

My Magazine

Anna Kennedy



Articles

LotR vs.
TSoS

Caramel-
Spice Snack
Mix

Info on the
Bermuda
Triangle

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How to: Make a Caramel-Spice Snack Mix

From "Anyone Can Cook" by Better Homes and Gardens



Have you ever wished for a snack that's tasty, easy to prepare, and yields a lot of food for the amount of work that goes into it? This snack mix might be the answer!

Preheat your oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Take 12 cups (about one box) of crispy corn/rice cereal and mix it with 1 ½ cups of mixed nuts (or cashews or almonds) in a large roasting pan. Set this aside. Then, in a 1-quart saucepan, blend ½ cup of packed brown sugar, ½ cup of light-colored corn syrup, ½ cup of butter, 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon, and ½ teaspoon of ground ginger together. Cook this, stirring so that it doesn't burn, over medium heat until the butter is melted and the mixture is smooth and golden-brown all through. Pour this over the cereal-nut mixture and stir carefully to coat it all.

Then, bake in the 300-degree oven for 30 minutes, stirring twice. Take it out of the oven and spread it in a single layer over a big piece of buttered foil. Let it cool and break it into pieces. Now stir in 2 cups of something chocolatey—chocolate-covered raisins or peanuts, or simply chocolate chips. You're stirring it in now because if you did it before baking, the chocolate would melt. (It took me a couple seconds to figure this out.)

You can store this in an airtight container for up to 3 days or freeze it for up to a month. Or you can just eat it straight out of the pan. Enjoy!

Poetry Corner

The Difference...

He surfaces and glances around.

Ripples against his face,
The separate sounds as each of them strike,
The forest of sun-veined leaves,
Locusts, flies like jewels,
And gray spiders inside turrets of tight-spun gossamer.
Prisms of dew upon a million blades of grass.

But only this.

He has survived.
He sees with new eyes.
All the things he has never seen before...
And all the places where his friend, his companion in escape, is not.

Stained Glass

The sun glows warm through
Wind-sifted emerald leaves
Against the blue sky.



UNICORN

Understand that

No one can tame a unicorn.

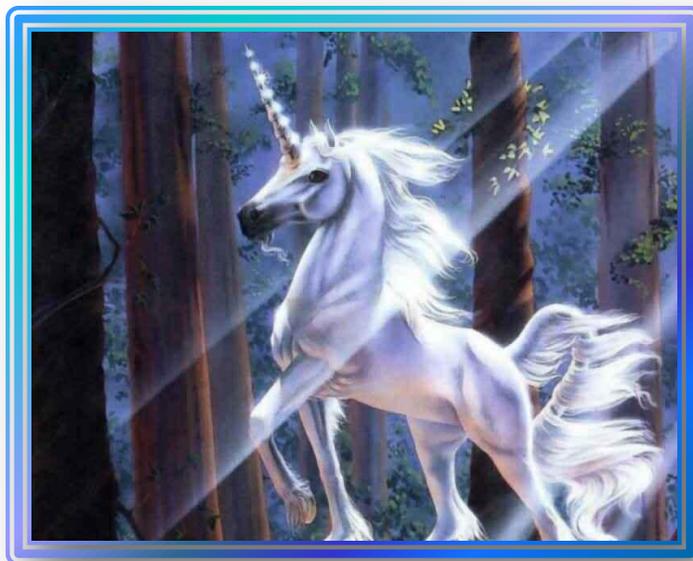
It is a creature of secrets.

Can one capture an enigma?

Oh, and also understand,

Really understand, that

Nothing is impossible.



Touch of Autumn

I look at the leaf

Of the maple; still green, though

Red creeps along its edge.

The Zeldee Prank War

My name is Marilyn Zeldee, and there's only so much you need to know about me. Number one, that I'm twelve years old. Number two, that I have three brothers and two sisters. And number three, that I can turn invisible.

No, I'm not crazy.

My brothers and sisters can do wacky stuff too, if that makes it better. Skip flies, Tina teleports, Cleo controls things with her mind, Zack talks to animals, and his identical twin Felix controls the weather.

OK, so that doesn't make it any less strange. But you have to get used to strange if you live in my family. If your little brother comes up to you and gravely informs you that your gerbil tastes like chicken, you have to be able to take it in stride. To my great relief, Zack had heard it from a snake.

That day, we were bored. And a bored family with superpowers is definitely not a good situation.

"Come on, Felix, pleeeeeease? Stop the rain. Aw, seriously. Everybody wants you to!"

Felix glanced at his twin brother. "No."

"You're not still mad about the pencil thing, are you?"

"What do you think?"

"It was an accident, I promise. Honest! Please?"

"Really, Felix," Tina put in, slouched on the sofa with her iPod. "This is ridiculous. Just because Zack dropped your pencil down the vent? It's holding a grudge."

"Well, he stole it!"

Skip soared down the hallway into the bathroom, backtracked hurriedly, and perched on the edge of the couch. "Hey Felix, make it sunny, will you?"

"We've all been trying to get him to," Cleo said. "He just won't. He's still mad at Zack."

"Tattletale!"

"Stay out of it, Cleo!"

"Go find your own argument."

"Lovely atmosphere today," Cleo sniffed, staring hard at her phone and catching it as it flew over to her. "So kind and forgiving and friendly..."

"DON'T PREACH!" Zack and Tina yelled at the same time. "You're not Mom, OK?"

"Fine! Go lick the electric fence or something. Don't mind me over here, I'm just trying to settle an argument." Cleo turned her phone on and refused to look away.

“Come on, guys,” I added, a little more gently. “Don’t snap at each other. It’ll just make everything worse.”

“You sound like Cleo,” Felix remarked. “Copycat!”

“Well, I’m not yelling at you!”

Cleo bounced up over her phone, sulkiness forgotten. “Who says I was yelling at you?”

Skip hovered upside-down. “Weren’t you sulking just now?”

Cleo stared loftily at her phone and pretended not to hear, but one of the curtains flicked up and smacked Skip in the face, startling him so that he dropped out of the air with a yelp. “Ow!” he said, sitting up. “What was that for?”

Cleo ignored him.

Skip flew over and started carefully pinning her hair to the back of her chair. Cleo’s face remained unchanged, but a flyswatter whisked up and smacked at his hand. A sudden gust of wind knocked it aside into the kitchen. Cleo looked angrily up. “Felix!”

Felix gave her an innocent look. “What?”

Cleo looked disgusted. “You can change the weather to tick me off, but to make your whole family happy? Oh, no, you couldn’t be bothered!”

Felix folded his arms. “You were picking on Skip!”

“So? He was picking on me! Haven’t you ever heard of the Golden Rule? Do to others as they do to you!”

“Something sounds weird about that,” Zack said doubtfully.

“She’s got it all wrong,” Skip said, turning somersaults up near the ceiling.

That was when I got the idea that I thought was brilliant.

“Hey, guys!” I exclaimed excitedly. “Let’s have a prank war! Boys against girls!”

Cleo popped up from behind her phone. “Sure, why not? It’ll be fun!”

“Not fair!” Felix yelled. “You girls have all the best ones! Telekinesis, invisibility, teleportation. What do we boys have? Weather, flying, and the ability to ask a gecko what its favorite color is!”

“Chicken, are you?”

“I’m not,” Skip said, striking a dramatic midair pose. “I am mighty!”

A heavy book landed on his outstretched hand and flung him to the ground. “Cleo! You didn’t say we were starting now!”

“Fine, then,” Felix said. “Game on!”

That was how the great Zeldee battle began.

We threw ourselves into it with zest. I sneaked into the boys’ bedroom that night and squirted toothpaste everywhere, then put the mostly-flattened container under Felix’s elbow so that it would look as though it was all his fault. When I came out of our room I found a scrap of paper pushed under the door.

Ha ha. Classic. But we'll get you soon.
Just you wait and see.

They did. Somebody put salt in my cereal.

Cleo's was trickier. Zack kept her perched squealing on her chair as spiders scurried up the legs. It took her a little while to figure out who was doing it. Skip dragged Zack out of reach into the huge oak in front of our house, and Cleo yelled at him from the front window. The boys roared with laughter until a Kleenex box sailed out the window and whacked Zack out of the tree, pulling Skip with him. Fortunately it's only about ten feet to the ground out there, and Skip was strong enough to break their falls.

Tina was hardest because she can teleport anywhere, so Skip was the one who substituted her instant coffee for potting soil and then hovered, smirking, just out of reach while she fumed about not being able to teleport onto thin air.

For the next few days pranks came faster and faster. Cleo's shampoo was laced with maple syrup, somebody filled my hairbrush with caterpillars, Tina was followed by a small storm cloud as dark and frowning as her face, Felix found soap in his shoes, Skip was yanked mysteriously back to the ground every time he tried to take off, and Zack's action figures disappeared and were found in odd places like the gutter or the medicine cabinet. And these were only a few of them.

The pranks got more and more intense as they went on. We scared Zack silly with a glow-in-the-dark Darth Vader mask made of cardboard and held outside his window. Tina almost got bitten by a squirrel before Cleo jerked it into the air and held it there. Zack swore up and down that it was an accident, but we weren't so sure. Skip said nothing to Cleo about how he was being grounded every time she was anywhere close, but I could tell it was wearing him down. You just can't fly and ever be happy trapped on the ground again. I felt slightly guilty, but war was war. I wasn't so happy about it myself because every single morning my shoes had honey drizzled over them. Cleo had climbed the rose trellis to rescue her own shoes so many times that she had to wear long sleeves because of the scratches all over her arms. Our parents didn't know about what was happening yet, but I had a sneaking suspicion we'd be in big trouble if they ever found out.

The whole shed incident was the last straw.

We girls held an emergency meeting in my room with the door securely blocked and the window shades pulled down.

"OK," Cleo said. "Here's the plan. The boys are beating us up one side and down the other. Right?"

"Yeah," Tina said. "We need to get our act together and think up something really good."

"That's why I called meeting," Cleo said.

Skip's silhouette appeared outside the window. Tina elbowed Cleo and pointed, and Skip disappeared. I heard a painful-sounding thud outside, but Cleo was talking again.

"I was thinking. Maybe lure the boys into the shed. Tina, you do it. Sneak something of Felix's out of his room and make sure they see you go into the shed. Then teleport out. I'll lock the shed door from the outside and jam the lock. Marilyn, you can make sure they don't get out until suppertime. OK?"

"Just locking them into the shed? Sounds too mild to me," Tina said slowly.

"OK, then, I'll remote-control that big bucket of whiffleballs we have in there. Make them fly around and bop people or something. Sound better?"

"Let's do it!" Tina said enthusiastically.

I hesitated. Earlier we would have thought locking them in the shed was enough, but now... We were, all of us, losing our scruples and becoming almost merciless, and I wasn't sure I liked what I was seeing. But it would be fun finally beating them. "OK, then," I said finally.

The first part of it went off pretty well. Tina raced down the stairs with Felix's "Star Wars: The Essential Guide" clutched in her arms and disappeared into the shed. "Hey, give me that!" Felix yelled, outraged, and took off after her with his brothers hot on his heels. Skip winced with each step. Either it had hurt when Cleo jerked him to the ground a few minutes ago or he just hated running when he could fly. I pushed aside a twinge of guilt. *But Skip can be so annoying sometimes. And war is war. With Skip earthbound we have a much better chance.*

Yes, but are siblings supposed to fight each other like this? Sibling rivalry, nothing. This is getting to be a real problem.

I pushed the little voice in my head away.

Tina disappeared into the shed, Cleo slammed the door and jammed the lock, and Tina reappeared grinning like anything. "They're in there, those idiots, and I managed to bring out the book too."

"Don't call them idiots," I said sharply.

Tina stared at me. "But this is war, Marilyn. All's fair."

"I don't know," I said slowly. "I think I liked it better when it wasn't."

From inside the shed somebody shouted and thumped the door.

"I've got the whiffleballs flying." Cleo grinned. "Listen to them!"

We could hear muffled voices inside the shed, voices sounding almost frantic.

I frowned. "Are you sure about this, Cleo? I mean, just playful pranks might be fun, but this seems like too much."

“But we’re siblings,” Cleo said, shrugging. “We’re supposed to fight.”

“Arguments like the one we had earlier were awfully close to the edge, but this is over it. It’s not funny anymore.”

“Yes, it is,” Tina smirked. “Did you see the look on Felix’s face when he found his Obi-Wan Kenobi in your gerbil’s cage?”

“That’s what I meant,” I said. “Take Skip. You’re earthlocking him every chance you get, and look at him. It’s wearing him down.”

“Honestly, Marilyn, give it a rest. He’ll get over it.” Tina rolled her eyes.

“And besides, it gives us a real advantage,” Cleo said. She didn’t look quite as convinced as she did before, though, so I pressed a little harder.

“What would you feel like if you couldn’t use your power anymore?”

Cleo didn’t answer. The shed door rattled as if people were shoulder-charging it.

“If they break down the door, Mom and Dad are so going to kill them!” Tina said gleefully.

“It’ll be our fault, though,” I pointed out. “And do you think Mom and Dad would like what we’re doing?”

Tina shrugged, but she looked a little uncomfortable.

“What about you, Tina? What would you feel like if you couldn’t teleport?”

“I would get over it,” she replied icily. “I wouldn’t mope around looking like a kicked puppy.”

The shed door looked as if it was about to fall off.

“Are you sure, though?” I asked. “If it was me I would be sad. Like, really, really sad.”

Tina was about to answer when Zack’s voice came from under the door. “Guys! Guys, can we talk or something? Ow! Because—ow—we surrender, and we want to get—ow—out of here, like, right now, and—ow—could you tell Cleo to stop, because—ow! Ouch, Skip, will you quit it? That’s my foot! Ow! Cleo, let us out!”

“What?” Tina sneered, stooping down to talk under the door. “They’re just whiffleballs!”

“Let them out, Cleo,” I said. “Come on. Please, Cleo. Zack surrendering means something is really wrong! I mean, have you ever heard of Zack giving in to anything?”

“I guess not...”

And a moment later the boys were tumbling out onto the lawn. Tina’s smug grin froze when she saw bruises all over their arms. Zack glared at us with one eye swollen shut. “Cleo, what image did you have in your mind when you meant to control whiffleballs?”

Cleo stared. “Um...the gray bucket with the lid that they’re kept in? Like always?”

Felix folded his black-and-blue arms. “Well, those weren’t whiffleballs. You know all those soccer balls we used to keep for old Rover?”

“Oh my,” Tina said faintly.

Skip frowned. “That really hurt, guys.”

“So we surrender,” Zack said. “You win. We didn’t have a choice, really. This whole thing got a little too...violent...for me.” He started to walk away, but Cleo stopped him.

“I’m sorry,” she said. “Marilyn was right. She thought this was going too far. I honestly thought those were whiffleballs.”

“I’m sorry, too,” I said. “I should have said something before this happened. I just—I mean, it was fun playing tricks, and everything, and—”

Zack’s face softened slightly.

“I guess I’m sorry,” Tina said in a very small voice. “I didn’t mean for this to start hurting people.”

There was a moment of extremely awkward silence.

Then Skip grinned, a little lopsidedly, and flipped into the air. “It was actually a pretty good idea...” he said, turning aerial cartwheels.

“Until the soccer balls,” Felix finished, and everybody laughed.

It ended up being OK. We had to explain the whole thing to Mom and Dad, but after they’d given us a talking-to, they congratulated us on stopping when we did. Nobody was seriously hurt except for a black eye on Zack’s account. We girls had won, but we felt a little ashamed about it, because it hadn’t really been fair. I felt much better to be able to look my brother in the eye and say, “Good morning,” and not be thought sarcastic. It was also nice to wake up in the morning and not have to look before I stepped out of bed, in case somebody had poured some blueberry jam there.

So all in all, the Zeldee prank war might have been fun, but the treaty was a good thing for all of us.



Letters to the Editor

Dear Anna,

I have heard interesting things about the Bermuda Triangle. Can you list possible theories that could account for the disappearances?

Sincerely,

Patrick Zeldee

Patrick Zeldee, QG



Dear Patrick,

Your question was quite interesting to me. I looked it up, and here is what I found.

History.com says that trying to assign a common cause to each disappearance is like trying to find a cause for all car accidents in the state of Missouri. Most likely, there is no one theory that solves everything.

TodayIFoundOut.com cites the Coast Guard's explanations. The Gulf Stream current can erase evidence quickly, the triangle is right in Hurricane Alley, and crossings are often attempted by underprepared navigators.

Bermuda Attractions.com suggests that there may be methane gas trapped under the seabed. It might erupt periodically and lower the water's density, making ships sink instantly. Also, the Sargasso Sea, a mass of floating seaweed, is right in the heart of the Triangle. It has a reputation for stranding ships.

These are by no means all the theories out there. You can find many more if you continue looking.

Best wishes,

Anna

Dear Editor,

That columnist of yours, Rupert Mahoogey, is a creep.

Very sincerely,

Sam Froomerwhippelschnitzel

Dear Sam Froomerwhippelschnitzel,

First, I would like to thank the editor for kindly allowing me to answer this letter.

Second, I am very sorry that you have such a low opinion of me. I have not meant to be a complete jerk, but I was unable, for excellent reasons, to let your zebra continue kicking the bumper of my car in. I assume that if I let my pet poke its head through your (closed) car window you would react as I did. Once again, please accept my sincere apologies for any hurt your zebra received from my guitar case and for any wrong that I have done you. I am fully willing to pay any veterinarian bills.

Yours respectfully,

Rupert Smith

Rupert Smith



The Editor's Opinion

The Lord of the Rings vs. The Sword of Shannara

Lord of the Rings and Sword of Shannara are so much alike that it's almost uncanny. The storylines are almost mirror images, from the Hall of Kings/Moria to Storlock/Rivendell to Skull Bearers/Nazgul. Both Shea and Frodo are weak to the Dark Power's eyes, yet possess surprising reserves of inner strength. Both have been jerked out of commonplace existence to risk everything on a seemingly hopeless quest. Even the other characters in TSoS have parallels in Middle-Earth. Allanon and Gandalf, Durin/Dayel and Legolas, Hendel and Gimli, Balinor and Aragorn... when you compare the books, it's easy to see who tried to emulate whom.

But between the two stories, however, there is a major difference. Tolkien spent years carefully jotting down the history, languages, and lore of Middle-Earth, while Brooks seems to have taken a shortcut, thinking through details only when he needed them for the story. That, I think, is one of the major differences that makes LotR better than TSoS.

The Princess Bride: a Review

I got the remotes and sat down with my dad in front of the TV. My sisters were out of the house and my dad had some free time, so of course he was going to introduce me to *The Princess Bride*. I waited impatiently through the main menu and the title screen. This was supposed to be a fairy tale, a story of giants, duels, princesses, and monsters. And the first thing in the movie I saw was the display for an old-fashioned baseball video game.

"This *is* the Princess Bride, right?"

My dad grinned. "Just keep watching..."

And so I did, and I was rewarded. Just like the back of the case promised, it was a story about an evil prince, a group of three kidnapers, and star-crossed lovers who would die over and over if they could do it together.

The thing I had to remember was that the Princess Bride is a spoof on a fairy tale, with the drama heightened to the point of absurdity and the Princess Buttercup's kidnapers resembling a comedy trio. The good-natured Fezzik, the revenge-driven Inego, and the irascible Vizzini are all defeated by a man in black, which is, in Vizzini's words,

“Inconceivable!” But can this mysterious hero get past the dreaded Fire Swamps, not to mention a few Rodents of Unusual Size...?

And all too soon, it’s over, and my dad and I are sitting on the couch again watching a little boy’s grandfather close the book and put it under his arm. The letters on the cover flash out for a moment—“The Princess Bride”.

“Grandpa,” says the boy. “Can you come read it to me again tomorrow?”
I want to be there for it too...



A long time ago, in a
galaxy far, far away..

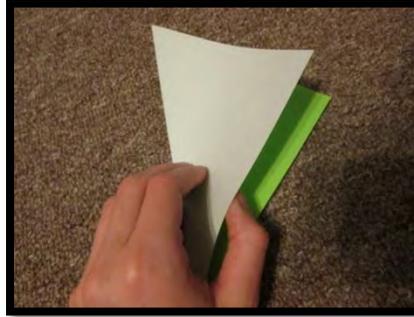
But this lightsaber is considerably
closer than that. And it even comes
with the batteries to make the blade
glow. This limited edition won't be
here long, so call now to order
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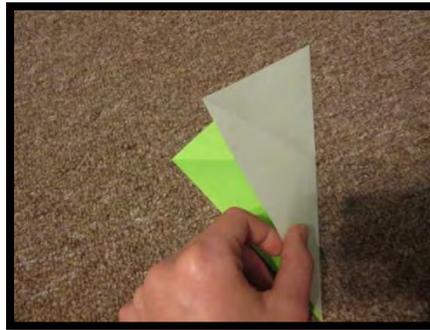
Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

How to Fold a Three-Headed Moat Monster

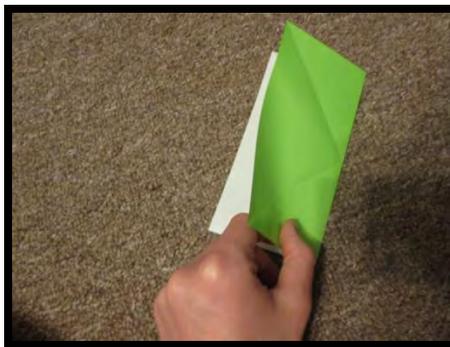
From "Teach Yourself Origami", by John Montroll



Fold your square of origami paper in half diagonally, forming a white triangle, and unfold.



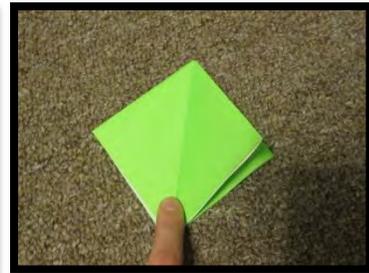
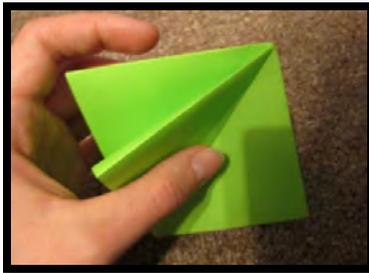
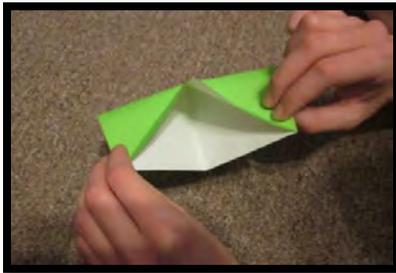
Fold it diagonally the other way, unfold, and flip over.



Fold it in half again, but this time to form a colored rectangle. Unfold.



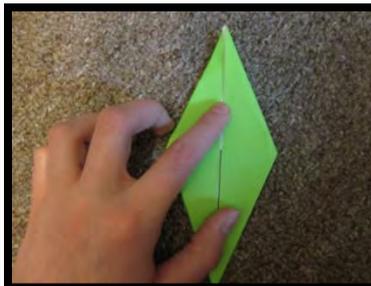
Fold it the other way to form another green rectangle.



Take your paper by the two front corners and bring them together in the middle so that it looks like the above pictures.



Fold the corners into the center and unfold. Repeat on the other side.



Open top layer and fold upwards, using creases from last step. Repeat on the other side.



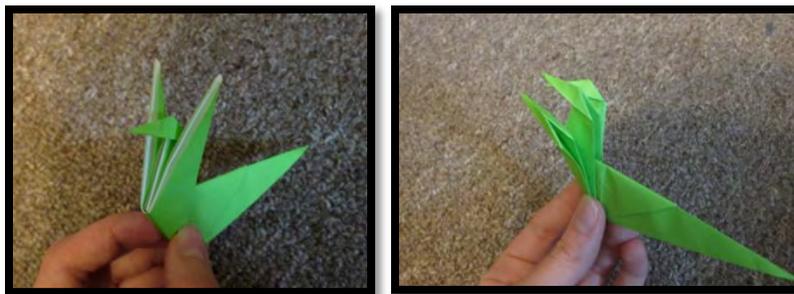
Fold one flap down (above left) and fold in half (above right).



The next step is a little tricky. Fold one layer inside out and upwards to make a reverse fold. You may have to open the paper out a little to do this.



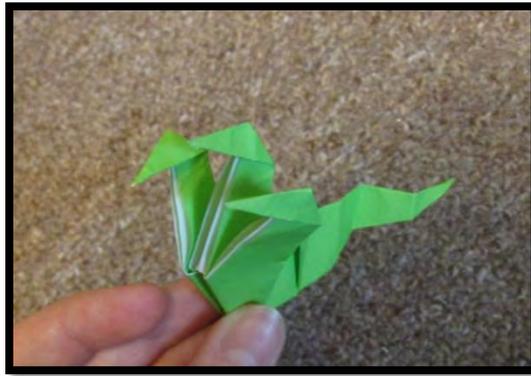
Now fold the tip inside out and downwards. Your moat monster has its first head!



Fold the other two points up to meet the first head, and fold the tips in the same way.



Crease the top layer of his tail inside out and up, fold the excess paper at the base inside, and crinkle his tail back and forth.



Say hello to your three-headed moat monster! I named mine Mr. Fang, but you can name yours whatever you want.

The Travel Log

10:30 AM: Heard a lot of interesting things about Blainesbury Lake. UFO sightings, misty lights over the water, mysterious animals, that sort of thing. Finding them for myself. Jammed my stuff into the car and set off. Mysterious phenomena, here we come!

11:25 AM: Arrived in Blainesbury. Almost got lost, but found Main Street at last. Why do the streets go in circles? I found myself staring at the same green alligator sign for Gator's Groceries about three times.

11:30 AM: Main Street...ROADBLOCKED?!? Seriously? Sighed and turned off. The back roads here are full of potholes. Very bumpy, almost broke my tailbone.

12:00 noon: Finally got to Wielder Avenue. Spelled Weilder on the sign. Slightly flooded. Afraid I was going to get water up my engine. Apparently the floor leaks.

12:30 PM: Got to Zephyr only to find my way blocked by a policeman. "Sorry, lady, no vehicles allowed," he said, with a glaringly cheesy smile. "We're investigating a crop circle." Crop circle, my front teeth. Had to leave the car behind. I've never been one to give up on something.

12:45 PM: Wow. There are gravel roads going every which way. How annoying. Which one am I supposed to take? I was supposed to turn off at the granite pillar. I found it broken, on its side, covered in ivy, and directly between two roads. Hoping this is the right one.

1:05 PM: It wasn't. They're very territorial around here. All but chased me out at gunpoint.

1:15 PM: On the other road. Strange creature blocking my path. Scaly and slithery, but not a snake or a lizard. Am I seeing things? Where's a nice, sturdy SUV when I need one?

1:25 PM: It's following me. Must be the scent of the sandwiches in my backpack. Seems quite friendly. I'm not trusting it as far as its teeth, though.

2:05 PM: Finally arrived! Blainesbury Lake is slightly disappointing. Very small and innocent-looking. All I know is that the creature must live here, because it dove straight into the water. I guess the stories were true. Now I have to get back.