

Dear Person Reading This Letter,

It probably all started almost twenty years ago, when I wrote a book called *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*. It's about a boy who swaps his dad for two goldfish. It is quite funny.

This is what the dad does in the book: He is swapped for things; he does not notice he has been swapped for things; he reads his newspaper. At one point, near the climax of the book, he *eats a carrot*. It's not really a positive portrayal of fatherhood, is it?

And people have been giving that book to each other as Father's Day gifts ever since.

I have felt guilty. As a father. As a human being. People were reading my book, and learning from it that fathers were oblivious, newspaper-reading, occasionally carrot-eating lumps of distraction.

I resolved to do something about it. I would write a book in which a father did all of the sorts of exciting things that fathers actually do, in the real world.

In this case, he would go and get the milk for his children's breakfast cereal.

Also, he should do the other things that go along with going out to get the milk. Things like escaping from globby green aliens, being made to walk the plank in the eighteenth century by pirates, being rescued by a time-traveling professorial stegosaurus* in a hot air balloon, being nearly sacrificed to a volcano god, being attacked by wumpires, and, of course, saving the world.

And I haven't even mentioned the ponies. Or the All-Dinosaur Space Police. Fortunately, the milk is with him. And it may even destroy the Universe, if he isn't careful.

Fortunately, the Milk is the only book I have ever written that tackles the Big Questions. The questions nobody else dares to ask. Questions such as:

What happens when you open a door on a spaceship and let the space-time continuum in?

Will evil aliens redecorate by replacing all of Earth's trees with throw cushions, and replace

*And inventor of the button

Australia with an enormous decorative dinner plate with a picture of Australia on it?

Are we actually living in the present as we believe, or are we actually, as dinosaur Professor Steg claims, living in the far far future?

Also it has pictures. Lots and lots of pictures, all drawn by Skottie Young: a man who knows one end of a pen from another, and draws with the pointy bit; a man who has won awards for his drawing; a man who knows what a time-traveling stegosaurus in a hot-air balloon looks like; a man of bronze.

I did not mention that there are piranhas in the book, but there are. More or less.

Fortunately for the Universe, the book also has milk in it. *Hurrah!* It is also quite funny.

I am looking forward to receiving the gratitude of fathers internationally. When they've finished reading the newspaper, of course.

Yours faithfully,
Neil Gaiman