

CASTLE IN THE CLOUDS



There once was a princess named Teragwa. She lived in the Castle in the Clouds. It was called the Castle in the Clouds because it was built upon a tall mountain, and the clouds surrounded the mountain all year long so it was hidden. There were stories of such a castle among the people who lived below, but no one had ever been there nor seen it.

Living in the castle was lonely. The only people she saw every day were the servants and her family. She wanted to meet different people, but her parents said no. She should only live in the castle and nowhere else. They said it was the only place that was safe for a princess.

Teragwa studied with a tutor every day. She learned how to be a proper princess, but she wanted to learn more about her kingdom. She was very curious.

One day she made a plan to leave the castle to see all of the things she had never seen before.

Her plan was to jump out of her window into the cloud and let it take her away. She stood in her window and reached out to the cloud. It was so soft. She knew if she jumped, she would land in the cloud like falling onto her bed. She closed her eyes and jumped.

No one knew that she had left the castle, since she had not told anyone of her plan.

She floated into the cloud. It felt wonderful. Then she tried to stop her fall, but she could not. She began to fall faster and faster and soon she became frightened. She waved her arms and legs in the air as she fell through the clouds. This was not what she had expected. She thought the clouds would hold her and then she would be able to float

slowly down to the ground.

She screamed as loud as she could. What was she to do?

Just when she thought she was going to die, she fell into the arms of a handsome young man. When he caught her, he set her gently onto the ground.

The princess looked up at the young man, and asked, “Where did you come from? How did you know I was falling?”

“I was sitting here looking at the clouds and then suddenly I saw you falling. If I had not caught you, you would have certainly landed on my head,” the young man answered smiling and laughing.

“Thank you so very much. I did not expect you to be here. In fact, I did not expect to fall so far. I thought the clouds would hold me,” she explained to him.

The young man laughed, “You thought the clouds would keep you from falling?”

“I’m not so sure now. It does seem a little silly, doesn’t it?” she replied.

“Where did you come from?” the young man asked.

“I don’t remember,” she answered, wrinkling her nose in confusion.

The princess had forgotten who she was and where she had come from.

The young man looked up into the sky, and said, “I’ve heard stories about a Castle in the Clouds, but I never thought they were true. When I looked up, I saw you falling. Perhaps you came from there.”

“I don’t remember,” Teragwa replied.

“If so, then I guess you are proof that such a place exists,” he said, as he reached down to lift Teragwa up from the grass.

“What’s your name?” Teragwa asked the young man.

“My name is Gerard. I’m pleased to make your acquaintance,” the young man replied showing his fine manners. “And may I ask you who you are?”

“I don’t know my name,” she replied, surprised that she did not know her name. “Why don’t I know my name?” she questioned herself.

“That’s odd. Recently I found myself in the town nearby and I wasn’t able to

remember how it happened. I couldn't remember my name as well. I was told my name is Gerard, but I'm not sure if that is true or not," Gerard responded to Teragwa's story.

"I met some people who were walking along the road. When I asked them where I was, they laughed at me. When I asked them my name, they told me Gerard. I believed them, so since then I have been Gerard, but I don't know for sure," he said rather confused.

"Well, thank you for catching me. It is also my pleasure to meet you. I want to thank you for saving my life," the princess said, blushing a little.

She looked around the place where she had landed. The grass was green and there were yellow flowers everywhere. There were a few tall trees and in the distance was a wide river. In the sky above, she saw birds floating in the air. In the distance, she saw the great mountain as it rose from the flat prairie below. Clouds surrounded the mountain like a ring of smoke.

She had never seen anything like this before.

Looking up at the mountain, she asked, "Is that where I fell from?"

"I would have to say yes, based on what you just told me," Gerard answered her question.

She was quite surprised at how far away the mountain seemed to be.

"How can I get home?" Teragwa asked, with tears in her eyes, realizing that she was going to have a very difficult time figuring out who she was and how she got there, but even more of a problem was, how to get home.

"If you would like, I'll help you climb the mountain and then we'll know if the story is true," Gerard offered. "Perhaps that's where you came from."

Since she had no other ideas on what to do, she agreed to go with Gerard.

As they walked toward the mountain, the weather began to change. The bright blue sky was turning gray. Thick clouds were coming from beyond the river and they were coming quickly.

Teragwa and Gerard began to run. They found a cave in the side of the mountain

and just as they entered the cave, the rain began to fall. Large pieces of hail pummeled the ground. Teragwa covered her ears because of the noise.

Gerard found some dry sticks and built a small fire. The warmth of the fire filled the cave and lit up the walls. The shadows of the flames from the fire danced on the walls.

It was soon dark and they fell asleep.

In the morning, when they awoke, they were surprised by a sound within the cave. They looked deep into the cave and saw two red dots shining back at them.

They heard the noise again and realized that it was a bear. They ran out of the cave and into the woods as fast as they could. The bear chased them, but soon gave up once it felt it was safe.

The sun was bright in the sky. The ground was still muddy, so walking was more difficult, especially for Teragwa. Her slippers were not made for walking in such conditions.

Gerard took something out of his bag. He rubbed his hands together, and then he presented Teragwa with a new pair of shoes, perfect for walking and climbing.

“How did you do that?” she asked.

“I’m not sure. I found out that if I think very hard and rub my hands together, I am able to make things I need, just like when I built the fire last night,” he replied. “I’m not sure why I’m able to do it, but it has really come in handy.”

They began the long journey of climbing the mountain. It was not going to be easy.

On the way to the mountain, they met two people who were leaning against rocks, one on each side of the road. When they walked between the two men, they jumped at Teragwa and Gerard. They grabbed Gerard.

“Let go of him! He hasn’t done anything wrong!” the princess yelled out loudly.

The shorter one, with light hair, asked Teragwa. “Tell us young lady, what are you doing with this stranger?”

“I just met him. He is taking me to the mountain. Who are you that you need to

protect me?” Teragwa answered

“Well let’s just say that we are willing to take you to the mountain. We can help you find your way,” the taller man, who had dark hair, offered.

“Why should I go with you?” she asked.

Just then, Gerard undid the ropes around him, jumped onto the back of the shorter man, and wrestled him to the ground.

The taller man yelled, “Let go of him or I’ll hurt the young lady!”

Gerard replied, “Oh no you won’t.” Gerard rubbed his hands together and suddenly the man disappeared.

Then the smaller man ran away.

Teragwa went to Gerard and hugged him.

“Thank you once again for saving my life!” the princess said almost crying. “Where did the other man go? What did you do with him?” Teragwa asked.

“I sent him to the village. He’ll be fine,” he replied. “Let’s get out of here before we meet any more people like that!”

They continued on their journey to the mountain.

After a few hours, they found a trail. The trail went to the right and to the left. They decided to go to the right.

It was easier walking on the trail. The ground was hard and the trail was easy to follow. They walked and they walked until they got so tired they had to stop.

While they sat, the ground began to shake. Then rocks began to fall from above and blocked the trail in front of them.

“What just happened?” the princess asked.

“I think it was an earthquake. I’m glad we stopped or we would have been caught in the rock slide and we would have certainly died,” Gerard stated in obvious shock from the disaster they had just avoided.

“Do you think we should climb the rocks to get to the other side?” Teragwa asked while looking at the mess in front of them.

“NO! I think the rocks are too loose and may continue to fall. It’s too dangerous. We should just turn around and go the other way,” Gerard responded.

“You don’t need to yell at me, you know!” the princess said upset that he had yelled at her.

She wasn’t used to being yelled at. It had never happened before.

“It’s not my fault you keep asking dumb questions!” he retorted.

“DUMB QUESTIONS? I didn’t ask any dumb questions. What are you talking about?” she yelled at him.

“Yelling at each other isn’t going to get us anywhere. We need to continue our journey to get you home. Let’s go,” Gerard tried to calm the princess down.

“This isn’t over yet, you know,” the princess stated.

“Fine, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to yell. I just didn’t want us to get hurt,” Gerard decided to end the argument.

Since the trail was blocked, they turned around and went the other direction on the trail.

They walked in silence, since Teragwa was still upset over their conversation.

Teragwa was the first to break the silence.

A little rudely, Teragwa asked, “Do you think you could make us a lunch? If you can make a pair of shoes you should be able to make us a lunch.”

Not sure if he could do it or not, he replied, “I’m not a cook, but I can try.”

Gerard took some leaves from a tree and rubbed his hands together. After a few seconds, he had a sausage in his hands.

He took it and broke off a piece for Teragwa. He handed it to her to eat.

“Why do you want me to try it? You try it first, then if it’s OK, I’ll eat some,” Teragwa reacted to the food. (Probably the same way she treated the servants as a princess in the castle.)

“OK, I’ll try it. I was just trying to be a gentleman and I offered it to you first,” Gerard said, as he took a bite.

“This is really good, do you want some now?” he asked.

Teragwa took a piece and then sat down on a rock along the side of the path.

“This *is* good,” she said with a mouthful of sausage. “I wish we had something to drink?”

Just then, she noticed a small waterfall behind Gerard she had not seen before.

She went and took a drink. The water was cool, fresh, and clean.

Gerard joined her.

“Thank you for the lunch,” she said to Gerard.

“You’re welcome,” Gerard responded.

They were now refreshed and continued up the trail to the top of the mountain. They climbed higher and higher until they entered the clouds. Now It was difficult to see the trail through the fog. They had to go very slowly.

Bam.

Gerard ran into something very hard. There was a wall in front of them. The wall was too steep to climb.

They walked along the bottom of the wall looking for a way to enter. It was not easy to see because the fog was so thick.

They came upon an opening in the wall, and when they entered, they found a large door. They looked at the door and found out it was locked.

Teragwa knocked on the door. Then she knocked again. Still no one came to open the door.

They looked at each other wondering what to do.

Gerard pushed Teragwa aside and rubbed his hands on the lock, but it did not open.

The princess looked over at Gerard.

“Why did you push me? You could have been nicer,” Teragwa said to Gerard.

“Sorry, I was just in a hurry to get the door open,” he replied.

They sat down to think. Should they continue around the wall, or try to open the door?

Just then, Teragwa thought of something. She took her necklace and on it was a key. She took the key, inserted it into the lock and it opened.

“This *must* be where you are from! You have the key to the lock!” Gerard said excitedly.

The large doors were heavy and difficult to open. It must have been many years since the door had been used. The hinges were rusty and they made a loud creaking noise as the doors opened.

Inside was a long corridor. There wasn't a lot of light but for some reason they were able to see enough to go inside.

Gerard took a stick from his bag and rubbed it. In a flash, it turned into a light. Now they would be able to see as they walked down the long hallway.

Where they were going they did not know, but they continued to move forward.

Soon they came to a set of stairs that circled upward in a spiral that went higher than they could see.

The steps were steep and the climb was very difficult. After just a few steps, it was hard to breathe and as they climbed, their legs began to grow weak. Slowly they climbed higher and higher, often taking a break to rest.

They reached a place where one of the stairs became larger. It was a landing where they could sit down and take a long break from the climbing. They became so tired they had to stop and rest for a long time.

They looked down to see how far they had come, but they could not see the bottom. Gerard took a stone and dropped it. Several seconds later the sound of the rock hitting the ground rose in an echo.

“Wow, we've come a long way!” Gerard exclaimed.

Looking up, they still could not see the top.

“How much farther do we have to go?” Teragwa asked, worn out.

“I'm not sure,” Gerard commented.

“Do you think we'll ever reach the top?” Teragwa asked, almost too exhausted to

even speak.

“Perhaps we should rest here for a while longer. After that, we need to continue. I’m sure we can do this,” Gerard answered, less than confidently.

Gerard made some water and food for them as they rested.

As they looked around, they noticed the platform they were sitting on had a tunnel going to the right. Gerard decided to look to see what might be there. Teragwa, not wanting to be left alone, followed closely behind him.

The tunnel was not very deep, and inside were two statues, one woman and one man. They had their arms around each other and on their backs were beautiful wings. They looked like angels.

“I wonder why these are here?” Teragwa asked aloud, as she walked closer to see them.

“These are amazing. If we had wings like these statues, we would be able to fly to the top much faster than walking up all of these stairs. I wish I had wings like that,” the princess said, dreaming of what it would be like to have wings.

Suddenly Teragwa felt funny. Her back hurt and then she fell backward onto the hard floor.

“Ouch! What’s going on?” she yelled.

She looked up at Gerard and he looked different. When he turned, she noticed something on his back. He had wings!

She felt her back and she felt something there.

“Look at me! Do you see anything different?” she asked Gerard.

“You have wings!” he stated in surprise.

“So do you!” Teragwa said, also surprised.

He turned his head around and saw the wings on his back.

“How did this happen?” he asked.

“I don’t know. I just wished we had wings and then they appeared,” she said as she admired her white wings.

“Should we try them?” she asked.

Gerard began to move the wings on his back and he slowly rose off the floor. His feet were moving, but he didn't move.

“This is cool, you should try it!” Gerard said, while still trying out the new wings on his back.

Teragwa began to spread her wings. It took a couple of tries for her to get off the floor, and when she did, she had a huge smile on her face.

Gerard was the first to fly out of the tunnel and up toward the top of the staircase. Teragwa followed closely behind.

Up and up they flew. They flew in circles, to the left and to the right. It was so much fun and much easier than walking up the steps.

When they finally got to the top, they landed in front of a pair of large doors.

Gerard looked over at Teragwa and said, “Your wings. Where did they go?”

Teragwa looked at Gerard.

“Yours are gone too. Maybe we just needed them to get here,” Teragwa said, a bit confused, still looking to see if the wings were on her back. They were gone.

The door was locked, like the door below, so Teragwa took the key from her necklace and tried to open the door. Once again the key worked.

The lights from within were very bright. They had to cover their eyes.

When their eyes had adjusted to the bright light, they noticed they were in a big room surrounded by windows with the sun shining through.

“Welcome my children,” a big voice came from the far side of the room. “We've been expecting you.”

Gerard looked over at Teragwa, and said, “Who could that be?”

Teragwa shrugged her shoulders. She had no idea who it was that was talking to them.

“Come here, I want to talk to you,” the big voice said with authority.

In front of them was a large banner made of dark red, black and gold fabric. In

front of the banner was a large chair, and in the chair was a big man wearing expensive clothes and he had a crown on his head. Next to him was a beautiful woman. Both of them were smiling.

“We see that you have met,” the man in the chair spoke up. “We knew our plan would work.”

The two travelers looked at each other in confusion.

Gerard spoke up, “What do you mean? We have no idea what you are talking about.”

The big man in the chair stood up, and said, “Come here. I have something for you.”

They obeyed and walked toward him.

The big man stood up, took out his sword from his belt, and stretched it toward both of them. He said something in a strange language.

Suddenly Teragwa blurted out, “Father! What has happened to me?”

“You’ve been on an adventure, and you’ve passed your test!” the king said to his daughter.

“Who is this with you?” the queen asked, with a big smile on her face.

“This is Gerard, he saved me when I fell from the sky,” Teragwa answered.

“My name isn’t Gerard, it’s Prince Pelland of the Castle of the Valley. I was on a quest to find my true love, but somehow I lost my memory. It has now just returned.”

Looking around the room, he asked the king, “What are we doing here?”

“Our castles needed an heir. Your parents came to us and asked us if we would approve of your marriage, but we told them we needed to have a test to see if you would love each other, but not knowing who you really were. We made a plan for you to meet.

“We sent some people to make sure you were on the right path to come home. We gave you special powers to see if you would use them wisely.

“You both proved your courage when things were difficult. Now we need to know if you are in love,” the king explained.

Prince Pelland and Princess Teragwa looked at each other. They had not thought about anything like that, but when Teragwa smiled, Pelland knew in his heart that they were meant for each other.

Teragwa went on a journey to meet Pelland's family. They loved her as soon as they met her.

The two Castles had a great celebration when they were married and when the time came, they ruled both Castles wisely.

VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. hail _____ | a. jewelry around the neck |
| 2. float _____ | b. flat grassland |
| 3. proof _____ | c. go slowly to the ground |
| 4. tutor _____ | d. wet dirt |
| 5. prairie _____ | e. corroded, tarnished |
| 6. blush _____ | f. frozen rain |
| 7. muddy _____ | g. meet for the first time |
| 8. necklace _____ | h. show something is true |
| 9. rusty _____ | i. private teacher |
| 10. acquaintance _____ | j. cheeks turn red, flush |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Teragwa caught the prince who was falling from the clouds. | T / F |
| 2. The Castle in the Clouds floated on a large cloud. | T / F |
| 3. It was raining when Teragwa jumped out of her window. | T / F |
| 4. Two men tried to take Teragwa away. | T / F |
| 5. Gerard made lunch with his hands. | T / F |
| 6. Gerard found Teragwa in a tree. | T / F |
| 7. Gerard was his real name. | T / F |
| 8. They crossed the ocean to get to the Castle in the Clouds. | T / F |
| 9. The king and queen were in the castle. | T / F |
| 10. Prince Pelland and Princess Teragwa were married. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. Where did Teragwa live? _____
 - a.) Cloud Castle
 - b.) Castle of the Valley
 - c.) Prairieland
 - d.) Castle in the Clouds

2. What was Gerard's real name? _____
 - a.) Prince Pella
 - b.) Prince Pelland
 - c.) Prince Pellar
 - d.) King Pelland

3. What did the use go to the top of stairs? _____
 - a.) statues
 - b.) feet
 - c.) magic potion
 - d.) wings

4. What did Teragwa use to open the locked doors? _____
 - a.) key
 - b.) money
 - c.) magic
 - d.) wings

COMPREHENSION: (*Write a complete sentence to answer the question.*)

1. Who caught Teragwa when she fell from the clouds?

2. How many men tried to stop Teragwa?

3. Who told the man his name was Gerard?

4. What did Gerard make for lunch?

5. How did Gerard make the lunch?

6. What happened to the trail so they had to another way?

7. How did they open the door to the staircase?

8. How did they get to the top of the stairs?

9. Who made the wish about the statues?

10. Who greeted them when they entered the castle?
