

# No Kidding: 'Joker' is a Triumph in Art

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The Joker is one of the most iconic characters in fiction. He has been in countless forms of

**REVIEW** media and is a favorite among fans even outside the world of DC Comics, where he has served as Batman's most recognizable villain for almost 80 years. It seemed inevitable there would eventually be a film focused entirely on the character.

Who knew it would be this good?

"Joker," will become a classic in a few decades. Both among comic and movie fans, it will be remembered for being a masterpiece of the type that rivals that of "The Dark Knight."

Joaquin Phoenix wasn't the obvious choice when he was cast. Phoenix is known to be picky with his roles and what

scripts he accepts. But if he picked "Joker," then it stood to reason the script must have been special. And special it is.

The movie executes almost every aspect of film perfectly. Each factor is intricately designed to complement the movie. The story is dark, as it literally follows the story of a man fully embracing the hidden side of his psyche. The first half of the movie is depressing and dire, while the second half feels more triumphant in a troubling way. Phoenix's acting is, as always, astonishing.

This version of "Joker" is also much more realistic than other incarnations. The world feels very fleshed out, and Joker himself feels like part of that world. The music contributes to the depth.

As the story progresses, and Arthur Fleck — which is the real name given to this it-

eration of Joker — falls further into chaos, the music becomes more intense and complex. It adds instruments and volume through the course of the movie. The cinematography brings the viewer in, too. Each scene has a unique framing mood. The color follows the narrative of the story, with muted dull colors in the beginning and bright colorful palettes towards the end.

Todd Phillips' directing is perfect for each scene and can serve as an example of how to direct different scenes. The set design is intelligent, with the interiors being cramped and ugly, and the exteriors being filled with vandalism and trash. It truly makes Gotham City seem like a miserable, rundown city. The inclusion of the Wayne family may seem like a simple allusion to Batman, but they actually serve a

vital role, as Arthur's attitude towards them drives him further to chaos.

The chaos builds to a moment of extreme tension. A scene between Arthur and Murray Franklin, played by Hollywood legend Robert De Niro, begins normally. But the discomfort builds by the moment. Tension is ratcheted to the max before Phoenix, De Niro and Phillips bring the scene to a head. The whole picture comes together to create the cathartic final moments.

The climax of the movie is extremely intense. There is an incredible scene between Arthur Fleck and Murray Franklin, which starts off fairly normal and builds up suspense and tension until the climax takes hold. The last 15 or so minutes of the movie are very potent. Everything comes together. Joker, the Waynes,

the music, the cinematography, and the directing all create the cathartic final moments of the climax. And it is beautiful.

The fact that this movie even exists is a miracle. Comic characters are actually being used to present deep stories and character studies, instead of blowing stuff up to make money. It is fortunate that Joker is making so much money at the box office, because it means that more movies like it may come. It would be fresh and interesting to finally see more comic characters being used as a medium to tell deep moral, emotional, or even political stories.

"Joker" is a triumph in film, storytelling, but, most important, in art. As a movie lover, and specifically a lover of Batman, I look forward to what this movie's success may spawn in the future.

## Tennis

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won in three sets. This year, Chadwick and Casasola Rosas won in three. Rodriguez said the four are going to miss their everyday rivalry and competitive natures.

Haas Hall also won the girls singles title and girls doubles title.

Leena Cashman, a freshman at Haas Hall Fayetteville beat Lotti Hoffman of Riverside, 6-0, 6-0 in the final. This score is especially impressive considering she is only 14.

Haas Hall Fayetteville coach Andrea Broshears said Cashman "is a very dedicated player who puts a lot of time and effort not only on the court but off the court. She is a smart and determined player who has been playing competitive tennis for many years."

Cashman, who has been playing tennis since age 8,



Photo by ERIC BOLIN

Haas Hall Bentonville seniors Maxim Chadwick, Austin Rodriguez, David Cordero and Carlos Casasola Rosas were members of the Class 2A state championship team in boys tennis.

said she was happy with her performance.

"This was a very rewarding experience. It helps to show that the work I put in does have rewards," she said.

Senior Alexis Evans and sophomore Lexa Farmer teamed up to take the doubles championship, the first title for both. They beat Kenlee McAuliffe and Ali

Looney of Parkers Chapel, 6-3, 6-1.

Hunter said Haas Hall's success will continue, even with the loss of so many players.

"I think it is important for people to take up a racket next year try to fill in that," Hunter said. "If we get a solid group, we can get in more titles."

## Paying

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regulations are too harsh. For example, Shabazz Napier, a former basketball player at the University of Connecticut, told a story at his team's NCAA championship appearance about how he didn't have enough funds for food. If he had attempted to borrow some money from someone outside of the university, though, he could've been slapped with NCAA rule violations and then been suspended.

"We do have hungry nights that we don't have enough money to get food in," Napier said. "Sometimes money is needed. I don't think you should stretch it out to hundreds of thousands of dollars for playing, because a lot of times guys don't know how to handle themselves with money. Sometimes, there's hungry nights where I'm not able to eat, but I still

gotta play up to my capabilities."

Whatever side of the argument on compensation is right, though, is up for debate. After the passage of the Fair Pay to Play Act in California, similar legislation has been written in at least nine other states. The NCAA will have to modify its current laws in some capacity to prevent widespread chaos. In response, the NCAA Board of Governors voted unanimously to move forward with proceedings to update their regulations to coordinate with state laws.

"As a national governing body, the NCAA is uniquely positioned to modify its rules to ensure fairness and a level playing field for student-athletes," NCAA President Mark Emmert recently said. "The board's action today creates a path to enhance opportunities for student-athletes while ensuring they compete against students and not professionals."