

THE LAST DAYS OF CRANK FIZZLEPOP
A SHORT TRAGEDY IN LETTERS, JOURNAL ENTRIES AND DESIGN DOCUMENTS

BY SEAN L. RILEY

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary,

Day 1283

It occurs to me that the product of an engineer's ingenuity is determined not by his cleverness nor intelligence, nor by his understanding of the minutiae of technical schemata, but by the limitless ambitions of his dreams and his perceptions of the problems the world faces. A skilled engineer may invent true marvels of technical achievement, but unless he can conceive of a problem great enough, and imagine a world in which this problem is solved, then he will be limited to creating small things of small import. Like that over-rated hack, Merriton Hoppithwet -who just last year won the final Gnomeregan Engineering Grand Prix with his "Lifelike Mechanical Toad". I ask you, what sort of problem does that solve?

Well, I suppose it could solve an over-excited fly population.

But no! Never for me. I dream of higher goals, and note that no problem in the world is beyond solving. We live in a world of conflict, a world of war, and this is the greatest problem we face.

Again, I say! Again! No problem is beyond solution. If we war over food, then better farming might yield enough for both of us. If we fear that which we do not understand, then better communication technologies removes that lack of understanding! If we face undead, or demons, or troggs, well, then we have weapons engineers for that sort of thing. None the less! I maintain, a world of peace is attainable. I maintain, I shall find our way to that world! I maintain, I will be made famous and insanely wealthy for this discovery!

Also, I need to call an exterminator again. The roach problem is reaching a breaking point.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Think big! Think big!

Dear mother & father,

As always I begin this letter by praising whatever fates may exist for your survival of the Gnomeregan disaster. Every letter I receive from you is a blessing. (I realize that Merriton Hoppithwet also survived, but one must take the good with the bad, I suppose.) My understanding is that you have both settled down nicely in Loch Modan now? The refreshing lake air must be doing you both a world of good, a world of good!

Things here are tight, but my sponsorship from the Cogsworth Corporation keeps me fed and the roof over my head my own. They were a little bit unhappy over the demonstration of the

Exploding Firework Entertainment Device, however. I fear my next product for them had better be more impressive, so I'm working on one now. This is all a side project, of course, but it is my paid work.

Give my love to each other. I miss you and will travel to see you soon. Ironforge isn't that far from Loch Modan.

*Love,
Crank.*

Design Brief 81-RD v0.1

Author: Crank Fizzlepop

The problem: A key issue in creating a peaceful world is the further understanding of different cultures. We have seen visible proof of this in the past; humans and night elves, future allies, initially warred with each other over perceived differences. Better communication and translation technologies could facilitate stronger cultural exchange between groups, strengthening ties between allies and removing barriers between enemies.

The solution! A two part system of translation booths and mechanical birds to send messages faster and cheaper than a messenger on a gryphon can be.

The system begins as this: A booth exists in any town or city, in which one can write a message. The message is then converted by the booth into a punch card with binary messages, at which point the booth summons a mechanical pigeon! The pigeon will be designed to look obviously mechanical (to reduce terrible misunderstandings with local wildlife and veterinary dentists) and, of course, be designed to not defecate upon local statues. The pigeon will then take the punch card and carefully insert the top part of the card into its underbelly. This holds the card in place, and reads the top strip of the card, which contains the instructions telling the birds where to go. It's simplicity itself! Once arriving, of course, the bird will fly to the appropriate booth and deposit the card, which will now be translated into the appropriate language for the receiver.

The birds will, of course, require energy. Again, this is simple! When not sending messages, they will forage like normal birds for seeds. The seeds will be pulped in their beak and the resulting liquid refined into fuel. As such, they will require little funding or investment beyond the initial capital expended.

The challenges: Creating a metal bird that will fly. Programming bird-like behavior into the device so it can forage. Finding a way to turn seeds into fuel. Finding translators for various languages. (Note to self: Goblin help may be regrettably required.) As always, acquire funding.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary,

Day 1287

While I was out shopping in Ironforge for good quality bronze for my experiments in bird-flight, I saw Felicity Winterspring again. Her hair is always so lovely, as are her eyes. Both are as green and lovely as the spring in Elwynn forest.

Or so I've been told. I've never been there.

Trying to start up a conversation, I informed her that there is a place called Winterspring, and asked if she'd ever been there. Furthermore, I noted the chilly beauty of the place and the pure crystalline snow that sparkles like gems there.

Could Winterspring be as beautiful and pure as Winterspring? I didn't say that last part, but I wanted to. Had I not chosen the noble path of engineering, poetry was always my second choice.

She replied to me, in her beautiful dulcet tones, "Would you shut up, Crank, I'm trying to work here and at the very least could you stop standing on the testing platform please?"

Alas, she's so dedicated to her work.

Things were not quite so cheery around all of Tinker Town, however. That loathsome beast Merriton Hoppithwet was wandering around, too. Would you believe the nerve of that man? He came right up to me and said, he said, "Why, that's a lot of bronze you have there, Crank! What have you got planned this time?"

The nerve! You would think we were friends or something. I told him to mind his own business, what little he had of it, and leave me and all my friends alone.

Experiments in bird-flight are continuing nicely. Weight-to-power ratio is the key, I'm convinced. The actual mechanics of bird-flight are not that complicated. Bronze may not, however, be the right material.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: The vision is produced one dream at a time!

Dear mother & father,

Well, this is an exciting piece of news! I had feared that with the irradiation of Gnomeregan the Gnomeregan Engineering Grand Prix would have perished, but High Tinker Gelbin Mekkatorque has promised that the Grand Prix will survive in Tinker Town! What most excellent leadership! What tenacity in the face of adversity! What a chance to finally show up Merriton Hoppithwet and exact revenge for my humiliating defeat last year!

Things are looking up!

I've been courting the beautiful young Ms. Winterspring; you remember her, don't you? I know you disapproved of her skipping school, but she comes from a proud family of inventors, and I know you will be excited to see your son settling down at last. She has currently not accepted any of my gifts, but I know she is just playing hard to get.

I have a meeting with the Cogsworth Corporation tomorrow. Perhaps they will commission a new product from me. This would be a most excellent development, as I am rapidly running out of food. Maybe I should reinvestigate my Exploding Fireworks Entertainment Device. It always held such promise. The prototype is still around here somewhere, I wonder where?

Give my love to each other. One day I will visit you, I promise. Fares for the gryphons have gone up a little, I fear.

Love,
Crank.

Design Brief 81-RD v0.22

Author: Crank Fizzlepop

Update: After extensive testing it has become clear that bronze is an unsuitable element for this flight. The softness of the metal requires more of it to be used, and thus the weight becomes too much. I have switched to hardened mithril, an expensive choice but one that allows me to use much thinner sheets of metal. This does make the beak and wings a little sharp. I actually see this as a plus! It makes cutting down seeds for fuel much more efficient.

My programming challenges have increased as I must now meet the deadline for the first Tinker Town Engineering Grand Prix. Since it would be inefficient for me to craft each and every one, I will

program into each bird the means to create another one of itself. Thus after I make one, we will both make the second and third. With three created, I can create one, and they will each make another three. Exponential growth will deliver results in time!

Dear Mr. Cogsworth,

I urge you to reconsider the termination of my contract with you. This is a terrible mistake for both myself and your business.

While it is understandable that you would be reluctant to continue our association given some of the issues with my products, these were only small defects. My Automatic Room Fragrancer may have emitted gasses producing anosmia, but it did make the room smell nicer, at least in theory. While it is true that the Floating Electric Illuminator you commissioned produced a light that blinded the test subjects, you did ask that it be as bright as possible so that it could be used in construction work. Furthermore, the fact that my Exploding Fireworks Entertainment Device exploded before it could explode should not deter you from funding further research! I feel so confident that it could be made to work with only minor tinkering!

I beg you to reconsider!

Yours sincerely,
Crank Fizzlepop Esq.

p.s.. PLEASE!

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary,

Day 1289

With the money from the Cogsworth Corporation no longer reliable, I have been forced to make cut-backs in my lifestyle. Decided to purchase a large supply of meat products at the market today as they were discounted in price and I may not be able to afford them later.

There is one area I cannot afford to cut back upon, however, and that is my work. This is for two highly important reasons:

- 1. My work is too important. It is my firmest belief that without peace the many races of Azeroth cannot truly reach their highest potentials. I imagine a world where gnomish ingenuity matches with human ambition and orcish determination to create truly great results. Where the hard work of the dwarves*

can meet the natural understanding of the tauren. Where the trolls and the elves can peacefully discuss magic.

2. Also, the Grand Prix really is my best chance to pick up a new sponsor. I'd like to have some money again.

But even so, I know I must have some poetry in my soul. A gnome does not survive in raw technical conditions. So I have decided to woo the young Ms. Winterspring once more. I have a horrible amount of bronze left over from my early experiments. A little bit of it I will fashion into a bronze rose, pressing it into the finest, most delicate folds I can. Maybe this will win her heart.

~~THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Optimism is easy when times are good. It is when times are tough that hope is truly tested.~~

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary,

Day 1289

Addendum

Why do I do these things to myself? Why?

Felicity liked the gift, at first. I crafted each and every petal to the thinnest bronze I could. She took the rose, smiled so sweetly (my heart was set aflutter!) and held it tight.

In retrospect, I should have realized I didn't need to craft authentic thorns on the stem.

Set into a rage, she accused me of sabotaging her efforts for the Grand Prix, and ran off to bandage her hand. After waiting there a heart-wrenching moment, I returned home. Spent the night in a depressed state.

Dear mother and father,

The Engineering Grand Prix is tomorrow. I am, of course, nervous. But my devices have performed admirably under testing and even now a tiny flock of twenty such birds are pecking at a handful of seed on my apartment's floor. Occasionally they coo like real pigeons. The exponential growth system I developed to produce the birds in a rapid pace has proven just the ticket, as they say. It requires me to do little to make more of them than lay a single plate of

mithril on the ground and their tiny metal beaks peck it apart, excrete appropriate parts, and put them together admirably. This should also lend itself to easy replacement and maintenance of the flock over time.

Things continue swimmingly here. My contract with the Cogsworth Corporation was renewed. Felicity yesterday was delighted by a bronze rose I gave her. Your son is doing well in all matters!

Give my love to each other. I cannot wait to visit you. It is really only a matter of time.

Love,
Crank.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary,
Day 1289

It is quickly becoming clear to me that there is no justice in this world. None at all. Tragedy, unrelenting horror: that untalented and contemptuous little sneak, with no sense of vision or imagination whatsoever, yes, Merriton Hoppithwet has once again taken the Grand Prix! And with what, with what, I ask you? Why, with improved clothes washing technology! I do not even joke. His invention was an improved wringer that washed and wrung dry clothes in a single motion.

Where is the vision in this? How could they award it to that when my invention promised prosperity, improved communication and peace on Azeroth?

So what if my device suffered a minor malfunction during the presentation? So what if the birds became vicious and pecked one of the onlookers half to death? So what if it was a judge? The second showing went off without a hitch! You have to look at the greater perspective!

And that... that horrible little man, Merriton Hoppithwet. He approached me after the Grand Prix. He came over just to rub my nose in it; to seek fame and glory at my expense; to steal my ambitions and dreams. Every word I recall, and will transcribe verbatim.

"That really was a darned shame in there, Crank. I saw that there second test and it really looked like it had potential. You shouldn't give up on it, you know. That would be the worst of things, you understand. So much good could be done with that. It could bring together nations, if done right.

" Now I know you and I have been solitary inventors our whole careers, but you must know most gnomes don't work that way. The most productive gnomish engineers in history have been pairs: One imaginative, pushing the boundaries, seeking new frontiers. The other grounded, thinking about the practicalities. They bound off back and forth between each other, like the two sides of a combination explosive. Crank, I think that could be you and me. Our best days could yet be ahead of us. Together, nothing could stop us! What do you say?"

What do I say? I know what I say: You're a talentless little greenhorn, Merriton Hoppithwet! For a single shining moment you caught a glimpse, a tiny glimpse of what actual vision is and you wanted it. Without any way to capture it yourself in your black little heart, you looked to cozy up to me and steal my own. Steal my vision, steal my inventions, steal my credit and steal the heart of the lovely Felicity Winterspring! Well, you won't have any of them, will you? I stand alone, I tell you, and this invention will be mine and mine alone.

I stormed off out of the makeshift exhibition hall. As I left, I noted with satisfaction that Felicity Winterspring ran after Merriton as he fled from my righteous fury. No doubt she intended to also give her a piece of her mind after how disgracefully he treated me.

With that, I returned home in a fury. Two pints of dwarven stout later and anger turned to depression.

The meat is beginning to go off. Something will have to be done about that.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: True genius is brilliant, and like any brilliant light must eventually be seen. I hope.

Dear mother and father,

Well, the Grand Prix came and went, and alas, although my showing was formidable the judges did not see fit to award me with the victory. Please do not pay any heed to stories you may read in the Ironforge Gazette that claim my device injured one of the judging panel - You know how these tabloids love to entertain even at the injury to the truth.

It turns out that my expenses for the Grand Prix might have gone a little bit over my intended budget. While my position at Cogsworth remains very safe, very safe indeed!, I do worry about my ability to secure the everyday needs of life for the next few weeks until my next payment

comes in. Though it tears at my heart to ask you for anything, could you extend to me a little bit of money just to keep me going until then? I apologize profusely even as I ask.

Give my love to each other. When I come to visit you I will make all this up to you!

Love,
Crank.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary,
Day 1293

There are no two ways about it. The meat is beginning to go off. My calculations show that the real issue is the proximity of my apartment to the Great Forge; I had not factored in the heat of the forge into my assessment of how long the meat would last.

It occurs to me that smoking the meat would preserve it. While I suspect that setting a fire in your apartment is probably against the terms of lease, really there shouldn't be anything hard about it. I'd just need a well sealed empty closet and a small fire. The floor and walls are stone, so there shouldn't be any issues with fire damage. I'll plan it out tonight.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: With ingenuity, any problem can be solved.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary,
Day 1294

I have now remembered within which closet I put my Exploding Fireworks Entertainment Device prototype.

After some consideration, I've decided not to tell the landlord about the damage until my parents send me some money. The repairs look like they might be a titch expensive.

And as if all that weren't enough, I've counted my mechanical birds and discovered that there are now only eighteen within my possession. Two may have escaped from the exhibition hall, or worse, been stolen. Is someone already reverse engineering my work, profiteering from my brilliance? Could it be Merriton?

This is all getting very depressing. A miracle may be required. I hope to awake tomorrow and discover that a wealthy investor heretofore unknown to me has taken in my communication system.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Alcohol is like ingenuity, sometimes.

Dear Mr. Arsteck,

I received your letter today with delighted surprise. Of course I expected some wealthy investor would take an interest in this wonderful system I have invented, but I must confess you were heretofore unknown to me.

Your offer is most welcome. The forms you have sent me have been filled in correctly and the blueprints you requested will be returned with them. Your offer of remuneration is most generous and appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Crank Fizzlepop Esq.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary,

Day 1296

Well! Yesterday was certainly a turn for the unexpected! Just when things looked bleakest, my expectations were inverted and salvation arrived! Mr. Arsteck has offered me compensation for my work with the mechanical birds at a rate twice that I was earning with Mr. Cogsworth, and we haven't even begun negotiations over the translating message booths! Soon, I trust, we will begin construction of these on a grand scale, hire some goblin translators and perhaps use their businesses to sell some to the Horde, and soon a new era of peace will dawn upon Azeroth!

And yet, even now my happiness is dulled.

Naturally, upon the word of my good news, I thought immediately to visit Mr. Hoppithwet and show him that Crank Fizzlepop is not one to be trifled with! I would show him exactly how well I could do on my own, and that he could take his offer of co-operation and hurl it into the Great Forge, which coincidentally is also where his flat is.

As I strode across the walkways around the Forge, I looked up into the second story window of his apartment building and froze in my tracks. There, in his apartment with him, were the virescent locks and emerald eyes of my beloved, Felicity Winterspring.

How had he done this? How, even in my moment of triumph, had he dulled me of my most cherished desire?

Never mind. Continue to be optimistic. I have stared into the worst of times once before, and things have turned out alright. With a poetic letter sent to her (and some careful reminding her of my impending riches) she will be mine and my joy complete!

p.s. Have begun to hear strange reports of mechanical birds beginning to eat farmers' crops in Elwynn. Seems too unlikely to be true, but the resemblance to mine own contraptions does make me worry somewhat.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Nobody ever changed the world by believing their dreams couldn't come true.

Dearest Felicity,

Even now as I write this letter, my heart is moved by the thought of your purest beauty and sweetest demeanor. While you work day in and day out at the Great Forge, it is not the power of that crucible that drives this city but your spark and verve alone. Far away from these hot halls, there is a wind-swept land of snow named Winterspring, yet could Winterspring be as beautiful and pure as Winterspring? I think not!

Your beauty astounds and amazes everyone who walks these halls, and yet it is your mind that is your greatest treasure. Inventive and creative, your incredible contraptions delight and awe all who witness them.

My offer to you is extended; an evening of dance, dinner and romance with the most handsome and eligible bachelor of Ironforge. You should know that I have been endeavoring to make Azeroth a more peaceful place, and this is why my most marvelous mechanical birds were demonstrated at the Tinker Town Engineering Grand Prix. There, they caught the eye of one Mr. Arsteck, a dwarf of some wealth and sophistication who shares my dreams of peace upon Azeroth. He is also prepared to pay me a handsome sum for this service.

So, then. Will you do me this honor? Will you escort me to dinner?

Yours in humble anticipation,
Crank Fizzlepop, Esq.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary,

Day 1298

My joy has turned into the deepest bitterness. That shameful harridan Felicity Winterspring came to my apartment yesterday in peals of scornful laughter. She informed me that Mr. Arsteck is NOT a peaceful altruist as I had come to believe but an arms dealer. His intention, she supposed, was to turn my mechanical birds into predators! She says this happens all the time, and he always finds anything with the hint of martial application and turns it into a terrible weapon!

Cruelly, she laughed at me and told me that Merriton Hoppithwet was a better and smarter man than I would ever be. She called me a failure and an incompetent dreamer, and then left.

BAH! Let that beast Hoppithwet have her! They deserve each other. I do not need her! I do not need him! I do not need Mr. Arsteck! I do need Mr. Arsteck's money, however. But I don't need him! I don't need him!

I will find a way to make Azeroth a better, more peaceful place! My life will not make the lives of other's worse. It will create a lasting peace on this world.

Somehow.

My parents money arrived today. I spent it all on dwarven stout and intend to drink all of it tonight.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Who cares? Who cares about thoughts in days? Nobody.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary

Day 1299

The Ironforge Gazette carried the story today. Flocks of mechanical birds have begun to terrorize the farmers of Elwynn Forest. They have exhibited deadly cunning and so far Stormwind's finest guards have been unable to stop them. Apparently they switched to mithril plate for their armor.

Am desperately wishing I hadn't drunk all the stout last night.

No thought for today. Could not begin to imagine one.

Design Brief M1-ND v0.1

Author: Crank Fizzlepop

The problem: Civilization is a sham. The truth of the matter is that all creatures are primitive atavistic brutes disposed to warfare. No amount of shared resources will stave off their desire for more. No cultural exchange will prevent bigotry and hatred from being invented by shameless leaders who seek to profit from bloodshed. The problem is the mind, it is the mind. Violence must be purged from the mind itself!

The solution! The mind functions on electrical impulses within the brain. These electrical impulses can be altered with other more powerful electrical impulses. Surely the correct pulses of energy, in the correct sequence, could forever burn out all thoughts of violence or hatred from the brain of gnome, dwarf or man.

Therefore, I propose to build an impressive device that will emit a charged ray of lightning, carefully calibrated to affect the mind, washing away all thoughts of barbarity or brawling. This will be built with the money Mr. Arsteck pays me, turning the warmongers own evil against themselves. Azeroth will have peace in its time!

The challenges: Must deduce the workings of the mind. To overcome this hurdle, I have put out a call for volunteers to let me test my device by sending electrical currents from a gold power core into their brains.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary

Day 1300

The response to my call for volunteers has been depressingly low. I fear I must resort to the only avenue I have left: Self-experimentation. While my system is already set up to do nothing more than turn me into a more peaceful person, I fear that if it is calibrated incorrectly, it may result in some minor sensory adjustment and temporary mental incoherency. This seems unlikely, however.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: The noblest of commanders would never ask their soldiers to do anything they would not do themselves.

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Crank Fizzlepop's Diary

Day 1301

I apparently spent yesterday convinced I was a duck. Unsurprisingly I have
become somewhat fearful of my device and am uncertain about what to do next.

Oh, if only I were still with my parents. I cannot even begin to write to them
anymore. Lying to them hurt when the lies were small, and how would I even
begin to cover up a day spent as a water fowl? Not to mention the disastrous
state of affairs with Mr. Arsteck, Ms. Winterspring and that hatred misanthrope
Merriton Hoppithwet.

I have no idea what to do. No path avails itself to me.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY: The night is darkest before the dawn. Oh, please let
that be true.

Dearest Felicity,

~~You have no idea how much you have hurt me, but you will regret every last piece of it. My
designs are growing in grandeur every day and soon you will see what a fool you were to cast me
aside for an infantile imbecile like Merriton Hoppithwet! You will be mine, I swear it, and
nothing you can do will stop it. One of these days, sooner or later, you will stand besides me as
my happy and blushing bride!~~

Please disregard to previous paragraph. I didn't mean it. I swear I didn't. Felicity, you are the light of my life and I need you to go on. Don't you see? You are my muse, my enchanting inspiration! I need you to invent, to go on, to live!

Please love me.

Please.

Yours sincerely,

Crank.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary

Day 1305

Felicity has yet to respond to my letter.

Testing continues. I think I may have it right now. The shocks to my head seem to do little to me now. They even seem mildly calming.

Landlord has discovered the destroyed closet in my apartment and is threatening to evict me if I don't repay him by the end of the week.

I have a deadline now.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY: There comes a time when one must place his bets, and call the world's bluff.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary

Day 1308

Felicity has yet to respond to my letter. I now fear she never will.

I am starting to question the wisdom of shocking my head with electricity every night in a row, but I am running on a deadline.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY: When you put your head on a rock and hit it with a book the book hurts.

Crank Fizzlepop's Diary

Day 1311

Oh, what an amazing night last night was.

Finally, after long testing, my device has born fruit. Glorious, beautiful fruit.

I lay down upon my pillow, rest the device in its place, and pulled the string attached to its trigger. Once more I was bathed in the electric blue field of its energy output. But this time, the world cleared, and I was filled with a lasting, incredible peace.

In this moment, I saw all of Azeroth. Even parts of it I had never seen before. The rolling hills of Westfall. The tempestuous mountain peaks of Alterac. The glacial turns of Amberimbie Ridge.

Finally, it has been completed, and I now see what a fool I was. I should write one last letter to Merriton Hoppithwet and Felicity Winterspring, and apologize for my behavior toward them. Tomorrow, I will begin public testing of my new device.

Dear Merriton Hoppithwet, and Ms. Felicity Winterspring,

First, I beg you to read all of this letter. I realize I have been such a fool in my dealings with both of you. In this short missive I will seek to right all the wrongs I have committed against you.

Mr. Hoppithwet, to you I say sorry. Though you have been condescending to me all your life, I know that you meant no harm. You merely sought to help even though you lacked the social skills or humility to properly do so. I forgive you for that and ask you to forgive me in turn. Jealousy of your success drove me to spiteful words and hateful dealings. My thoughts were tainted by these things. I shouldn't have thought that the world was brutally unfair because your meagre tinkering found widespread success. Instead, I should have been happy for your success. And I am! I am truly happy.

And Ms. Winterspring, you have found quite a catch in Mr. Hoppithwet. Oh, what we could have done together, but it was not to be. So be it. You should have the most wonderful of lives together.

As for me, I have realized that my goal to bring peace to Azeroth was tainted by my desires for fame and glory. These kinds of selfish thoughts cannot co-exist with the required altruism to make true changes to the world.

Tomorrow, I start out with the public testing of my new device. My heart is now unclouded by such petty desires as wealth. This time, I set out with nothing but the best of intentions.

Even if I never hear from you again, you will hear about me.

Yours in peace,

Crank Fizzlepop, Esq.

EPILOGUE

Ironforge Gazette
Issue no. 493, pg. 1

An unidentified gnome went on a berserk murder spree last night that killed four and wounded twenty-two. Reportedly the firing began in Tinker Town but rapidly moved into the Military Ward. The assailant reportedly yelled, “Be at peace! Be peaceful! Make war never again!” at victims before shooting them with some sort of high-powered lightning gun. He was eventually killed by guards resisting arrest.

Victims are currently being treated for burns and shock by priests in the Mystic Ward. King Magni Bronzebeard has ordered an investigation into the incident, with private citizen Dunzkin Arsteck volunteering to lead the inquest. Witnesses are asked to report anything that may aid investigation.

More details as they come.

DEDICATED TO JESSICA ROOPE AND BRUCE BAUGH, FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND
FRIENDSHIP.