person who bought you this book to play you this song. It's called “The Star-Spangled Banner,” by Francis Scott Key.

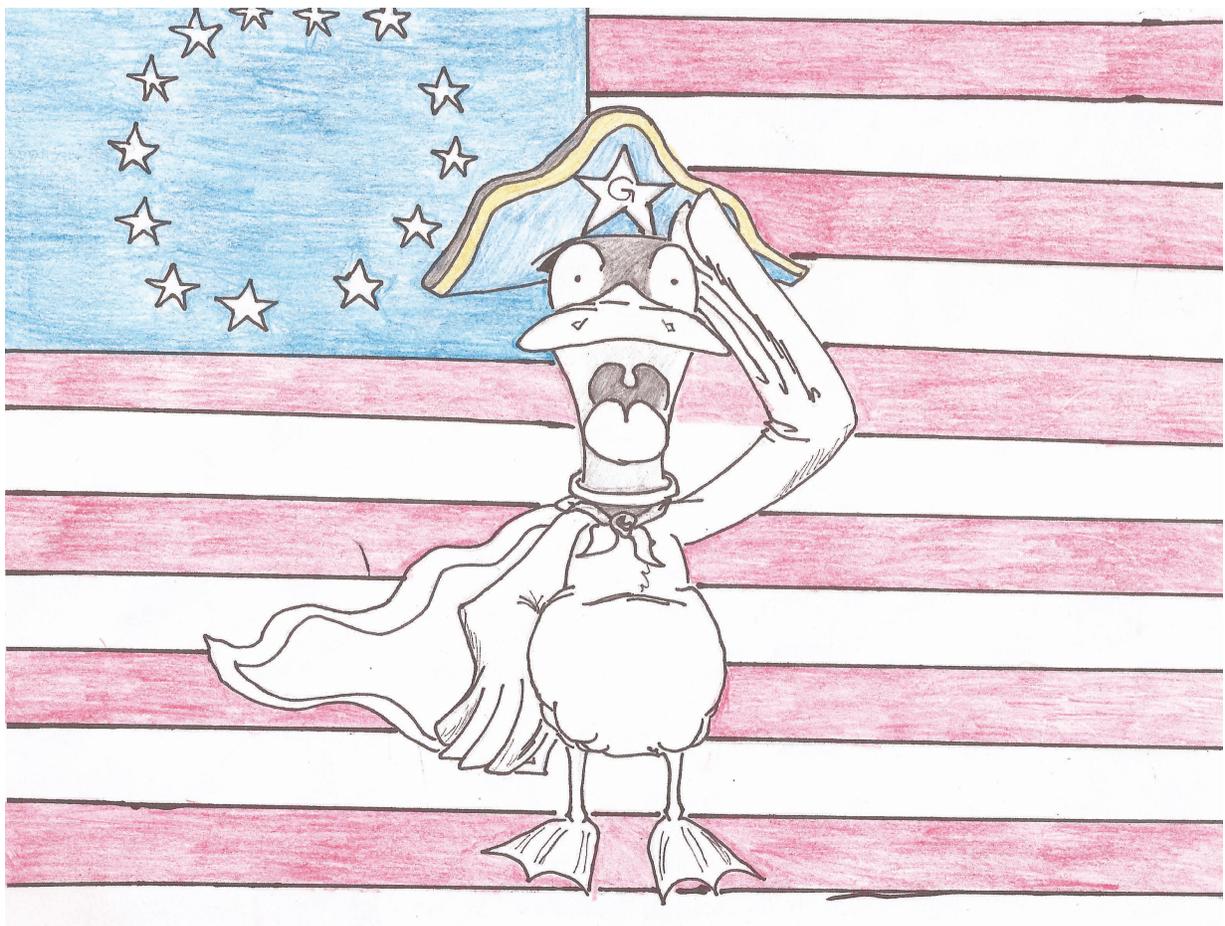
Even though it would take many months to repair all the damage, the people of America felt confident. They felt this was a second war of independence, which we know today as the War of 1812. A few years later, when James Monroe

became President, he wrote the Monroe Doctrine warning Britain and other European nations against colonizing American territory.

Griffy the Goose was as loyal to the grounds of the White House as a golden retriever is to its people. He was called the Guard Goose while the repairmen rebuilt the roof and repainted the walls.

However, in the shadows of Griffy's treehouse, a group of six animals watched the patriotic goose as he stood guard. Who were these six creatures? Well, they were Alex the Ant, Bary the Bear, Coco the Caterpillar, Debbie the Duckling, Esther the Eagle, and finally, Fritz the Frog (having recently returned from his expedition with Captain Lewis and Captain Clark and company).

"So, do you think young Griffy will be a good addition to our troop?" Alex the Ant asked, turning to the rest of his animal companions.



“I know so!” Esther the Eagle replied. “This young goose witnessed the saving of an important national treasure!”

“I second Esther’s vote!” Coco the Caterpillar called. “Besides, we’ll need all the help we can get if we’re going to help ole’ Zerlock.”

But who is this Zerlock? Well, dear reader, I’m afraid you’ll just have to continue reading these stories, and find out more about the epic escapades of the Freedom Seekers!

The War of 1812 boosted the spirit of American patriotism, which contributed to the Monroe Doctrine, written by President James Monroe in 1823. This doctrine warned European nations against intervention in and colonization of the United States.



Write a brief summary of the historic event in this story.
