

June 2 - August 29, 2025

The Stories of the Library Realms



The group of Adventurers



Daer
The Ranger
and
Netsil
The Fox



Elegy
The Knight



Penn
The Mage



Rawiya
The Artist

Characters developed by Maggie Davis



BridgesLibrarySystem.org/Dragons

The Border Realm The Stories

With the first step, your journey begins...

“Everybody up! C’mon, today’s the day!” exclaims Daer, flopping onto a groggy Penn’s sleeping bag.

Netsil chirps and dives into Elegy and Rawiya’s tent, playfully tugging at the knight’s fingertips as she crawls out of the flap.

“We’re moving, Daer, we’re moving. What’s so special about these mountains anyway?” yawns Rawiya.

“Supposedly, there’s a ton of undiscovered species living in this range, but not a lot of research has been possible,” says Daer, flapping his hands. “Only a handful of explorers have successfully scaled the mountain. Others claim they’ve been chased out—and I want to know why!”

“Alright,” Penn yawns, “then find out we shall. After breakfast, preferably.”

Powers Memorial Library (Palmyra)

“Quiet, Elegy! Don’t scare him!” Daer hisses from where he and the others are hiding in the brush.

In the small clearing, Elegy kneels, still as stone behind her shield, watching a little white owlbear examine his reflection in the metal.

The cub hoots softly, turning its head this way and that. It reaches and taps a paw against the metal shield.

From their hiding place, Penn jots down Daer’s observations in his notebook, while Rawiya sketches the little critter interacting with her friend.

Elegy’s self-control begins to fray—how does anyone resist cuddling something so cute?!

White owlbears were incredibly rare, too. But alas, it’s a wild animal and needs to be left to its own devices.

Alice Baker Memorial Library (Eagle)

“So... are we lost?” asks Penn.

“I don’t know,” says Daer. “I’ve never had this happen before!”

The adventurers are posted up on a rocky outlook, gathered around the small boy. The compass in his hand spins aimlessly.

“Did you drop it? Maybe it’s broken,” Rawiya suggests.

“I’m not sure about that,” Elegy says. “Look, the spare one from my pack is doing it too!”

“You stay here with that one. I’ll try going back down the trail to see if it changes,” Daer says.

“Good idea!” says Penn, “Let’s test it and see what we can find out.”



The Stories Continued...

Mukwonago Community Library

After a day of trekking, the party decides to make camp. High above the tree line, in the rolling foothills of the lower mountain, they discover a large plain of baby blue flowers.

“How sweet!” says Rawiya, taking one of the blooms in hand. “Their pollen is blue, too! Why do you think that is?”

Penn looks at her dusted hand and says, “Not sure. Maybe it’s something to do with the mountains?”

“Whatever the reason, it seems like a great place to rest!” Daer says, as Netsil brings him a few sprigs of the plants. “We can see for miles.”

As night falls, the meadow takes on a comforting glow. The pollen left on the artist’s hands shines as well!

“Look at this!” Rawiya exclaims. “I bet I can make the diagrams I made of the flowers really shine with this!”

Big Bend Village Library

The adventurers snicker from the entrance of their tents.

A funny little bug-eyed lizard decides to help himself to lunch from some berry bushes across the way from their camp.

Each time its tongue shoots out and pulls a new berry into its mouth, the lizard squeaks and turns a brand-new color.

Strawberry? Purple.

Blueberry? Yellow polka dots.

Blackberry? Stripes!

“Do you think that happens for everything that little lizard eats?” Rawiya asks through chuckles. “We could always follow it and see!”

Muskego Public Library

The party takes a break on an outcropping in the lower peaks. Elegy watches a bird of prey circle, then dive into the forest below, before returning to the sky.

“Huh, its nest must be nearby,” Penn says, just as Elegy’s nerves spike. The bird’s getting closer. Too close. Too big.

“Down! Down, down, down!” Elegy shouts, pulling her companions’ shirts as a massive downdraft from the gigantic wings sends the party tumbling back down the hill.

Two huge, bronze, glittering feathers gently float to the ground beside them.

“Cool,” Elegy croaks from the bottom of the pile.



MAGIC PASSWORD
CURIOSITY

Final Story

“Did you really think we were going to find a dragon up here?” Penn asks. The adventurers sit atop a landing near the mountain’s peak, overlooking the foothills and valley below.

“Seemed like it was worth a shot,” Daer shrugs, petting Netsil. “Even if we didn’t, we still found tons of cool stuff that we’ve never seen before!”

It’s true—the range is home to new species never found elsewhere. They’ve even observed changes known species have made to survive in these strange mountains. Daer, with the help of Rawiya’s drawings, had expanded his journal considerably. New plants, bugs, and critters all had sketches and notes on their behaviors. The odd features of the mountain also earned a section of their own, too.

“Strange that so many adventurers said they’d been chased back down the mountain,” Elegy remarks. “Aside from us giving some of the creatures a wide berth, I don’t think we’ve seen anything all that aggressive. We never really hit a point where the trail was difficult to navigate, either.”

“No dragons, but a lovely detour. Definitely worth the curiosity, Daer,” says Penn.

Suddenly, the ground beneath them begins to quake. A deep voice rumbles, “And there lies the reward!”

The party slides down the back of a great creature as it clears its mottled scales of dust and pebbles. As they land on a lower face, a massive stone mask turns to face them. The great dragon re-settles itself, claws crunching up the rock beneath him.

“Adventurers who step foot into the borderlands with visions of wealth and glory,” the dragon intones, “come face to face with me in a most unkind manner. I have no interest in catering to those who come upon my doorstep to trap and hunt and steal from my subjects simply because they can.”

(Go to next page.)



The Border Realm

Final Story Continued...

“Understood!” Penn squeaks.

“We did take these, sir,” Daer says, reaching into his satchel, pulling out the twist of dried blue flowers he and Netsil had collected from the meadow. The boy shows them to the dragon.

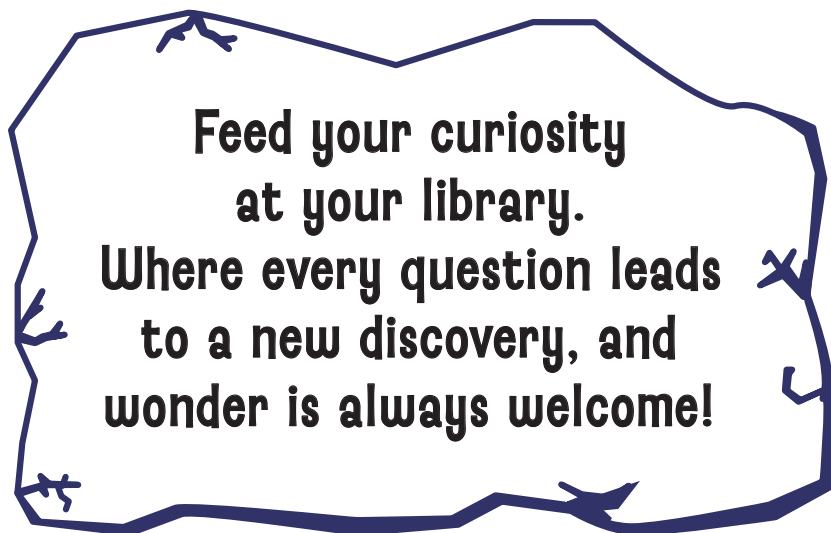
The dragon levels with the small ranger.

“Were they the last of their kind? Was it the only bit of food available to the rabbits in the meadow? Did you take more than your share?”

“No, I suppose not,” Daer answers.

“Then you have not violated my rules,” the dragon says with an approving grunt. “Your curiosity, boy, is a most precious thing. I have been watching since the moment you stepped foot into the mountains, and never once did anyone waver, or say it was too hard, or assume the worst of this place—only asked new questions, observed new answers. You tried to understand that which is not like you, saw the beauty in it, and that is the opportunity and joy I offer to those willing to see.”

After a beat, the dragon adds, “Your honesty is appreciated, however. Now, tell me what it is you believe to have figured out.”





The Stories

With the first step, your journey begins...

The group of adventurers has traveled a great distance together, and the journey is beginning to wear on everyone. Even Netsil grows weary on padded paws as they explore the small city.

“Elegy, what do you mean we have to wait a whole week for a merchant?!” Daer whines, stamping his foot.

“It’s not like we’ve caught sight of a dragon yet, Daer...even with the rumors around here,” sighs Penn.

“Besides, I really need to restock my spell supplies.”

Rawiya nods. “This city is probably the most comfortable place we’ll find for a while,” she says. They notice the townspeople are friendly enough, but surprisingly distant—even to each other. It will have to do while they wait for supplies to arrive.

“A week and no more, Daer,” Elegy declares. “We’ll find things to do in the meantime.”

Menomonee Falls Public Library

A great lightning storm has caused a small brush fire at a farm on the edge of the city.

The adventurers arrive at the farm prepared to work and help the family clear the debris. They offer what they can for knowledge and advice.

Eventually, a few neighbors begin tagging along to help with the effort, offering their own two cents.

“Why do we do this?” a young child asks, helping Elegy and Netsil clear stones from the ravaged field.

“Because we are here, and because we are able,” answers the knight.

Butler Public Library

There’s a great outcry in the town square. Penn and Daer look up from helping a craftsman load a wagon to see two arguing townspeople. They stubbornly insist that their idea for a renovation of the square is the only way.

“Good friends,” calls Penn, “Have you considered...”

Soon the noisy argument turns into a steady debate and thoughtful deliberation, as more townsfolk offer their ideas and opinions.

- How will there be space for the harvest markets?
- Don’t forget about the needs of festival planning!
- Could it prevent the need for expansion as the town grows?

“You possibly made it more complicated, you know,” grumbles Daer.

The scholar sniffs, “If so, then good. No one’s ever been hurt by hearing a new idea.”



The Stories Continued...

Waukesha Public Library

"I don't believe I'm cut out for this," Elogy grunts.

The weave in their hands has no slack, the weft begins to fray. Somehow, helping a grandmother fix her loom became a lesson in weaving.

The older woman laughs, nudging the piece from Elogy's hands. "No need to be so dramatic. It can be redone," she says

The woman's young apprentices giggle behind their own work. The afternoon passes, possibly the quietest the knight has had in a long while.

Normally, they are the one correcting someone's hold, but Elogy remains quiet and still as the grandmother and her apprentices patiently walk through the trade again.

Brookfield Public Library

A family arrives at the inn from far away. It looks like they have seen better days.

The innkeepers fetch warm blankets, while the adventurers beckon them to join them in their meal—there is plenty to share!

Elogy and Penn help the mother speak with the guards, relaying the troubles the family has encountered on their journey here.

As the children fall asleep, Rawiya weaves quiet tales of a kinder tomorrow.

New Berlin Public Library

"So, how does it work?"

Penn startles, nearly dropping his pen and toppling off the ladder. He's been asked to help redo the light spells of the streetlamps. A young boy is staring at him expectantly.

"You have to learn how to ask magic correctly. If you have what you need, it'll do what you ask. For the lamps...actually, do you want to come up and try it with me?"

In the time it would have taken Penn to finish the street alone, the duo finishes one lamp with guided but unsteady hands.

"My mum was good at this stuff at my age, but she didn't get to finish learning," the boy says.

"Not everyone does. Perhaps you can try learning magic again together," Penn replies, placing twists of flowers, paint pigments, and pebbles in the child's hands.



Final Story

"Everyone packed and ready to go?" Rawiya asks, placing her sketchbook into her satchel.

As the party hits the road, their new friends in the city wave goodbye, telling them to return soon. There's laughter and conversation around them—chatter in the workshops and lively debates in the square. Townspeople are learning how to sew their first button from one another, repair their homes, and grow their first gardens.

Daer knocks into Elegy's side. "That was definitely more than a week," she says. Netsil nips playfully at her heels in agreement, before doubling back for treats offered by a kind grandfather.

"Time well spent regardless, in my opinion. Some of us like a break from camping out now and then." says Penn, carrying a full pack of replenished spell materials.

He's made sure to leave some with the townspeople who wished to learn. There's no telling when the next mage would stop through town and be willing to recast the more basic kindnesses that magic had provided. Not every spell is a grand and flashy display.

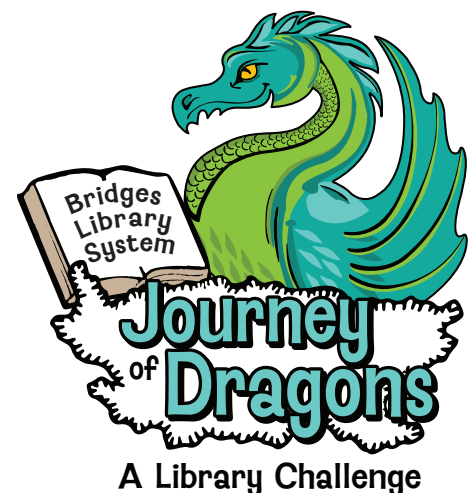
As the cobblestone road slowly gives way to gravel and dirt, shielded by a patch of forest, the party comes to a halt. Parked in the middle of the road—almost lazily—is a large blue dragon. The creature chuffs lightly, steam rising from his snout.

"G'mornin', neighbors," the dragon rumbles.

"Neighbors?" the adventurers ask.

"Course. You'll have to forgive me for not saying hullo sooner—I'm not much a fan of an audience," the dragon says, resting his snout on his paws. There's a tilt to his head that's almost cheeky. "You kids do good work. I didn't even have to do much of the heavy lifting this time."

(Go to next page.)





Final Story Continued...

“What heavy lifting?” Daer says. “We just sat around and did a bunch of chores!”

The dragon thinks for a moment. “Not so, in my opinion. It takes work to care, and it seems to me that you got folks to care an awful lot because you care an awful lot. I’ve tried giving plenty of nudges over the years, but even I couldn’t get some of the folks living here to look each other in the eye. Now just listen!”

Through the wind in the fields and birds in the air, the quiet din of the distant community reaches their small gathering.

“Joyful noise,” the dragon breathes, eyes closed as he raises his head towards the sound. “A house now a home—a fine working indeed, neighbors.”

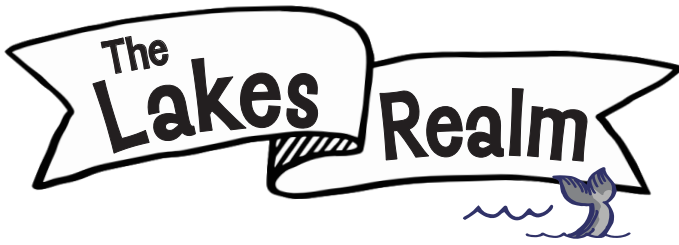
Together the party and dragon sit, a small community all their own, simply enjoying the sight around them. Not much needs to be said between them. After a few minutes, the dragon breaks the silence.

“Well,” he says, slowly standing, “I ought to let you go.”

“Are you going back to town?” Rawiya asks.

“Not this one. Another,” he grunts, lowering Daer and Netsil from his back by their scruffs. He turns to the artist. “Plenty of towns need my help. Maybe they’ll be lucky, and good kids like you will come knocking on their doorstep. For now, these folks’ll be just fine as they are.”

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stronger, kinder world.**



The Stories

With the first step, your journey begins...

“Everything’s gone!” Penn gasps, tearing through his satchel.

“My lyre!” cries Rawiya, overturning her bedroll.

“Has anyone seen our map? Or our funds, for that matter?” asks Elegy.

Netsil stumbles around the lakefront where the party bedded down for the night, head stuck in an empty bag that once held some of Penn’s spell components. Daer picks up the little fox before he wanders into the lake.

“There are some tracks from around our campsite that lead to the water,” the ranger says, pointing.

“If it’s in the lake, then it’s probably toast.”

“We can check,” says Penn, “there are ingredients around for a water-breathing spell.”

“For real? What are we waiting for?” Daer shouts. “I’ve never explored a lake before!”

Pauline Haass Public Library (Sussex)

Massive coral bookcases spiral throughout the cavern, every shelf full to the brim. There must be thousands of books in this one room alone!

“Look at them all! How many of these have been thought lost to time?” Penn gasps.

Some books are protected by strings of bubbles, while others are crusted with salt and barnacles, as if they’d been salvaged from a shipwreck.

“Well, now we really have to go,” says Daer, “before Penn decides he wants to live in here!”

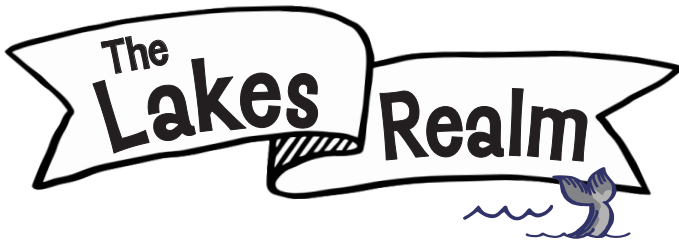
Oconomowoc Public Library

“Look at all these paintings,” gasps Rawiya. “There must be thousands here!”

In cubbies carved into the rock, dozens of framed paintings sit waiting to be flipped through. There are grand, large paintings of shipwrecks and landscapes, but also drawers of miniature portraits of unknown faces. Some works rest at what looks like an oversized desk, in the process of restoration, despite being underwater.

Statues and wood carvings also dot the space, with coral and barnacles making a home on some, creating new works entirely. Quilts and tapestries hang from displays, drifting lazily with the cave’s currents.

“Certainly a collector with interesting tastes,” Elegy calls, paging through one of the cubbies. “I’ve never even dreamed of some of these places!”



The Stories Continued...

Hartland Public Library

Elegy traces the edge of a rusted shield with a light touch. Hammered into its proud face are two great dragons. The paint that once decorated it is cracked and flaking.

In the distance, she can hear Penn and Rawiya chattering about sections of broken structures hauled into this chamber. The paintings on them tell stories that have been mottled when passed between generations. Pottery, waterlogged journals, registers, and other items of historical importance seem to be gathered here.

They really ought to get moving, but a moment won't hurt. Elegy sits for a time, thinking of the proud fighter who might have carried this shield on journeys long past.

Town Hall Library (North Lake)

"There are so many paths we could take," says Elegy.

The party floats at a crossroads, lit by glowing algae and shells.

"It's a shame I couldn't bring my paints down! Look how pretty it all is!" Rawiya bubbles, happily exploring the open space.

"We have plenty of time, why not look at it all, Elegy?" Penn says.

Pewaukee Public Library

"This is more like it!" shouts Daer, exploding from a shining pile of trinkets. Netsil yips, doggy-paddling along with a waterlogged squeaky toy.

This cave, they discovered, was filled with all kinds of items that seem to have no order. A ratty fabric doll appears to be given the same pride of place as a finely jeweled crown. There are huge barrels dedicated to holding what seemed like every button under the sun!

"They're certainly unique," wonders Rawiya. "What do you think their stories are?"

Delafield Public Library

"I didn't think I'd ever see the day when we'd discover... a library of kelp? ...A garden?"

Sure enough, the explorers find themselves in an underwater greenhouse. Each patch of colorful water foliage is decorated with a hand-carved sign and looks meticulously maintained.

Schools of fish, small crustaceans, and other marine life swim happily among the tall plants. The older adventurers watch as Daer and Netsil follow a sea slug along the floor.

"You must admit, all the colors are quite lovely!" says Daer.



Final Story

The party continues their swim through the dark caves, the path lit by glowing shell sconces. So far, even with everything found down here, they haven't seen any sign of their missing items!

"Ooh! My, what a find, and such craftsmanship as well!" the quiet echo of a voice rumbles down the tunnel. "These materials appear to have come from near the sea, quite a rarity in my collection for certain. Ah, and these..."

The adventurers continue down the path, tugged along by a gentle current. Before they know it, they enter a sunlit plaza filled with piles of unsorted treasure. A long, snake-like body with leafy fins spirals across the sand. Sure enough, this dragon is picking their missing items out of a large bag woven from seaweed.

"Excuse us!" calls Elegy. "Those supplies belong to us! Could you kindly return them, please?"

"Us? Us!" the dragon proclaims. "It's been so long since I last had visitors to my collection! Welcome, welcome! I've just made the most delightful discovery of new items from the shore of my lake, can you believe they were just abandoned—"

"They weren't abandoned! We were just sleeping!" says Elegy.

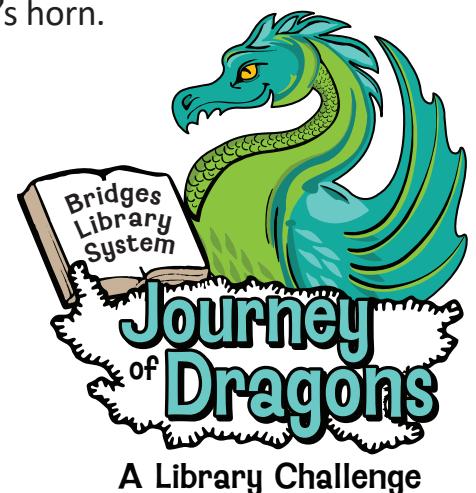
"Sleeping?" she cocks her head to the side. "Ah, yes, that is a thing you earth-trodders must do, isn't it?"

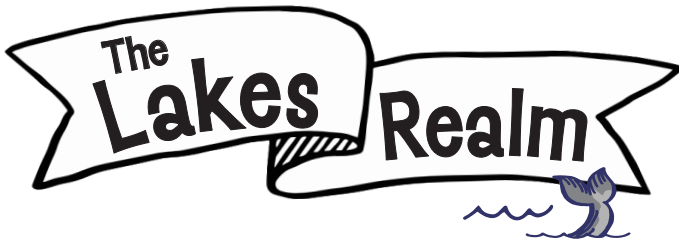
"Do you not?" Daer asks, Netsil paddling along to inspect the dragon's horn.

The dragon tips its head back as if to think, before looking back at the boy, unblinking.

"I do, but not in the same way! I suppose I just float along until I bump into something. Anyways..." she turns to Elegy, holding up the sack, "You say these are yours?"

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Final Story Continued...

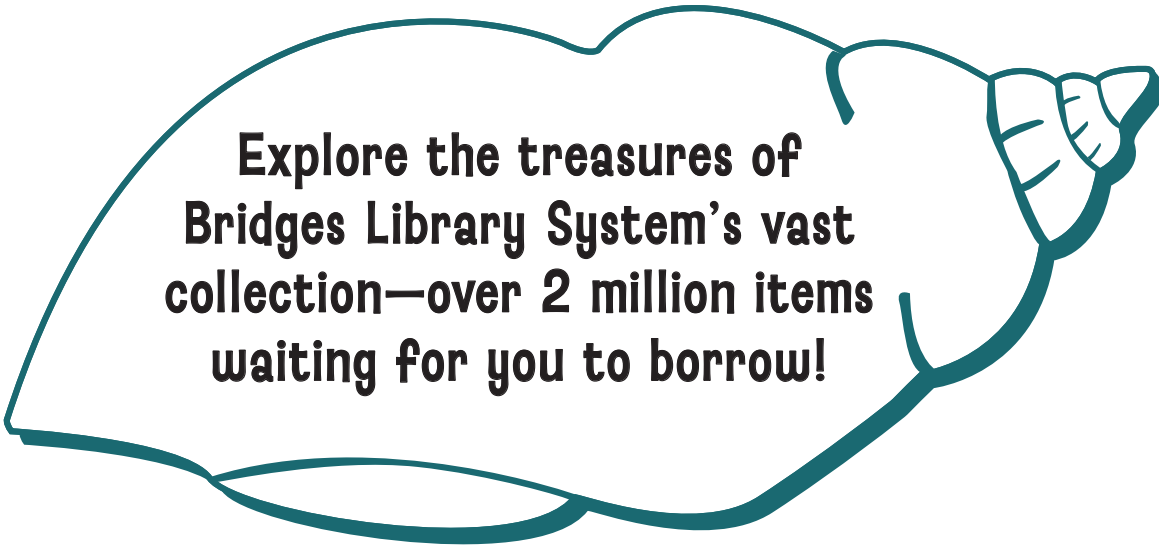
The knight explains exactly what is in the bag and how they need the items to continue their journey. The dragon's collection was admirable, for certain! Surely, though, she won't miss just a handful of items?

The dragon taps her claws against her maw, before surging like a wave to elsewhere in the clearing. She returns with the sack, which seems to have shrunk, and four small shells in her claws.

"Consider them returned," the dragon says, handing over the items. "And, now that we are friends, you are always welcome to peruse my collection. Should something strike your fancy, just show me the pearl inside the shell to borrow items."

Penn opens one of the shells to reveal a glowing, aqua pearl.

"If you happen upon any treasures you don't need," the dragon continues, "do bring them to me—I'd love to take a look."

A stylized illustration of a hand holding a scroll. The hand is drawn in a simple, bold line style. The scroll is a large, irregular shape with a wavy border, containing text.

**Explore the treasures of
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collection—over 2 million items
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The Stories

With the first step, your journey begins...

“I’ve always wanted to participate in this festival—I’m so excited!” Rawiya exclaims. The party has been planning to make a detour to a village in the plains that was well known for its Festival of the Arts.

“Do you think you’ll win a prize? Your art is the best I’ve ever seen!” Daer asks, tugging at the hem of her tunic. Penn and Elegy nod in agreement.

“There are no prizes!” the artist laughs. “The point is to share and enjoy everyone’s creations. Besides, I’d like to learn something new!” Rawiya thinks for a moment. “Perhaps whittling? Ooo, no—maybe paper crafting! Crochet? There are so many options...we’ll have to see what is offered!”

“At this rate, Rawiya, there won’t be much that you can’t do!” says Elegy. “There’s a lantern launch toward the end of the festival, too. I can’t wait to see it!”

Watertown Public Library

“I think that may be the steadiest I’ve ever seen your hands, Penn!” Rawiya laughs.

Adults and teens are painting, but some of the young children seem more interested in covering themselves with color than the paper. To compromise, Penn uses his set of paints to create designs on the kids’ faces.

An especially energetic boy squirms in the chair across from the mage, waiting for his lion design to dry. A set of twins giggles as they examine the matching butterfly wings around their eyes.

“I practiced a lot of calligraphy to improve drawing my spells. Eventually, my little siblings wanted to play with my ink and things, so I learned how to do silly face paint,” Penn says, cleaning his brushes. “Nice to know I’ve still got it!”

Karl Junginger Memorial Library (Waterloo)

“What colors do you think would go best with this?” asks Daer, holding up a sprig of baby pink flowers.

A group of kids is inspired to make terrariums, and one of the visiting festivalgoers happens to deal in flowers. Daer has already picked out a little moss ball, and Netsil brings some suitable sticks and rocks, but they just need a bit of color to make it perfect.

One of the boys scrunches his nose, thinking, “Maybe... yellow? There are some nice brush plants with white leaves, too.”

“I really like all of them!” a girl sighs. “Are you sure we couldn’t find bigger jars?”

The florist laughs, “Sometimes the best expression comes from being choosy! Pick the ones that really speak to you, and it’ll come eventually.”

Before the day is over, the kids place their jars out in the gentle rain to collect water, then seal them to keep.



The Stories Continued...

Johnson Creek Public Library

Elegy spins around in front of the inn room's mirror, admiring how the dress's skirt swirls around her knees. The others are downstairs, listening to Rawiya and other performers weave tales and songs from far and wide.

She smooths the fabric down thoughtfully. It isn't often she wears anything this soft, this nice. It had been a gift from one of the artists.

"Well, if I'm going to a festival, I should look the part, right?" Elegy grins at her reflection. She slips on her boots, then heads down the stairs. The room hums with music, color, and stories waiting to be told. Elegy realizes she isn't just attending. Tonight, she's part of the celebration.

L.D. Fargo Public Library (Lake Mills)

Glittering gems and crystals are spread across the table, glinting in the muted sunlight. Rawiya and other artists sit out of the rain, enjoying the breeze from the workshop's open entryway. She hunches over her lap, trying to coax a delicate wire to close a ring on a charm bracelet. The thing seems to have a mind of its own, bending every which way except the one she wants it to go!

With a huff, Rawiya slides down in her chair. She twists the draped fabric of her veil between her fingers, thinking through how to solve the problem.

Dwight Foster Public Library (Fort Atkinson)

Long tables stretch across the grand hall, as almost everyone attending the festival prepares their sky lanterns for the launch. The watery ink is added in washes and dries slowly. There is laughter in the candlelight as thunder rolls distantly outside.

Daer covers his lantern in foxes, while Netsil generously stays still to model. Elegy joins some of the village elders in writing hopeful wishes for the future on the lanterns.

Penn blows on the paper, wishing it would just dry faster so he can keep working. Rawiya's inks lay untouched, as she stares at her blank canvas—endless possibilities waiting in front of her.

Jefferson Public Library

The party sits together, hunched over a wooden box between them. Other groups huddle nearby with similar boxes. One of the carpenters attending the festival has a special interest in puzzle boxes and has created six identical ones for a competition.

Elegy diligently takes notes on solutions they've tried while Penn and Rawiya examine the box. The team has solved the first two layers of the puzzle but seems stuck on the third. A cheer goes up as lightning flashes outside the window, another group has found their next solution.

"The storm will clear up before the lantern launch, right?" asks Daer. Elegy chews the end of her pencil, then answers, "We don't have a way of telling. Now let's put our heads together—surely there's something we haven't thought of yet."

"Your competitive side is showing, Elegy!" Penn laughs.



Final Story

Rawiya holds her hand out from under the shelter, rainwater gathering in the palm of her hand. The entirety of the festival is crowds under any available cover from the rain, lanterns and candles shielded beneath cloaks, shawls, and jackets. It started out as a lovely day, but it was now dark and dreary.

“It’s so strange,” one of the village mothers whispers to another. “We’ve never seen storms like this before, especially during this season.”

“Did we do something wrong?” a child asks.

“Plain bad luck, by the looks of it,” another villager says.

“Can’t be helped,” one of the elders says, tapping her cane on the soft ground. “We can only hope to have clear skies every year. No sense in everyone catching cold. Inside! There’s plenty of food and warmth for everyone.”

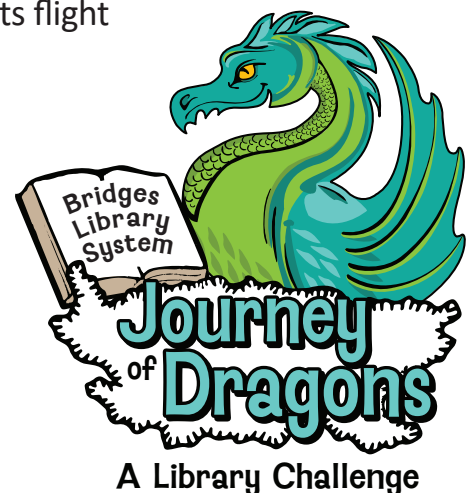
The crowd begins to shuffle back to the great hall. Fires are stoked, covers hung to dry. Warm bread, stew, and other bites to eat are passed around. Penn looks at his lantern set on the table. He thinks he’s done a lovely job decorating it, even if it did take forever. The mage conjures a small orb of light and gently guides it inside the delicate paper. It’ll make a fine centerpiece, at least.

The lantern hovers, just a touch above the wood of the table. Elegy reaches over and guides it higher with a gentle hand. Slowly but surely, the lantern rises up and up, stopping just inches below the vaulted ceiling of the hall. Festivalgoers around them watch its flight in solemn silence, before another mage lifted her and her companion’s lanterns with a similar spell. Then another, and another.

“Penn,” Rawiya nudges.

One of the village children has crawled up in between them and is holding their lantern expectantly.

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Final Story Continued...

As more and more lanterns float to the rafters, the darkness is dismissed to reveal a great mural of a dragon in flight. The creature is trailed by glinting red-pink feathers, drifting down upon a village.

“Back when the festival first started, many of the great artists were rewarded with one of those feathers,” says the elder. She lifts her head high and allows herself to take in the artwork lost in the darkness. “We’d find them floating down, scattered in the surrounding fields. We started sending the paper lanterns back up, in exchange. A thank you for sharing their beauty with us. The feathers have become harder to find in recent years, ‘til we stopped finding them at all. Perhaps she moved on to somewhere else. Maybe she’s no longer here at all.”

“I don’t think that’s true,” Rawiya cuts in. “We’ve seen it every day of the festival. In the flowers, in song, in paint, carved in wood. There’s beauty, cleverness, and meaning in it all, and in sharing it with each other. No matter the form it takes, creativity will never be gone. Nothing could ever replace it.”

With that, the mural illuminates and a great wind sweeps through the hall! Attendees duck their heads down as candles are blown out. When everyone can raise their heads once again, a great dragon stands ghostly in the hall. Her form shifts and glitters, as if made of delicate stardust. The dragon’s feathered tail passes through tables as it sweeps through the space.

“Brava, dear storyteller,” she says, touching the end of her snout to Rawiya’s forehead. “Well said, indeed.”

The dragon spreads her wings, untold colors catching on the edges. The hall fills with wind once more as she rushes for the doors. They burst open with a great slam, and she makes for the clouds. The storm yields as she cuts through the darkness, faster than a dagger.

The party and festivalgoers rush out to follow the dragon, as the last of the rain falls with a mighty crash. Everyone bursts into cheers, greeted by a beautiful sight. The moon and stars shine clear, casting the town in twinkling light as they are reflected in puddles and dripping water. In watery reds and pinks, the aurora dances above. Floating gently down into the hands of artists and craftsmen are the treasured feather tokens.

Rawiya holds hers up to the light of the moon, admiring endless possibility in the shifting colors of the night.

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