

The cloud world

"Happy birthday!" rang all around the place.

It was a sweet evening during the 1851 summer. All the English nobles were invited. Obviously, it was Monica's, her mom, birthday. Rachel, in her minds, was bored to death. The only thing that she was waiting for was the departure of the balloon. "Those people are annoying me. I would prefer being alone to watch the sunset" thought Rachel. It was time. Everybody started to go towards the balloon. Monica had her eyes blinded by a little piece of canvas. The crowd was surrounding her. "A balloon ride? What a gift for my mother!" thought Rachel, fascinated by the balloon. All those serious discussions about work and money started to become more and more important. Rachel decided to wait for her parents inside of the balloon. No one was paying attention to her. A huge wind blew on the balloon and it suddenly took off. Everybody turned back. An anguish shiver browsed the guests. Few persons started to run to the balloon. It was too late. Monica began crying while Rachel's dad tried to catch the rope. It was too late. The sound of the screams eased as the balloon was reaching the sky.

She was escaping of this world of boring ant. She was looking at the sky, looking for some creatures and forms in the clouds. She was exhausted, she took the blanket which was at her feet, and fallen asleep.

She felt something tickle on her cheeks, and suddenly woke up and discovered a fluffy little creature. Right in front of her was standing a violet furry lump with big eye. Full of energy, he was looking at her. "Who are you? I've never seen an animal like you! What variety are you?" asked the creature. "Oh, you can speak! I... I'm sorry I think I'm lost... Where are we?" responded the little girl.

The creature was more and more excited and said "Well, we are in the sky now. You aren't from our world?" and Rachel replied "No. There was an accident and I woke up here. Can you help me to rejoin my parents please? I would be so grateful. What's your name?"

The creature was doubtful about the question. She never had a friend that called her by a real name. Rachel conclude "Gumpy. It suits you good!"

And then she told him her story. They both were over excited about having met the other one. Gumpy told her about the world she was in, and he told her that no human was allowed here, because of the Mad Queen. She would probably kill Rachel if she knew she was there. So Gumpy had to hide Rachel. He thought about the Mushroom Forest. It was a really dense and thrilling forest, where no one ever goes.

Rachel noticed that the balloon was accelerating more and more and was going down as the clouds were thicker. The smog was intensifying. The balloon suddenly went faster and projected her on the blanket. She saw something that wasn't seemed real. An uncountable number of petals over whelm her in a second. She was blind. There were millions of petals. She had lost the notion of the time, and the notion of speed. Gradually after a blurry time the petals left place to a quiet river. The balloon alighted slowly. It was the most beautiful scene that she had never seen. The trees were higher than the sky. The light trough the branches was magic. At this moment she was just like in a fairy story. Butterfly circled her, the water of the river was emerald green. Everything was shining. The moss of the trees was purple, orange and blue. Her two eyes were not enough to see all the details of this perfect place. Some petals were falling down the river and some red and yellow fish eaten them. The water lilies remembered her Monet's masterpiece. Rachel was totally amazed. Progressively than the balloon was continued his way, the forest was thickened.

Little by little some things like big mushrooms appeared. The balloon passed above them. They were huge! Suddenly the balloon grounded in a small creek. Gumpy who was with her, encouraged her to get off the balloon and follow him.

He led her in the forest. It was very dense, and if Gumpy was not there she would have been lost.

The show was wonderful. Rabbits were red and blue. Fawns were not afraid of her and she could caress one. Her eyes were sparkled. There were so many things to watch. Petals still fallen on her hair. She decided to keep one in her pocket.

Little by little the light was decreasing. She could not see butterflies, rabbits, fawns. She felt alone and afraid. Trees became frightening. Hopefully Gumpy was still there to reassure Rachel. She heard weird sounds. There were beasts' screams, it was scary.

After a while they arrived in a place without trees. She could see the moon. It was full moon. Moon's ray illuminated Gumpy's fur. She could see scary yellow eyes. They stared at her and she was so afraid. They were so much! She heard the hoot of an owl. Bats were flying upward her head. Suddenly all the screams stopped. In front of her was appearing a feline figure. A tiger loomed face to her. His eyes were like diamonds. But they were fierce.

Gumpy was not in her field of view. Little by little panic won Rachel. All her body shook. Her teeth slammed so hard. Gradually the light intensified and she could see Gumpy next to the tiger. The tiger seemed nicer than in the dark. And hoarse voice emerged of his throat "I heard a lot about you. All the animals talked to me about a little girl" and Gumpy replied "She is in danger. I heard about a resistance village, can you help us?" Charly, replied, kindly "You have to follow me and we'll explain you everything."

Rachel and Gumpy started following Charly to the village. They have been walking approximately for 2 hours in this strange mushroom forest. It became more and more dark. Rachel could see shadows. They sank little by little into the darkest part of the forest. It was because of this strange location that the survivors decided to hide just behind. Charly stopped there and let Rachel discover the amazing village that was just after the biggest mushroom. What she saw at this moment took her breath away. Gigantic houses were standing in a little clearing that was full of color. The brightness was blinding her. Some houses were built on high trees, and they were some mechanisms for them to get down. Rachel was contemplating this spectacle. "I am in a wonderland" thought Rachel. Gumpy, which never went to this part of the forest too, was extremely excited. He was flying everywhere. "Did you expect that?" asked Charly, proud of his village. "You can't imagine how happy I am!" responded Rachel. Then, Charly decided to bring them to the chief. They had to discuss a lot.

Rachel told all her story to the head of the resisters. He blessed her to be alive and warned her about the Queen. He agreed with the others that they were letting them live in the village. Rachel wasn't safe in this world, but it was the best for her to be protected by the resisters.

Charly took Rachel and Gumpy to their rooms. They shared the same hut which was near Charly's. It was all in wood, from the walls to the furniture. It was dimly lit by a lantern, but it was enough with all the sun that was illuminating the clearing. When she entered the room, Rachel discover some stuffs let there for her: clothes, vegetables, and a backpack made of liana. Suddenly, she thought about all of this. It really was crazy for her. She even thought it was all a dream and that she was going to wake up in her mother's arms. But she shouldn't thought about that, for now her new friends were taking risks for her, because of her they were all in danger. She changed clothes and went out of her room. Gumpy and Charly were waiting for her in the living room.

They went for a little tour in the village. They discovered the rebel's way of life. There were all type of animals: tigers, cats, dogs, birds and even bears!

Rachel, exhausted of her incredible day, went to bed early. But she was far to imagine that she would be woken up by fire in the middle of the night. There were screams everywhere and it was buzzing in her hears. Charly and Gumpy ran into her room. They were really serious and took her out of the hut. "The Mad Queen have find us! We have to run!" shouted the tiger. They were running to the forest to hide into the dark. Rachel could saw some Snakes soldiers captured and terrorized the poor animals, but no one saw them running away. They ran for hours before falling in sleep next to a mushroom. They were terrified but fortunately no one was hurt. Rachel was crying but the warm and the softness of Gumpy in her shoulders was comforting her.

The next morning, they woke up because of hungriness. They decided to look for some food in the way back to the village. They found cereals and Rachel took some little species of mushrooms that she didn't known, in her pocket. They ate a little of cereals and went back to the clearing. It was all devastated by the flames. No one was left. Charly ran to his chief's hut. But he didn't find anyone. The only thing that

left was an old book. The three friends approached it, surprised. It was covered of dust, they could only read was "Story of the cloud world". Rachel opened it. They read it loudly "Our world will be save by a young human girl, along with her two friends". They were all shocked. After few minutes, Charly said "This story is famous, but I though it was just a myth. There is just one model in the entire kingdom. I don't know how it can be here!". "I don't understand... All of this... Is it my fault?" asked Rachel, desperated.

Charly told her to sit. He had something to reveal to her. "I have to tell you the secret of the Cloud's world..." started the tiger. He continued "A long, long time ago, was a Queen. Her kingdom was in peace, and love reigned at this time. The queen was so kind that a God wanted to offer her one only wish. She admired panthers so much that she wanted to be one with her wish. But, the citizens made fun of her because of that. Full of rage, she used her wish by transforming everybody in animal. But the God transformed the whole kingdom except her. From this moment, we call her the Mad Queen because she sank in the madness. She is now violent and mean. We, animals, we have to hide in the farthest parts of the kingdom. If we don't, she often take us as workers." Rachel, thoughtful, replied "If the Queen have captured all the animals in the village, they are in danger. We have to help them!" The three friends were determined to accomplish the prophecy.

At this moment the adventure began for them. What a strange story! Charly was the guide, indeed he already have been in the Queen's castle. It was not a good memory, the tortures and curses were still in his head and body. Rachel and Gumpy were following their guide and in few hours they had left the mushrooms forest for an ice field. The curiosity and the fright was always in Rachel, and it was understandable, what was this field? With this ice everywhere, this giant cereal which looked like something like... a massive lychee. And below the ice there was something swimming in the iced water...

But Charly was the best guide, he was knowing where they had to walk. All was fine when suddenly Gumpy fell from Rachel's shoulder and outside the path. Many ice turtles with longs fangs attacked the poor Gumpy. Charly caught him and ran fast in