

# The Order of Odd-Fish

BY JAMES KENNEDY

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RANDOM HOUSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS

COVER ILLUSTRATION © 2010 BY PAUL HORNSCHEMEIER

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Jo Larouche has lived her thirteen years in the California desert with her Aunt Lily, a faded Hollywood starlet, ever since she was found in Lily's laundry room with this note pinned to her blanket: *This is Jo. Please take care of her. But beware. This is a DANGEROUS baby.*

Up until now, Jo has been, as Aunt Lily puts it, "as dangerous as a glass of milk." But all that's about to change. At Lily's annual Christmas costume party, several strange things happen: a boy in a hedgehog shoots an elderly Russian colonel; a talking cockroach is found tied up in the basement, moaning about how this will play in the tabloid press; and a box falls from the sky, addressed to Jo from "The Order of Odd-Fish."

Soon, worsening circumstances lead Jo and Lily out of California forever—and into the mysterious, fantastical world of Eldritch City. There, Jo learns the scandalous truth about who she is, and she and Lily join the Order of Odd-Fish, a colorful collection of knights who research useless information. Glamorous cockroach butlers, impossible quests, obsolete weapons and bizarre festivals fill their days, but Jo's dream turns to nightmare when she learns that instead of a hero of Eldritch City, she may in fact become its destroyer. By the novel's wrenching climax, Jo comes to understand who she truly is—and what it means to call a city home.

Equal parts Monty Python and Roald Dahl, *The Order of Odd-Fish* is a hilarious and unforgettable ride through a world that readers will not want to leave.

# Note from the Author: “How To Be Irrelevant”

by James Kennedy



I wrote my first story when I was seven. It was called [\*The Strange Ship\*](#), and it was about two ghosts who visit a spaceship full of aliens and blow it up. After I illustrated it, drew a cover, and stapled the pages together, I was astonished. Producing a book was so easy! I felt as though I’d gotten away with something.

Encouraged, I tried something bigger: an epic that started with the creation of the world, progressed to a story about a talking Christmas tree and a dinosaur detective who fight against a grinning pile of hair and his army of squabbling freaks, and ended with the apocalypse. I kept rambling off into digressions and subplots, so I never finished, but that’s why I enjoyed writing it so much. I discovered early on the pleasures of getting distracted.

The ability to get distracted is an easily misunderstood talent. Irresponsibility might be a secret virtue. Throughout grade school I left many stories unfinished; in high school I half-programmed a lot of computer games; in college I wrote a musical, but even though we got a cast together and rehearsed it, it was never properly performed. Yet I learned a lot by being undisciplined. Someone once wrote, “If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly.” Yes—and I’d add that if something is worth doing, it is also worth doing halfway and then quitting. It’s also worth brooding over, and making lots of plans, and then going off and doing something else. Having many little interests, amateur enthusiasms, and failed ambitions creates a rich stew out of which you can boil fresh ideas.



**Jo Hazelwood**  
(Britnee Berman)

I’d always wanted to be a writer, but for a while I abandoned writing. In college I decided I’d rather be a physicist. After getting my degree in physics, though, I realized I didn’t want to be a scientist after all. I had friends who were in bands, so I learned how to play the guitar, but as soon as I was halfway proficient I stopped. I taught science at a junior high school, but then I stopped that too. I moved to Japan and came back after a year; then I moved back to Japan; then two years later I came back again. I took classes in improvisational comedy, but when it came time for real shows, I often dropped out.

We hear advice about how perseverance pays off. That’s true, but I think the opposite is more interesting and equally true. My favorite experiences and ideas have come when I’ve wandered away from what I should’ve been doing. Maybe it’s better to make a principle of fickleness, to deploy a strategic laziness, to be staunchly flighty.

By letting myself get distracted by interests other than writing, I gave myself something to write about. The specialties of the knights in *The Order of Odd-Fish* are almost all subjects I've been curious about at some point or another. The Odd-Fish lodge itself has its roots in the grubby convent I lived in when I was a volunteer teacher (a mishmash of queer little rooms full of junk nobody had touched in years, an attic seething with bats, fraying red carpet that smelled overpoweringly like cat urine, and a woozy, wobbly, extremely aged nun that trundled around the halls at all hours). Ken Kiang's failed musical is inspired by my own musical. The rituals of Eldritch City are partly based on festivals I saw and participated in while I was living in Japan. My tastes in reading are similarly scattershot, and *The Order of Odd-Fish* borrows from writers as various as Douglas Adams, Evelyn Waugh, Madeleine L'Engle, Edwin O'Connor, C.S. Lewis, Roald Dahl, James Joyce, J.K. Huysmans, and G.K. Chesterton.

Maybe I wrote *The Order of Odd-Fish* because I felt I'd be at home in an organization like it: a society of dilettantes, living together in a fascinating but homey lodge in a big city, bound together by weird but not oppressive traditions, contributing to each other's idiosyncratic projects, and occasionally going off on a quest. If I can't join the Odd-Fish, writing about them is a fair substitute. I suspect there's enough in Eldritch City to distract me for a long time. And when I eventually find myself going astray from that world, into new and irrelevant terrain, I'll know I'm on the track of something good.

This curriculum is written in a similar spirit! It is not only about *The Order of Odd-Fish*, but a gateway to many other fascinating topics. The knights of the Odd-Fish, after all, are scholars as well as warriors. In this curriculum you'll be introduced to all kinds of recondite knowledge—topics are as disparate as cockroach anatomy, Hindu mythology, 1980s classic videogames, philosophy, the KGB, Shinto religious festivals, musicals, the mechanics of modern celebrity culture, etymology, literary criticism, foppery, real-life international pranksters, and more.

In this guide, I've included some of the great fan art I've received from teens and adults for *The Order of Odd-Fish*. Check out a complete gallery of Odd-Fish fan art at <http://www.jameskennedy.com/oddfishgallery>. You can also read about the Odd-Fish fan art gallery show (and costumed dance party) that we threw in Chicago in 2010 at <http://bit.ly/auUjsb>.

I'm always delighted to see what *Odd-Fish* art my readers have made. If you want to share *Odd-Fish* art (inspired by this guide's activities, or created on your own) please tell me about it at [kennedyjames@gmail.com](mailto:kennedyjames@gmail.com). I'd love to include it on my website!



**Stained Glass Sefino**  
(Kim Tobash)

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***Order of Odd-Fish Banner (Laura Jayne Nailor)***

The mixed-media cut paper illustrations on the chapter worksheets on pages 13-40 are by Max Pitchkites, a high school student who illustrated all twenty-eight chapters of *The Order of Odd-Fish* in 2009. The images are reproduced here with his permission. Copyright is retained by Max Pitchkites.

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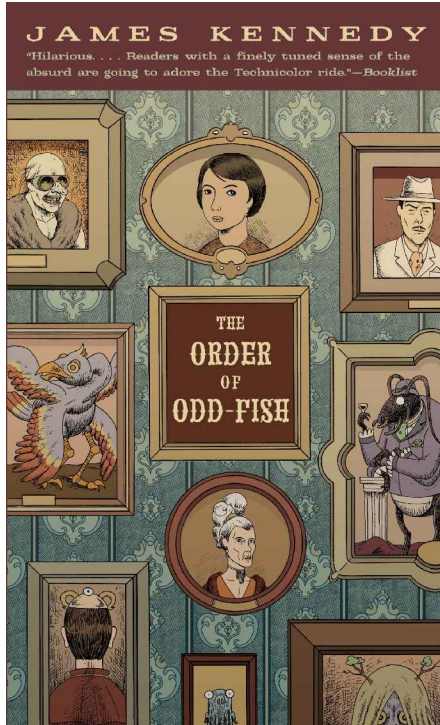
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A .pdf of this curriculum is freely downloadable at <http://jameskennedy.com/oddfish-curriculum/>



# I. BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Examine both covers of the book. Discuss the similarities and differences. Make a “literary time capsule” to store answers to the questions below. After you have finished the book, open the time capsule and reread your predictions. How do your predictions compare with what you've read?



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1. Based on the covers, what do you think this book will be about?
2. Does it seem some characters appear on both covers? Which ones?
3. For the paperback cover (on the left), write a few sentences predicting the role for each character in each picture frame in the story. Pick three elements from the hardback cover (on the right) and do the same thing.
4. How would you describe the difference in feeling between the two covers? Which cover do you prefer? Why?
5. What do you think the “Order of Odd-Fish” might be? Can you think of any books with a similar title? What do you think “Order” means here?
6. The left cover is by graphic novelist Paul Hornschemeier. The right cover is by artist John Meyers. Research either Paul or John. What other projects has he done? Does he have a website? What other project(s) strike you as interesting?
7. Visit the *Odd-Fish* fan art gallery at <http://jameskennedy.com/oddfishgallery>. What's your favorite art? Make predictions about the book based on the art.

## II. GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



*Jo in costume dueling armor as Aznath, the Silver Kitten of Deceit.*

1. How does Jo change from the beginning to the end of the story? How does she stay the same? In what sense does she turn out to be "dangerous"?
2. What is the mission of the Order of Odd-Fish? How is their Appendix different from a standard encyclopedia? How is it like Wikipedia? What is the "appendix" in a book? What is the "appendix" in the human body? What do these meanings have in common? How does that relate to the Odd-Fish charter? Read James Kennedy's essay *How To Be Irrelevant* and connect it to the Odd-Fish mission.
3. Describe how Jo and Aunt Lily's relationship changes throughout the story. Do they always get along? Is Aunt Lily a good guardian for Jo? What has she done right? What has she done wrong? What do Jo and Aunt Lily appreciate about each other? In what ways do they *not* get along?
4. Compare and contrast Aunt Lily to other "mentor" characters in movies and literature. What is a mentor? Who are the mentors in other stories like *Star Wars* or *Harry Potter*? How is Aunt Lily similar or different to those mentors? Are mentors always right? How about Aunt Lily? Can you give examples in stories in which mentors are wrong? Where does the word "mentor" come from? Do you have a mentor?
5. Jo hides her secret in Eldritch City. How does that affect her behavior? How about her relationship with Aunt Lily? With Ian? Nora? Audrey?
6. Korsakov and Sefino seem to be friends, but they're always bickering. Same with Ian and Nora. What other pairs of characters are like that in other books, movies, and TV shows? Do you know any pairs like that in real life?
7. Sefino claims it is "maddening" to be written about in the newspaper, but it's all he ever talks about. How do you think he really feels about being the focus of attention? How does he react when Chatterbox *stops* writing about him? Describe how Sefino's relationship to Chatterbox changes throughout the novel. Does he always want the same thing from Chatterbox? How does Jo contribute to Sefino's story? How does Sefino's love/hate relationship with fame relate to the two other main plots in the book (i.e., Jo's struggle with her destiny as the evil Ichthala, and Ken Kiang's floundering quest to be evil)?
8. Colonel Korsakov is an ex-KGB agent. What was the KGB? What nation was that part of? How is it different from its modern-day counterpart?
9. How is Ken Kiang's story related to Jo's story? How does his experience of Eldritch City compare to Jo's experience? How are Jo's and Ken Kiang's struggles with "evil" different? Compare Ken Kiang's worldview to that of the Odd-Fish. What would be a good specialty for Ken Kiang in the Odd-Fish?

2. Sir Oort's scene in Chapter 14 is inspired by the scene from *A Wrinkle In Time* in which Mrs. Whatsit explains the tesseract. Compare and contrast the two scenes. What is the difference between Mrs. Whatsit's authority and the kind of authority Sir Oort has? How does this reflect the difference in philosophy between the two books?

11. The Belgian Prankster is inspired by a real man named Noel Godin, whose real-life pranks caused him to be tagged as a "Belgian prankster" in newspapers. Which prank made Godin famous? How might the Belgian Prankster of *Odd-Fish* "improve" upon that prank? Compare the *Odd-Fish* Belgian Prankster with the real-world Belgian prankster Godin. How do Hoagland Shanks' obsessions relate to Godin's pranks?

12. Describe how the relationship between the Belgian Prankster and Ken Kiang changes over the story. How does Hoagland Shanks enter into it?

13. What is the connection between Sir Nils' specialty for the *Odd-Fish* and the Belgian Prankster's activities?

14. How is the Belgian Prankster similar to famous terrorists like Osama bin Laden? How are his TV shows similar to modern reality TV shows?

15. *Odd-Fish* is preoccupied with manners and etiquette: the traditions around dueling, the Apology Gun, Sefino's interactions with Chatterbox, the rituals that regulate life in Eldritch City. How do traditions define a society? Do they always serve their original purpose? For instance, there are many rules traditions around dueling. Do they have their intended effect? Why or why not?

16. Discuss Jo and Ian's relationship. Is it a romance, a friendship, or something else? Why can't Jo ever feel totally comfortable around Ian? What do Jo and Ian like about each other? What do they dislike about each other? Were you surprised when Jo kissed Ian at the victory party? What is the meaning of what Ian does to Jo in the last chapter? Why did he chose that way to express it?

17. Discuss Jo and Fiona's relationship. How is Fiona different from Jo? Why are Jo and Fiona enemies from the moment they meet? How does Fiona learn Jo's secret? Why doesn't she expose Jo right away? Before the duel, it occurs to Jo that "if this was a story, then Fiona was the hero. Jo was the dangerous dragon that had to be slain." Do you agree or disagree with this? Why?

19. How does the *Teenage Ichthala* show relate to the story? Why is Nora so interested in it? Why do you think Ian has distaste for it? How does it bring Jo and Audrey together? What is Jo's attitude towards the show?



***Fiona in costume dueling armor as Ichthala, the All-Devouring Mother. (Mallory Woods)***

20. Who are the Silent Sisters? What do they want? Often stories are not about good vs. evil, but about the conflict between two irreconcilable goods. What do the Silent Sisters consider good? What does the Order of Odd-Fish consider good? Compare and contrast the values of the Silent Sisters and the Odd-Fish. Broadly, what does each think of conflict vs. peace? Of purity vs. variety? Of activity vs. passivity?

21. Given their beliefs, why must the Silent Sisters rely on someone like the Belgian Prankster to do their work for them?

24. Why does Jo visit the Belgian Prankster at the asylum? When she is there, she discovers to her horror that she is of two minds about the Belgian Prankster and her Ichthala side. Why do you think this is? Why does she lose her nerve?

25. Inside the All-Devouring Mother, the Belgian Prankster tells Jo, "Soon it'll be over. You won't hurt anymore. Nobody will, when we are all inside you again . . . Now you know . . . Now you understand what we want." What is he referring to? Connect what he's saying with the theology of the Silent Sisters we learned from Nora in Chapter 18 and Fiona in Chapter 21. Why does Jo stop resisting the Belgian Prankster? Why does she look at the pool with "something like craving"?

26. Compare and contrast the first and last chapter. In both chapters, there is a party, a gun, a boy, and an apology. How are those four elements different in the first and last chapters? How has Jo changed?

27. The Belgian Prankster is always surrounded by artificial people: the balloon-animal committee at the Country Kitchen, the fake Odd-Fish dolls, the papier-mâché orchestra, the hypnotized doctors. What does this say about him?

28. You should be able to determine the earliest year that this book could take place in. From the text, find out Jo's age; Aunt Lily's age; the earliest Aunt Lily could disappear, given that one of her headlines in Chapter 1 mentions a certain President; and for how long Aunt Lily disappears. The rest is simple math!

29. The Belgian Prankster filled the Houston Astrodome with piping hot clam chowder "in the work of a single night." How many gallons of piping hot clam chowder would it take to fill the Astrodome? Assuming a night lasts eight hours, how fast did the Belgian Prankster pump the clam chowder into the Astrodome, in gallons per second?

30. What's the least number of guests that could have been at Aunt Lily's costume party, assuming nobody switches costumes? (When a "gang" or a "group" is mentioned, assume that means at least three.)

31. Chapter 7 mentions the number of pies Hoagland Shanks consumed, and the amount of time he and Ken Kiang were at the restaurant. Based on this, calculate the average number of pies Hoagland Shanks consumed per hour.

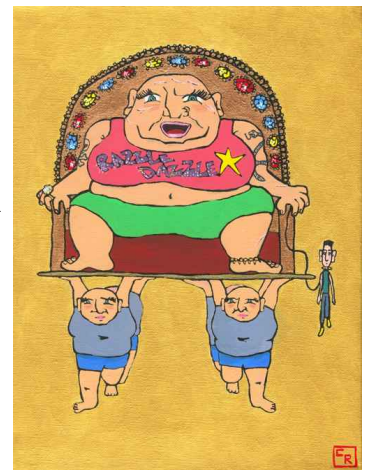


**Colonel Korsakov.  
(Danielle Marie  
Beamish)**



### III. PROJECT IDEAS

1. Invent your own Odd-Fish specialty. Describe how you would research it.
2. Pick (or invent) an Odd-Fish specialty and two real things that fit into the specialty. Then make up a *third* thing that fits the specialty that isn't real, but *sounds real*. Invite the class to guess which is false. Try convince them that the fake thing is real! For instance, if you chose Absurd Animals, present two actual animals that are so outlandish as to be unbelievable. Then make up a third animal that fits in with them. If the class picks your invented animal rather than the real one as "true," you've succeeded!
3. In Chapter 1, we're shown newspaper headlines of Lily Larouche's bizarre youthful Hollywood exploits. Write your own headline and article about another one of Lily Larouche's mad stunts. Extra points for style if you include pictures and format the whole thing like a real newspaper article.
4. The myth of Ichthala, the All-Devouring Mother is partially inspired by the goddess Kali in Hinduism. Describe Kali in a report. What role does she have in Hinduism? How is she similar to the Ichthala? How is she different?
5. When Jo asks Aunt Lily how she came from California to Eldritch City to become a knight of the Odd-Fish, Aunt Lily replies that it's a story for another day. Also, we never learn how Colonel Korsakov (from Russia) or Sir Nils (from Belgium) first became knights. Chose one of those characters and write a story of how he or she discovered Eldritch City and became an Odd-Fish.
6. Come to class costumed as a character from the book and act out a monologue. You can adapt lines from the book, write your own, or combine both. Suggested characters for this exercise: Aunt Lily, Colonel Korsakov, Sefino, Commissioner Olvershaw, Ken Kiang, Jo, Oona Looch.
7. What are the various pranks the Belgian Prankster has done? Make up your own Belgian Prankster-esque prank(s). Write newspaper articles about it, with pictures. Even better, video your own episode of *The Belgian Prankster Show*.
8. Colonel Korsakov is obsessed with his digestion, which provides him with special guidance. What are the major parts of the human digestive system? How does it work, starting from when food comes into the mouth? Draw the human digestive system. Then draw Korsakov's digestion and explain how it is different. Feel free to add internal organs, enzymes, etc. of your own design and explain how it all connects to Korsakov's brain to communicate with him.
9. Sefino mentions an incident with a chandelier in Cairo in Chapter 2, but he never tells the whole story. Write your own account of what happened in Cairo from Sefino's point of view, using the kind of over-the-top vocabulary Sefino would use. Bonus points if it's illustrated!



**Oona Looch (Chen Reichert)**

10. Upon arriving in Eldritch City, Jo discovers that Aunt Lily had a completely different life before Jo came along. In looking through photographs of your parents or other family when they were younger, have you ever discovered that someone close to you had a surprising other, earlier life you knew nothing about? Describe it.

11. Choose a character and draw him or her in at least three situations. For example, if you chose Aunt Lily, you could draw her dancing at the ruby palace, in her Odd-Fish feast robes, and as a young, glamorous Hollywood starlet.

12. Draw a map of Eldritch City, showing the locations of the various places in the book, such as the Odd-Fish lodge, the Wormbeard lodge, the Municipal Squires' Authority, Snoodsbottom, the fish market at East Squeamings, the Dome of Doom, the eelmen's neighborhood, etc. Add your own locations that are in the spirit of Eldritch City. Explain how they relate to the social, cultural, political, economic, or religious life of the city.

13. Construct a model of one of the book's locations, such as the Odd-Fish lodge, the ruby palace, the Dome of Doom, the Silent Sisters' cathedral, etc.

14. Sefino is a fop. What is a fop? Write a brief report on a historical fop like Oscar Wilde or Beau Brummell. How is Sefino similar to, and different than, that fop? Fops are always men; what is the female equivalent of a fop?

15. Sefino is also a cockroach. Do a report on cockroaches. What is their anatomy? Where can they live? What do they eat? What is their life cycle? What are their habits? There are many varieties of cockroaches—what do they all have in common? What are some unusual kinds of cockroaches? Why does the fact that Sefino is a cockroach make his foppiness particularly ridiculous?

16. *Eldritch Snitch* headlines make heavy use of alliteration. What is alliteration? Make up a newsworthy event for Eldritch City and write alliterative headlines for it. The longer your headlines are, while still being alliterative, the better.

17. The urk-ack is a joint project between Sir Alasdair (Unlikely Musical Instruments) and Dame Delia (Absurd Animals). Make up your own joint project between two Odd-Fish specialties.

18. Create urk-ack music and record it. Play it for the class, and have them try to guess how you made the sounds.

19. Find a partner to "duel." Invent your own Eldritch City gods and dress up in appropriate costume armor. Then exchange your own insults and threats in Eldritch City style in front of the class, in the style of Chapters 19 and 25.



***The Grand Feast of the Order of Odd-Fish (Dawn Heath)***

20. Film your own episode of *Teenage Ichthala*.

21. Make a replica of Fiona's Desolation Day Ichthala sculpture. (Bonus points if it leaks milk!)

22. The East Squeamings fish market is Eldritch City is inspired by the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo, Japan. Use the Internet to find out more about the Tsukiji fish market. Explain what it is. Do an image search for that market, and for strange fish in general, and combine those images into a collage to create your own image of Eldritch City's fish market.

23. Eldritch City's festivals are inspired by the colorful, fascinating, sometimes violent Shinto and Buddhist religious festivals (or *matsuri*) in Japan. Research *matsuri* like the *Hadaka Matsuri* ("Naked Man Festival") and *Kenka Matsuri* ("Fighting Festival") and relate them to the festivals of Eldritch City. Discover another *matsuri* and report on it.

24. In Chapter 23, we only get to hear a little of Ken Kiang's horrible musical. Write some more verses, and set the whole thing to music. (Make sure it's *really* terrible.)

25. Make up a "ludicrous weapon" of your own, like the Apology Gun of Chapter 15, and write a story explaining it like the story of the Very Polite War.

26. Dame Isabel's specialty is Unusual Smells. In the spirit of her research, collect twelve different stinky things and put them in unlabeled bottles. Invite other students in the class to smell the contents of the bottles, and try to guess what is in them.

23. Aunt Lily's ruby palace is partially inspired the movie *Sunset Boulevard*. Watch *Sunset Boulevard* and give a short summary. Which character is Lily Larouche like? How is she similar and different?

24. Colonel Korsakov orders a drink called a "Flaming Khrushchev." Find out what "Khrushchev" means. Why would someone like Korsakov want this drink? The only ingredient that's specifically mentioned is Worcestershire sauce. How do you pronounce Worcestershire? Do any other cocktails have that as an ingredient? Imagine what other ingredients might go into it, and make a recipe for it. If you're really adventurous, make a batch for the class to enjoy.

25. Colonel Korsakov often makes exclamations like "Boiling Brezhnevs!" or "For the love of Lenin!" or "Great galloping Gorbachevs!" Who are Brezhnev, Lenin, and Gorbachev? Make up three similar exclamations using other names from USSR history and briefly describe what situations Korsakov would use them in.



***Ian vs. the All-Devouring Mother (Teddy Bihun)***

## IV. CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER WORKSHEETS

Each chapter has its own worksheet for more detailed examination of the text. Each worksheet is divided into 4 sections. Depending on the aptitude of the class, the teacher might decide to assign a subset of questions from each sheet instead of the whole sheet every time, to cut down on overwork. In short, here is an embarrassment of riches; select what you will!

**I. Vocabulary.** *The Order of Odd-Fish* does not fear large or obscure words! The words most likely to be unfamiliar to students are listed here. Students can jot down a quick definition for each word.

**II. What happened and why?** These are general comprehension questions to make sure the students understood what they have read.

**III. Beyond the story.** The answers to these questions aren't necessarily in the book. They invite the student to speculate beyond the story, to hypothesize their own explanations, to creatively fill in the gaps in the text. Points should be awarded for ingenuity and style.

**Creative Extra.** A more elaborate creative project inspired by the chapter.



*Some Odd-Fish Knights (Hailey McLaughlin)*

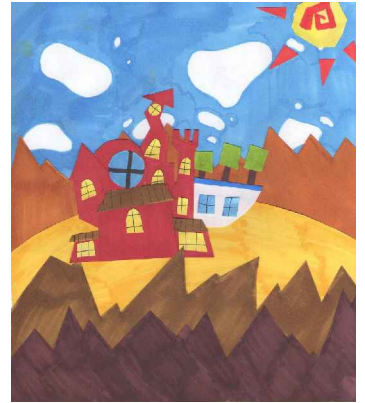


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 1***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

<i>raucous</i>	<i>flustered</i>	<i>notorious</i>
<i>crawdad</i>	<i>geisha</i>	<i>askew</i>
<i>mastodon</i>	<i>whist</i>	<i>choker</i>
<i>excruciating</i>	<i>hootenanny</i>	<i>Victrola</i>
<i>gastrointestinal tract</i>	<i>baroque</i>	<i>queasy</i>
<i>unimpeachable</i>	<i>formaldehyde</i>	<i>smoldered</i>



***It was tucked away behind the mountains, alone and nearly forgotten, the old house of Lily Larouche. (Max Pitchkites)***

**II. What happened and why?**

1. Why is Jo hiding in the bushes?
2. Why does Korsakov draw an X in the sand? Why is that important later?
3. What is Aunt Lily doing when Jo finds her? What do other party guests think of her behavior? What does Jo think?
4. Why is Jo thought of as "dangerous"? Does anyone take this seriously?
5. Why does the boy dressed as a hedgehog fire the gun? What is the result?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. "It was Lily Larouche's annual Christmas costume party, and all of her old friends had come." But the boy dressed as a hedgehog is only 17 years old, so he couldn't possibly be one of Lily's "old friends." Why do you think he came?
2. What do you think the starlet might've said or done that caused Lily Larouche throw a live rat at her?
3. Why on Earth would President Eisenhower think he could win Aunt Lily's love by shaving off his eyebrows?

**Creative Extra.** Draw a picture of the party that includes every costume mentioned.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 2***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

sarcophagus

ornate

portly

slander

palp

thorax

noxious

rancorous

gallivanting

yammering

frenzied

libel

bludgeonings

depraved

indiscretion

nattering

lackeys

shanghaied

gilded

cravat

monocle

chic

gawked

cad

salacious

muckrakers

hack (as in journalism)



***“I have submitted to the stern authority of my kidney; I have harkened to the wild, squishy poetry of my intestines; I have trembled at the invincible wisdom of my rectum.” (Max Pitchkites)***

## ***II. What happened and why?***

1. Why isn't Aunt Lily too surprised to see Sefino? Why does she find it easier than Jo to accept Sefino?
2. Why does Jo keep the note she was found with as a baby?
3. From whom did Korsakov and Sefino steal the black box? Why? What do they think will happen as a consequence?
4. Who is Chatterbox? Why is Sefino angry at him?
5. Why is Aunt Lily able to figure out how to open the box? How? What does she find inside?

***III. Beyond the Story.*** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Why do you think Aunt Lily's remote control is so large ("shoebox-sized")?
2. Why do you think Korsakov "stifled a smile" when Sefino complained that the black box incinerated his collection of powdered wigs?
3. What do you think happened to Sefino in Cairo?

***Creative Extra.*** Write a gossip column for the *Eldritch Snitch* describing some scandalous or embarrassing thing Sefino has done.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 3***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

<i>burlesque</i>	<i>vaudeville</i>	<i>rawhide</i>
<i>frazzled</i>	<i>anonymous</i>	<i>hydrogen</i>
<i>embezzled</i>	<i>vexed</i>	<i>embalmed</i>
<i>fathom (verb)</i>	<i>rapture</i>	<i>pandemonium</i>
<i>bustier</i>	<i>shambling</i>	<i>genial</i>

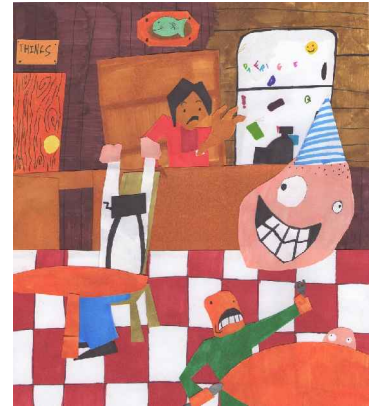
**II. What happened and why?**

1. Jo drives the car, even though she's only thirteen years old. Why?
2. How do the residents of Dust Creek feel about Aunt Lily? How do you think Aunt Lily feels about them?
3. Why does Aunt Lily's magic show go haywire? What happens?
4. Who told Hoagland Shanks to spray the ruby palace with insecticide? How does Korsakov feel about that? Why?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Why do you think Jo works at the Dust Creek Cafe? Do you think she and Aunt Lily need the money?
2. The chapter describes several theories of the Belgian Prankster's true identity. Make up your own theory in a similar spirit.
3. The chapter also describes various pranks the Belgian Prankster has done. Make up your own prank in a similar spirit.
4. What does the Belgian Prankster have in common with modern terrorism? With reality television?

**Creative Extra.** At one point in the chapter "Korsakov's eyebrows twitched like two panicking caterpillars." At another point Hoagland Shanks is described as a "big, shambling pudding of a man." Write three more metaphors that compare part of the body to a small animal, an insect, or food.



***The black box's side door burst open and something utterly astonishing flew out. (Max Pitchkites)***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 4**

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*parapets*

*gangway*

*roiling*

*gabbling*

*shell-shocked*

*sauntered*

*knave*

*rapscallion*

*rogue*

*cur*

*reprobate*

*blackguard*

*clammy*

*sweetmeats*

*begonias*

*oratory*

*assuage*

*engenders*

*caterwauling*

*decapitations*

*squall*

*discordant*

*chord*

*keening*

*reeled*

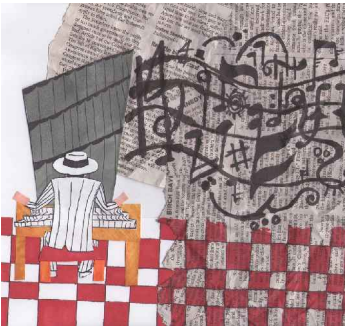
*dandyish*

*baying*

*larynx*

*rejuvenated*

*thrashed*



**Someone was playing her organ. No, torturing it, forcing out clashing chords, blasting up and down caterwauling scales—  
(Max Pitchkites)**

**II. What happened and why?**

1. Hoagland Shanks has a crop duster. What's a crop duster? What's it used for?
2. What effect does the insecticide have on Sefino?
3. What does Ken Kiang want from Jo?
4. Who helps Korsakov and Sefino save Jo from Ken Kiang? Why do you think they did this?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Korsakov calls Hoagland Shanks a "villain." What is the original meaning of the word "villain," before it got its modern meaning? Why is that a particularly appropriate thing to call Hoagland Shanks?
2. Hoagland Shanks doesn't seem to notice that Ken Kiang speaks perfect English. Do you think he *really* believes Ken Kiang doesn't speak English? If not, why would Hoagland Shanks act in this way?

**Creative Extra.** Write an article for the Dust Creek newspaper describing what happened that day. Or even better, do a live interview with an eyewitness for Dust Creek's local cable access show, and perform it in front of the class.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 5***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

<i>automaton</i>	<i>exquisite</i>	<i>languish</i>
<i>disquieting</i>	<i>connoisseur</i>	<i>trite</i>
<i>shopworn</i>	<i>verve</i>	<i>benefactor</i>
<i>crusades</i>	<i>postmodern</i>	<i>crackerjack</i> (not the candy)
<i>meticulously</i>	<i>humanitarian</i>	<i>scarfing</i>
<i>repentance</i>	<i>methodical</i>	<i>diabolical</i>
<i>theoretically</i>	<i>abode</i>	

**II. What happened and why?**

1. Why does Ken Kiang become depressed? How does he overcome his depression?
2. Why does Ken Kiang grow weary of doing good deeds?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. At the beginning of the chapter, Ken Kiang is watching a mechanical donkey that is a "medieval Arabic automaton." There are historical records of ingenious automata in medieval Arabia. Use the Internet to discover some examples. How did one power automata before electricity?
2. What do you think is meant by a "postmodern" hairstyle? What does postmodern even mean? Find some hairstyles on the Internet that strike you as postmodern.
3. Ken Kiang is described as a millionaire, but we never learn where he got his money. Given that Ken Kiang is extremely clever, easily bored, but able to commit himself utterly to a project if it catches his interest, how do you think he earned his money?

**Creative Extra.** The book gives examples from Ken Kiang's collection of exquisite objects and ambitious experiences. Invent three more for him in a similar spirit.



***It was no use. His connoisseur's instinct would not let him rest. (Max Pitchkites)***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## *The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 6*



**Colonel Korsakov  
plunged the Indignant  
into a steep dive,  
dodging a flock of  
screaming missiles that  
spun off into  
corkscrews of smoke.  
(Max Pitchkites)**

### **I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

cobbled  
indignant  
exploits  
buffeting  
errant  
degrade

frayed  
oboe  
femme fatale  
bristling  
infernal  
grovel

bracing  
blunderbuss  
ominous  
zeppelin  
ricocheted  
tapped

### **II. What happened and why?**

1. Sefino claims it is "maddening" to be written about in the newspaper. How do you think he really feels about being the focus of attention? Why?
2. Sefino says he hasn't heard of Eldritch City or its newspaper, but goes on to say "every morning I am somehow delivered a fresh copy of this nonexistent city's newspaper." How do you think Sefino gets a copy of the paper every morning, then? There are many possibilities. Choose one and argue for it.
3. Why does Ken Kiang read a list of "life's little pleasures" to Jo, Aunt Lily, Korsakov, and Sefino? Why does he sing to them?

### **III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. List three of the weird things laying around Korsakov and Sefino's plane. For each, give a brief (about 3 sentences) explanation of how they got that item. Bonus points if the stories are funny and are in character for Korsakov or Sefino.
2. What do you think Jo expected would happen when she turned the silver crank? How do you think she felt about the actual outcome?

**Creative Extra.** The two missiles are decorated with scenes from the Battle of Agincourt and the Crimean War. In Shakespeare's *Henry V*, King Henry gives a speech before the Battle of Agincourt to rouse the troops (it starts, "Once more unto the breach"). As for the Crimean War, its most well-known poem is "The Charge of the Light Brigade" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Read both poems. What are the similarities between them? Differences? Why do you think the author chose these battles for the missiles?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 7***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

bistro

discreet

perverse

malevolent

yawp

calibrated

cataclysm

quince

persimmon

angstrom

avant-garde

phosphorescent

neptunium

dormant

concocted

curdled

transaction

ruminating

### ***II. What happened and why?***

1. Why do you think the door to the restaurant is unmarked?
2. Why does Ken Kiang say he's "all hat and no cattle"? Where does that expression mean? Where does it come from?
3. What effect does the Pie of Innocence Slain have on Hoagland Shanks? Why do you think that is?
4. Ken Kiang promises the Phosphorescent Fascination will make Hoagland Shanks into a "Class Four biohazard." What does that mean? Find out the different classes of biohazard and briefly describe them.
5. Why won't Ken Kiang give Hoagland Shanks any more pies after tonight? How does Hoagland Shanks react?

### ***III. Beyond the Story.*** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Ken Kiang has a chapter about "mouse abuse." Can you think of an interesting way to abuse a mouse?

**Creative Extra.** Write a paragraph describing your own made-up avant-garde pie. Better yet, bake your avant-garde pie and share it with the class.



***“Oh, but only yield your mouth to me, Shanks—lend me your stomach! I shall open new worlds before you. Pies beyond your wildest dreams. Pies you dared not even hope exist!” (Max Pitchkites)***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 8***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

<i>seethed</i>	<i>forbidding</i>	<i>enzymes</i>	<i>nonchalantly</i>
<i>mucilaginous</i>	<i>entrails</i>	<i>crabbed</i>	<i>rhapsodized</i>
<i>ponderous</i>	<i>protrusions</i>	<i>dubious</i>	<i>jounced</i>
<i>duodenum</i>	<i>ottoman</i>	<i>lanky</i>	

**II. What happened and why?**

1. Where does Korsakov think they are at first? Why does he think the afterlife would be like this? Why is that Sefino's idea of hell?
2. Why is Jo so eager to enter the lodge?
3. Why does Sir Oliver shove the brains up Korsakov's nose violently instead of peacefully? How does Korsakov react at first, and how does he react once his memories are fully restored? Why do you think this is?
4. What is Jo's real last name? How do we learn this? What is Sir Oliver's relationship to Jo?
5. Why does Aunt Lily take Jo's ring from her? Why doesn't anyone tell Jo her secret yet?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Aunt Lily's, Sefino's, and Korsakov's memories were physically removed through their noses and kept in jars. Relate this to a similar practice in Egyptian mummification rituals.
2. Where does the phrase "fine fettle" come from?

**Creative Extra.** Construct a model of Eldritch City.



***Fish Vomiting Lodge (Max Pitchkites)***



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 9***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*mandibles*

*epaulette*

*tepid*

*dissertation*

*panache*

*propriety*

*metaphysics*

*cavalcade*

*futile*

*arcane*

*charter*

*venerable*

*discredited*

*frippery*

*dither*

*faux pas*

*tuffet*

*irksome*

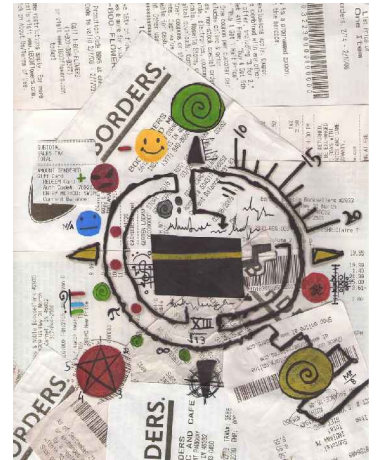
### ***II. What happened and why?***

1. Write down the name of each knight, their specialty, and their squire (if any).
2. What is the Inconvenience? What is Sir Festus' addition, and what does it do? Why do you think the Odd-Fish would want to build such a thing?
3. Who stole the lodge? Why are the knights surprised? How is Lily involved?
4. How are the Odd-Fish similar to Ken Kiang? How are they different?

### ***III. Beyond the Story.*** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. How is the Appendix similar to Wikipedia? How is it different?
2. Invent your own Odd-Fish specialty. Describe how you would research it.
3. The knights are writing an Appendix to the encyclopedia of all knowledge. What is an "appendix" in a book? In a human body? What do these meanings have in common? How does that relate to the Odd-Fish charter?
4. What does Sir Oliver mean when he says, "If we refuse to let Dame Lily stay, then the Order of Odd-Fish will no longer exist. That is, it will no longer exist in any way that makes sense to me"? Why do Sir Alasdair and Dame Isabel object to Aunt Lily's return to Eldritch City?

***Creative Extra.*** Pick an Odd-Fish specialty. Research two real things that fit the specialty. Then make up a *third* thing that isn't real, but *sounds real*. Invite the class to guess which is false. Try to pass off the fake thing as real! For instance, if you chose Absurd Animals, present two actual animals whose descriptions are so outlandish as to be unbelievable, and make up a third animal that fits with them. If the class picks your animal a real animal as false instead of yours, you've succeeded!



***"What an exquisitely obnoxious twenty-four hours you've had. The device has performed beyond our wildest hopes." (Max Pitchkites)***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 10***

### **I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

<i>malignantly</i>	<i>ionosphere</i>	<i>abstraction</i>
<i>transcended</i>	<i>cryptologist</i>	<i>toxicologist</i>
<i>minions</i>	<i>fungologist</i>	<i>leered</i>
<i>kaffeeklatsch</i>	<i>abhorrent</i>	<i>improvise</i>
<i>apocalypse</i>	<i>vouch</i>	<i>palanquin</i>

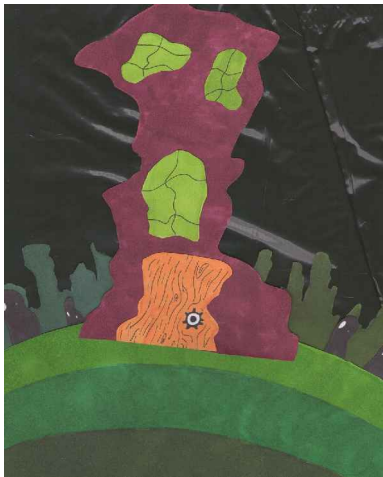
### **II. What happened and why?**

1. Why does Ken Kiang want to kill the Belgian Prankster?
2. Why did many in Eldritch City want to give Jo over to the Silent Sisters? How were Aunt Lily, Korsakov, and the Belgian Prankster involved?
3. Who was the Belgian Prankster before he became the Belgian Prankster?
4. Why did the mayor exile Colonel Korsakov and Aunt Lily?

### **III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Why do you think Ken Kiang chose to bring a 16th century Sicilian pistol to kill the Belgian Prankster, instead of something more straightforward?
2. Why does Ken Kiang call the Belgian Prankster a "mad Walloon"? What's a Walloon? What's the opposite of a Walloon?
3. Write the cover letter and resume that Ken Kiang submitted in hopes of becoming a member of the Belgian Prankster's committee.
4. We learn about Mr. AAA, Mr. BBB, Mr. CCC, Mr. DDD, Mr. EEE, Mr. HHH, Mr. YYY, and Mr. ZZZ. Invent pranksters for three letters *not* mentioned in this chapter. Extra points for describing how they irked the Belgian Prankster and were punished in inventive ways (like Mr. HHH and Mr. EEE).

**Creative Extra.** Parts of this scene were inspired by Ray Bradbury's short story "The Earth Men" and G.K. Chesterton's novel *The Man Who Was Thursday*. Read both and show how Kennedy took ideas from those earlier works and made them into something new. How do themes from those works relate to this chapter?



***It was as if some invisible hand were squeezing the house, stretching and twisting it as if it were taffy. (Max Pitchkites)***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 11***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*appalled*

*imbroglio*

*hearsay*

*perniciously*

*calumny*

*condescend*

*callow*

*insipid*

*licentious*

*inebriated*

*idlers*

*popinjay*

*simpering*

*rabble*

*poppycock*

*scurrilous*

*palpitate*

*beseech*



***Jo's elephant stomped down the streets, ducking under low arches hung with curling vines, squeezing between bright minarets and twisting, crooked towers. (Max Pitchkites)***

### ***II. What happened and why?***

1. What is Jo's reaction when Aunt Lily tells her about her past? Do you think her reaction is reasonable? Why or why not?
2. What is Korsakov's quest? How long has he had it? Why do you think it's taking him so long to finish it?
3. What does Nora want Jo to do? Why?
4. What do the cockroaches want Jo to do? Why?
5. Why is Hazelwoods' Row off-limits? How does Ian feel about the Hazelwoods? Why? How does Jo react to that?

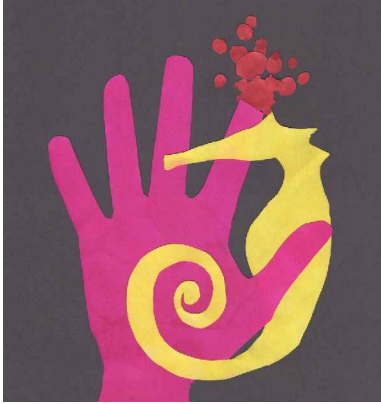
**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. *Eldritch Snitch* headlines seem to make heavy use of alliteration. What is alliteration? Make up a newsworthy event for Eldritch City and write your own alliterative headlines for it. The longer your headlines are, while still being alliterative, the more points.
2. We learn from Nora that Ian had been hanging around the lodge even though he wasn't a squire. Why do you think Ian chose to hang around the lodge even though he had no official position there?

**Creative Extra.** Find pictures online or in magazines that resemble how Eldritch City is described and make a collage of what you think Eldritch City looks like.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## *The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 12*



*Jo snatched out her chewed-up finger as the nangnang howled in disappointment. (Max Pitchkites)*

### **I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*municipal*

*sumptuous*

*caustic*

*milquetoasts*

*pancreas*

*veto*

*unmentionables*

*impertinence*

*anti-climax*

*greenhorn*

*gutless*

*mollycoddles*

### **II. What happened and why?**

1. Why is Commissioner Olvershaw cruel to Korsakov? Why doesn't Korsakov stand up for himself?
2. Why does Jo tell Olvershaw to shut up? Did she do the right thing? Why? Now argue the opposite case.
3. Why does Jo want a quest so badly?
4. How do Jo and Ian get a quest?
5. How does Jo hurt her finger? Does she feel it was worth it? Why?

### **III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Dugan told Ian there would be a fearsome "initiation" at the Municipal Squires' Authority, but there wasn't. Why do you think Dugan told Ian that?
2. At the end of the chapter, Olvershaw seems pleased his offices have been half-wrecked. Why do you think that is?
3. Draw a squat-snouted nangnang.

**Creative Extra.** Commissioner Olvershaw talks in a way that's easy to imitate—he's either complaining about his illnesses or abusing the squires. Write a paragraph in Commissioner Olvershaw's voice.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 13***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*festering*

*feculent*

*putridity*

*pristine*

*tinny*

*tapestry*

*capering*

*convoluted*

*fertility*

*caricatures*

*mildewed*

*incontrovertibly*

### ***II. What happened and why?***

1. How does Aunt Lily's attitude change when Jo jokes about destroying Eldritch City? Why? How does Jo react to that?
2. When Jo and Ian are in the tapestry room, at first they are quite close. Then the atmosphere turns tense. Then it turns sour. What causes each change to occur?
3. What is the "surprise" that the Belgian Prankster left in the lodge? Why do you think he would do that?
4. What is *Teenage Ichthala*? Why does Nora believe it's important?

### ***III. Beyond the Story.*** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. We learn that the quests given by Lady Agnes are ridiculous, pointless, or impossible. Make up one of your own "Lady Agnes quests" in a similar spirit.
2. When Jo asks Aunt Lily, "How did you become an Odd-Fish?" Aunt Lily replies it's a long story for another day. Write your own version of what you think that story is. Remember, Aunt Lily was a world-famous Hollywood star when she disappeared to Eldritch City (refer to the headlines in Chapter 1 for a refresher).
3. Draw a part of the tapestry—either a part that is mentioned in the book, or a part from your own imagination.
4. The tapestry was inspired by the work of once-renowned, now-forgotten landscape artist John Banvard. Read the essay about him in Paul Collins' *Banvard's Folly: Thirteen Tales of Renowned Obscurity, Famous Anonymity, and Rotten Luck*, a partial inspiration for *The Order of Odd-Fish*. How is Banvard's landscape painting similar to the tapestry? How is it different?

**Creative Extra.** Film your own episode of *Teenage Ichthala*.



***A raucous parade of images danced past, with hardly enough time to take in each scene before it was gone, followed by even more scenes. (Max Pitchkites)***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 14***



***The sheer size and variety of Eldritch City, its creatures and architecture, its noise and chaos, shook Jo's brain, spurred her senses, made her feel sharp and alive. (Max Pitchkites)***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

brackish	thronged	pantaloons
chromium	billowing	arsenal
vivacious	fens	vehemently
orifices	retraction	bravado
swashbuckler	sublime	vituperation
ascot	porkpie	seersucker
undulating	salacious	besmirching
lambasting	insufferable	impertinence

**II. What happened and why?**

1. Why is Aunt Lily a legend in Eldritch City? How do people respond when they see her in the street?
2. Why does Jo visit Sir Oort's rooms early in the morning? How does she feel about it? Why does she keep going?
3. What are Alasdair and Delia working on? How does it combine their interests?
4. What name has Sefino given his ascot? Why? How is he defeated at the *Eldritch Snitch*?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Describe your own Eldritch City festival for a local god (made up by you).
2. Sir Oort's scene is inspired by the scene from *A Wrinkle In Time* in which Mrs. Whatsit explains the tesseract. Compare and contrast the two scenes. How is Mrs. Whatsit's authority different from the kind of authority Sir Oort has?
3. The urk-ack is a joint project between Sir Alasdair (Unlikely Musical Instruments) and Dame Delia (Absurd Animals). Make up your own joint project between two Odd-Fish specialties (from the book, or invented by you).
4. Learn how to tie an ascot. Demonstrate it to the class.

**Creative Extra.** Create urk-ack music and record it. Play it for the class.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 15***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*sprightly*

*modesty*

*renowned*

*tact*

*effusive*

*degenerating*

*stalemated*

*withering*

*cheeky*

*trussed*

*gesticulating*

*cacophony*

*loped*

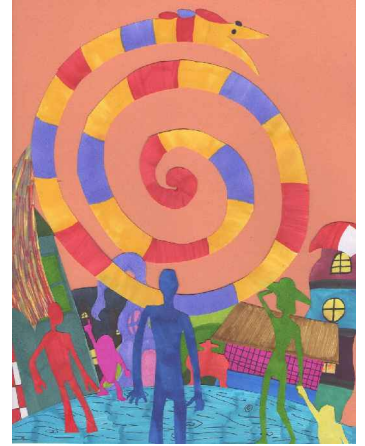
*warren*

*quagmire*

*bluffed*

*deduced*

*decalibrate*



***They saw the proud shape of the Schwenk soaring overhead, all four of its wings outstretched, turning slowly in the sky; then it plunged away from the city, toward the forest, with incredible speed, and was seen no more. (Max Pitchkites)***

**II. What happened and why?**

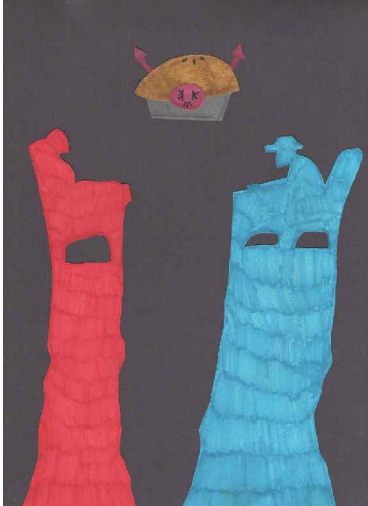
1. Who won the Very Polite War? How did they win?
2. Why is Nora often in East Squeamings? Does she like it? Why or why not?
3. Why does Nora get angry at Ian?
4. Why doesn't Ian want Jo to talk to anyone in Snoodsbottom?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Make up a "ludicrous weapon" of your own, with its own story behind it (like the story of the Very Polite War).
2. We never learn what Nora's weapon does. Describe your own idea of what it does—or explain your theory of why it continues to do nothing.
3. Do you think Jo set the Apology Gun to "sarcastic" on purpose? Why?
4. What other artifacts of the Very Polite War might still survive?
5. Dugan is on a mysterious errand. It's never quite clear what he's doing. What do you think his errand was?

**Creative Extra.** The East Squeamings fish market is Eldritch City is inspired by the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo, Japan. Use the Internet to find out more about the Tsukiji fish market. Explain what it is. Do an image search for that market, and for strange fish in general, and combine those images into a collage to create your own image of Eldritch City's fish market.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 16***

### **I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*precipice*

*piddling*

*implementation*

*protagonist*

*formality*

*inscrutable*

*functionary*

*vainglory*

*resignation*

*contemptuously*

*coaxed*

*sordid*

*encroached*

*desecrate*

*obligatory*

### **II. What happened and why?**

1. Why does Ken Kiang eventually open the envelope? What is in it?
2. Why does Ken Kiang decide to go to Eldritch City?
3. What does Ken Kiang feel he must do before he leaves? Why?
4. How does Ken Kiang plan to send Hoagland Shanks to hell?

### **III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. At one point in the chapter it is said, "Purity of heart is to will one thing." This is a quote from a famous philosopher. Use the Internet to find out who the philosopher is. What do you think he meant? Do you agree?
2. In the chapter it also says, "Any idiot can fire a gun and kill someone. It takes real evil to ruin a soul." Do you think this is true? Give reasons and examples.
3. The writing style of Ken Kiang's chapters is different than Jo's chapters. Even though it is also in third person, the writing starts to take on aspects of Ken Kiang's personality, becoming grandiose and comically overblown. This is a technique literary critic James Wood calls *free indirect style*: "As soon as someone tells a story about a character, narrative seems to want to bend itself around that character, wants to merge with that character, to take on his or her way of thinking and speaking." That is, even though Ken Kiang is not the third-person narrator, the "narrator" speaks in Ken Kiang-ish terms. Point out examples of this technique in the chapter.

**Creative Extra.** What message did Ken Kiang leave for Hoagland Shanks? It is referred to, but we never read it. And Hoagland Shanks seemed scared by it. What could Ken Kiang have written that rattled Hoagland Shanks so much?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 17***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*incredulous*

*effeminate*

*straggler*

*rotunda*

*gibbering*

*congealed*

*jaunty*

*peevish*

*glyphs*

*askew*

*fiasco*

*cliche*

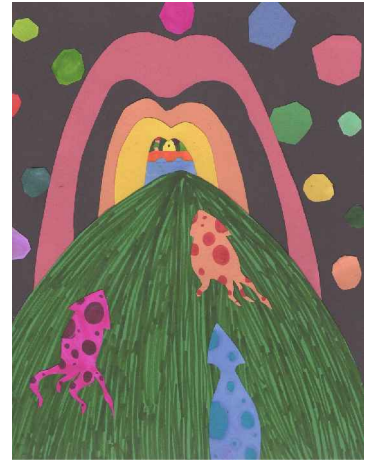
**II. What happened and why?**

1. Why did Lady Agnes make Ian and Jo wait for so long?
2. Why does Ian lose his temper with Lady Agnes?
3. Where does Nick take Jo and Ian? Why does he take them there?
4. Who are Lady Agnes, Nick, and Duddler Yarue really? Why?
5. Who must have thrown the rock with the note attached to it? (Hint: the character does appear in the chapter.)

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Why does Jo follow Nick? How does Ian feel about that?
2. Some clues about Nick's true identity are dropped early on. Name one.
3. Why do you think the groglings attacked Jo, Ian, and Nick?

**Creative Extra.** Rewrite the "cathedral" part of the chapter from the point of the view of the groglings.



***The dark water became a seething broth, churned to a writhing foam, and out of the depths of the flooded cathedral rose three gigantic squids. (Max Pitchkites)***





***"There are other prophecies, too horrible to be explicitly described, hinted at in these coded messages." (Max Pitchkites)***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 18***

### ***I. Vocabulary.*** Write a quick definition for each word.

hapless	nefarious	daunted
cross-breeding	discreetly	chartreuse
scathing	ungainly	gusto
trill	arpeggios	ozone
ornery	tentative	lurid
chastened	chivalrous	superlative
monstrosity	zealously	bestow
languidly	seceding	exonerated
expatriate	magnanimous	mandating
sanction	ordinances	reconciliation

### ***II. What happened and why?***

1. What prank did Jo and Audrey pull on Ian? Why?
2. Why is it particularly appropriate for Sir Alasdair and Dame Isabel to have built the smells organ, given their specialties?
3. What was Nora able to deduce from Audrey's scripts? Why was she the first to discover it?
4. Why is Aunt Lily tinkering with the Inconvenience?
5. What does Jo have a nightmare about? Why?

### ***III. Beyond the Story.*** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Audrey and Jo discover many chords and progressions of scents on the smells organ. Make up one of your own that uses at least six smells.
2. Aunt Lily says, "Having an enemy is a delicate art . . . if handled correctly, it can be good for you." Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

***Creative Extra.*** The start of the chapter describes various curiosities Jo and Audrey find while exploring the lodge (like the smells organ). Make up another one. Write a short piece about how Jo and Audrey find it, and what they do with it.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 19***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

<i>plumage</i>	<i>talons</i>	<i>regalia</i>
<i>fledgling</i>	<i>cranky</i>	<i>jury-rigged</i>
<i>bender</i>	<i>debutantes</i>	<i>insolence</i>
<i>impropriety</i>	<i>prig</i>	<i>naive</i>
<i>disreputable</i>	<i>rancid</i>	<i>fermented</i>
<i>incognito</i>	<i>hookahs</i>	<i>baleful</i>
<i>ignominious</i>	<i>obloquy</i>	<i>flagon</i>
<i>infamy</i>	<i>sticklers</i>	<i>aficionado</i>
<i>moxie</i>	<i>scamp</i>	<i>gangling</i>

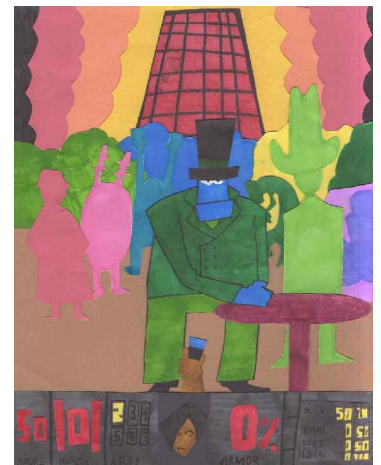
## **II. What happened and why?**

1. Why does Aunt Lily leave? Who goes with her? Why is Jo upset about it?
2. What did the cockroaches do all night? Why did they do it so vigorously?
3. How many gods are there in Eldritch City? Which gods are mentioned in the chapter? Make up three more Eldritch City gods of your own.
4. Why are there so many rules and traditions around dueling? Do they have their intended effect? Why or why not?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Dugan starts to justify why he works for Oona Looch, but Ian cuts him off. How do you think Dugan would have finished his explanation?
2. Audrey explains the traditions of dueling. Make up an additional dueling tradition of your own in a similar spirit.
3. Dueling on flying ostriches is inspired by the 1980s video game *Joust*. Find it on the Internet and play it. How do you defeat other duelists in that game? Which duelist in *Odd-Fish* uses that technique? What does Jo think of it?
4. Jo notices that only the highest and lowest classes of Eldritch City are at the Dome of Doom. Why do you think the middle class is missing?

**Creative Extra.** Oona Looch mentions "mofflehoppers." What might they look like? Draw Oona Looch and Ian hunting mofflehoppers in the moors.



***A ferocious man with blue skin and a face bristling with grotesque moles, decked out in an ornate military uniform from an army that existed only in his overheated imagination. (Max Pitchkites)***

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 20***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

<i>schemed</i>	<i>drudgery</i>	<i>groveled</i>	<i>swooned</i>
<i>craven</i>	<i>ostentatiously</i>	<i>subsidized</i>	<i>spinster</i>
<i>boardinghouse</i>	<i>pomade</i>	<i>subverted</i>	<i>cog</i>
<i>deployed</i>	<i>appropriated</i>	<i>foiled</i>	<i>despoiled</i>

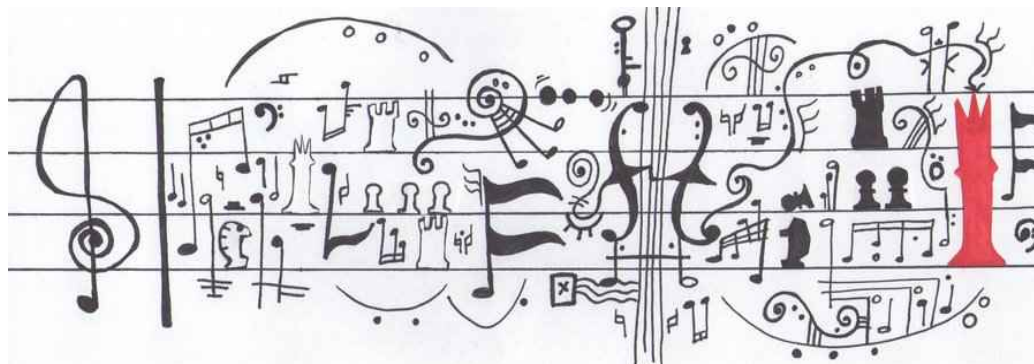
### ***II. What happened and why?***

1. Where does Ken Kiang get a job?
2. Where does Ken Kiang live? Why does he have to live there?
3. What does the Belgian Prankster's plan call for Ken Kiang to do? What does he do instead? Why?
4. Why does Ken Kiang get fired?
5. What is Ken Kiang's "wonderful idea"? Why does it appeal to him?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. At the end of the chapter, Ken Kiang has lost his job and his home, but he feels triumphant. Why?
2. What do you think about Ken Kiang's views about showmanship? Do you agree or disagree?
3. Just as in Chapter 16, this chapter uses "free indirect style" when writing about Ken Kiang. Find another example in this chapter of free indirect style.

**Creative Extra.** Make an absurdly complicated diagram that expresses the intricate insanity of Ken Kiang's battle against the Belgian Prankster in Eldritch City.



***Eldritch City became for Ken Kiang a vast, complex chessboard, the stage for an exhilaratingly complex game between him and the Belgian Prankster. (Max Pitchkites)***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 21***

### **I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

grueling

archives

arbitrary

notarized

bequeathed

convention

defile

sociable

illicit

stewardship

poised

theology

composure

skullduggery

blustered



***Jo's pencil trembled as she wrote her translation in the margin of the manuscript. (Max Pitchkites)***

### **II. What happened and why?**

1. Why does Jo train with Dame Delia every day? How does Dame Delia feel about Jo dueling?
2. Who is Mr. Enderby? What is his project?
3. Describe the code Jo's father uses in his message. How does he ensure that only Jo can translate it?
4. Why does Fiona want to see the tapestry? What is her relationship to it?
5. According to Fiona's story, how did the universe begin? What existed before the universe?

### **III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. What were Jo's parents' specialties for the Odd-Fish? The book describes examples of different things her parents studied for their specialties. Make up one more example each for each specialty.
2. Why did Fiona say what she said after Sir Festus' speech? Do you think she was right or wrong? Why?

***Creative Extra.*** Fiona tells us a *beginning-of-the-world* story about the All-Devouring Mother. Back in Chapter 18, Nora told an *end-of-the-world* story about the All-Devouring Mother. Make up your own mythology, with its own story for how the universe begins and ends.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## *The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 22*

### **I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

sodden

sheen

stunted

kilns

adjoined

noncommittal

### **II. What happened and why?**

1. At the beginning of the chapter, Jo, Ian, and Nora are waiting at the fish market from Chapter 15. How has Jo changed since the last time she was there?

2. What is the mission of the Wormbeards? How is Fiona's specialty related to it?

3. Describe how the Wormbeards lodge and the Odd-Fish lodge are different. How are the characteristics of each lodge appropriate for its knighthood? How does the difference make Jo feel?

4. Fiona has a surprise for Jo. What is it? How does Jo react?

5. What is the crowd's reaction when they see Fiona's sculpture? What do they do to it? Why do you think this is part of the Desolation Day ritual?

### **III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Why do you think everyone wears those costumes for Desolation Day?

2. Read Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery." How is it similar to the Desolation Day scene? How is it different?

3. It is never really explained why everyone so eagerly drinks the milk. Make up your own theory.

**Creative Extra.** Make a replica of Fiona's sculpture.



*The tree filled up the pit with glittering branches, supporting a staircase descending to the bottom. (Max Pitchkites)*



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 23***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*ensemble*

*amok*

*bloated*

*pusillanimous*

*affable*

*cameo*

*voluminous*

*brazen*

*brandished*

*harangue*

*crass*

*overture*

*raunch*

*forlorn*

*hallmark*

*roguishly*

*caterwauling*

*consarn*

*maestro*

*lasciviously*



***Still, the more elaborate production wistfully ran through his mind as he strutted back and forth, sang off-key, and danced so frantically it seemed he was being publicly electrocuted. (Max Pitchkites)***

**II. What happened and why?**

1. What does Sefino want from Chatterbox? Is it the same thing he wanted from Chatterbox at the beginning of the story? What has changed?
2. Why don't Ian and his friends have to wait in line or pay for anything at the festival? Why would this arrangement particularly irritate someone like Ian?
3. How does Sir Alasdair's music affect Jo? Why is she surprised by that?
4. Why is Sefino upset when Sir Alasdair is interrupted?
5. What is Hoagland Shanks' secret identity?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. We hear all about various features of the festival: the brontosaurus in the parade, the roller coaster that wraps around the entire city, etc. Make up three more features of the festival in a similar spirit.
2. Describe what Sefino and the other cockroaches would have done, and the crowd's reaction, if they had not been interrupted.
3. We've seen two big holidays in Eldritch City so far: Desolation Day and the Founder's Festival. How are they different? How are they similar? Are either of them like holidays that you celebrate?
4. Invent another Eldritch City holiday. Describe its rituals and traditions.

**Creative Extra.** We only hear a little of Ken Kiang's horrible musical. Write a few more verses, and set the whole thing to music. (Make sure it's *really* terrible.)



*She had braced herself for a nightmare; a cocktail party caught her off balance. (Max Pitchkites)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 24***

### **I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*chiding*

*engimatic*

*debacle*

*resplendent*

*finery*

*firmament*

*vertigo*

*comme il faut*

*swank*

*mod*

*blithely*

*fawning*

### **II. What happened and why?**

1. Why does everyone think Jo is ill? What is the real reason?
2. How does Jo judge Sefino's character? Do you think it's fair? Why or why not?
3. Did the Belgian Prankster expect Jo to come to him? Why?
4. Whom did the Belgian Prankster disguise himself as for so many years? Why?
5. Why does the Belgian Prankster shoot a hole in his own head?
6. What is Jo's plan at the asylum? How does that work out for her?

### **III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. When Sefino is trying to think up rhymes for "Jo," one of his ideas is "comme il fault." What language is that in? How do you think he picked up that language?
2. Near the beginning of the chapter, it is said that "People will put up with being terrified, but no one will tolerate being bored." Does this make any sense? In what sense is this true? In what sense is it false?
3. Jo discovers to her horror that she is of two minds about the Belgian Prankster. Why do you think this is? Why does she lose her nerve?
4. What is iambic tetrameter?

**Creative Extra.** Write a portion of Jo's 100-line poem insulting Fiona in iambic tetrameter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 25***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

<i>pizzazz</i>	<i>prude</i>	<i>swaths</i>
<i>tumultuous</i>	<i>premium</i>	<i>masticating</i>
<i>braggadocio</i>	<i>gumbo</i>	<i>avaunt</i>
<i>fie</i>	<i>alack</i>	<i>egad</i>
<i>forsooth</i>	<i>parries</i>	<i>inept</i>
<i>ripostes</i>	<i>pummeling</i>	<i>feints</i>
<i>undertow</i>	<i>audacious</i>	<i>bestial</i>

### ***II. What happened and why?***

1. Why do you think Jo chose Aznath, the Silver Kitten of Deceit as her god?
2. What did the butlers do for Jo? How does Jo revise her opinion of Sefino?
3. Why does the crowd boo Fiona?
4. What does the Belgian Prankster want Jo to do? Why doesn't she want to do it?
5. What are Oona Looch's rules for dueling? How do Jo and Fiona break those rules? Why do they break them?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Before the duel, it occurs to Jo that "if this was a story, then Fiona was the hero. Jo was the dangerous dragon that had to be slain." Do you agree or disagree with this? Why?
2. Do you agree with the last line of the chapter? Why or why not? Why do you think Jo feels that way?

**Creative Extra.** Find a partner to "duel." Invent your own Eldritch City gods and dress up in appropriate costume armor. Then exchange your own insults and threats in Eldritch City style in front of the class.



***Again Jo blacked out, sucked down into darkness and silence. The little glowing man was still dancing. (Max Pitchkites)***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 26***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

vaudeville

spoils (noun)

scuttlebutt

wrangle

crumpet

deluged

perfidious

onslaught

**II. What happened and why?**



***A mob was waving torches,  
stomping and shoving,  
screaming at the lodge.  
(Max Pitchkites)***

1. How does Jo's mood change after she starts dancing? Why?
2. Why does Oona Looch cry?
3. Why does Audrey leave the party early?
4. How did Dame Isabel discover Jo's secret? What are her three pieces of evidence?
5. Why does the earthquake happen?
6. What is Audrey's plan?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. How do you think the mob tracked down Jo? How might Dame Isabel, with her special abilities, have helped?
2. Why do you think Audrey stays loyal to Jo even after everyone else has turned against her?
3. Why does Jo give herself up to the Silent Sisters?

**Creative Extra.** Draw the moment at the victory party when Dame Isabel exposes Jo's secret, showing the different reactions of all the characters.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 27***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*muddled*

*chalices*

*scepters*

*sacs*

*misshapen*

*ghastly*

*gristle*

*cartilage*

*slackened*

*incandescence*

## ***II. What happened and why?***

1. Inside the All-Devouring Mother, Jo's consciousness flickers between two perspectives. What are they? Why is that happening?
2. Why does Jo see "ten thousand Eldritch Cities"?
3. How does Jo get out of the pit of acid the first time? The second time?
4. How can the golden thread be used to defeat the All-Devouring Mother? Who ends up doing it?
5. What does Jo do to the Belgian Prankster in the end?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. Why do you think Jo is losing consciousness in the palanquin?
2. Why do you think Jo stops resisting the Belgian Prankster? Why does she cling to him and look at the pool with "something like craving"?
3. The Belgian Prankster says, "Soon it'll be over. You won't hurt anymore. Nobody will, when we are all inside you again . . . Now you know . . . Now you understand what we want." What is he referring to? Connect what he's saying with the theology of the Silent Sisters we learned from Nora's account in Chapter 18 and Fiona's account in Chapter 21.

**Creative Extra.** Much of this chapter is written in a style inspired by H.P. Lovecraft. (Indeed, *eldritch* is a favorite word of Lovecraft's.) Read his classic short story "The Call of Cthulhu" and compare it to this chapter.



***She was huge, she was getting huger, eating, swelling, eating Eldritch City, skewered with pain but boiling over with wild shrieking power. (Max Pitchkites)***



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Order of Odd-Fish: Chapter 28***

**I. Vocabulary.** Write a quick definition for each word.

*chutzpah*

*hypochondria*

*envisaged*

*affliction*

*floundered*

*waffled*

*malingered*

*slapdash*

*frenzied*

*derring-do*

*incarcerated*

*reprimanded*

*irreproachable*

*vindication*

*banister*



***Jo was certain there was no group of people in the world so fond of toasting each other. (Max Pitchkites)***

**II. What happened and why?**

1. How long was Jo asleep? Why isn't she a monster anymore?
2. What did the Odd-Fish mount on the wall to honor Jo's achievement?
3. How has the cockroaches' feud with Chatterbox on the *Eldritch Snitch* been resolved? Are both sides satisfied? Why?
4. How does Ian surprise Jo? Why do you think he did that?
5. Why do you think the Schwenk broke the Odd-Fish out of jail? Why did Oona Looch help break them out?

**III. Beyond the Story.** Answers aren't necessarily in the book. Points for style.

1. How does Ken Kiang end up? Do you think he "deserves" it? What do you think would be a good Odd-Fish specialty for him?
2. The book begins and ends with a boy shooting Jo over an apology. How are the two scenes similar? Different? How has Jo changed in the time in between?
3. Why do you think the Schwenk grabbed Ken Kiang, too?
4. The book begins and ends on Christmas. Why do you think the author chose to do this?

**Creative Extra.** Karl Marx's famous saying "the road to hell is paved with good intentions" is here reversed, in Ken Kiang's case, to "the road to heaven is paved with bad intentions." Take another familiar phrase, reverse it, and invent a situation in which that reversed phrase is true.

## V. THE AUTHOR ON BOOKS THAT INSPIRED *ODD-FISH*

*The Man Who Was Thursday* and *The Club of Queer Trades* by G.K.

Chesterton. “*The Man Who Was Thursday* is a mad, hilarious, astonishing novella about an undercover policeman who infiltrates a group of anarchists, each named after a different day of the week. The Belgian Prankster is partially inspired by the nightmarish Sunday. *The Club of Queer Trades* is about a club of eccentric gentlemen who have all invented novel ways of making a living. It inspired the idea of each knight having to research an original specialty for the Odd-Fish Appendix.”

*The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams. “The book I most emulated in writing *Odd-Fish*. The humor is genius. The Appendix in *Odd-Fish* is partially based on the Guide—a reference book that's relaxed about being inaccurate.”

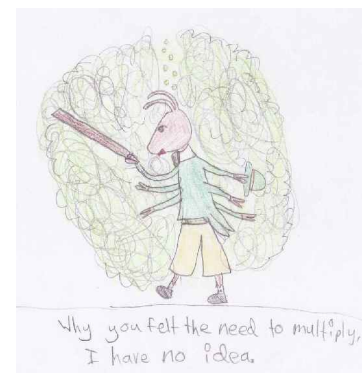
*Banvard's Folly: Thirteen Tales of Renowned Obscurity, Famous Anonymity, and Rotten Luck* by Paul Collins. “Thirteen essays about once-famous eccentrics who are now forgotten. They could all easily be Odd-Fish knights: the celebrated physicist who discovered ‘N-rays’ (which do not, actually, exist); the man who made a language of musical notes; and John Banvard, the once world-renowned artist whose fifteen thousand square foot moving panoramic painting of the Mississippi River (now destroyed, tragically, with the rest of his work) is the inspiration for the Odd-Fish tapestry.”

*A Rebours* by J.K. Huysmans. “The title is translated as *Against Nature* or *Against the Grain*. Called ‘the Bible of decadence,’ this is the unnamed ‘yellow book’ that corrupts Dorian in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. This catalogue of the aesthetic indulgences of a weary aristocrat was the inspiration for Ken Kiang.”

*The Dark Tower* by C.S. Lewis. “Lewis' unfinished novel and most troubling work. It's controversial: some even say it is a forgery. I ripped off his ‘stingingman’ for the Belgian Prankster's sting, but that's OK; Lewis himself ripped off a similar idea from David Lindsay's amazing/unreadable *A Voyage to Arcturus*.”

*A Wrinkle in Time* and *A Wind in the Door* by Madeleine L'Engle. “The scene with Sir Oort and the crumpled paper is both homage and parody of Mrs. Whatsit's explanation of the tesseract in *A Wrinkle in Time*. The idea of the Silent Sisters is partially inspired by the Echthroi in *A Wind in the Door*. Indeed, the word ‘Ichthala’ is inspired by the word ‘Echthroi.’ (Look up what ‘ichth-’ means for a surprise.)”

*Violence and the Sacred* by Rene Girard. “Dense work of literary and social critical theory. Its account of collective violence against a surrogate victim inspired the Ichthala plotline.”



**Sefino (Freya Trefonides)**



**Jo, Lily, Ian, Nora,  
Korsakov, Sefino, Audrey,  
and the Belgian Prankster  
(Diana Todd)**

Titus Groan and Gormenghast by Mervyn Peake. “The stifling, oppressive, fascinating rituals of the rambling castle of Gormenghast, the eccentric grotesques who make their home there, the intricate slowness of the plot and the unapologetic length make this one of my favorite books. I wanted Eldritch City to be a ‘character’ in its own right, just as the castle Gormenghast is here.”

Vile Bodies and Brideshead Revisited by Evelyn Waugh. “Waugh is a master of social comedy and blithe snobbery. The cockroaches owe much to his style of humor. Aspects of Sefino are inspired by Anthony Blanche in *Brideshead Revisited*. There is a gossip columnist named Chatterbox in *Vile Bodies*, but he is quite different than the one in *Odd-Fish*.”

A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole. “One of the funniest books ever written. Ignatius Reilly’s ‘valve’ is the inspiration for Korsakov’s digestion.”

James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl. “Giant insects in waistcoats!”

The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame. “Sefino owes much to Mr. Toad.”

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll. “Sui generis, and freshly strange every time one returns to it. All fantasy owes something to this grand-daddy of them all. Jo’s matter-of-fact response to the fantastical is very Alice.”

The "Jeeves and Wooster" novels of P.G. Wodehouse. “The relationship between Jo and Sefino is a deliberate reversal of the Jeeves-and-Wooster comic dynamic.”

The short stories of H.P. Lovecraft. “These overheated, reckless, disturbing visions of otherworldly monsters inspired the All-Devouring Mother.”

"Bartleby the Scrivener" by Herman Melville. “This nineteenth-century short story about an office clerk who steadfastly, perversely, hilariously refuses to work inspired Ken Kiang’s career at the Municipal Squires’ Authority.”

The Once and Future King by T.H. White. “A classic retelling of the legends of the Arthurian knights. King Pellinore’s pursuit of the Questing-Beast inspired Colonel Korsakov’s hunting of the Schwenk.”

Le Morte D’Arthur by Sir Thomas Malory. “This fifteenth-century compilation of the legends of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table is the seminal work of Arthurian literature.”

## VI. SELECTED INTERVIEWS WITH THE AUTHOR

With Adam Callaway of *The Weirdside*. Kennedy's ideas on comedy, on what makes for a good title, on accessing originality through being deliberately "wrong," and more. <http://bit.ly/6w92hm>

With a high school student who disliked *Odd-Fish*. Kennedy is pressed to defend his artistic decisions to someone who disliked the book. Probably the most substantial interview. Focuses on the ideas of subverting usual ideas of "romance" and "villain," the mythological roots of the All-Devouring Mother, the relationship between religion and fantasy, the difference between "shaggy" and "lean" stories, and more. <http://bit.ly/8wbSjJ>

With Betsy Bird of the School Library Journal's Fuse #8 blog. Discussion of the inspiration behind the Odd-Fish knighthood and its lodge, the relationship between Eldritch City and Japan, different approaches to cover art, the literary value of 1980s computer games, and the problem with "problem novels." <http://bit.ly/anX2ct>

With Amy Alessio of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). Biographical background about Kennedy's experiences as a junior high school science teacher, his participation in Japan's violent "Naked Man" Festival, and interactions with young readers. <http://bit.ly/13quk6>

With Melissa of the Book Nut blog. Discussion of the idea of an "urban Narnia," the inspiration of Odd-Fish in studying physics and philosophy, the author's high school friend who was the inspiration for Jo, and the origin of the All-Devouring Mother character. <http://bit.ly/cbxbS4>

With Marcus Gilmer of Chicagoist. This freewheeling conversation discusses the process of writing and revising *Odd-Fish* in detail, reveals the origin of the Belgian Prankster, and relates *Odd-Fish* to the Watchmen, G.K. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday*, and more. <http://bit.ly/dR8WM>

With Veronica Bond of the Gapers Block Book Club. A discussion of the origins of *Odd-Fish*, literary influences (including J.K. Rowling's transformational role in YA literature), moving beyond the clichés of "good vs. evil," and how one must write up to children, never down to them. <http://bit.ly/akchou>

A complete collection of articles and interviews with James Kennedy can be found at <http://jameskennedy.com/press/>



**Armored Ostrich (Libby)**



