

# P.P.S., Thank you

Fatima Grace Vinluan

## Entry no. 1

Hello!

Mom gave me this notebook and she said I can make it a “diary” (that’s like a notebook where you tell about your day), but that’s weird because my notebook can’t read. So I’m just going to write to you! I’m not sure if you remember me. Hello! I’m Mikay. My favorite color’s red. But I also like blue. And also pink and purple. And green. Oh, but I think yellow is nice too! I like all the colors! They’re all my favorites! Hmm, except gray and brown. And black. They’re really boring. Oh, and do you know paper dolls? I love paper dolls! And I love playing with my friends! We always play hide-and-seek, and *patintero*, and Chinese garter... Hmm, but they always call me *saling-kitkit*. I don’t know why, though. Maybe that means I’m smaller than them? I wanna play with them every day and I HATE it when it’s already nap time! Ate always tells me to go to sleep every single afternoon! I tell her I’m still playing but she says she’s gonna tell Mama so sometimes, I just close my eyes and pretend to sleep. (Don’t tell her that!) *Hay*, I can’t wait for the day that people would stop telling me to take a nap! I wish I were you...

&&&

Dear Mikay,

It’s been a while since I last heard from you. And I guess you know absolutely nothing about me, so let me tell you a few things about myself, too.

People call me Ella now. I’m a certified public accountant—oh, that just means I count a lot. I’m 25 and single. And probably gonna stay that way for the next... three or five years—wait, what am I saying? These grown-up things would surely bore you.

What would you like to know? Hmm, favorite colors? I guess I like black and gray, even if people argue that they’re not *technically* colors. About 90% of my clothes are black or gray; it lets me choose clothes more quickly in the morning. You can wear them with anything. Plus,

less colors make you look a little more professional. I think. As for the things I love, well, I love books! Though I don't remember the last time I've had the time—nor the energy—to read a full novel. (As I'm writing this, there's a huge pile of unread books staring menacingly from one corner of my room). Anyway, I uhhh... I also have fun with my friends! We don't do hide-and-seek or *patintero* anymore, though, and Chinese garter would definitely break my back. We get our fun from hitting the mall to check out the latest shades of lipstick from our favorite brands. We don't really buy them. We just “window-shop.” But we're not sad about that, don't worry. There's something... strangely therapeutic about going in and out of stores with your money intact.

Oh, and you mentioned paper dolls? Of course. I know just how much you love them. You know, I don't tell a lot of people this, but I still love paper dolls. You probably won't believe it, but I still have a shoebox full of them somewhere! I don't play with them anymore, though. I no longer get to play much, actually. But it's all good. That's just how it is when you're older. I miss it and I'd stop hating nap time. I miss it and I'd give anything just to be told I could nap every single afternoon. I wish I were you...



#### Entry no. 5

Hi there!

I did something new today: I went to school! I wore a very pretty dress (and all the other girls in class were wearing it too! It must be a popular dress). I have many classmates. They played with me, and they even let me use their crayons! They're really, really nice! We sang songs, and colored pictures, and ate yummy snacks. It was fun! I think I like it in school.



Dear Mikay,

I'm glad to hear that you liked school! There's so much more in store for you, and I hope you look forward to it. Though, I gotta tell you, it's gonna get a little bit tougher along the way. Soon, school will be more than about classmates, and nice uniforms, and snacks. But anyway, never mind all that for now! Enjoy!

Ahh... I miss school a lot, to be honest. I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'd gladly trade my balance books and financial reports for a 500-item algebra exam. Not that I'm an “algebra whiz,” but at least if I get a few numbers wrong, the only people I'll have to answer to are Mama and Papa. No bosses, no clients... I mean, sure, I didn't get the ceiling grade for

my Math and ended up not being valedictorian, but at least that didn't cost me the family's meals and bills. Mistakes get pretty expensive as you grow older...



**Entry no. 7**

Guess what? Teacher gave me stars today! I have one, two, ... five! I think Mama and Papa like stars. They talk about them aaall the time with my Aunties and Uncles and Ninongs and Ninangs. And they all say I have a bright future. Is that what stars do? Do they make a big bright ball and light up your "future?" But like, how bright? When I look at stars, they're just tiny dots at night. Not very bright. Hmm. I think maybe I should take as many stars as I can so that my future will be very, very bright.



Dear Mikay,

Good job on those stars! Oh, and, it's not exactly the stars that they love talking about. It's you. Haha. They're really proud of you, you know? Always have been. I wish you could understand this much, much earlier.

And about what stars do, yes. You're right. In a way. They make your future pretty bright. How bright, you ask? Hmm... Well, the clock has just struck midnight but there's this... bright little box still glaring at me like the noontime sun. I've been staring at it since morning, and now the lines and boxes are beginning to wobble. The numbers are also starting to double.

Ugh. My eyes hurt. I tried to look out the cafe window to rest them, but there are more lights outside. Buildings, lampposts. I shifted my gaze elsewhere, but the headlights that littered EDSA also twinkled like stars. Red giants, yellow dwarfs. All sorts and shapes. I'm reminded from every brightly shining, sparkling corner that the city was designed to be awake 24/7. It was never meant to let people sleep. No one earns in their sleep, after all.

I just closed my eyes shut and pressed the heels of my palm over them to block off all the light, but then I heard the barista calling my name. My drink is ready. My third coffee of the day. Or I guess, it's technically the first of the new day? I'm not even sure anymore. Days and nights blur into each other when you reach this point. Is this the bright future they imagined for us?

Yeah... maybe. I don't know. The night shouldn't be this bright.



**Entry no. 10**

Hello again!

We watched a movie today! It was sooo awesome! There was a mermaid princess, and talking fishes, and big, magic castles! But you know the best part? They're just drawings, but they're MOVING drawings! I didn't know drawings can move like that! I took my crayons and drew a mermaid princess and fishes too but they don't move like in the movie. So I asked Mama why. She says it's because the drawings in the movie were made on a "computer" (that's like a TV but it has letters and you can't watch cartoons there. Weird). Mama says it's called an "animation." I dunno what that means. But I think it's magic. I want to learn that magic trick too! Do all adults know how? Do *you* know how? Oh, I hope you do! I will draw lots and lots of pictures—princesses, princes, fairies, angels, even dragons! I'll show them all to you. I'll put them in a box under the bed so you'll be sure to find them. So, please, please promise me you'll make them move!

P.S.,

I'll be a good girl so Mom will give me new crayons and I can give you more drawings.

P.P.S.,

Thank you!!!



Dear Mikay,

Actually, it's called "animation," but you're close. And... wow, it was love at first sight, huh? That first cartoon really did blow your mind. The rush of excitement that just took your breath away and made you jump from your seat squealing and clapping. The thrill of seeing entire worlds of possibilities unfold before you when you first learn what hands and minds are capable of creating. It just made your hair stand on end, didn't it? Oh, I know the feeling. I still feel it once in a while. (I can't wait till you can read entire stories and novels!)

Anyway, that movie did set off a dream in you... You were not kidding when you said you'd draw lots of pictures. Oh boy, you made sure I remember that. The rough, hardened skin on the crease of my right thumb and along the side of my index finger still brings back the sensation of a pencil clamped tightly between them day and night. You filled notebooks upon notebooks with the worlds and creatures in your head, hoping to see them move one day. One day...

How long has it been? 20 years? Hmm... I don't think I have the heart to tell you this, but they remain motionless to this day. I have not been able to make them move. I still don't know how. I never learned how—no. The truth is I never dared try. Somewhere along the way, I stopped believing I can learn that magic. Or that I should...

You're probably upset with me, but growing up, I found out that even worlds of endless possibilities had doors you needed to unlock, and the price of opening those is often steep. At some point, you'll have to choose which door to open. And the choice you make should be the smartest one. How do you know it's smart? You listen to people. You look at things through their eyes. It will never be just *your* choice to make...



**Entry no. 12**

Psst... Hey.

You remember the drawings inside the box? You remember I said they don't move? Actually, I have a secret. They *did* move.

Yes! Don't tell people, but the truth is, they're alive! They say they live in a kingdom called Rainbow Land. It's a magic place. Not a lot of people can go there. They don't have bikes or cars there (they say those are very boring). They have *real* unicorns. But sometimes, they ride dragons too. When you're bigger and stronger, you get dragons. Cool, huh? Maybe they'll let *you* ride a dragon.

They like it when I visit the box. And they get mad when I don't! So sometimes, they climb out just to visit me. They tell me a lot of stories about Rainbow Land. Which is nice, but they also have many, many questions! (It's sometimes annoying because you have to explain everything to them.) They asked me why there are people trapped in the box in the living room. So I said, no they're not trapped. That's a TV. They're just "images." They said they don't have TVs in Rainbow Land. And that's sad! So now, I made one for them. I drew a really, really big TV (like the ones at the cinema). They liked it! And now we're friends and I make a lot of things for them. I made Mr. Muffins a cooking machine for his bakery. His back is bad like grandpa's and it's hard for him to cook now, so I told him he can just press buttons on the cooking machine to make his cakes or donuts. He loved it!

The Rainbow Land people are really nice. But people don't see them, and that's pretty sad. I tried telling Mama and Papa about them (they say I'm talking to myself, but actually, I was talking to Princess Sunnie), but they don't believe me. They said I should just study counting to 100. I can already do 15, though! But I'll do that. And maybe when I can count to 200, Mama and Papa will listen to me about Rainbow Land. Adults love talking about numbers, I think? Hey, you can count to two-hundred-hundreds, right? Maybe they'll listen to you. You can show them the people of Rainbow Land now. How's Mr. Muffins and Princess Sunnie? You still visit them, don't you?



Dear Mikay...

Princess Sunnie of the Rainbow Cloud Castle, Mr. Muffins and his fairy-dog Cookie, Ms. Flutter of the Little Fly-ers School... those names, and many others. I haven't heard them in a while...

Before I answer your question, let me tell you a story.

There was a kingdom called Rainbow Land and it was a very, very happy place. It was beautiful, and they had every little thing they could ever wish for because they have a kind and powerful ruler, Princess Sunnie. But then, one day, a really imaginative wizard with all sorts of wacky ideas stumbled upon the kingdom gates, and it was never the same since.

The wizard made many cool and awesome things for the kingdom! At first, she only made magical dresses and crowns for the princess, but the more she spent time with the Rainbow Landers, the more she thought of creating other things to make life better for them. One day, she made a huge television so that people can watch at the city square for free. She made cooking machines that churned out any food the people ever craved with the press of a button. She made them beautiful gardens, and houses, and even helped build many, many towns, that the kingdom grew so big. So big, in fact, that it spilled out of the box.

At first, she only visited the kingdom during the day, but as it expanded more and more, its people started visiting her. At home, in school, and most especially, in her dreams. Soon the magical creatures' world has grown so much it has become so intertwined with hers. As she spent more time in the fairytale world, her magic grew stronger and stronger. She has started to see her own world in colors yet unknown to humankind. In her eyes, the mundane transformed into the spectacular.

But the wizard's world, ironically, did not respond well to magic. There was only so much enchantment it was willing to embrace. Her world didn't take too kindly to those who let their imagination lift their feet off the ground; it demanded you stayed grounded on the logical, the measurable, the practical.

So, even though they admired the works of her hands, they couldn't see just how those could take her anywhere that mattered. Whenever she talked about her dream world, they would tell her to dream other dreams. Dreams they had for her. Dreams of "greater consequence;" greater than the world in the tiny box. They knew she could reach them, if only she'd set her mind on them. After all, she was becoming better and better with numbers (she taught herself to count to two hundred!). She was starting to grasp the logical and the measurable well. She only needed to be taught the importance of the practical. And, really, if enough people told you the same thing, you'd start to believe it's true.

Soon, the wizard grew. She became bigger and bigger until she outgrew the world she had built. And the magical kingdom started to fall. Little by little, it withdrew the colors it loaned to her world. Little by little, it shrank, until all that's left of it fit within the confines of the box.

The wizard visited the kingdom less and less. She no longer had the time. There were simply too many things—too many important matters—that she had to attend to. There were tests to study for, papers to write, lessons to master. There were deadlines upon deadlines to catch. She gained stars this way, for the bright future they told her about. This bright future she now lives in.

If you ask me now, I could hardly be called a wizard. That was you. The talent, the imagination, the dedication—I can never surpass the power you once wielded. I have retired my wand too long ago that I'm not even sure if I still know how to use it.

I haven't visited the box in a long, long time. But you know what? Once in a while, its dwellers still visit me. Mostly in dreams, but sometimes, even in wakefulness, in the midst of the mundane. There are moments when I see them while waiting in long lines to get on the train, or while walking home through deserted streets late at night. They don't speak to me anymore, but I know it's them. They're the tiny sparks I catch glimpses of in the corner of my eyes, bearing colors I have no name for. I can tell it's them because they make the world look different, if only for a moment. And whenever I see them, the calluses on my fingers will itch, suddenly painfully aware of the wand it had long been missing.

I still wonder sometimes what it would be like if I didn't look at our dream through other people's eyes. Maybe, if I didn't stop building, the world we made would've been big enough for everyone else to see. Or, I dare say, even live in. You know, I've long been convinced that the reason why I didn't chase our dream was that it wasn't big enough. But now I see the truth. It was never small. It was enormous. So, so big, in fact, that it scared me. That I chose to settle for the logical, the measurable, and the practical. It was a dream that needed a bigger voice because there weren't many who were willing to vouch for it, and I got too intimidated to speak for it.

I'm sorry, Mikay, I truly am. I'm sorry I wasn't brave enough to fight for us. Sometimes you just need to do what you need to do. To be completely honest, I don't regret making the "smarter" choices. They brought food to the table. They put Mama and Papa at ease. But one thing I do regret is that I didn't honor your dream enough to keep nurturing it. I let it go. So, if it makes up for anything, I'll let you in another secret: I still believe in magic, and I am willing to try this time.



Dear Mikay,

I just got home from the mall and you'll be surprised what I got!

(No, I didn't buy any lipstick. I have 10 different shades that I barely use and I don't need more.)

I got a new sketchpad! I also bought a couple of pencils and drawing pens, and last but not

the least—I'm sure you'll love this—colored pencils! I got a big box with more colors than you or I could name! I know we've wanted this for a long time, but we didn't really have the budget for it. Well, it should be fine now.

Art materials haul aside, I have news for you. Remember I said that I'm willing to try this time? I've been looking for courses I can take. There are some promising ones, and I think I can take them on weekends and maybe some days after work. I'll probably send out applications and—oh, crap. I'd need a portfolio. Oh, man. I haven't done any proper sketches in a while! What would I even include there? You should be the one to send them a portfolio. You're the more prolific artist here!



Dear Mikay,

I've been getting back on track with drawing. I did a couple of sketches last weekend. It was so refreshing but also... I gotta ask, how on earth were you able to spend all your waking hours bent over your drawing notebook? I only drew for a couple of hours and it's been two days since—TWO DAYS!—but my fingers still feel like they would fall off and my neck is still rock stiff! Oh, and my back cracks whenever I try to stretch out. Isn't it a little too early for all these? I wish I have even just a fraction of your stamina.

Anyway, I'd show you my sketches but... maybe another time. I'd like to tweak them a bit more. It pains me to admit this, but I've become quite rusty. Though, I should've expected that. The last time I owned a proper sketchpad was probably during my first year in college. Before balance sheets swallowed me whole. Now it's easier for me to balance accounts than to draw two matching eyes. And how do you even draw hands? No, never mind, don't answer that. I know you draw hands behind your characters or inside their pockets all the time. If we're serious about this, we can't keep doing that.

I looked up some tutorials and saw some artists online, and I found these amazing art blogs run by people my age—and some younger! If only you could see the wonders they do with watercolors, and pencils, and even with basic crayons—can you believe that? Realistic portraits with student-grade crayons!

I had to put down my pencil. I had to take a deep breath. And think. Just how much do I want this? I have miles and miles to run before I reach the level of skill they're in... can this dream sustain me through that?

Not gonna lie, it really made me think about what's in this for me. I could be a hobby artist, sure, but to turn this into a career? That's something else entirely. Can I really do that? Isn't it a bit too late? I did say, mistakes get more expensive as you grow older... if this turns out to be a mistake, it's gonna be more expensive ten years down the line.

I guess if last weekend taught me anything, it's that I'm not getting any younger.

But also... if the last twenty years taught me anything, it's that dreams don't scrub off so easily. The last thing I want is to receive pages upon pages of complaints and regrets from 35-year-old Ella that would be far too late for me to address.

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**Entry no. 15**

Did you know that I cried today because I tore Princess Sunnie's new dress? I tried to draw her a dress like the princess doll I saw on TV, but it didn't look pretty, so erased it. And I tried to draw the dress again, but it still didn't look right, so I erased it again and the paper got so dirty. I erased more and more but then the paper got a hole on it. I cried because I was *soo* mad! Why is it so hard to make dresses?!

Princess Sunnie was also sad so I just said sorry and I said I'll make her another dress. I'll just try to make the dress she likes another time...

&&&

Dear Mikay,

Well, what a coincidence? I'm just about to cry, myself. It is hard to make dresses. And a lot of other things.

You'd think holes and tears from erasing too much would be a thing of the past at this age, but no. Not for me. These past weeks I've been trying to draw from photographs of sitting figures, but something always doesn't look quite right: the shape of the legs, the body's proportions, the direction of the feet... Anatomy lessons have been driving me crazy! I didn't sit through a single minute of Biology in college, but now I'm supposed to learn bones, and muscles, and muscle insertions! I swear I'd draw only facial close-ups and busts forever if I could.

But, crappy foreshortening aside, I think I'm getting somewhere. Here's a couple of sketches. I'd say they're pretty good! (My coworker said so. He saw them during my break-time sketch. I hope he's not just being nice, though, hehe.)

Oh, and here. This is the dress you were trying to draw for Princess Sunnie, right? Tell her I'm sorry it took some time. I didn't have a lot of trouble sketching it anymore, but I can't take credit for that! I think you're hundreds of attempts and practices gave me a lot of boost. (Maybe that's another motivation to keep practicing. Future me will thank me later.)

You know, I think I should show you some sketches weekly. That way, I'll be forced to keep practicing. Next week, I'll try to learn perspectives. Guess I'll need a new (and sturdier) sketchpad...



Dear Mikay,

Sorry I haven't shown you any new drawings in a while. I've had to cut back on the practices. The year's about to end and, as usual, the pile of work has just gone through the roof. I don't think I'd be able to draw much for some time. It's gonna be like this for a couple of months more.

Oh, and it's almost Christmas! I'm coming home for a week. I can't wait! Hopefully, I get the chance to pick up my pencil again during the break. It would be nice to try sketching the view of the ocean from my room's balcony.

Oh and... I think it's the perfect time to talk to Mama and Papa.



Dear Mikay,

To be honest, I don't know what I was expecting.

The first few days back home, I was getting pretty antsy because I figured there was no way I could just sit my aging parents down and tell them I'm planning to make a major career detour to chase a fever dream. I mean, I know the whole idea of putting a stable career at risk to bring a fairy-tale land to life sounds like the delusions of a five-year-old—which, to be honest, they are.

Anyway, don't get me wrong. This dream is still really important to me, but the problem is, marriage talks aside, Mama and Papa have been pretty much confident about my future. And I felt that I was about to wreak havoc on that vision with my big news. Still, I'd have to tell them some way, right? So I went and told Che-Che. Yup, Ate's daughter.

While my unsuspecting niece was sitting wide-eyed in front of the animated Christmas movie on TV (she reminded me a lot of you, by the way!), I told her, "You know what, Che? Tita's going to make something like that too! I'll even draw you as a princess!"

And off she went, my little messenger, telling—no, *squealing*—the news to anyone who would listen, including her *Lolo* and *Lola*. Especially her *Lolo* and *Lola*.

Next thing I know, we were all sitting amidst squealing kids (Che-Che also told her cousins and the neighbors' kids, naturally) with faces straight from a *Semana Santa* tableau. Of course, Mama and Papa had... questions. I don't think I can call those "objections" anymore. All of us knew deep down that I wasn't really asking for permission.

And, hear this! They weren't mad! They *didn't* get mad. Not at all. I thought that perhaps it would've given me some sort of impetus—some angst to fuel the journey—if they just got mad at me. But they just looked at me in ponderous silence before starting with the questions. *How are you going to train? What about your job? Can you handle both at once? What*

*about your tuition? Can you still, you know, for Che? And of course, the question I could never prepare myself enough for, What if you fail?*

See, the hardest part about it wasn't that I didn't expect those questions. Those were the exact same questions I've been asking myself from the moment I bought our first sketchpad in ten years. The hardest part was that I couldn't say a thing to reassure them. I never did have anything reassuring to say for myself, after all.

Any ideas?



**Entry no. 21**

You know I really like school, right? But sometimes? I like it less. Especially when we have to do something reeally hard.

Teacher gives us games and there's a prize when we win, but today our game is SUUUUPER hard! We did shoelaces! Teacher showed us very, very slowly at first, then she told us to try it—and I tried it again and again and again—but it always comes off! I don't know why because I do everything EXACTLY as she says. I make the knot and then I loop the lace, but when I pull? Nothing!

The game was "Who can tie shoelaces fastest?" Inah did it first, of course. She always gets candy because she always wins the games. And then EJ did it next, and then, Clarisa, and then everyone.

I'm not sad I didn't win, though. I already knew I can't win because I was so soo slooow. But I still did not stop looping and pulling even after everybody was finished. I knew I could do it too if I didn't stop. So I asked Inah to show me again. And she did. Oh, and she also shared her candy. She's so nice.

Aand, tada! Look! I can tie my laces now! Mama and Papa were soo happy when I showed them, so they took this picture! So cool, right? I'm happy I didn't stop.



Wow Mikay... I almost forgot about all that.

My first self-tied shoelaces... That was 20 years ago?

Keep looping and pulling... Got it. I also wanna be able to say I'm happy I didn't stop.



Hi Mikay!

You wouldn't believe what I just did! Well, *I* couldn't believe what I just did. I've just sent out my portfolio to a couple of studios. My fingers were soo cold and shaky when I clicked

that “send” button. And now the waiting game begins. Do you think they’ll like my work? How long do you think before they reply? Do you think I should maybe follow up if they don’t reply in three days? Or would that be weird? I don’t think I’ll be able to sleep in the next few days.

&&&

Hello, Mikay!

Here are some of my latest drawings. Pretty neat, huh? I think I’m getting the hang of anatomy. I mean, I’ve been practicing for months, after all. I know it’s not yet perfect, but hey, at least the fingers don’t look like sausages anymore, see! Next, I’ll be practicing different hairstyles. I’ll probably drop by the bookstore this weekend to get more supplies. I’m running out of paper.

Mm, and yeah. About the applications... I’ve been dreading to check my emails for any response (but honestly, I couldn’t help but keep refreshing my emails, anyway). So far, we’ve got nothing. Maybe there are... way too many applicants to screen? Or maybe the studios I reached out to are no longer accepting any? Or maybe... anyway, I guess, if I don’t receive anything by Saturday, I’ll go and look for other studios. I still kind of dread showing my work to a lot of people, but I gotta sow wide if I wanna get somewhere. That said, I guess I’m gonna start drafting more application letters. I’ll get back to you when I get something!

&&&

Dear Ms. De Guzman,

We appreciate your interest in our program. Let me skip the pleasantries and go straight to the point. I’m not going to make this email longer than it has to be. The drawings you sent, they’re pretty good. They’re actually better than average. But honestly, I can’t see them making it to the screen, no offense. I’m not writing this to bring you down, really. I’m hoping you would take this as friendly, practical advice. This industry is no joke and everyone’s gotta go through the eye of the needle just to make it. I saw your résumé. It looks to me like you’re already standing on stable ground with your job, credentials, and all that. See, this world you’re trying to break into is anything but stable. Maybe the best you can do is to try some freelance illustrator gigs on the side, but animation? I don’t know. It could be devastating. You might wanna think this over.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Alexis Cruz

Alamat Animation Studios



Hey Mikay,

It's been a while, I know. Sorry for not updating you as often. The last few months have been pretty busy. I've been spending all my free time practicing and, well, to be honest, I haven't *had* a lot of free time. And whenever I did, I often felt too tired to even pick up a pencil. I know, I know, I'm sorry. It's just that... sometimes, I can't help but think... is it still worth it? I've been trying—it's been months, but the only answers I've been receiving so far are either "no," or silence. Which, obviously, also means "no." And not too long ago this guy I wrote to gave me some... "practical" advice. I mean, as if I haven't received enough practical advice to last me a lifetime. Honestly, that word refuses to let me go. But I guess it's for good reason...



**Entry no. 25**

You know what we did today at school? We planted flowers! No, don't get too excited. The truth is, we planted little rocks. Teacher said those are called "seeds." They didn't look flowery at all. But she told us that they'd become flowers when we put them in the soil, and add water (but not too much!), and let them get some sun. Which we did, but still, no flowers! So we told Teacher, there are no flowers! But she said '*yet*.' There are no flowers *yet*. (That means not now, but later.) Teacher said we should wait. It's Monday, so we asked if there would be flowers on Tuesday, but she said no, not *yet*. Ugh. So maybe, Wednesday? And again, she said no. She told us we were being *im-pey-shent*. I don't know what that means. She said that flowers don't wake up easily, but if we keep watering and waiting, we would see them. Maybe a few Wednesdays from now. Fine. I'll wait.



Ugh, Mikay, seriously, you really wouldn't let me wallow, would you? Just when I'm down in a ditch convinced that this is it, that I'm done, I'd hear you talking about flowers and being impatient!

Yeah, okay. Okay... I think my last letter was pretty depressing. I'm really sorry. It was a bad day. No, actually it was probably the culmination of a bad week. Or a few bad weeks. You can't really blame me. Up until this point in my life, I knew *exactly* how to get to where I needed to be! Study for good grades, build credentials for a good job, train and perform well to get a raise... Whenever I invested effort, I was always certain I'd get something in return. But, these past months? I've been giving it everything I could, but it's been for nothing! No flowers in sight. Ugh, fine. *Yet*. Not yet. Just gotta keep watering and waiting I guess.

P.S.,

Yes, I'll send my nth application letter later, I swear. Just... just let me edit it a bit and update my portfolio.

P.P.S.

Thank you.



April xx, 20xx

Philippine Institute of Digital Arts  
Preston IT Center, 1013 Kalayaan Ave.,  
Quezon City, Philippines,

Greetings, Ma'am/Sir,

I'm writing this letter to express my intent to apply for your animation course. I'm aware of your good reputation and the rigorous training that you give your students, and it would be an honor to train under your guidance.

Enclosed with this email are some sample works I'd done recently, as well as some that date twenty years back. I hope you're not thinking of this as some sort of prank, but I had to include those. Sending this letter to you today are two aspiring artists, separated by time but connected by one timeless dream.

This is probably far from the sort of application letters you've had to screen to date. I won't sell myself much because there's really not much to sell apart from some basic skills and sheer determination.

I know that learning animation now would be a real challenge, given my age and current skill level. However, I can assure you that I'm willing to learn. More than willing, to be honest. You can call me desperate. And I am hoping you'll give this desperate dreamer the chance to take a step closer toward bringing to life a world she's dreamed up for two decades.

Thank you and best regards,

Mickaella De Guzman



Hi Mickaella,

Being on the receiving end of letters addressed to an institution sometimes makes me feel that people forget I'm human too. I never did like formalities, so let me first thank you for the "humanity" of your letter. It reminded me of the kid who dreamed tall dreams of piloting the Voltes V one day.

About your application, it's good that you're already aware: this would be a challenge. There's no point in sugar-coating it, as I'm sure you've already experienced first-hand how hard it is to keep hammering at every aspect of your art just to refine it. But don't be disheartened. We all have something we still need to refine. I can share some tricks I have about hands and all those other anatomical hurdles, but honestly? I'd sit down for your lecture on making fabrics look so dynamic if you'd ever decide to hold one!

That said, I don't see why I'd withhold this chance from you. Consider this your ticket to Rainbow Land. I can't wait for you to bring us there too someday.

Welcome aboard.

Sincerely,  
Francisco Ledesma/Kokoy  
Director of Department of Digital Arts  
Fellow Dreamer

