

The best and worst classic books

Are classics all they live up to be?

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“You have to read this book—it’s a classic!” You’ve likely heard these words before, whether from an English teacher, parents, or even friends. Maybe you roll your eyes and dismiss these suggestions, or maybe you’re the one making them. Whatever the case, there’s a lot of strong opinions on books that are considered classics, be they positive or negative.. Here are a couple of what I believe to be the

best and worst classics.

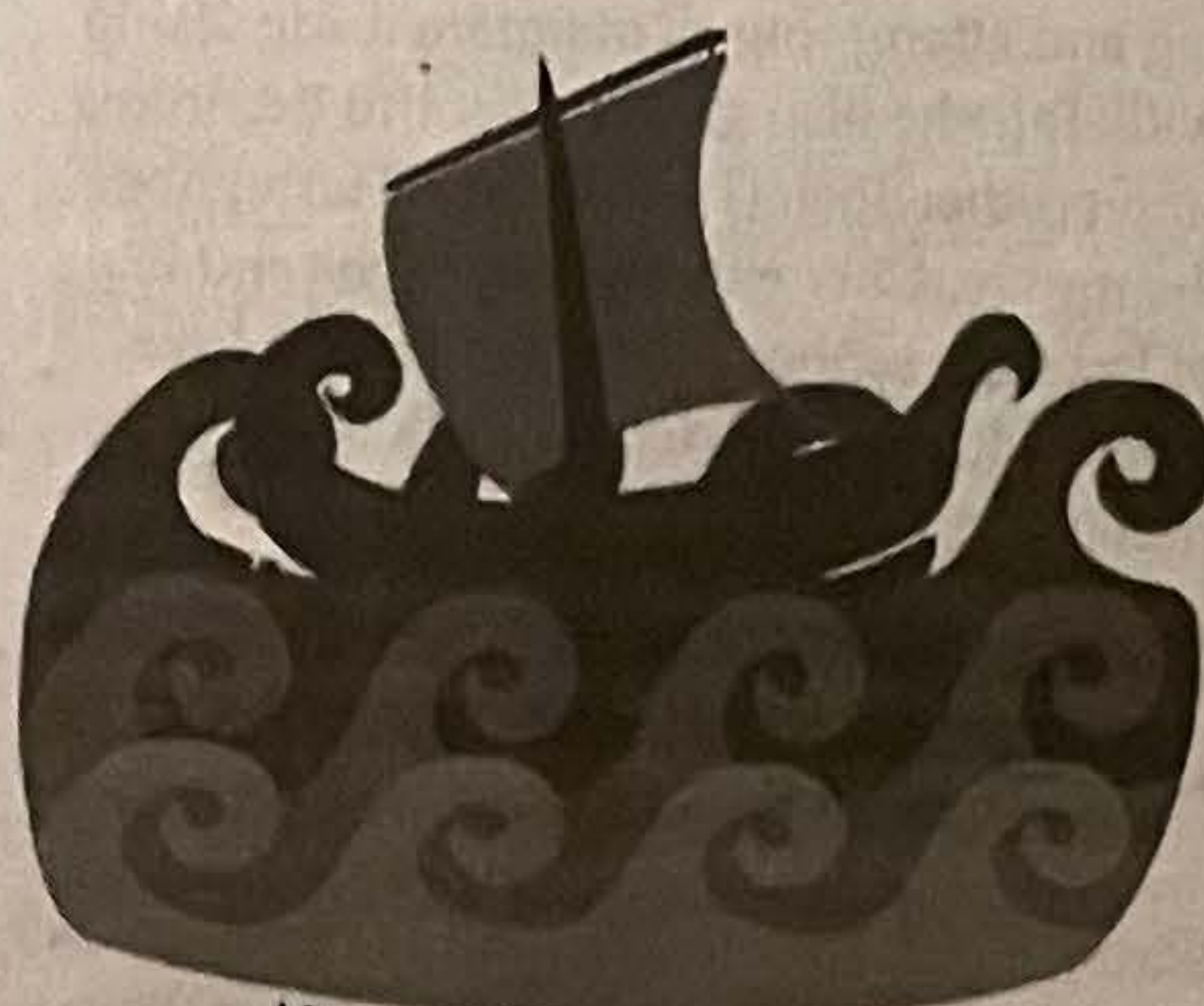
Best:
“The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” by Robert Louis Stevenson (1886)

Regarded as one of the best pieces of

gothic literature along with more well-known titles such as “Frankenstein” and “Dracula,” Stevenson’s novella tells the story of scientist Dr. Henry Jekyll in his pursuit to separate the good and evil sides of man. Told as an outsider perspective by Jekyll’s close friend Utterson, this suspenseful story follows Utterson as he investigates the depths of Jekyll’s connection with local criminal Edward Hyde. The book has been adapted into many movies as well as an excellent Tony-nominated musical that I recommend to any theater lovers out there.

“Much Ado About Nothing” by William Shakespeare (1598-1599)

Good old Shakespeare... love him or hate him, you’re sure to have an opinion, but you have to acknowledge that there’s a reason he’s as famous as he is. My favorite Shakespeare work is probably “Much Ado About Nothing.” One of his most famous comedies, “Much Ado” follows the story of two young couples—Hero and Claudio, the more traditional love story, and Beatrice and Benedick. The heart and humor of the story lies in the latter couple and their constant bickering. The two swear to hate each other but their friends believe otherwise, scheming to set the two of them up. In an entertaining and adorable love-hate relationship that holds up refreshingly well to modern readers, Beatrice and Benedick alone make this play worth checking out. There’s also a wonderful movie adaptation of “Much Ado” from 1993 that I highly recommend watching.



All art by Eiana Megargee

Worst:
“The Odyssey” by Homer (~7th Century B.C.)

I had to read “The Odyssey” in my freshman year English class, though it was removed from our school system the following year. If you never had to read this book, consider yourself lucky. “The Odyssey” is one of two ancient Greek epics attributed to the vague ‘Homer.’ It follows the story of supposed hero Odysseus and his 10-year journey back home after the Trojan war. Along with being incredibly dense and boring, the main issue I have with “The Odyssey” is with Odysseus himself. Considering that the entire book is centered around him and his hero’s journey, he’s a really awful person. Throughout the story we see Odysseus rape, murder, and leave his men for dead without a second thought. Why are we supposed to then cheer him on as one of the greatest heroes of all time? He isn’t and we shouldn’t. If it’s Greek mythology you’re interested in, there’s far more interesting stories than that of “The Odyssey.”

“1984” by George Orwell (1949)

“1984” is probably my least favorite book I’ve ever read. Considering how well-regarded it is in the dystopian genre, I thought there’d be something about the book that made it worth the hype. There really wasn’t. The protagonist, Winston Smith, is one of the worst characters I’ve seen, and he’s supposed to be the hero. Winston does things like fantasize about raping and murdering the woman he later ends up with—and it’s never acknowledged as wrong? Obviously this book is from a different era, but that doesn’t make these scenes any easier to read. Additionally, the character—and book itself—are both incredibly boring. It’s two-thirds of the way through the book before any significant events start happening. The graphic torture scenes are the most interesting part of the whole book simply because things are going on. “1984” may have been important in paving the way for dystopian novels, but the day and age for this book to be relevant has long since passed.

Board games

Games to play when you’re bored

Ben Irish
Staff Reporter

Need a break from screens? Need a fun activity? Here’s some of our favorite board games:

Monopoly (~\$30):

Monopoly is undoubtedly one of the most iconic board games of all time. With more than 300 versions and 250 million copies sold, almost every kid in America has played this game at one time or another. For my family, Monopoly is the first game we sit down to play when we’re all together for the holidays. It’s especially fun when playing with house rules, such as using the “free parking” space as a jackpot, or trading properties for money, other properties, or favors, which we call “wheeling ‘n’ dealing.” It’s the sort of comfort game that brings people together and makes them talk, which earns it a clear spot on the roster.

Settlers of Catan (~\$40):

I’ve never met anyone who doesn’t like this game. It’s kid-appropriate, strategy-based, and unique, with the fun addition of being able to trade. With something for everyone, it’s no wonder this game is such a classic. I’ve played it just about everywhere, from school to my friend’s basement to the family table to a board game convention, and I still see new strategies all the time. The expansions for Catan also are some of the best I’ve used, and are absolutely worth the money. No board game can be perfect, but even objectively speaking, this one checks all the boxes.

Clue (~\$20):

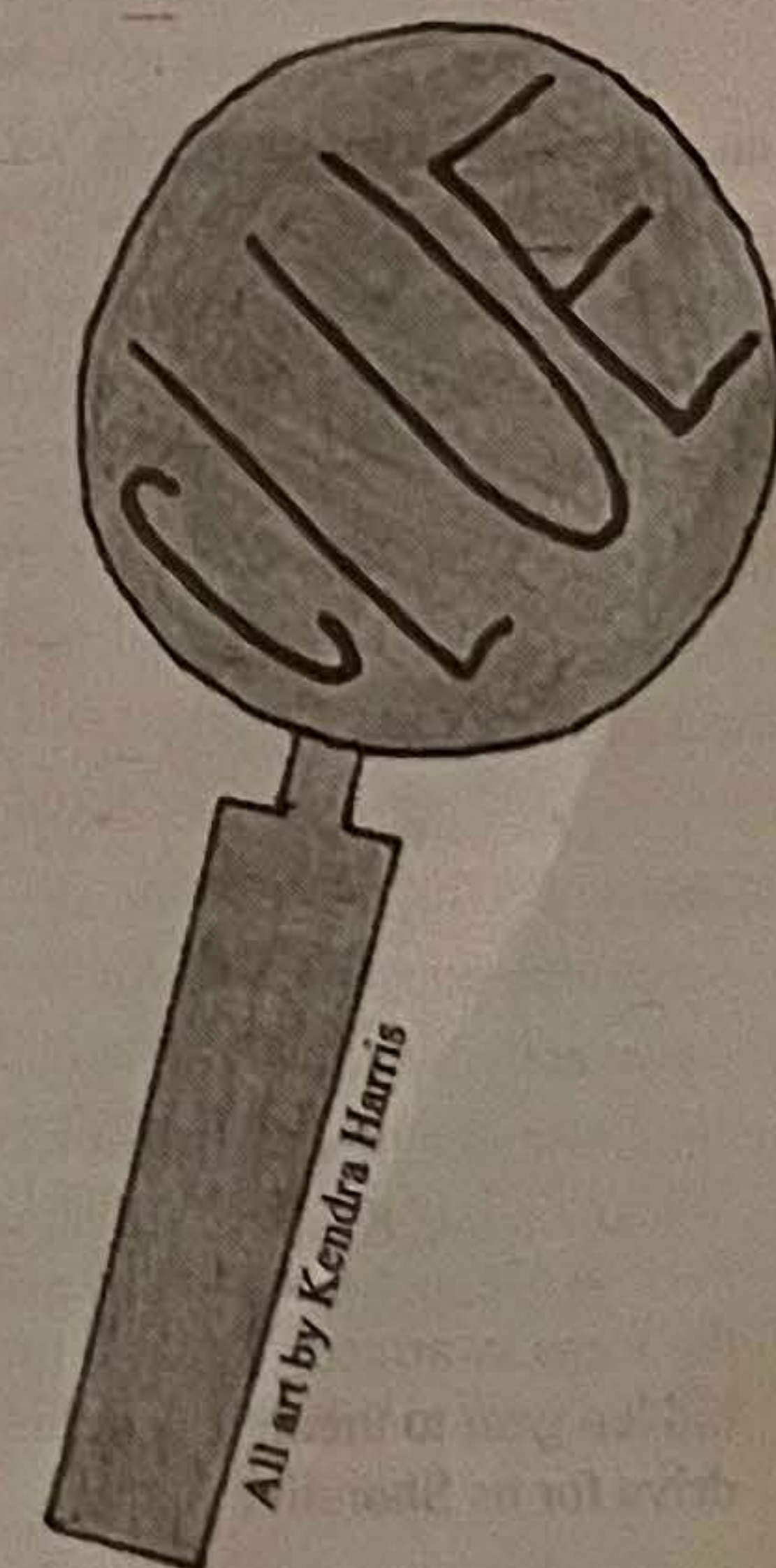
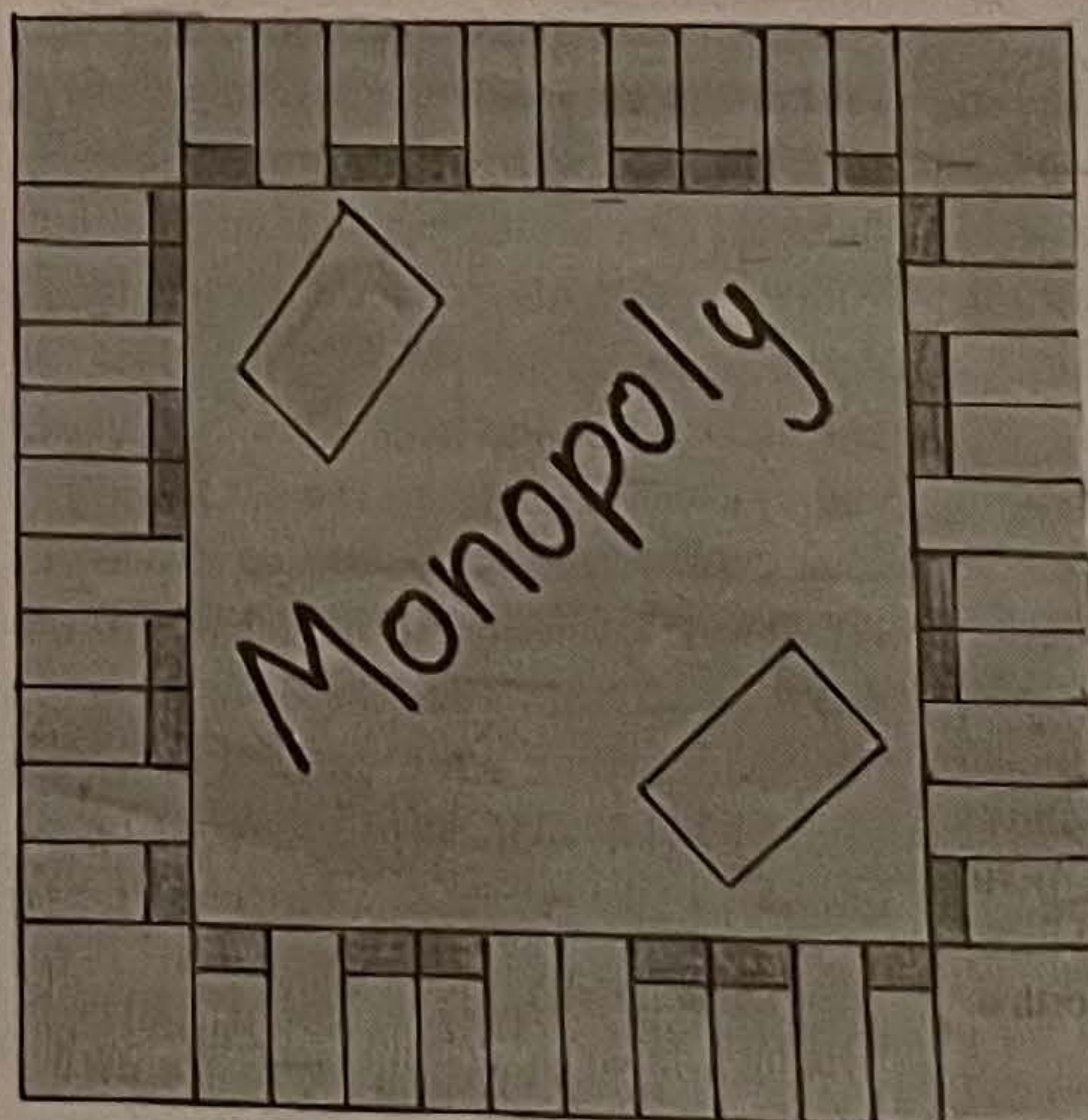
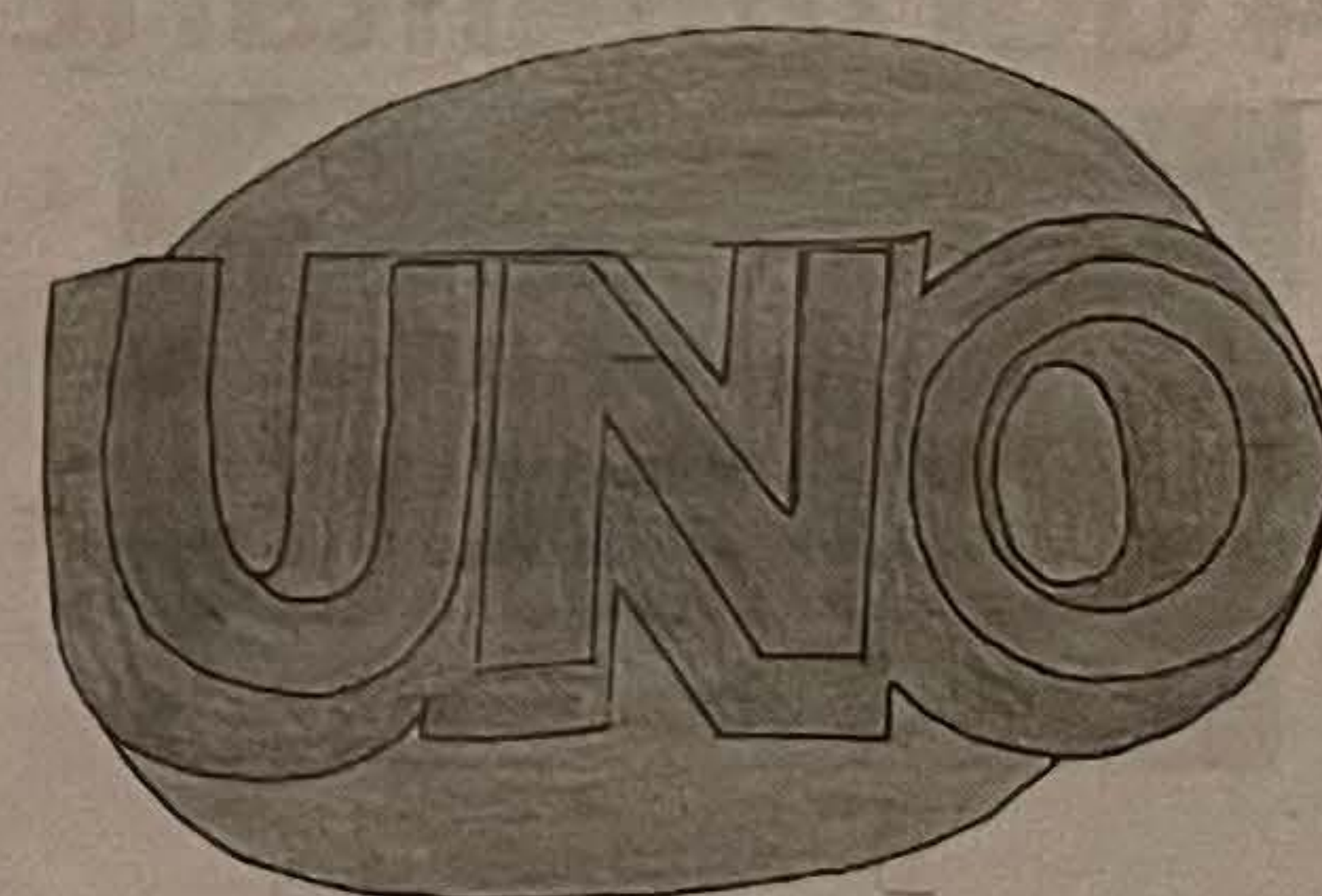
Just like the 1985 movie, Clue will forever be a classic. It makes strategy count for everything, logic puzzles fun, and it’s the most satisfying thing ever when you win. It’s definitely the most intellectually stimulating game on this list as well. The biggest downside is that there’s a lot of room for cheating, but this can easily be fixed by just arguing it out. Also, sometimes cheating at Clue is fun if you can get away with it.

Splendor (~\$35):

I don’t know too many people who’ve played Splendor, but it’s easily my favorite tabletop game of all time. I’ve hardly ever lost it, either, because it’s super suited to my playing style (strategy over everything, mess with opponent’s heads). If you like anything math, logic, or optimization-based, this game is for you. In Splendor, you play as a gem merchant eager to expand their empire by collecting gems, buying gem mines, and attracting nobles to earn points. There’s also a few expansions for the game that change objectives by giving players specific power-ups for the gems they own. Having played at least 40 times, I strongly recommend this game for parties, families, friends, and game geeks alike.

One Night Ultimate Werewolf (~\$20):

This might be the most chaotic and the most logic-based game I’ve ever played at the same time. Although it’s based on the popular party game “Mafia,” One Night Ultimate Werewolf takes the deception, teamwork, and strategy aspects of the game to a whole new level. It also provides a role for everyone playing, so nobody misses out on the action. The best part of the game is the arguing, though, because trying to figure out who’s who is usually a nightmare, which makes everything more interesting.



All art by Kendra Harris