

# INSIDE ALS



An A. L. Stanback Middle School Newspaper Club Publication

Managing Editors – Michele Johnson & Joyce Gilbert

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## FYI

### Hispanic Parents' Meeting

**Where:** ALS Media Center  
**When:** Tues., Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> 6-7pm  
**Topic:** High School Graduation Requirements  
**Guest Speaker:** George Rubenstein, counselor at Cedar Ridge High School  
\*\*\* This presentation will be in Spanish.

### Registration for French

**Who:** Any Interested Student  
**Where:** ALS Main Office  
**When:** Immediately  
**Topic:** Learn French  
**Instructor:** Mrs. Holzhauser  
**Contact:** Laurie Terrell at 919-644-3200 ext. 31030

## HELP! A Plea for Proctors

We anticipate a need for parents to proctor our upcoming End of Grade tests in May. If you are willing to proctor EOG tests this year, please contact Ms. Breeze in the main office. We would truly appreciate your help in this matter as there will be about 40 proctors needed beyond the resources of ALS.

# Ask Instead What You Can Do for Your Community

*Students, Staff, and Parents Model Integrity and Character via Assorted Kind Acts and Charity at and Beyond the Walls of A.L. Stanback Middle School*



*Perry C. and Matthew M. manufacture a tower with donations during the canned food drive.*

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

*Gloria Jones, Ed. D., Principal*

I know I have said it once, but I am saying again, especially to those families who may not have received the AlertNow message, "Happy New Year!" Second semester is here. Spring is hopefully not too far away. While we are all waiting for warmer, sunnier days, there is a lot to keep us busy. Teachers and staff are very excited about the unique opportunities that are available for students and families this quarter. It is our commitment to afford each A.L. Stanback family with enriching experiences.

Second semester concluded with a school-wide Spelling Bee on January 19<sup>th</sup> and our Behavior Celebration on January 28<sup>th</sup>. We are thrilled to say that more than 90% of students participated in this recognition of positive behavior over the course of the first semester. Congratulations to all students who participated both of these events.

Students also participated in the second round of benchmark testing in math and reading in all grades and science in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The benchmark tests allow teachers to examine how well students are learning and understanding concepts taught each quarter. The results are used to inform instructional decisions to enhance learning and teaching.

Third quarter kicked off with new encore classes, literacy blocks, the implementation of the Bulldog Beat schedule, and the anticipation of Spring Break. Each Thursday we will operate on the Bulldog Beat schedule which allows designated time for intervention and enrichment experiences for all students.

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### Student Council

#### The Penny Wars

*Rebecca Smith, Student Council Advisor & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Instructor*

A L Stanback's Student Council worked with all A L Stanback students and staff to raise money for UNC Children's Hospital Funds. They organized a Penny War competition. Students brought Pennies in and placed them in their team container and brought other coins or bills and placed into other team containers. The pennies were

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### Staff & Students

#### Charitable Works

*Joyce Gilbert, Literacy Coach*

"The students and staff of A L Stanback should be commended." Writes Joe Sharp, 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies teacher about the charitable acts performed by staff and students over the past three months. "Over \$1400 worth of charity fundraising was given this past holiday season. The combined efforts of students and staff," he continues, "has raised \$484 with

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### Students

#### Senior Citizens

*Edryan Jones, Vocal Music Instructor*

A L Stanback's Bel Canto club members and some ALS music students visited with residents at Carillon Assisted Care in Dec. The residents received Thanksgiving cards and peppermint puffs. Before leaving the facility, the residents were given a mini concert by the students. In Feb. they will make cards for them, too.

## News from ALS's PTSO

*Sabrina Hanson, PTSO President*

Thank you to all the parents who graciously made the December 13<sup>th</sup> Holiday Appreciation for Teachers and Staff such a wonderful success. We had a wide range of goodies and snacks that were a huge hit. Thank you to the following families for their support: Josh Lee family, the Rabablais family, the Brady family, the Mittendorf family, the Carter family, the Cox family, The Timberlake family, the Moffitt, The Nissler family, the Leesmitar family, the Winslow family, the Ennis family, the Teer family, the Stephens

family, the Kloetzer family, the Sallars family, the McKee family, the Woods family, the Edwards family, the Thompson family, The Weber family, the Wersniack family, the Hanson and Litteras family. If you sent something in and we missed you, I am sorry and thank you for your contribution!

Volunteers are needed for the Behavioral Celebrations. We need volunteers for these school functions to reward our kids for good behavior. Please let us know if you can help by contacting me at [alsptso@gmail.com](mailto:alsptso@gmail.com).

### Duty-free Lunch

Our teachers would really appreciate our help with organizing a few duty free lunches. The dates are Feb 11<sup>th</sup> and Feb 25<sup>th</sup> from 11-1pm, if you can spare a couple of hours or any part thereof for our teachers to have a working lunch together, we would all appreciate it. We will try to do this at least once a month.

### Valentines Day Dance

On Feb 11th, 6:30-8:30pm, please join us. DJ Kenny Wilson is back and it will be great! We do need volunteers for

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# NEWS

## Seventh Grade Sees Own Circulatory System



Mr. Ingold shows Ella B. her own circulation paths with an ultrasound machine.

Kristie Mabry, Science 7 Instructor

On Friday, January 14, the Chameleon team hosted a guest speaker during the 7<sup>th</sup> grade science classes. Jack Ingold is a Vascular Clinical Specialist who works at AngioDynamics. He demonstrated an ultrasound machine that allowed students to look at various blood vessels in the body in order to view circulation paths. Students were able to actually see the veins and arteries in the arm and the neck of a classmate. The machine also had the technology to color code each type of vessel. The red color indicated an artery while the blue color indicated a vein. We were able to view the arteries and veins while the student was at rest and also after a few minutes of exercise. It was fascinating to see the comparison between the slow and fast flow of blood using the ultrasound machine. We were really excited to have a specialist come in and share with us. Thank you, Mr. Ingold.

## Connecting Cultures

Beverly Holzhauser, French Instructor

Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, from 6:00 P. M. to 8:00 P. M., A. L. Stanback will host A Cultural Explosion – Connecting Cultures – for all elementary and middle Orange County Schools. This will be a cultural celebration to raise interest and awareness of world cultures and the benefit of knowing a foreign language. This event will feature cultural performances, food, culture tables and a poster contest.

Please reserve this date and plan to attend with your family. If you would like to participate or would like to read the poster contest rules, please contact Beverly Holzhauser, A. L. Stanback French teacher at 644-3200 extension 31300.

## Clubs at ALS

Megan M. & Emma C.

During these past nine weeks, I, Raven went to the Food & Travel club, where I talked to Julian K., a 6<sup>th</sup> grader. Food & Travel is a club where you can learn about different countries and try and make food from there. I asked Julian why he liked his club and his reply was “I like to eat the food we make.” So, I guess that is a good reason to join a club. The food. But, I then asked him if there was anything he would change about his club, and he replied, “I would want more food.” Okay. I’m guessing this guy really likes food. Considering what Julian and I talked about, most people

really do like their clubs based on small things, like food, or something that would contribute to their life goals.

I also talked to Jessica E. in the photography club. When I walked in the room where the photography club meets, I saw that there was a very small amount of members in this club, approximately 10-15 students. So, maybe not that many people like taking pictures. However, some people don’t like large groups of people, so I asked Jessica if she liked the people in her club and her reply was, “Most of them.” Okay... “most” is a lot of people when it comes to this club. Picture taking is a great hobby, in my opinion. I’m pretty sure Jessica agrees. So, I

asked her why she liked her club. Her reply was, “Because I like to take pictures.” Well, that proves my theory, right? When I said the club you’re in today might affect the things you do in life, I meant it. Photography is a career and doing this now might help in pursuing it as yours.

It’s Crouton here, and I would like to tell you about some other amazing people and their clubs! First, I got to interview Johnathon and he is in the Builder’s club. So, I asked him what he thought of his club and he responded by saying, “Yea! My club is cool. Yea, it’s good; I like it. I wish we could go outside and have more things to build. The people in my club are cool.”

## PENNY WARS

(continued from page 1)

counted as positive points and the silver and bills were counted as negative points and deducted from your pennies. The object was to be the team with the most points at the end of the fundraiser.

UNC students met with A L Stanback's Student Council to go over various fundraiser ideas and find out how they could help make it a successful fun event. They worked to get donations so that the winning team could have a pizza party. The Seagulls team of sixth graders really enjoyed this challenge and won the event with a total of 3242 points. The school worked to

raise a total of \$384.00 to donate to UNC Children’s hospital.

The Student Council will be conducting other fundraisers. One will be for UNC later on this month and will combine the funds and present a check to the UNC Children's hospital in time for the big UNC Dance Marathon in February. A second fundraiser may be a “Seat Change” at lunch time. We would sell tickets at lunch for \$1.00. Students would then be able to use the ticket to sit cross team. A third fundraiser may be to sell hearts for Cystic Fibrosis. The hearts would be supplied by CF and have a place to put the contributor’s name. We would like to fill the windows in the front lobby with all of the hearts.

## ALS MOSAIC NIGHT

Katrina Massey, School Counselor

ALS MOSAIC Night will be held on Thursday, February 24, 2011 from 5:30-7:30 in support of our multicultural students and family (see details below).

MOSAIC is an ALS initiative to provide support and resources to A. L. Stanback’s multicultural families and students. Speakers will share tools and community resources to aid in the academic experiences of students of color. ALS welcomes the Hillsborough community to come out and receive great information

designed to enhance student success.

Also, we will be starting a six week Grief and loss group for students beginning in February as well. Students will learn coping skills and healthy ways to express grief. These sessions will be facilitated by a Greif Counselor from the Duke Unicorn center and ALS’ School Counselor, Katrina Massey.

In addition, ALS students have the opportunity to participate in the Peer Mediation program. Please speak with Aviva Scully for details.

## Our Amazing Musicians

J. Michael Capps, Band Instructor

On Saturday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, students from ALS used their long weekend to audition for All-district band. Our district reaches from Raleigh to Asheboro and consists of over 1000 students auditioning for seats in a rather prestigious band. This year, the following students performed at a high enough level to achieve a seat.

### Symphonic Band

Ian S. – clarinet, 12<sup>th</sup> chair  
Chris S. - trumpet, 1<sup>st</sup> chair (all-state eligible)  
Matt M. – trombone, 5<sup>th</sup> chair

### Concert Band

Angela C. – alto sax, 1<sup>st</sup> chair  
Noah L. – trombone, 9<sup>th</sup> chair  
Ardyn F. – snare drum, 4<sup>th</sup> chair

### Alternates:

Sanam K. – bassoon, 1<sup>st</sup> alternate  
Caleb C. – trumpet, 1<sup>st</sup> alternate

For all the students auditioning, you did your school proud by even auditioning and, through the process, have become a better musician. I applaud you for your efforts.

The above students will perform in a clinic at Eastern Guilford on February 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. For the parents involved, a packet of information was sent home on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

# NEWS

## Winter Cheerleading

Claire H.

As you all probably know, tryouts for winter cheerleading were on November 8th, 9th and 10th. I believe most people found it exciting, while some others thought it was overwhelming and quit after the first or second day. Cheerleading is a tricky sport. You either hate it or love it. Fortunately, a lot of the cheerleaders were fantastic, so it must have been hard for the

judges to pick 18 from the 30 girls who tried out. On the first day, we all learned two cheers. On the second day, we learned another cheer and were given a song to create a two-minute cheer to. Finally, the last day rolled around the corner and we all piled into the auditorium where the day ended with a high-spirited cheer to "Dynamite" by Taio Cruz.

I spoke with Heather H., who stated: "Cheer practice is very fun, Ms. Mabry always has fun new ideas and lots of enthusiasm! Our cheers are fun because they are exciting, and ALWAYS have a good bulldog

beat! But I think what I like most about practice is how everyone gets along with one another and shows great character with each and every one!" Next, I talked with Jessica F. who said: "My favorite part about practice is DEFINITELY learning new cheers and dance moves, and so far the cheers I have learned are fun, but sometimes tough!"

I highly encourage you to come to the games and represent ALS. Go to the AL Stanback website to get a sports calendar. Go Bulldogs!!!

## Baby... Think-It-Over

Briley T.

I learned that responsible parents should have knowledge about how to handle and care for an infant. You have to know how to rock, feed, and burp it properly. If you don't, you could seriously injure or may even kill the infant.

Things that could happen if you are not properly educated include, dropping the infant, hitting the infants head and causing brain damage, or not providing the infant with the vital things a responsible parent should.

This project has completely changed my opinion on young parents. Having a child (at a young age) is very stressful and time consuming. Once you have a child your life is changed forever. It costs so much money to raise a child in the proper environment, money that most teens or young adults don't have yet.

So just remember, have a child only when you know you and your partner are absolutely ready!

## PTSO

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the snack bar, chaperones and decorating. Please let us know if you can spare a couple of hours by contacting us at the following: [alsptso@gmail.com](mailto:alsptso@gmail.com) or 919-260-4141. Thank you!

Maple View at Hampton's Pointe (near Walmart) will be donating 10% of all sales on everything but milk to our PTSO on Monday Feb 14<sup>th</sup>. So, pick up that ice cream or cake, take the kids out for a sundae and we get 10%.

We Need Your Box Tops

Parents, teachers and students, please look on those products for box tops. Please send them in to your teachers or put them in the PTSO box; every bit counts! Stress relief for tax day, April 15<sup>th</sup>! Your PTSO will be selling Kripsy Kremes as our last fundraiser. You may pre-order or get them through the drive through lane in the am. The cost will be \$6 per dozen and we need your support.

The BUDGET will be posted this week. 100% of your dues are going back to the classrooms! Thanks to your membership and our new status we are able to give the teachers \$1000 in mini-

grants. Thank you! We need a few people to serve on the school's wellness committee. If you are interested in serving, please contact Mr. Paul, Asst. Principal at [craig.paul@orange.k12.nc.us](mailto:craig.paul@orange.k12.nc.us).

How Are We Communicating?

We want to know if what we've implemented to better communicate between parents, kids, teachers and administrators is working. We added the PTSO newsletter which members get every two weeks, the Bulldog Bite, AlertNow on Sunday nights and our quarterly newspaper Please let us know what we can we do better. [alsptso@gmail.com](mailto:alsptso@gmail.com)

### Important information About Our Pepsi Refresh Project

As you know, we have a chance to win \$50,000 from the Pepsi Refresh Project for a new playground for Grady Brown.

**PLEASE SUPPORT THESE OTHER PROJECTS**

You are allowed 10 votes each day for 10 different projects.

Two projects will win \$250,000, 10 projects will win \$50,000, 10 will win \$25,000 and 10 will win \$5,000.

Therefore, we have partnered with other projects to combine our networks and support each other. These projects have agreed to vote for us as well:

Digitize and Electrify the Classroom at Alhambra High School in Martinez, CA (\$250K)  
Text a vote to 73774 with the message 105633

"Today a reader - Tomorrow a Leader" Westhoff Elementary School in O'Fallon, MO (\$25K)  
Text a vote to 73774 with the message 104318

"Teach Piano to Elementary Students" at West Salem Elementary School in West Salem, WI (\$5K)  
Text a vote to 73774 with the message 104928



If you have any questions or suggestions please contact Rachel Monschein at [rmonschein@owasa.org](mailto:rmonschein@owasa.org) or phone 919-923-1779

## Charity at ALS

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Casual December for Cancer; \$506 in the Beard-for-food drive; and over 865 cans of food worth approximately \$432. Further, our angel tree was left with no ornaments on it."

This year's Beard-for-Food challenged staff members to shave their beards or hair to raise money for families in need during the holiday season. The staff members with the most money in their jars shaved their beards or cut their hair the evening of Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>. For every \$50 that was earned, an additional staff member had to shave. Participants in this year's fundraiser were: Joe Sisco, exceptional children's teacher, Joe Sharp, social studies teacher, Lance Glass, English language arts teacher, John Capps, social studies teacher, Michael Capps, instrumental music information technology teacher, Laura Ziemba, visual art

teacher, Michael Lester, science teacher, Joyce Hatch, science teacher, Chris Tovell, library media specialist, and Rebecca Smith, math teacher. The fundraiser starts officially on Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> and ends on Dec 10<sup>th</sup>. Our goal this year is to raise \$1000 for families who could really use it.

Our annual food drive, sponsored by the FCA, is a competition between homerooms for the most cans in the quest for a pizza party before Winter break.

Other staff and students participated in mission work such as feeding the homeless for Thanksgiving & Christmas. Ms. Massy writes, "This experience was like none other as the Ministry fed thousands... volunteers came from as far as Charlotte. This opportunity was life changing for me and I'll do this from now on." Ms. Massey says, "Perhaps my experience will encourage others to partake in volunteerism & service to others."

## Upcoming 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Events

Sara Amos, Math 8 Instructor

8<sup>th</sup> Grade is having a speaker through science classes (ask Michael Lester for details)

8<sup>th</sup> Grade will start the computer skills testing again.

Bulldog Beat will be starting up again.

Retention letters will be sent home soon.

The PTSA winter dance is scheduled for 2/11.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade will be having random NAEP testing.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade taking a field trip to Greensboro to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Greensboro sit-ins, see Mr. Sharp for more details.

8<sup>th</sup> Graders will be learning about the Job Shadowing opportunities coming their way soon.

## From the Principal's Desk

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Staff will focus on individual student needs as we gear up for End-of-Grade Testing.

There are also several cultural arts programs planned for students as well as fieldtrips, sports, and fine arts activities. Please visit the school, communicate with teachers, discuss each day's events with your child, be involved... parental involvement is a top priority.

Bravo to A.L. Stanback students, parents, and staff for your endless contributions and commitment. You are the faces of Bulldog pride. It is my personal commitment to each A.L. Stanback family to ensure that we work together to make a difference in each student's life. I will continue to encourage each of us to question daily, "What will I do to support teaching and learning in my school today? Now, let's go do it!

## Library News!

Chris Tovell, Library Media Specialist

I have library news and the news is good. We checked out 1,513 items in November, the most ever for this month, and we are on track for breaking our all-time yearly circulation record of 12,818 items circulated, which we set last year.

## Random Acts of Kindness

Maranda C.

Amber S. volunteered for the rescue mission.

Beatriz G. befriended people who felt left out.

Briley T. modeled good citizenship.

Elmer T. is an extremely dedicated and hardworking student. The Seagulls totally appreciate how hard he works every day.

Andrew H. helped with the roll every day for the Seagulls.

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## Greek Mythology

Jessica R.

In ancient times, when Rome ruled over Greece, the Greek gods had different names and personalities. For example, Zeus, king of the Greek gods and lord of the sky, holder of the eagle, was called Jupiter by the Romans.

## Poetry

### Two Untitled Poems

I want to hear your voice, that voice that makes me smile and laugh, the one that says the right words for me to calm me down. the voice that makes me say "awww he loves me:) " id die just to hear your voice for one last time. It wouldn't matter if I dint see you I would just want to hear you because no matter how far or how long we haven't seen each other id hear you say I love you back when I say I love you. <3

Beatriz G.

Have you ever heard of all the children in the world? Some have nothing to eat or drink - don't even go to school. We never think of others around us we just think of us, saying what we don't have and what we want. We're lucky to go to school and get an education but they are unlike most of us; we try to get out of it somehow or another, saying we're sick and that we don't feel good. Think twice before saying that next time PLEASE because we have a chance to go to school unlike others in the world!

Beatriz G.

### You Stood By Me

You stood by me  
In pain and doubt,  
I sorrow when my mind was in Doubt.  
When the moon took  
The place of the sun in the Sky,  
You stood by me.

You stood by me  
When my well ran dry,  
When there were  
No tears left to cry,  
When I needed you so much,  
To hold, to grab, to grip, to Touch.  
You stood by me.

In pain, in agony, and deep  
Despair,  
When shadow cast beams  
Unclear,  
When all my hope and dreams  
Were gone,  
You stood by me.

Amber S.

## Dangers of A.L. Stanback! Mr. Capps or Monster Capps: Band Teacher or Menace?

Corey V., Maggie R., Olivia M., and Sanam K.

### \*Disclaimer!!

The stories that follow are completely fictional and have absolutely no real purpose except for entertainment. We are totally sure that Stanback is completely safe and you have absolutely nothing to worry about.

### Forklift

\*Note: this article is much cooler if read in a Steve Erwin accent. (Australian)

Just imagine you're walking down the hall and a giant forklift crushes you! That could happen at A.L. Stanback, where dangerous forklifts roam the hallways destroying anybody who comes near their pinching hazard. As we observe this beast in its natural habitat we concluded that it is a cruel, heartless beast of a creature. It has abdicated the lion as king of the jungle. Its creaking call threatens any innocent being that becomes victim to its pernicious orbit. As you walk the halls of A.L. Stanback there is the constant possibility this creature will attack and you will die!

Reporting from the utterly disastrous scene is top reporter Claire-Annette Diminuendo. As I cower in the door of the band room I witness this hostile scene of aggression, the band teacher, using his brute strength, has thrust a tube at a terrified flute player. She's been injured! She attempts to clean her flesh wounds with her flute cleaning cloth while taking cover in a tube cubby. In a horrific reign of terror the menace screeches on his C piccolo trumpet leaving the ears of the student forever ringing. His beady eyes roll back in his head as he lifts a pair of cymbals and crashes them

together with a percussionist head between. The percussionist attempts to fight back with his mallets, but Monster Capps whips out CDs from his Batman tool belt and flings them like ninja stars slicing the percussionist's flesh. As he screams in agony he reaches out with a withering arm to play his last C natural. Will this reign of terror end? No one knows but it needs to be put to rest.

As you can see this school is a dangerous place with deadly creatures and horrors beyond all belief. This school clearly needs a hero with brute strength and the courage to face these beasts saving! Where are you Superman?



## The Cards

### Part 2: Emir



By Emily A.

In the kingdom, the courts of Spades and Clubs had been at odds, and occasionally at war, for hundreds of years, each court jostling for position over the other. Their latest combat was vicious on both sides. Soldiers saw and did horrible things, while those at home were left with nothing to do but wait and hurt. They were never certain of what the next day would bring—their loved one or a casket. It is often those most innocent that are caught in the crossfire.

\*\*\*

He was returning home with blood on his hands. Not the blood of a nameless soldier, but the blood of William. The red that colored his hands so vividly was the blood of Valerie's beloved.

"It was self-defense, Emir. Everyone knows that. No one will object when they hear the story," Michael, the advisor to the court of Spades, assured him. Michael put an arm around Emir's shoulders in a fatherly gesture, a role he often played in the teenage prince's life. Michael was more of a parent to Emir than his chronically absent father.

"I suppose. But Valerie..." Emir let the thought trail off. Plain and, simple, he was in love with her.

He had killed the one she loved, and he knew that she would

never be able to forgive him, much less love him. Though he was returning a hero in his people's eyes, he was returning a villain in his own.

When they returned to the castle, Emir shut himself away in his room, and tried to make sense of it all.

After three days he had almost managed to convince himself that what Michael said was true, that William was an assassin and that he only acted in self defense. After all, why would Michael deceive him?

"Excuse me, sir," the page

interrupted his thoughts, having entered without knocking. It only distantly occurred to Emir that she had breached conduct. "But the Princess Valerie is waiting to see you."

With shaking hands, Emir smoothed down his blonde hair. His mouth ran dry. Of course she'd want to talk to him. Just like that, three days worth of work was undone.

When Emir arrived in the throne room, Valerie wasn't waiting. He desperately tried to be calm. He took a seat in the grand throne, smoothing out his

green tunic and brown pants, attempting composure. Best to brace himself, he thought. When Valerie arrived, it wasn't as bad as Emir thought it would be. It was far, far worse. Anger and pain colored her lovely face.

"Val..." Emir began. She cut him off before he could say anything else. She was alternately screaming and sobbing about William, asking how he could kill him.

Hearing her words and seeing her grief absolutely tore him apart. Emir wasn't prepared, though, for what came next. Her hand collided with his cheek, resounding with a crack.

Instead of responding to it, Emir remained quiet and waited for the rest. He deserved whatever she did to him. Yet she remained silent, and he took advantage of the pause.

"Valerie, please." He begged. Have a seat and hear me out." He pulled out a chair for Valerie to have as she collapsed into it. Emir, however, wouldn't sit. It was only then that he noticed her feet; they were cut to

ribbons and bleeding across the floor. "Bring me some bandages and water," Emir ordered to one of the servants who nodded and was back in the blink of an eye. The Prince himself bent to clean her feet.

I'm so sorry. William was trying to kill me, I was only defending myself. I had to do it." As Emir focused on washing the dirt from the cuts, even he heard a ring of falsehood in the story. What was it that just didn't add up?

"I wish it had been you!" Valerie shouted down at him, her icy eyes welling up again.

"Valerie, please," He pleaded, looking steadily at her face. He focused on her forehead, not wanting to meet her eyes directly. "William played dirty. He impersonated an advisor and wore a cloak. I didn't even know it was him until it was too late."

Valerie leapt to her feet. "You're lying! You're lying! William would never do anything like that! I hate you! You lying---" Her rant was cut off by the door banging open.

A page ran in, gasping for air, looking as disheveled as she possibly could. Time seemed to freeze for several minutes. The news she brought was something no one had ever expected to hear about the Princess of Hearts, Allegra; news everyone thought impossible.