

Do

THE BOOK
OF LETTERS

Foreword

TRACY HURLEY

In 2009, after years of saying no to playing, I joined my husband's gaming group. The decision changed my life. As I became more confident, I branched out into other games, podcasts, and even freelancing. Sure, I often was scared, but I trusted that my friends would help me find the way.

So, what does this have to do with *Do: Pilgrims of the Flying Temple*? This game is about transformation, the decision to turn away from what-is and to explore what-could-be. Your decisions change others' lives and your character's life, too. Who do you help and how? Will you be of the temple or of the worlds? What are you willing to sacrifice to ensure either destiny comes true?

Two years ago, my letter would have been simple. "Help! I'm 30, I work alone from home every day, and I have no friends." Fortunately, the letters in this expansion are more interesting than that. Some are silly, others sad, but all are a call to explore and transform the world. The words and art express a sense of wonder and depict the diversity of our life experiences.

I hope everyone takes the opportunity to look at the world through a pilgrim's eyes. Live a little. Love a little. Most importantly of all, get into some trouble.

Tracy is the driving force behind SarahDarkmagic.com. By day, she's a mild-mannered web developer. After hours, she creates worlds and monsters for fun and profit.

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Advice for writing your own letters. Plus! Fun facts about the universe. Well, most are fun. Well, only some of them are facts. They are definitely about the universe, though.

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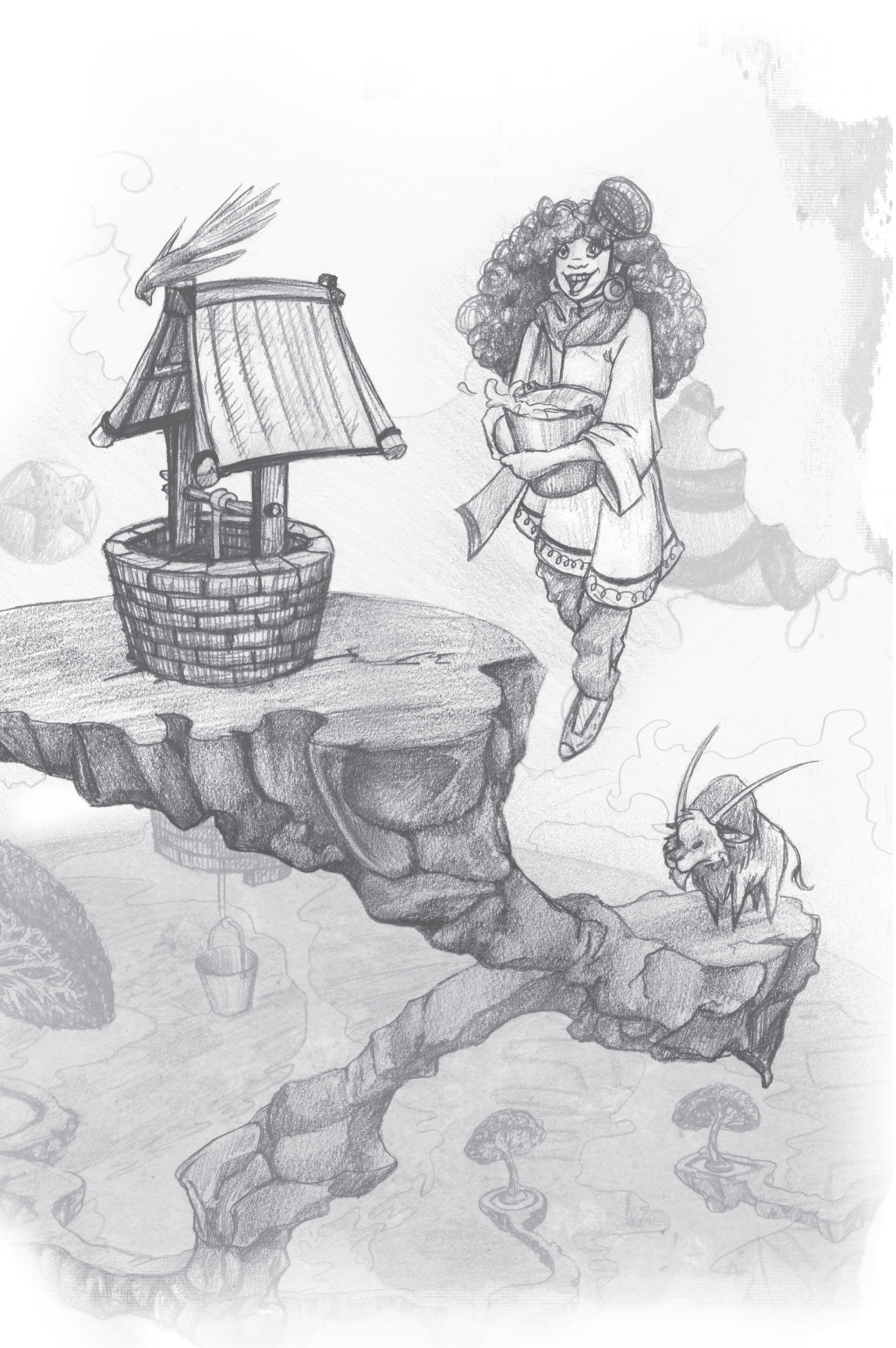
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More Letters to the Temple

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01





Welcome to *Do: The Book of Letters*. This is a supplement to *Do: Pilgrims of the Flying Temple*, a game about young travelers who answer letters from people in trouble. This book contains new letters to start new adventures; each comes from a unique world with a unique culture. The one thing they all have in common? Someone needs help.

Instead, they'll get the pilgrims!

Perhaps that's not fair. You see, the pilgrims do help... eventually. They'll cause plenty of trouble in the process, sure, but in the end they're really trying their best. Sometimes they're even worth the collateral damage.

Regardless, the letter-writers you'll meet in this book are in dire straits; so much so that the pilgrims are their last hope. Browse through their troubles, visit their worlds and try not to make things worse, okay?



Dear Flying Pilgrims,

Dear Flying Pilgrims, I need help. Mom and Dad are always fighting. “The porridge is too hot!” “The bed is too soft!” “Who broke that chair?” Now, a girl invaded our home and is making a mess of everything. Dad says we should eat her. Mom says that she might be a princess and we should ransom her.

While my parents are fighting, the wild wood is feeding off their anger and there are hunters out there! I don’t want to be turned into a bear skin rug. I just want my bed back and my parents happy again. Please help!



GOAL WORDS

mom

dad

bears

hunters

the girl

the girl

the wild woods

beds

porridge

chairs

by Todd Zircher



Dear Pilgrims of the Flying Temple,

Please forgive me if this letter smells like old milk that was left in the sun too long. It is because my brother, Tien Fa, turned the ground around my humble shop into cheese!

It had to have been him because he makes cheese. He denies it, of course. "Tien Ma," he said, "I do not know how to convince an earth spirit to turn your land into cheese." And it is true that he never conversed with spirits before, but there is a first time for everything.

How am I, a humble cobbler, supposed to sell and repair shoes when my shop is surrounded by cheese? My customers don't want cheese all over their shoes! Just yesterday my most loyal customer, Shien Li, shouted to me from the street that he would not come into my shop until the cheese was gone.

I have dug and dug at the cheese until my back is sore, but every hole I dig in the cheese fills back up with more cheese. It is never-ending! Tien Fa claims it is my punishment for convincing a water spirit to taint the water on his farm so that his cheese-making cows would make sour cheese. Why would I do such a thing? In fact, it was probably our sister Lin, who is angry at both of us for insulting her cooking. In our defense, her cooking is terrible. She can burn ice cream!

Now, it is true that Tien Fa and I have quarreled ever since I was born two minutes before he was. He has difficulty accepting my position as eldest son, since we are twins. But any rumors you hear that I once threw a small hammer at his head are gross exaggerations! The hammer merely slipped from my hand when I was working on a shoe.

Tien Fa and I went to speak with our mother Mei, so that she could settle this dispute, but she bounced our heads together and sent us on our way. Perhaps she is the one who set the spirits against us.

Please hurry and tell Tien Fa that he's wrong! And if you could get rid of the cheese, that would also be welcome.

GOAL WORDS

Tien Fa	shoes
Tien Fa	water spirit
sour cheese	earth spirit
Tien Ma	Lin
Tien Ma	Mei

by Stephen Granade



Hello!

I am writing to you because I'm stuck on my bed.

I just dreamed that the Evil clan of the Tvel.. Twl.. 12 Bed Mosters declared war against me, and I just woke up.

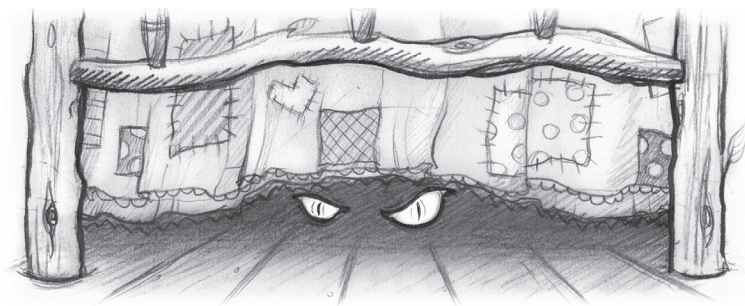
I know I should not be afraid, so I sent two of my teddy bears to take a look, but they haven't come back. Then I sent all the others but none came back. Now here on the bed I'm left with only Poldo and Capt. FluffyEar but the monsters are pulling my blanket and I can hear them laugh and chuckle and snicker and say they want to roast me and eat me and I DON'T WANT TO BE ROASTED!

So please come help me, because I don't want to be roasted and prettyplease don't make too much noise or my sister will mock me until Christmas because I'm afraid of mostners!

Stupid she is, she hasn't to be afraid, the mosnters don't go after her, do they?

Listen, here while I was writing they have eaten half of my blanket so now I fold my letter and make a paper plane but you hurry.

Thank You,
Agatha



GOAL WORDS

Monster	Capt. FluffyEar
Monster	Agatha
Monster	Agatha
Blanket	Sister
Poldo	Sister

by Ariele Agostini



Dear Monks!

I am writing to you today a little embarrassed. I made a slight mistake in the monster-summoning potion I was making, and the result was disastrous! The monster I ended up summoning was way too big for my house, and took the roof clean off! You won't have any trouble finding it when you arrive; it's the tallest thing in the whole city since it's been knocking over buildings left and right.

I tried everything I can think of to get rid of it: an unsummoning potion, bait, even trying to summon another giant monster to fight it! But nothing works.

I hope you can come soon before they wreck the rest of the city.

Thanks,

Brandon



GOAL WORDS

Monster	City
Monster	Building
Monster	Giant
House	Bait
Roof	Potion

by Tim Rodriguez



DEAR MYSTERIOUS ALIENS IN YOUR FLYING TEMPLESHIP:

My name is Reggie, and I know that you're real. None of my friends believe that you've been to visit me, which really hurts my feelings. I know that it happened and that I wasn't dreaming it, but I can't prove it. Come and show my friends that you're real. Oh —and try to avoid government agents. I think there's a big conspiracy to cover you guys up.

Your Friend

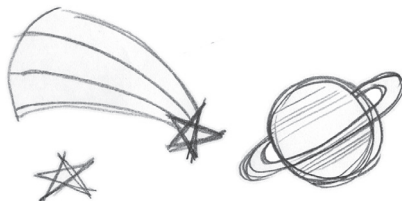
Reggie

P.S. If you bring snacks, we could have an awesome party.



GOAL WORDS

Government Agents	Reggie's Friends
Government Agents	Reggie's Friends
Conspiracy	Party
Reggie	Party
Reggie	Snacks



by James Orr



Dear Pilgrims of the Flying Temple,

I really need help! My brother is a courier, and he delivered the wrong messages to rulers of two planets. The messages were hate mail to another ruler, but they were sent to each other. Now they hate each other and are waging war. Both can't be convinced it was just a mistake. Now this little accident might lead to pulverized rubble instead of planets! My brother can't convince them it was a mistake!

Now they're gathering their forces and I'm afraid war has already started. I hope you can empathize about all this horrible destruction. Villages are being crushed—oh, now there's a flaming rock hurtling through the air near my head! If we don't get help soon, their forces will kill us, and each other. And to believe a small mistake could brew so much hatred! I have to run because Mom says that my clumsy brother was almost crushed by a flaming rock the size of an elephant.

I hope you understand why I have to stop writing. Please help me.

P.S. Both rulers are incredibly conceited and vain. Flattery seems to work.

P.P.S. Please get them to see things from the other's point of view and how fighting is unnecessary and so blood shouldn't be spilled over this.

GOAL WORDS

Vain	War
Vain	Convince
Rulers	Misunderstanding
War	Hatred
War	Flattery

by Julia Starrett



Dear Pilgrims of the Flying Temple,

I've got a serious problem, and you're the only ones I can turn to.

My parents have arranged my marriage to Nikalos, Prince of a rival country, but I've fallen in love with Felan, a childhood friend. It's important to the peace accord that we have with the other country that we be united, but my heart cries out. I've never even met this prince, but I can't imagine that he wants to be forced to marry someone that he's never been introduced to, either. My Mother, Muril, was married to my Father, Hector, because of the same tradition, and while they've always gotten along for the sake of the accords, they never seem happy. On top of all that, I have to leave all of my friends and my family to live in an unfamiliar land. I wish I could just run away, but that would shame me in my entire country's eyes.

You have to help me

Sincerely

Princess Loana

GOAL WORDS

Accords	Love	Princess Loana
Accords	Marriage	Princess Loana
Felan	Marriage	Princess Loana
Love	Muril and Hector	Tradition
Love	Prince Nikalos	Tradition

by James Orr



Dear Flying Pilgrim People,

HELP! I am in TROUBLE! There is a MONSTER under my bed and it will EAT ME! Daddy said if I am in trouble and he can't help, I should write to you. Daddy is dead, so PLEASE help me. I hope you are feeling well. I hope the weather is SUNNY and WONDERFUL where you are. Mommy said to be nice to people in letters and they'll listen to you. You HAVE to listen to me or I might DIE, so I am being EXTRA NICE. My planet is full of ORPHANS. My friends Daks and Jenk say EVERYONE on my planet is an orphan, except for maybe the grown-ups because once you're big enough you stop being an orphan. Daks and Jenk told me about the MONSTER under my bed. They told me it was under OTHER BEDS, too. I watched my friends and some of them DISAPPEARED. Daks told me the monster got them and it's going to GET ME SOON. HELP! Jenk told me the monster has FLASHING CLAWS and SLASHING TEETH. Better to REND FLESH from the BONES of small girls. Then he was nice and told me that if I heard the monster GROWLING I could scare it away by jumping on my bed and yelling flibbet REALLY LOUD. That night, the monster GROWLED. I yelled flibbet REALLY LOUD and the monster DIDN'T eat me. Matron Percy told me I was NAUGHTY. The next day I did not get an apple with my porridge to LEARN my LESSON, she said. I like apples. I like it when you bite them and the JUICE runs down your chin. Also, they are yummy. The monster GROWLED last night too, but I didn't jump on my bed or yell flibbet. I was quiet. Apples are NICE. The monster GOT DAKS. In the morning, she was GONE. Jenk told me the monster got her, but it would be okay. It's not okay. Jenk is sad. I am sad. The monster is going to GET US. HELP! I am afraid for JENK and for ME and for ALL MY FRIENDS and maybe even MATRON PERCY, even though she is a GROWN-UP. Please come and help us!

Matilda

PS. PLEASE COME NOW

PPS. I HEARD IT AGAIN

GOAL WORDS

Matilda	Monster	Matron Percy
Matilda	"flashing claws"	orphans
Matilda	"slashing teeth"	orphans
Monster	Daks	orphans
Monster	Jenk	bed

by Jesse Pudewell



Dear Pilgrims of the Flying Temple,

My name is Tiaa. Our village is called Stela and I am the daughter of the mayor, Nebka. I hate to be writing you like this, but my village's food keeps getting destroyed by sand waves from the desert. Please help us.

Long ago, our ancestors were driven to live in the desert by some long forgotten force. We make do since we are hardy folk and know the secret of creating water from sand. Building our village on rocks in the sands, we created an oasis and for many lifetimes enjoyed it.

There were large sand waves that reached us on our rock oasis. A young man named Aha the Inventor had a plan for a hanging garden that would stand high above the rock and desert so it would be protected from these sand waves. The hanging gardens didn't seem to help. As soon as night fell on the day they were finished, they would be destroyed.

Dad decided to send a group of villagers to see where these mysterious waves were coming from. An old tracker named Neith led the group. She was the village's best tracker and must be lost. They should have come back days ago, but we haven't heard anything from her or any of the others.

If Dad found out I was writing you, he'd be really mad. We are a proud people and don't like to ask help from strangers. On the other hand, if you were in the neighborhood and could help us, that'd be okay, I think.



GOAL WORDS

desert	rock	proud
oasis	Nebka	lost
sand wave	Neith	Aha the Inventor
mysterious	tracker	long forgotten force
hanging garden	village	creating water from sand

by Melissa & Josh Rensch



Dear Pilgrims of the Flying Temple,

My older sister Lue is in a crazy love affair! She's in love with a total jerk of a wizard's apprentice who has charmed her into loving him. I think that either my sister has gone bonkers, or he's done something to her!

Let me explain our world. It's a fantastic place of crystalline lakes of burning ice, verdant forests with living trees, deserts of acidic black sand, mountains of solid fire—you get the picture, right? Anything is possible, especially for the great and angelic beings representing divine power—the pilgrims of the flying temple.

I need your help desperately. The count ruling over this portion of the land (a sea of white dust in which burrowing creatures live) made a law that all magic-users and those who care for them are to be punished severely. Now my sister is telling her friends that her boyfriend can use sorcery! I am extremely frightened for her.

However, I am sure he has cast a spell on her to make her love him. Love spells can be disastrous! How did I know that? Let's just say I'm reading books on wizardry to help myself master the supernatural talent I possess. Please don't tell anyone. Pretty please? I am desperate for help. I suppose it might be a love potion, because I saw Lue eating a strange box of chocolates the other day.

Be careful, the count is a wrathful man, and my sister is not easily convinced that she is wrong. She's a rather obstinate sort of person. I have tried to convince her she is under an enchantment, but she says that the wizard's apprentice is a very handsome and kindly person. Ugh! She will be in so much trouble... I don't know how I might be able to save her! Help me, pilgrims of the flying temple!

GOAL WORDS

"My older sister Lue"	"great and angelic beings"	"love potion"
"crazy love affair"	"all magic users"	"strange box of chocolates"
"wizard's apprentice"	"punished severely"	"count is a wrathful man"
"fantastical place"	"love spells"	"handsome and kindly person"
"sea of white dust"	"supernatural talent I possess"	"so much trouble"

by Sophia Starrett



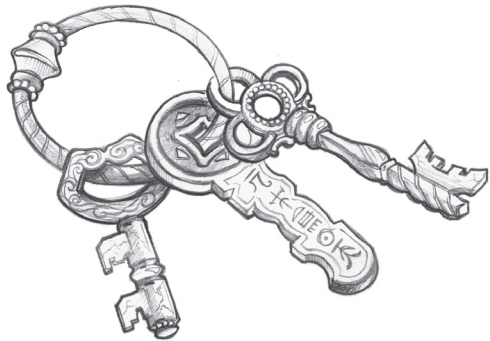
Dear Elders,

Please, you must help me! My father, Karl Pfortner, is gatekeeper of the Town of Towers on the world of Tarantara and he keeps the keys to the city gates. I borrowed the key to the South Gate to show to my friends and I accidentally dropped it into the town well. Now we can only leave the town through the North Gate. This would not be such a problem, but the Prince of Tarantara is getting married and he and his new wife will be touring Tarantara with their entourage in one month. They want to cross our town along the main street, so both gates must be open. If the gate cannot be opened, then my family will be banished from the town, never to see its towers again.

My father's tried everything to get the gate open, but we must not damage the gates as the town must look perfect for the procession. We asked Will Schmied, the town blacksmith to try to pick the lock; but it is too complicated, even with all the tools in his cellars. My father has tried lowering me down the well on a rope but the water is too deep for me to see the bottom. We asked Captain Bergmann, who leads the military academy in the town to help us. He cannot think of a way to get the gates open, even with the 200 cadets under his command, and my father won't let him try the cannon or battering rams. All the horses in the town cannot pull the gates open. We don't know what to do.

You must get the gates open in time for the royal wedding procession and get me out of trouble with my father and the town!

Toricht Pfortner



GOAL WORDS

Key	South Gate	Blacksmith
Key	South Gate	Prince
Key	Gatekeeper	Royal Wedding
Well	Captain Bergmann	Procession
Well	Cadets	

by Julian Tysoe



Dear Pilgrims of the Flying Temple,

Here in Onippa our animals have been disappearing. I have a pet turtle. His name is Sherbet. I just got him a year ago, when I turned 12 and my mom decided I was old enough.

When animals started disappearing around Onippa I moved his aquarium next to my bed and slept with my arm around it. That was not enough. When I woke up one morning Sherbet was gone. I am afraid for him, and for me. I tell him all my secrets. He is a good listener. I am afraid he might tell my secrets to somebody else. I am also afraid a bear will eat him.

My sister, Alise Penny, cannot find her cat, whose name is Sprinkles. My neighbor, Detroit Ferguson, owns a horse farm and four of his thirteen horses are gone now. There are many other missing animals that I have not met myself. The Onippa Gazette now has a new "Missing Animals" section that you can pay an extra ten cents for, and every morning it is a little bit longer with new listings and pictures.

Alise is thinking about getting dad to buy her a Robo-cat. I am sad she would do that. Robo-pets have no sympathy and they do not listen to you, they just record what you say. It is so much easier for somebody to sneak into your Robo-pet's tapes then it is to become friends with your *real* animal. But Alise is really excited about getting to choose the design and personality and customize her pet.

Mayor Grumbert has taken away buying-pet-tax for a few weeks so it is easier for people to buy new pets. People seem to be forgetting about loyalty. Also, if somebody's animal goes missing there is a special form for them to fill out. It costs 20 cents, but then they do not have to keep paying their monthly-pet-tax, unless their animal returns.

I heard mom tell dad that she thought this was a "stratergy". She thinks that Mayor Grumbert put the law into place so that later it will be more easy to raise taxes a lot higher.

Dad thinks that people are using this time, with no buying-pet-tax to get new animals that cost more. He said that half of the

missing animals were probably the owners illegally getting rid of old pets. That makes me sad. But please don't tell mom and dad I said that. They would get mad that I listened and then told you, but if they are right then there is even more fixing up to do in Onippa so I thought you should know.

Please find Sherbet and all the other animals.
With hope,
Henry Penny



GOAL WORDS

Onippa	Sprinkles	Mayor Grumbert
animals have been disappearing	Detroit Ferguson	forgetting about loyalty
Sherbet	four of his horses are gone	taxes
Secrets	Onippa Gazette	getting rid of old pets.
Alise Penny	Robo-pets	Henry Penny

by Kristin Firth



Great Deliverers!

I write to you from the Parchment Garden in the deepest woe and need. An enemy devours us.

We are the Phi Ri, a scribbling people who gather fables for the great harvest. Unlike the hairy Grenlish on our border, we give the stories to our young so that they'll grow up lean and tough, with good teeth and long bones. Since the Grenlish became hungry, they forced us to surrender our finest tales, leaving us nothing to eat but songs. Now these rot and the Phi Ri starve.

We are anaemic, bloated and slovenly, sinking into our own stomachs like cannonballs into custard. Even our Scrafters cannot write for us—the Grenlish imprison and mute them if they share their poems and legends.

How shall we feed on rotten songs? And what is a Scrafters without a tongue? Once the old tales were consumed, the Scrafters could not feed the Grenlish so some of them scrafted new tales: Where once there were happy stories, now the Parchment Garden is ravaged by evil deeds, most of them our own.

How do we stop these evil deeds? Even Scrafters Yoan, the leanest, baldest Scrafters of all, bows to the Grenlish. He took children from the Parchment Garden, took them away like they were nuts from the bush. No one knows what happened to them, except the Grenlish perhaps, who had that story for themselves.

The ink rivers are brown from neglect. Our people are still and silent, famished, fat and broken. There is no one to save us now, and none can stand against the Grenlish giants.

Even if we knew how the songs became rotten, or why the Scrafters turned, how could we make them safe and scraft for ourselves? Grenlish watch us like robins, and steal us away in their itchy, brown sacks.

If you find this letter, please turn your gaze upon us. This is the last hope of the Phi Ri. Help us before we are muted.

GOAL WORDS

Phi Ri	good teeth and long bones	evil deeds
scribbling people	bloated and slovenly	evil deeds
Grenlish	Scrafters	Scrafters Yoan
Grenlish	rotten songs	Parchment Garden
Grenlish	a Scrafters without a tongue	Parchment Garden

by Sebastian Hickey



HONORED HOLY ONES,

Our village at Three Roosters River is in a terrible predicament. Two years ago Fang Hua, a beautiful village woman, returned the god of the wind's amorous attentions. The result of their union was the demigod Déwu. Mother and child continued to live at Three Roosters after Déwu's birth. The father moved on – his only visit was the night Déwu was born.

In the past week Fang Hua has taken quite ill with the Thousand Weight disease. She is bed-ridden and can barely breathe, much less take care of her son. The rest of the village is doing its best to care for both mother and son. Yet he is more than we can handle.

Déwu is still a child, but also partly a god. He has eaten most of the season's grain and fish stores. He playfully throws our chickens well out of sight and his tantrums blow over our houses. Without his mother, Déwu is uncontrollable. Whether it was a mother's strength or a god's gift, only she can easily feed him, change his diapers, and keep him from harming himself or others.

Our prayers to the wind god for his return have gone unanswered. The village eldest elder says that Fire Bee royal jelly could cure Fang Hua's illness, but who would be foolish enough to enter the insects' volcanic hive? Further, some villagers grumble that the Thousand Weight disease is a curse levied by the wind god's former lover, the Queen of Whispers. How can I protect his mother from both sickness and dissent? What if the sickness begins to spread?

We come to you only because the need is dire and our own resources expended. Please help us.

Citizen Ahm Mirya, of Three Roosters River village

GOAL WORDS

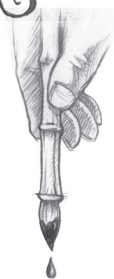
Three Roosters River	season's grain and fish stores	Fire Bee royal jelly
Fang Hua	Déwu is uncontrollable	volcanic hive
god of the wind	a god's gift	Queen of Whispers
Déwu	change his diapers	sickness and dissent
Thousand Weight disease	harming himself or others	sickness begins to spread

by Travis Bryant

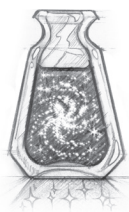


Distinguished World-Walkers,

My Aunt Valoria is a powerful scriptarian¹ tasked by the people of our majestic world, Lore, with collecting all the names and stories of everyone who ever lived on Lore into one book. The Book of Names will be housed in the greatest museum on Lore's tallest mountain. Visitors from all the worlds will be able to read the names and stories of Lore until the end of time.



However, in her research my Aunt Valoria discovered that to make the writing in the Book of Names last for all eternity, she must collect a special ink from a local black hole. This is where the rough and tough Celestial Fishermen hunt for starlight, the ruthless pirates² from Gravity's Rainbow³ plunder ships for treasure and technology, and the Old Ones from the Deep⁴ may emerge to drag all beneath into the dark hole's crushing gravity grip.



My Uncle Tinomin, a Master Stargazer for Lore has warned her against trying to use the ink from the black hole, saying that it could have profound consequences for our world if the attempt is made, including destroying the world she hopes to preserve in the Book of Names. I don't claim to understand the inscriptions or the formulas either side argues over at family gatherings and in public.

Lore needs your help to sort this out before any more of our people are forgotten from memory or the world is destroyed in foolish desperation.

- 1 Scriptarians are individuals gifted in writing with magic.
- 2 Pirates working out of Gravity's Rainbow are said to take orders from none other than the infamous Captain Horace Bane.
- 3 Gravity's Rainbow is an asteroid belt in a decaying orbit around the local black hole near Lore. It is said that in ages past, the asteroid belt was a twin world to Lore which through natural or other means was torn apart by the power of the black hole or a force related to it and that the asteroids are its lingering remains.
- 4 Old Ones from the Deep are believed to be trapped inside the black hole, but may emerge to wreak havoc on worlds in part or whole when black thread that binds the other dimension shut becomes loose.

GOAL WORDS

Aunt Valoria	Lore	Celestial Fishermen
Aunt Valoria	Lore	ruthless pirates from Gravity's Rainbow
Uncle Tinoman	Lore	Captain Horace Bane
scriptarian	Book of Names	Old Ones from the Deep
scriptarian	Book of Names	Old Ones from the Deep

by David Miessler-Kubaneck



Dear Most Holy Saviors On High,

We the management of Hotel Nirvana must humbly beg for you to volunteer your able services as temporary staff in our greatest time of need. Our most sacred spiritual revitalization establishment has been selected as the auspicious site by the Great and Awesome Powers That Be to host diplomatic discussions. These discussions will last until a settlement can be reached between the Ergs and the mighty Ughs, whose disagreements have threatened one and all for five generations.

The disagreements have lasted so long it is a wonder if either the Ergs or the Ughs can remember the original articles of dispute. This settlement, believes the Great and Awesome Powers That Be, will be one which will change the course of destiny for all the worlds now and forever after.

This convocation of forces at our humble Hotel Nirvana has since been called, Nirv-Con. We of Hotel Nirvana, as a small and modest staff, request from deep within our souls with prayers uplifted to the stars above that the Pilgrims of the Flying Temple provide us the strength and skill to make this, our first, Nirv-Con a success; to ensure the special delegates and entourages enjoy the amenities; to prevent unnecessary violence or harsh language; and perhaps most of all that the Great and Awesome Powers That Be do not smite our blessed establishment if we receive a complaint.

We are a four-star villa, nestled in the Valley of Enlightenment on the lush cultivated garden world of Mandala. Hotel Nirvana maintains herbal spring baths, meditative games, spiritual workshops; a gift shop to purchase souvenirs and toiletries, an in-temple restaurant and out-of-temple lounge for when you want to get away from getting away. We are open every day except for yesterdays. Hotel Nirvana hopes to be the next destination along your spiritual journey. Peace unto you and yours.

GOAL WORDS

Hotel Nirvana	Ergs	Nirv-Con
Hotel Nirvana	Ergs	Nirv-Con
Hotel Nirvana	Ergs	Valley of Enlightenment
Great and Awesome Powers That Be	Ughs	Mandala
Great and Awesome Powers That Be	Ughs	Mandala

by David Miessler-Kubanek



† Dear Pilgrims of the Flying Temple, †

My name is Sister Yo, and I write to you from Scrollshome Valley monastery. For one hundred years the monks have explored ancient ruins in the valley, recorded knowledge they discover, and stored the facts of history in our village's labyrinthine library. I'm only twelve, but I've been given an important job, recording the birthdays of every child in the valley, adding their names to the events of the past. It was a peaceful and ordered life.

Then the Dancing Moon Company arrived in Scrollshome Valley, led by famed actor Polobious Gant. The actors travelled in the company of their patron, the great Spirit Juwheya. When the company stages their plays, Spirit Juwheya believes what he is seeing so much his magic causes it to become real! Feathers sprout on paper costumes and actors take to the air, while the wooden swords of actresses are suddenly enchanted steel wielded by mighty warrior women. These fancies were things of wonder—until the night the actors' cart-oxen was transformed into a bull-headed dragon that set fire to our market! The magic fades with the first light of sunrise—but the damage to our village remains, as does the gemstone Spirit Juwheya leaves for Polobious Gant each night as reward.

Elder Oleon and our council have asked the company to stop presenting plays and move on. But the Dancing Moon will not—cannot, Gant says—continue on until Spirit Juwheya chooses to... who can say what will move a thirty-foot tall spirit made of dust, wind, and lightning? Spirit Juwheya rarely speaks, only wandering silently about each day to explore ruins before returning to the village for that night's performance. Elder Oleon even made sure that none of the people of the village came to the plays for a week.

Gant often pens new plays to help keep Spirit Juwheya entertained, and now begins work on a new play. Perhaps Oleon pushed Gant too far, but I'm told Gant's new tale tells of the early days of our village, when a young boy must decide between chasing his mind's desire to record history, or follow his heart to distant lands and become an actor. This is the story of Oleon as a boy when he explored the ancient ruins before founding the monastery and our village, though Oleon never desired to become an actor.

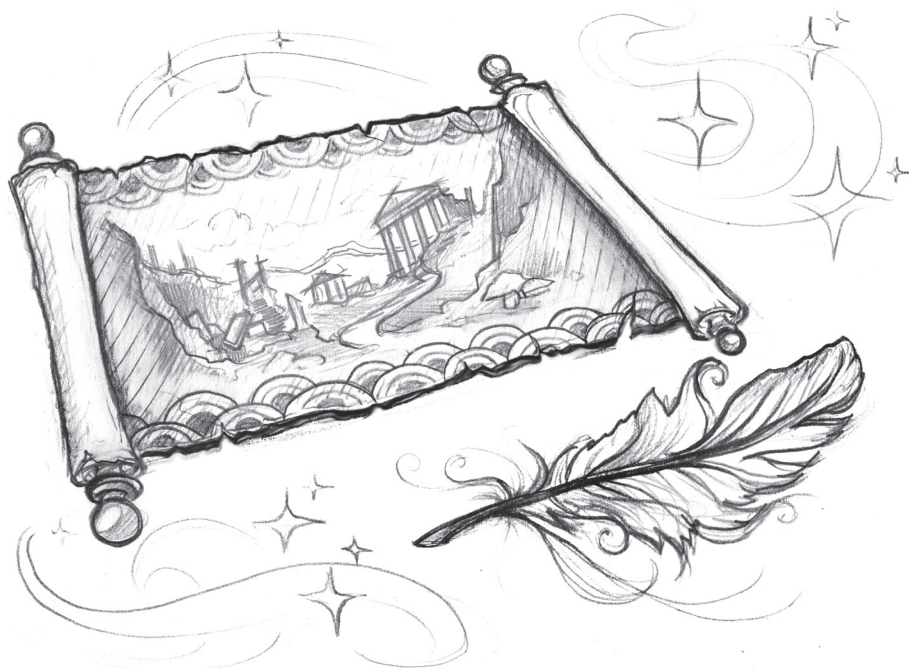


But what if Spirit Juwheya's magic makes Gant's play real? If Oleon becomes an actor, there will be no Scrollshome monastery, no village, and everything we know will change!

I write to you Pilgrims: Can you come and make peace between history-writers who record the truth and tale-tellers who live lies? Can you make contact with a spirit who cares little for what goes on around him unless it happens on a stage? Can you give our village, our monastery, and our people a future instead of a past that never happened?

I hope that you will visit soon.

Sister Yo



GOAL WORDS

Scrollshome Valley

Dancing Moon Company

ancient ruins

monastery

magic

magic

play

play

Polobious Gant

Polobious Gant

Elder Oleon

Elder Oleon

Spirit Juwheya

Spirit Juwheya

Spirit Juwheya

by Seth Johnson





To Do-Force Central! ♥

To: Do-Force,

From: a.murata@crisishigh.edu

Subj: PROJECT DARKSTAR SEARCH & RESCUE

Priority: High

My name's Arial Murata and I'm a 2nd-year student at Crisis High. While I realize that the highly trained elite Do-Force is charged with thwarting threats to time and space, researching and developing advanced technologies to resolve socio-economic dilemmas, and maintaining fragile peace within the galactic federation of worlds, I would like to request assistance that is in-line with the Do-Force motto, "Let no world be destroyed."

You see, I've misplaced my fighting suit and need your help to find or replace it in time before the upcoming battle with the alien invaders. I kicked their butts last year, but they promised to return and our town just completed rebuilding a couple months ago. I've looked everywhere for the suit, including under the gymnasium at school, under the swimming pool at home and in the hangar bay of the secret government center where they train me to use the suit. Even in the lost and found in the city's disaster shelter.

You see, there's this boy I'd like to impress by saving our world from destruction. And if I don't come through, this other girl (the captain of the swim team) is going to win him over by embarrassing me in front of the whole school. Not to mention the Big School Dance is in two days *and* the semester Final Exams the day after. I just wish I could remember where I left the thing — my dress and exam notes are inside of it!

Let me describe the suit for you. It's about three stories tall, made of an organic ceramic-metal composite harvested from secret alien technology for use in self-defense programs. It's loaded with all the latest missiles and regenerative laser cannons, a plasma ax, tons of grapple hooks and a hi-def sound system I just installed a month ago. It's blue and white striped and sometimes responds to the name Darkstar when our minds can connect — when I'm not distracted with thoughts of the upcoming swim meet, homework, or — you know — girl stuff.

Getting back to the alien invaders, they seem intent on defeating our town champion, which is me, before moving on to destroying Crisis High. None of the battle suit instructors will tell me why the aliens are so determined to invade our world and fight every generation.

They are all counting on me to pull through and kick the aliens out of town again. I haven't yet told the instructors about Darkstar going missing. I know that I can't give up because Do-Force would not. Even if I can't find Darkstar I will have to face the alien invaders. Hopefully, not alone.

Arial Murata

GOAL WORDS

Crisis High	alien invaders	battle suit Darkstar
Crisis High	alien technology	Big School Dance
Let no world be destroyed.	battle suit Darkstar	Big School Dance
alien invaders	battle suit Darkstar	Final Exams
alien invaders	battle suit Darkstar	Final Exams

by David Miessler-Kubanek



Honored Pilgrims,

My spiteful daughter Lei-Shan thinks she is in love with a stupid farmer, and looks to cast our family's good name into the dirt. Help me talk some sense into her, before she throws our riches away to elope with some unwashed commoner from River Bend.

We have a unique relationship with River Bend. Every Trade Season the orbit of our worlds brings River Bend and Tremendous Pearl close enough to accommodate interplanetary commerce. The River Bend rabble offers us common oranges, grain, and fish; to them we bestow the immortal gifts of poetry and song. It's very one-sided, I agree, but we of the Pearl are terrifically generous. As close as our worlds get, no one from Tremendous Pearl ever put a foot on River Bend, and no River Bend dirt-rat has ever muddied our beautiful planet. They wouldn't know what to do with themselves if they were allowed to cross the trade bridge. Enduring this much beauty every single day is an onerous task.

My daughter is the scion of House Lengfo and as the heir to the most esteemed estate between the two worlds; she has a responsibility to let the lowborn River Benders see her pretty face when they tie their sackcloth bundles to the rope bridge. Last season, she was caught looking back at the filthy workers and smiling. One of the young farmhands seems to have bewitched her with his sweat and grime, and she can't stop talking about his "handsome smile" and "brilliant eyes".

And this, just after I went through the trouble of arranging her marriage to Se Ong Banba of the second-most esteemed house of Tremendous Pearl. He isn't so handsome, but he writes fine poetry from his sickbed.

Trade Season ended weeks ago, and my willful Lei-Shan prays to the Gods that the next one will come soon. She longs for her idiot farm boy, and asked Heaven to intercede. She has always been a pious one, my Lei-Shan, but I never suspected the Gods to answer so quickly.

Unfortunately, the Gods are as fickle as the wind, and the answer is not to my liking. River Bend is on its way back, much sooner than usual, but



it doesn't seem to be moving along its normal route. There is some panic that it seems to be on a collision course with Tremendous Pearl, but the Gods would not be so cruel.

Would they?

Anyway, back to my request. Please talk some sense into my headstrong Lei-Shan. I will not call a farmer son. Also, save our planet if there's time. Maybe River Bend, too. I am partial to my morning oranges.

Ure Lengfo

House Lengfo

Lengfo Estate

GOAL WORDS

Lei-Shan Lenfo	Tremendous Pearl	Se Ong Banba	Collision course
Lei-Shan Lenfo	River Bend	Scion	Collision course
Lei-Shan Lenfo	House Lenfo	Farmer	Collision course
Ure Lengfo	Trade Season	Farmer	Headstrong
Ure Lengfo	Se Ong Banba	Farmer	Elope

by Jeremy Kostiew



DEAR PILGRIMS OF THE FLYING TEMPLE-

We are a scholarly community on the archipelago world of Shrapnel; and we are besieged by armies of intelligent rodents called Khuvhus. They are easily mistaken for hamsters unless examined closely.

The Khuvhus have formed factions and are now at war with each other. Their battles are very noisy and messy; being nocturnal, the Khuvhus wage their battles at night. We cannot sleep for all the noise of battle; and we are in constant fear of the havoc that will greet us by morning.

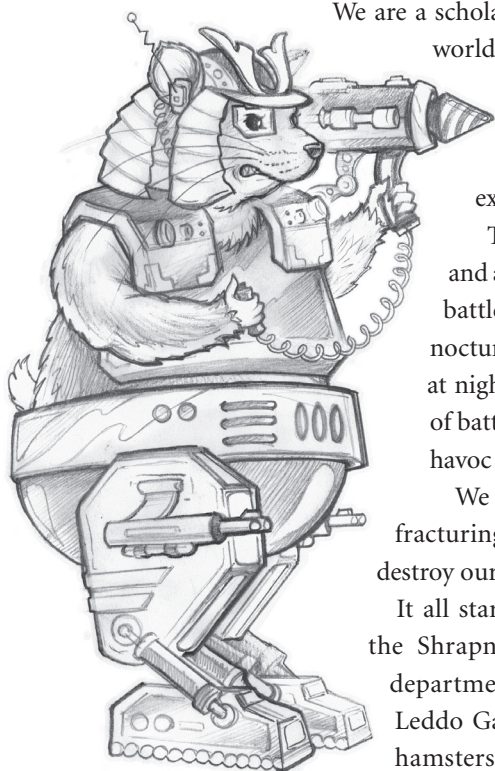
We are so stressed that now we are fracturing into factions; it is threatening to destroy our peaceful way of life.

It all started when Garvin Hedley, dean of the Shrapnel University of Science biology department, sent his laboratory assistant, Leddo Gaulway, off world to procure some hamsters for an upcoming study. Leddo

returned with a dozen specimens, unaware that they were actually hamsters' more intelligent cousins, Khuvhus. It turns out that a compound known as Cerium Dioxide, common on their home world, suppresses their natural intelligence, making it even easier for inexperienced folk to confuse them with Hamsters.

As the Khuvhus were unsuitable for his study, Garvin instructed Leddo to return them to the dealer from which they were purchased. But Leddo had grown fond of the creatures; and so Leddo decided to keep the Khuvhus as pets. Now that they were removed from their native world and the influence of the intelligence suppressing Cerium Dioxide, they began to exhibit some very distinct and unique personalities.

All was well at first; but like many rodents, Khuvhus are very fertile. They began producing many offspring. Unable to care for so many Khuvhus; Leddo sold some to other interested citizens of Shrapnel. Among those new Khuvhu owners were Fujukira Akito, Jurgen Richter,



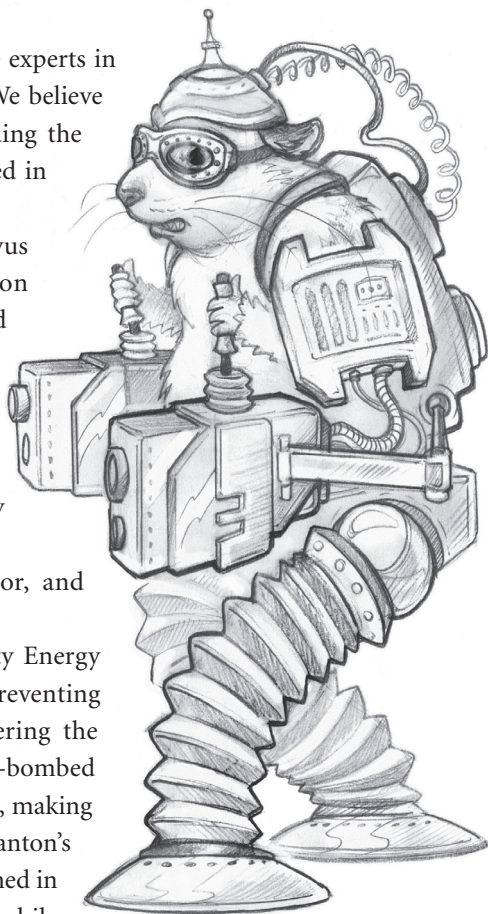
and Olivia Stanton; all of whom are experts in military history of distant worlds. We believe their Khuvhus began the war, reading the many books about warfare contained in their libraries.

A few months later, many Khuvhus escaped to freedom. One faction took up residence in an abandoned subterranean fungus laboratory. Another faction hid within the walls of the Shrapnel University Energy Studies Department building. Another faction took over the Library and Greenhouse at Fujukira’s estate.

They developed weapons, armor, and advanced machines of war.

Recently, the Shrapnel University Energy Studies building was blockaded; preventing professors and students from entering the building. Fujukira’s Library was stink-bombed with an extremely pungent chemical, making approaching it unbearable. Olivia Stanton’s face and arms were indelibly ink stained in an unfortunate landmine incident while she was picking berries near the Fungus Laboratory; the poor woman is now a bright blue color and glows like a light bulb at night.

We are at our wits’ ends and urgently need your help!
In desperation,
Proctor Redfern
Chancellor of Shrapnel



GOAL WORDS

Khuvhus	Fujukira Akito	Abandoned Fungus Lab	Fujukira’s Greenhouse
Khuvhus	Jurgen Richter	Abandoned Fungus Lab	Nighttime battles
Khuvhus	Energy Studies Building	Fujukira’s Library	Weapons
Leddo Gaulway	Energy Studies Building	Fujukira’s Library	Armor
Olivia Stanton	Abandoned Fungus Lab	Fujukira’s Library	Machines of War

by Leo Lalande





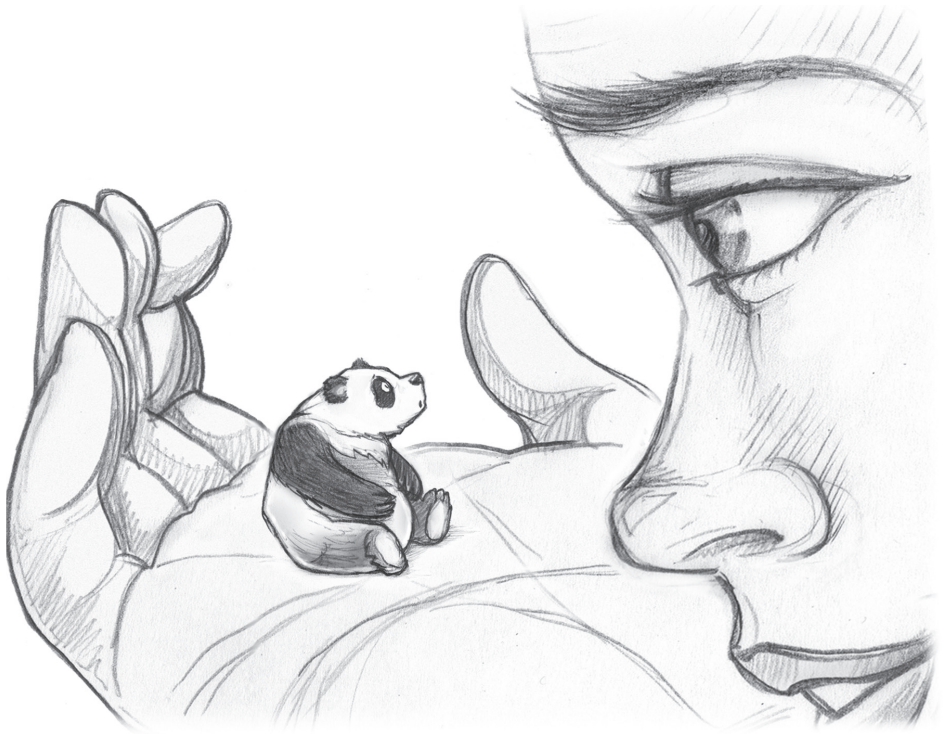
Dear Pilgrims of the Flying Temple,

My name is Sam. I am in third grade, and our class is having a lot of trouble with our classroom pet. Our teacher, Miss Hollsworth, asked us what kind of pet we would like this year, and we decided that we would like to take care of a panda bear. It took some time to find one, but this morning we came to school, and there he was! We decided to name him Xing-Xing, and everybody gave him lots of hugs.

When Miss Hollsworth left to get our morning snacks, we were playing with Xing-Xing and climbing on him, and someone accidentally knocked him over. We were very surprised when he broke into ten thousand little pieces when he hit the ground! It's okay, though, he wasn't really hurt - but now there are ten thousand teeny tiny pandas crawling all over the school, and we need to find them all and figure out how to put them all back together into one big panda before our teacher comes back and figures out what happened. We don't want her to think that we are careless with animals!

We have been trying very hard to collect up all the teeny tiny pandas, but it's a lot of work! We have some of them in a shoebox in the classroom, but there are still so many more to catch! I know that a bunch of them must have gotten outside, and we're not really allowed to go out there in the schoolyard and into the park without a teacher with us, but we thought that it would be okay if there were some Pilgrims with us! There are lots of places for a panda that's the size of your thumb to hide out there - in the statue garden, on the rocks in the fish pond, underneath the jungle gym, up in the bamboo grove, out by the bicycle racks, up on the roof, so many places!

There's no way we can do this by ourselves, and even if we did get every single little panda back in the classroom, we have no idea how we'd put Xing-Xing back together into one big huggable panda again! Please help us, Pilgrims! We don't want Miss Hollsworth to think that we can't be trusted with a nice pet!



GOAL WORDS

Panda	Miss Hollsworth	window	garden
Panda	Miss Hollsworth	bamboo	playground
Panda	Sam	pond	roof
Xing-Xing	classroom	fish	park
Xing-Xing	shoebox	statue	pocket

by Marc Majcher



Dear Champions of Hope,

I write to you ... not for myself, but for my family's sake. Three days ago, the Emperor arrested my Father and removed his laughter, leaving him with half a heart. He sits in his room and cries every day and every night. And it is my fault.

The Emperor traveled the world in a royal parade. Silver and gold glittered in his wake; soldiers in chains of bronze, thunder marching in the streets. One day my poor family went to watch the Emperor in the town square. On that day he pronounced that for every year to follow we would celebrate the Emperor's visit with feast and song from dawn to dusk. And I laughed. Before I knew what happened my Father stepped forward and the soldiers pulled him away from us through the crowd, until he was returned yesterday with half a heart.

I ask Mother for help, but she only tells me to be quiet before the Emperor arrests Father again, or worse. I know she blames me for what happened to Father because whenever I try to cheer Father up Mother scolds me and sends me to my room.

She is afraid of the Emperor's Shadow. Everyone says his Shadow will find anyone who disagrees with the Emperor. They say that the Shadow will find you and take something valuable and imprison it far far away where none can reach it. This distant place is known as the Land Beyond Tomorrow, where the stolen valuable will be gone forever in the Prison of the Forgotten.

I cannot forget my Father's laughter. I am afraid. I am sorry for what I did. I want to make it better. Is there nothing I can do to bring back Father's laughter? Will you help me, Pilgrims of the Flying Temple?

Or must I go by myself to a Land Beyond Tomorrow to free my Father's laughter from imprisonment? I await your reply at my bedroom window on the second floor at dusk. I wait for the day when the Emperor's Shadow is no more and people across our world no longer live in fear to leave their homes or laugh at their government.

GOAL WORDS

half a heart	Mother	Father	Land Beyond Tomorrow
Prison of the Forgotten	Mother	Emperor's Shadow	Land Beyond Tomorrow
Father's laughter	Mother	Emperor's Shadow	Emperor
Father's laughter	Father	Emperor's Shadow	Emperor
Father's laughter	Father	Land Beyond Tomorrow	Emperor

by David Miessler-Kubaneck



DEAR PILGRIMS,

I am trapped.

My sons, Phobos and Deimos, have pinned me to the ground and dropped a mountain upon me.

It is a very, very large mountain. Too much for me to lift alone, I fear. I have tried.

The effort has nearly undone me.

I feel the crust of this dusty red world cracking beneath me, from the weight of the mountain, from the strain of my labors here.

It cannot be long now before this dry planet I call home crumbles to dust, the price of my sons' treachery. I worry for them; they are not yet fit to wear the mantle of war. They know only fear; I know the necessary sacrifices made to defend those we love.

My beautiful green bride, my emerald jewel, must think me already dead. 'Twas jealousy at our engagement that drove my sons to this.

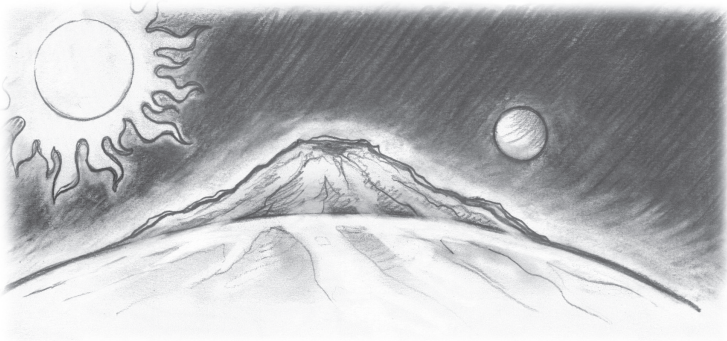
Please.

Help.

Only you can hear my whispered plea.

Only you can save Mars.

- M.

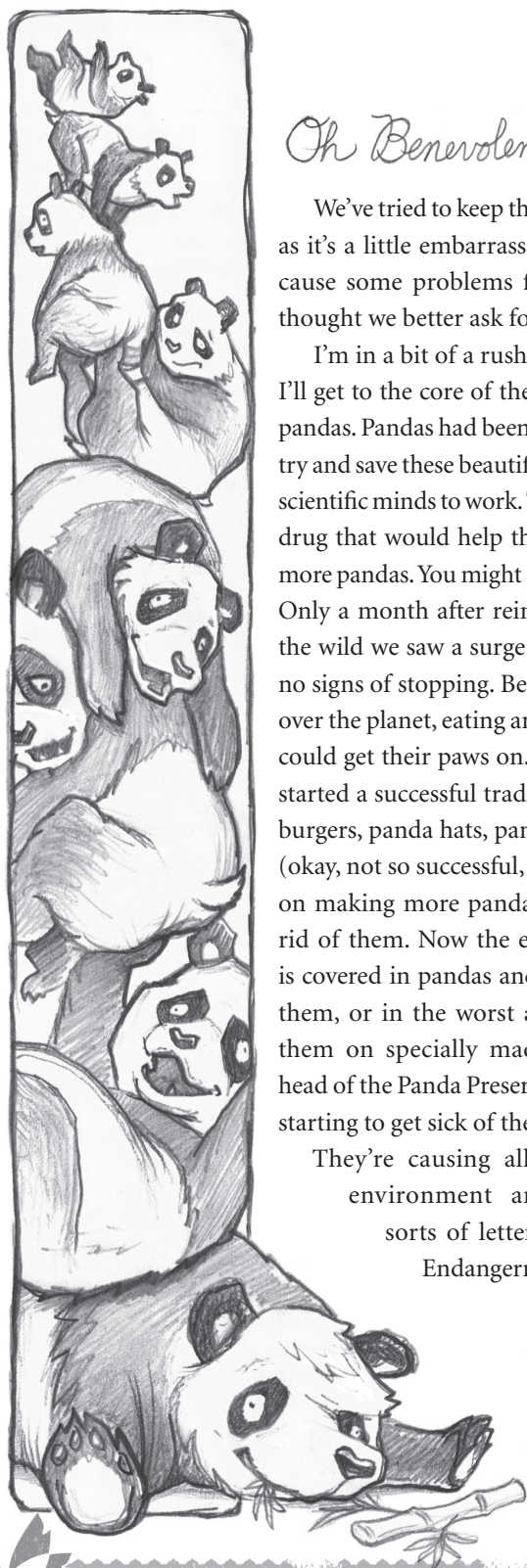


GOAL WORDS

Mars	The Emerald Bride	Very Very Large Mountain	Fear
Mars	Engagement	Dry	Jealousy
Phobos	Wedding	Dust	Whispers
Deimos	Treachery	Red Sand	Mantle of War
Sons	Very Very Large Mountain	Cracking Crust	God of War

by Fred Hicks





Oh Benevolent Guardians,

We've tried to keep this little problem to ourselves as it's a little embarrassing but we now fear it will cause some problems for our neighbours, so we thought we better ask for help.

I'm in a bit of a rush and a little bit cramped, so I'll get to the core of the matter: we have too many pandas. Pandas had been dying out on our planet. To try and save these beautiful creatures, we put our best scientific minds to work. They came up with a miracle drug that would help the pandas, you know, make more pandas. You might say it worked a little too well. Only a month after reintroducing the pandas into the wild we saw a surge in population that showed no signs of stopping. Before long, pandas spread all over the planet, eating and drinking everything they could get their paws on. We tried culling them and started a successful trade in panda fur coats, panda burgers, panda hats, panda-flavoured health drinks (okay, not so successful, that one) but they just kept on making more pandas faster than we could get rid of them. Now the entire surface of the planet is covered in pandas and we have to wade through them, or in the worst affected areas sail through them on specially made panda-canoes! I'm the head of the Panda Preservation League and even I'm starting to get sick of the black and white monsters!

They're causing all sorts of trouble to the environment and you should see the sorts of letters I get from the Bamboo Endangerment Committee!

We've even started launching them out into space to try and make more room on the planet, but our celestial neighbours don't seem very keen on that and sent us some rather strongly worded letters on the matter. What are we to do?

We're sure you as Celestial Guardians can solve this little issue for us; perhaps have a chat with our neighbours and let them know we're sure the situation is temporary and the pandas in orbit pose at the very worst only a 45% threat of the same thing happening on their planet.

Perhaps you could assure them that there is no need for such phrases as "contact with space-borne pandas will be seen as an act of war" or "blowing you out of the sky" and that you'll sort everything out in a jiffy.

Yours most reasonably,
Basil Blakeley
Panda Preservation League President

GOAL WORDS

Pandas	Miracle drug	Canoes	neighbours
Pandas	Panda Preservation League	War	neighbours
Pandas	Panda Preservation League	War	pandas in orbit
environment	Bamboo Endangerment Committee	War	pandas in orbit
Wade	Canoes	neighbours	pandas in orbit

Andrew Montgomery-Hurrell



To the most illustrious and enlightened Pilgrims of the Flying Temple;

In the belief of many of the inhabitants of the planet of Dunyana the time is now to ask for the help of those beings who both would help and are able. Our planet is afflicted of a grievous injury - one which will not heal with time - lo, it will become only more grievous in time.

Our planet is made up of three layers. The first, which men walk upon, is the crust, which is the thickness of a mile, a span and a step. This is the World Above. After that is pure, white crystal - a span, a step and a finger wide. The third layer is full of diverse creatures of spirit - a morass of beauty and splendor. This is the World Below

Those of the World Above summon diverse spirits in the course of their day to help them with difficult tasks - such as flying on carpets, ascending by means of ropes tied to nothing and making a truly excellent sherbet. In the old, good days, a spirit was then released back to the World Below. Now, such is not the case.

For lo, a maker of things and a delver of the deeps - Yusri, by name - bored through the crust to the crystal and, through many dark and terrible magics, formed bottles of various sizes from it. Each one capable of holding a spirit - alone and incapacitated - until a use arrives for it. The djinn is then let out of the container and, instead of being sent back to the World Below afterward, as is his right, he is placed back in the bottle, enslaved forever. As if this were not enough, Yusri carved too deeply into the flesh of the crystal. With less crystal and fewer spirits within to give the World Below its healthy, filled shape, the crystal began to crack. Once the cracks spread across whole crystal, Dunyana herself will be rent asunder.

The spirits groan in travail over their plight and the plight of Dunyana, but to no avail - other than the very old, every mother's son and father's daughter has fallen to the way of the Djinni of the Bottle. To expect them to remember the summoning each and every time they desire a cold drink is too much for them, they say. After all, they can't see the world cracking, so why change now?

Please, O Pilgrims; hear this letter and come to our aid. Convince the people of Dunyana to change their ways. The need is great and the hour is full. It is only in the death of my master that I was able to write this missive and throw my bottle into the setting sun. I pray it reaches you.

Kardal, A Djinni Of the Bottle





GOAL WORDS

djinn	crystal	People of Dunyana	summoning
djinn	crystal	People of Dunyana	bottle
djinn	The World Below	Dunyana	Kardal
Yusri	The World Above	Dunyana	Kardal
crystal	Yusri	Djinni of the Bottle	Kardal

by Jesse Pudewell



Dear Pilgrims,

War is coming to my land and I know not if we can survive. If our Great General Hanuel were still alive, I would not be writing you. Alas, he died peacefully upon his bed a decade ago and our army is yet in disarray.

Let me explain. On my planet, people live long, but there are not many children born. It is for this reason that our war is more like a dance, armies moving in and out, graceful touches to signal the death of your foe without the deed being done. For this reason, the intelligence and wit of your general is a thousand times more useful than the training of your army.

It has been more than a hand of centuries since a man has fallen in war, but there are rumors in the land of a new general, the Warlord Ji, scarcely two centuries old, who would change all that and wage war as in the Old Battle, with blood and strength and vigor. All this, he says he will do if none can defeat him in the Dance of War.

Our Great General Hanuel was a wise and terrible general and had walked upon the land for seven hundred and thirty-six years, but he did not foresee the rising of Warlord Ji. In his wisdom, he left the command of his armies to his three children. However, in the Dance of War, only one general is allowed as the Great General of our army and none of the children will allow another to lead.

His daughter, General Iseul, is proud and none have conquered her defenses. His elder son, General Kyung, is brilliant, cold, and a master of tactics diverse and terrible. His youngest son, General Li, is charismatic, kind and the most beloved of the generals. Many soldiers of the Dance of War would follow him to the grips of Old Battle, if it came to that.

Great General Hanuel had magic, which he broke into three parts and gave one to each of his children. This magic, he said, made his army faster than any other, responding to his commands as if they could all hear his voice and see his actions, rather than by way of bugles, messengers or flags. I know not of the magic, as I am not of the army, but it was terrible.

The three Generals have not given their pieces of the magic together, nor have they chosen one to be a Great General. If there is none in three days time, the Warlord Ji wins by forfeit and our army will be attacked in blood and strength and vigor. This I know we cannot hold against.

Please, flying pilgrims; come and help us. Help our Generals work together so that our world is not filled with blood.

Sang Jin

Loyal advisor to the Great General





GOAL WORDS

Great General Hanuel
Great General Hanuel
Great General Hanuel
General Iseul
General Iseul

General Li
General Li
General Kyung
General Kyung
Warlord Ji

Warlord Ji
Warlord Ji
The Dance of War
The Dance of War
Great General

Great General
Hanuel's Magic
Hanuel's Magic
Old Battle
Old Battle

by Jesse Pudewell



Dear Pilgrims of the Flying Temple,

I am Irra. Everyone in town says I'm foolish for sending this letter, even my older brother Tidan who is helping me with my writing. He calls me a silly girl, says that the Pilgrims won't come, but he helps me make the letters anyway.

We are all very thirsty. The well is drying up, and everyone says we can only have two cups a day to drink, and we are not allowed baths anymore! The Great Spring that feeds our fields and gardens is going away too, and daddy says if they don't get rain soon, all the food will die before we can eat it. Nobody knows where the water went. Tidan and me know, but nobody will believe us.

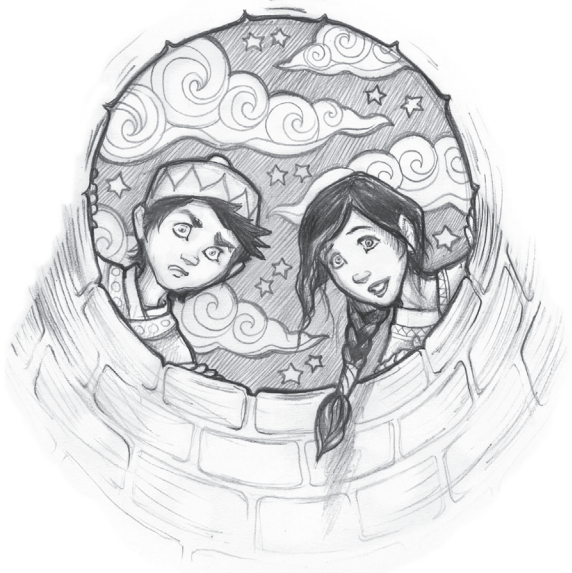
One night I was really thirsty and could not sleep, so I went out to sneak a drink from the well. It was so dark that I stubbed my foot on the bucket. But I looked down the well and saw little blue lights down inside! I told Tidan, and the next night we snuck out and went to the Great Spring and saw more of the little lights over the water, drinking it up! We have tried to tell our dad, but he won't believe us. I told him that we should write the Temple, and he got very cross and said the pilgrims are just troublemakers. Tidan said we can write the letter anyway if it would make me sleep better, but he does not think you will come. But I just know you will come help us!

Please come!

Irra and Tidan

CHOOSING GOAL WORDS

As a bit of practice before writing your own letter, try choosing your own goal words for the two letters here. Find the key characters and locations and list each as a goal word. If that character or location will appear multiple times, list them multiple times. If you want this to be an easy letter, choose ten. For a medium letter, choose fifteen. For a hard letter, choose twenty.



by Donnie Clark





DEAR TEMPLE OF FLYING PILGRIMS –

One of your pilgrims is here and refuses to leave. Please help! We've tried everything we can think of to return this pilgrim to you, including bribes, tricks, traps, and begging, but to no avail. Our limited resources are no match for the full power and fury of a Flying Pilgrim.

The Pilgrim has turned our government upside down, our food stores inside out, and our patience into a vacuum. Our children see your representative as a role model and have fled schools, shirked chores, and have unsuccessfully attempted to fly from their homes.

Without migrating from our world to another, we have this last recourse to consider and in the name of our world and others, please, please take back your pilgrim.

Yours respectfully, Argos of world Janus.

Argos

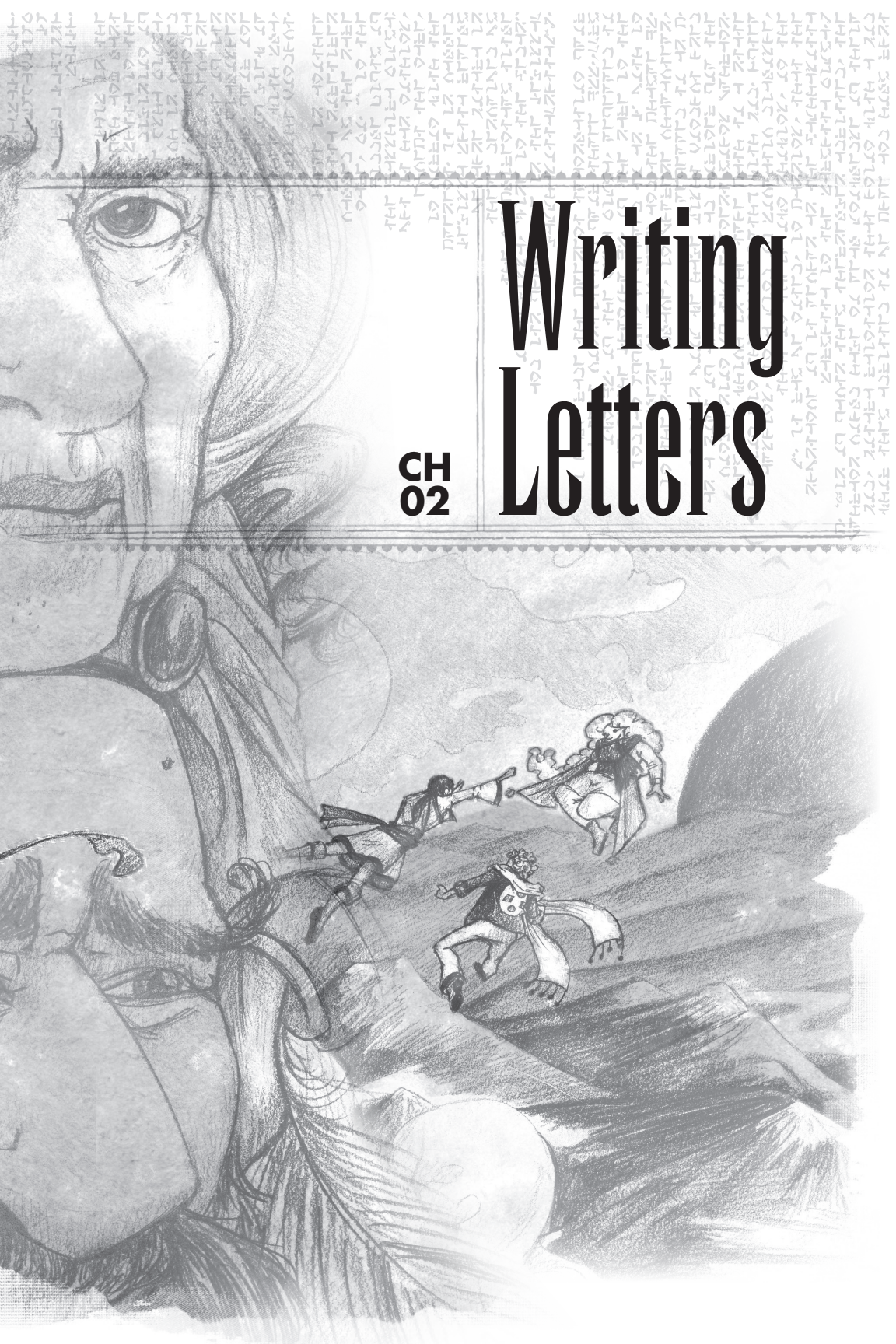
Janus



by David Miessler-Kubanek







CH
02

Writing Letters



If you read through all these letters and thought, “Hey, I can do that!” You’re quite right! In fact, we highly encourage you to write new letters and share them with your friends. This chapter offers you some inspirational material about the peoples and environments throughout the universe.

First you’re introduced to common types of worldly people your pilgrims may meet on their journey. From villagers to nobles, spirits to scholars, this survey of worldly cultures gives some of the personalities and background behind the letters.

Then you take a breezy tour through a few broad regions of the universe known as Heavens. Each heaven has its own peculiar environment, which has a strong influence over any worlds inside.

Ah, but the beauty of *Do* is its modular setting. The only history or geography that is important is the parts immediately relevant to the challenge at hand. This also allows great flexibility in genres, as you no doubt saw in this book’s collection.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN WRITING A LETTER

Who is in trouble? Someone is writing a letter to the pilgrims asking for help. Introduce them to the pilgrims and why they’re writing.

Where is the letter-writer? Take this opportunity to describe the relevant details about the letter-writer’s world. Mention any key props or locations that the pilgrims would use as a part of solving the problems at hand.

Why can’t they solve this problem on their own? For some reason, the letter-writer cannot solve this problem without the pilgrims’ help. This is especially interesting if the letter-writer is otherwise very powerful or influential.

Is what the letter-writer wants really what’s best? By writing a letter to the pilgrims, the letter-writer gives them authority to solve problems as they see fit. In the letter, suggest little clues that would cast doubt on the letter-writer’s intentions.

What are the goal words for this letter? Once you’ve written a quick draft of your letter, note the key characters, locations, and objects that you find most important. Crucial elements should appear at least three times. Secondary elements should appear twice. Cameos or flavor elements should only appear once.

How difficult is this letter? The more goal words you have in a letter, the harder it will be for the pilgrims to resolve. As a general rule of thumb, easy letters have ten goal words. Medium-difficulty letters have fifteen. Hard letters have twenty or more.

So, take a look at the pick and choose the bits you find most interesting, and ask yourself some questions as you write a letter.

Worldly People

VEHEMENT VILLAGERS

The average person lives in an average village. Not to say that there is such a thing as an “average” village, but they do share some common troubles.

A medium-size world can support a village of a dozen families. If the land is arable, it is devoted to growing one unique crop that no nearby world can produce. Half the world is a cluster of little houses, with a little skyport in the center. The other half, and the village’s entire life, is devoted to crops. People want the Shadow Wheat from Whitefall or the Cowephant Milk of Spiritfast. For villagers, it’s a meager but stable living.

Sometimes an ambitious dreamer runs away to a big world. Those dreamers are usually the ones who are strong and healthy enough to be pretty good farmers. Those left behind are very old or very young. The elderly either never left home or came back home after their own dreams never panned out. The children live with their grandparents while mom and dad work off-world and send home extra money. The temple gets a lot of letters from those kids, asking when their parents will return.

Rare independent villages do exist, if blessed with many renewable resources or a powerful chief. These are also protected by some natural shield like turbulent skies or a patron spirit. Agreements with spirits are tenuous at best, requiring pilgrims to be the arbiters for any dispute.

Few villages are so fortunate to have such powerful friends, however. New empires spring up overnight, trying to take over every little hamlet before they collapse. Usually an imperial armada takes over a world by force, setting up a mining operation and depleting the world of what little mass it has. Called the “Copper Curse” or the “Iron Exile,” villagers live in fear of all metal. If you find so much as an ingot, you hide it. Metal is a harbinger of terrible wars and worldly destruction.

Empires meddle in more subtle ways, too: using rival villages as proxies for simmering cold wars between imperial enemies too large for each other to take on directly. They will intercept trade routes disguised as rival villagers or poison the soil of an already weakened township. This leads to high tension between villages as they compete for dwindling resources.

Even when not under threat by a foreign power, these little communities have other internal troubles. When you’re holding your own as a tiny speck against the vast blue beyond, it cultivates a suspicion of all things different. Paranoid conformity, you might call it. Even pilgrims trying to help are viewed as meddling outsiders causing only trouble. Pilgrims do bring trouble with them, but that’s beside the point.

NAUGHTY NOBLES

Unlike villagers, there are regal families blessed with great resources and power, yet they still seem to find their own kinds of trouble. Whether queens or chiefs or mayors, they believe in the rightful tradition of their law and its inherent, inerrant truth. After all, if tradition kept you in power for your whole life, you'd defend it to the death, too.

Of course, that trouble usually comes from their sense of entitlement. Nobles declare dominion over anything, which is how you get Her Highness Helvetica, Queen of Written Language and His Splendid Splendorousness Sylvius, Sultan of Cinnamon. Legendary wars were once fought for the title of Lord of the Dance and Princess of Heart.

Most nobles pilgrims meet will be of the wealthy and ostentatious variety, born into families so powerful that they can indulge in any decadent dalliance. A noble usually owns her own throneworld. From there she commands or employs hundreds of servants who live on surrounding worlds. Some have habitable satellites specially constructed from silk and bamboo. Baron Brittle is known to keep his servants in dismal underground chambers.

"Noble" is a relative term, though, some worlds are lucky enough to have elected their own governors or chiefs. Given their position of power, they are still nobles just the same and sometimes act as entitled as their royal counterparts. A noble is as likely to be a tribal chieftain as a small town mayor as the prince of thieves. It's all relative to the local authority.

Noble children, in particular, seem to find more than their fair share of troubles. Princesses have an unfortunate stroke of bad luck, it seems, frequently getting kidnapped, ransomed or rebelling against their stodgy parents in the name of a high ideal. Princes get labeled as entitled brats. They run an all-out war to secure their reputations or, in more subtle machinations, hire mercenaries and lackeys to do the dirty work for them.

Arranged marriages are a common source of trouble. The temple gets letters from parents urging the pilgrims to convince their daughter to marry the King of Trolls for the sake of the nation. Meanwhile, the daughter sends a letter to the temple begging just the opposite. It's up to pilgrims to figure out how to best resolve this situation.

In this way, nobles' problems usually relate to their sense of proper society and hierarchy. Arranged marriages refused, inheritances disputed, signs of civilized life defiled, these are all reasons a noble may call upon the pilgrims for help.

SULLEN SCHOLARS

The pursuit of knowledge is a story told in lifetimes, not days. Wherever there is a rare species of animal, an alien civilization or strange phenomenon, you can bet that a scholar will be snooping around somewhere, feverishly taking notes, oblivious to any other concerns. There is always a discovery to be made, a paper to be published and the everlasting dream of having something named after you.

A well-supported scholar is usually appointed with the finest tools of her trade. An archeologist has exclusive access to the richest digs. A biologist has an endless supply of beakers, flasks, lenses and scalpels. Still, even the most well-funded intellectual still complains that it is not enough.

There are a number of traits that make scholars among the most peculiar worldly folk pilgrims may meet on their journey.

Scholars can be very helpful on the pilgrimage, offering insights into the local culture that are unavailable from laypeople. Find the nearest scholar if you need someone to translate the peculiar regional laws or learn proper rituals for excusing yourself to go to the bathroom. If you find yourself in the middle of a mystery, scholars are your reluctant ally. They are reluctant, because scholars aren't willing to divulge their life's work to every Tom, Dick and Pilgrim who flies through town. Scholars, like nobles, have sensitive egos; sensitive to insult, but also sensitive to flattery.

Scholars have a preternatural talent for seeing Things Not Meant To Be Seen. (Also, hearing Things Not Meant To Be Heard.) Anywhere there are Things, a scholar is probably studying them: especially if they're not to be studied. They're the canary in the coalmine when an ancient monster rises from the darkness or a long-dormant curse is set loose upon the worlds. And that doesn't even take into account the occasions where an imperial noble employs a scholar to build a new super-weapon.

The only thing that runs deeper than a scholar's urge for exploration is a scholar's venomous competition with her rivals. There's always a race to win, a discovery to make before anyone else. You'd think the universe was big enough for everyone to discover one thing, but noooo.

This makes scholars very poor spouses, unfortunately. Except in the rare case where you find a married pair of scholars sharing the adventure together, there is usually a neglected husband or wife tolerating his or her spouse's obsession. Sometimes pilgrims will get letters from kids just asking for a normal parent. Those are awkward letters.

SNEAKY SPIRITS

In some places, the walls between the material and ethereal are not as solid as one would hope. If you have rude neighbors partying late into the night, sometimes a delirious reveler passes out on your lawn. Except in this case, the neighbors are spirits of the natural world and they do a lot more than just knock over a trashcan.

Spirits represent all the natural wonders of the universe. There are spirits for every mountain, cloud and blade of grass in the universe. There is also a spirit for the smell of rotten eggs, the incessant buzzing of mosquitoes and that weird junk in the corner of your eyes when you wake up after a nap. Yet for all their presence, the average worlder may only see one fleeting apparition for their whole life.

Of course, pilgrims are not the average worlder. It is your job to deal with all worldly troubles, which includes many possible conflicts and grievances that natural spirits have with their inconsiderate material neighbors. The nice part about having spirits around is that most problems that at first glance don't seem like they would be negotiable: like fires, floods, and earthquakes.

Pilgrims can find the responsible spirits, if any, and engage in a parley. Like any intelligent being, the spirit has their own motivations for doing the things they do. They're just weirder than most. Spirits make strange demands in order to be placated. They're rude, too. It's not a pleasant experience to be shunned by the spirit of clogged sinuses.

Their motivations are strange and their thoughts confusing. It's hard to convince an utterly alien being to withdraw its flooded riverbanks. Still, at least their potential for trouble is nothing compared to the gods'.

ALIENS, ROBOTS, WHALES, HIVES, STORMS, AND OTHER “FARFOLK”
Though humans are by far the most prolific form of intelligent life, other forms of intelligence can be found far out in the deep sky. These strange beings are collectively called “Farfolk” because the Temple elders think it sounds cool.

Part of a pilgrim’s training is to be open-minded in her definition of “intelligence.” For a pilgrim, intelligence is any kind of system out of balance with its environment. Something like an air whale, spirits, gods, or a hurricane can be, and probably is, intelligent. (Actually, chances are good that a hurricane has actually summoned pilgrims to its aid – probably to scare off some storm chasers or something.)

The term “Farfolk” is generally used for any living, talking non-human that is otherwise just a mortal. Pilgrims may meet a few of these people on their travels, ranging from insectoid hive minds to self-aware automatons to magically animated household objects. Usually they live in the least human-hospitable environments of the universe. They live in the hearts of storms, inside volcanoes, the harshest deserts and the farthest depths of the Heaven of Night.

Most Farfolk keep to themselves, hidden from human interaction, so it’s not uncommon to witness disbelief at the mention of such beings in existence. Gods? Sure. Flying teenagers out to save the worlds? Absolutely. But aliens and robots? That’s just absurd.

Unless it comes up in conversation, it’s probably best to not approach the subject. As far as the folk themselves, besides their physical differences, they have your average problems just like any human. More than likely, they are a fish-out-of-water, lost in an unusual place and trying to find their way home. As a group, they might come into conflict with another group of worldly people for a limited resource. A botched attempt at first contact might lead to war or occupation.

WILD WANDERERS OR “SKYFOLK”

These wanderers are called “skyfolk,” the common polite term for anyone living on the drift without a world. There’s an old rule of thumb among people who travel the Swift Heaven:

On wooden mast, let it past.

On feathered wings, hide your rings.

On sailing kite, prepare to fight.

See, skyfolk sometimes ride great winged beasts from far-flung worlds. An animal is easier to mend and care for than a boat. The problem is that they need some kind of roost for shelter, which is where a ship does come in handy. That’s why travelers warn about anyone riding a bird or dragon of some kind. Where you see one, there are others, and you’d better hope the bird-rider’s friends aren’t hungry.

The bit about kites is another old traveler’s warning. Personal kites are usually escape pods from wealthy luxury liners or military vessels. They’re also favorite bait for raiding parties looking to score one of those luxury liners and strip it of any precious metals.

In other words, people would have you believe any worldless migrants are bandits, thieves and pirates. Nevermind that every grain of solid ground is claimed, making it tough to stake a new home. Those grains that aren’t claimed may not be habitable. Even those that are habitable may be haunted by unseen forces. Sometimes they are haunted AND claimed, which is double the trouble for any would-be squatters. And living under Imperial rule? Forget it. Facing these dilemmas, the wandering tribes find the idea of “home” a fleeting notion.

Being so patched together from the outcasts and remnants of other civilizations, it’s hard to put a label on the skyfolk culture. A pilgrim is just as likely to meet a community of refugees as an exiled prince or an honest-to-goodness band of pirates. They’ve got an infamous reputation from romance novels as scoundrels or dangerous lovers. Reputations are like compost dumps, though. Every world’s got one and they all stink.

The popular image of skyfolk as thieves only comes from living a life without the benefits of having a world of your own. Without land, you have no reliable source of food except that which you can hunt, poach or steal. Without resources to trade, you only have what you can beg, barter or bind. It’s a tough life, winnowing away moderation until you only have extremes of order or chaos. You can flip a coin to guess whether the next group you meet will be a self-sufficient, air-tight crew of workers or a

ravenous band of cannibals. Pilgrim bones are especially delicious, don't you know.

Once you get past the threat of a hungry bunch of cannibals busting in your skull, skyfolk are alright. The wanderers have a kinship and respect for pilgrims, as they are both between worlds. Just as the skyfolk have no particular place to call home, the pilgrims are between two lives. That's all the drift is for most people, something to get through to get where you're going. Not for skyfolk, though. The between is all there is to have.

Skyfolk have troubles just like anyone else though, and on occasion they'll call on pilgrims for help out of a jam.

The ironic thing about living outside of any jurisdiction is that you often have to navigate around even more rules and laws. Everyone with half a brain and a full stomach tries their hand at being the alpha dog of their pack. Working around these miniature despots can make troubleshooting that much more difficult. Stubborn, cruel and short-lived, a pilgrim is best advised to avoid interacting with these little kings.

Empires view skyfolk as a nuisance at best and a threat to social order at worst. They're only tolerated because they can be resourceful go-betweens to smuggle contraband between warring states. Of course, that puts a naive skyfolk into the uncomfortable position of being a double agent: a ready tangle of allegiances for pilgrims to unwind.

Seems like even those who have the least still find enough to make trouble.

The Heavens

THE HEAVENS OF SPICE AND JADE

These are home to arcane beings of vast cosmic power, but with appetites as banal and petty as any mortal's. These are gods, in other words, and they're a bunch of jerks. They love meddling in people's lives, especially those in the Heaven of Spirits, where their powers seem to be most effective. They are capricious, cruel and even the most well-intentioned deity will no doubt bring trouble to those who follow them. Pilgrims are advised to deal with gods delicately. Very.

THE HEAVEN OF SPIRITS

This pocket of air strengthens wizardly arts, though for no apparent reason any scholar has yet discovered. Sorcerers of all stripes congregate to purchase their Great Wands of Overcompensation and Mighty Crystals of Mighty Might. Wizards have their splashy duels, between lengthy berating monologues. All this activity attracts ghosts and gods, who often make appearances here. Or perhaps the magicians are the ones who were first attracted to the presence of spirits. Who can say? All is known is that any latent magical talent is increased a hundredfold, making this a very dangerous place for those inexperienced with matters magical.

THE HEAVEN OF STEEL

This is home to worlds of industry and empire. Most dare not mine their world for minerals or metals. Ah, but empires chew up every scrap of solid ground in their pursuit of better, stronger sky armadas. Steel citizens live under the rule of one of many imperial families, but the political drama is far removed from the life of the average laborer. Go ahead, introduce yourself as the new emperor.

THE HEAVEN OF DUST

This cloud is the result of Steel's labors: the sandy remnants of those unfortunate worlds where even an ounce of ore is discovered. The dust cloud, too small for anyone to call home, nevertheless makes convenient shelter for masked bandits, nomads and pirates. This heaven's most nefarious reputation may come from the fact that it is a weapon itself. The dust is suffocating as any noxious gas. It stings any eyes unprotected by goggles. Sky ships are even known to trawl the edge of the cloud with great slings, and then hurl the payload at rival worlds. Thus, the Heaven of Dust expands a little each day as the Imperial borders grow.

THE SWIFT HEAVEN

This network of air current speedily sends sky ships and other creatures across the universe. However, few stay on long as the Living Storm calls this region home. Without any solid land to break its course, this hurricane is thousands of years old. It has developed a symbiotic relationship with the rest of the universe across those strange cons. Its fast winds lure travelers with the promise of convenient travel. But its generosity is capricious. The Living Storm hurls lightning bolts that can shatter the strongest hulls and fry the biggest sky whale. (This lends itself to a very popular chain of side-wind whale restaurants.) If a pilgrim is swift enough and stupid enough, the Swift Heaven can be a great asset on the pilgrimage, though.

THE HEAVEN OF DUSK

Imagine the Flying Temple at the center of the universe, casting its light across all the heavens each day. Then imagine a region so distant that the Flying Temple's warmth and light is only a mild dimness. Only the mad and rugged live in this, the Heaven of Dusk. Snowdrifts swirl across the sky, blanketing worlds so thickly that they're more snow and ice than solid ground. People come to this edge when they want to get away from everything. The sky whales call this place home, munching on the glowing algae embedded in the floating icebergs. (When they don't migrate towards the center of the universe to spawn.) Those whales are pursued by nomadic tribes, hunting the great beasts for their valuable blubber and bone.

THE HEAVEN OF NIGHT

Beyond the Heaven of Dusk, the sky goes on to the Heaven of Night. This is the region of the universe farthest from the Flying Temple. Consequently, the Flying Temple's light never reaches anything here. It is intolerably cold. The wind is endless. Yet, *things* live here. Strange things cataloged only by their distant howls and moans. At times, the night-creatures grow brave, crossing the borders into the Dusk and even deeper into the lighted parts of the universe. In the light of dusk and day, creatures reveal themselves as writhing balls of teeth and tentacles.

POP CULTURE INSPIRATION

Fans of *Do* are a creative bunch. Here is a quick list of letter-starters inspired by various pop culture sources, each written by fans of the game. See if you can figure out the story that inspired each item. Even better, think of ways pilgrims might change the story in your game. "*Dear Pilgrims of the Flying Temple...*"

Found: Direwolf pups. Winter coming.
A tornado dropped me in a colorful land.
A silver man says his master will eat us.
An odd blue box plagues our history.
Help us get money to give to the poor?
Get my power converters at Toshi Station!
My favorite red cloak attracts the wolf.
My world is scheduled to be demolished.
Needed: Test subjects for science, cake.
Get these blueprints to the rebel forces.
A robot from the future is chasing me.
Turtle-men harass my dojo for at-risk kids.

I am banished. I must restore my honor.
We need a new road. Trade us for bricks?
Doc is lost in time. Send help yesterday.
Ship crashed. Monsters come at night.
We said a ghost's name 3 times. Oops.
Throw my uncle's ring into a volcano!
Five teens and their robot wreck our town.
In love with the son of my greatest enemy.
Get rid of this sparkly vampire.
Can seven of you scare off some bandits?
Help our alien get home. Likes candy.
There are SNAKES on this PLANE!!!

THANKS TO THE BACKERS

Four years ago, I had a hare-brained idea to create a game about flying teenagers in a weird universe causing even weirder chaos. Today, I'm proud to say *Do: Pilgrims of the Flying Temple* had the second highest fundraising campaign for a game project on Kickstarter.

Five-hundred fifty-two people across the world banded together to bring this game to life. I can't think of any way thank you enough.

That's when Fred thought of one way to thank you, with a new expansion to the game with more letters and tips for writing your own.

The letters you see in this book come from a handful of those backers who answered a call for contributions. To this creative community, I give my utmost thanks.

— Daniel