

Magic Tree House, Book 37

Dragon of the Red Dawn (Unabridged)

Chapter 1: for Merlin's sake

Tap tap tap..

Jack was dreaming that wild bird was pecking at his window.

Tap tap tap..

A red bird appeared with the wild bird.

Tap tap tap..

Jack, wake up! Said Anne.

Jack opened his eyes.

They are here.said Anne.

Wow. The birds. Said Jack.

No. Teddy and Catherine. Anne rushed to the window and waved outside.

They are tossing pepples in our windows.

Teddy and Catherine? Jack jumped out of the bed. enjoying Anne looking at the window. The two young enchanters of Camelot were standing in Jack and Anne's front yard. They were dressed in long dark cloaks. They smiled and waved up to Jack and Anne.

Merlin must send them. Said Jack.

Teddy made a volky motion to his fingers, pointed to the frog creek woods.

Anne nodded eagerly. They want us to the tree house. she said to Jack. Hurry and get dressed. Before mom and dad wake up.

Anne started out of Jack's room. When she got to the door, she turned, oh. And don't forget to bring the wand of diandas.

Jack throw on his clothes, he grabbed his backpack and picked inside, the wand was there, Jack put his pack on his back, then he slipped quiet downstairs and out of the door. Anne was standing on eh front porch,

Let's go. She said.

Jack and Anne ran cross their yard and dushed up to side wood.

I wonder why they came for us. Said Anne.

I wonder where they were going. Said Jack.

I wonder everything. Said Anne.

Jack and Anne crossed the street and hurried to the frog creek woods. The early March trees looked weird vary form the window, grey and brown leaves yet

Look! Said Anne out of breath. They are waiting for us.

Jack looked up. Teddy and Catherine were waiting from the window of the magic tree house. Jack grabbed the rope ladder and started

up, Anne followed

When Jack and Anne climbed inside the tree house, they threw their arms around Teddy and Catherine

We are so glad to see you . cried Anne.

And we are happy to see you also. Said Catherine.

The sea girl's lovely blue eyes arched.

Indeed. Said Teddy. It's been too long.

What's our mission this time? Asked Jack. Where's Merlin sending us?

Teddy glanced at Catherine. I think Merlin not even know that we come here. Said Teddy. We have come not at his order, but for his sake.

What does that mean? Asked Jack.

Merlin did not well, said Catherine, he complains getting old and feeble, and life of him full of sorrows, he doesn't eat or sleep,

Oh, no. said Anne.

All our Camelot wishes to help him. Said Teddy. But no one knows quiet how.

What can we do to help? Asked Jack.

Teddy picked a book from the corner of the tree house, through the ages people all over the world saw the secrets of happiness. He said. Morgan wants you to search for four of secrets to share with

Merlin. She believes that the first one might be found here.

Jack took the book from Teddy. He read the title aloud: a journey to old Japan.

Oh, wow. We have been to Japan before. Said Anne.

Before we sent you. Jack said to Teddy and Catherine. We have adventure to ancient .

Yes. Morgan told us. Said Teddy. But she said that that journey you visited countryside, this time you must travel to the capital city

Are you guys coming with us? Asked Anne.

I am afraid not. Said Catherine. We must return to Camelot now to help mergan. Since Merlin is fallen ill, she has taken on much of his work,

You have the wand, do you not? Asked Teddy.

Yeap. Said Jack. He reached into his backpack and took out the wand of diandas. The spear wand's shape like a unicorn's horn.

With the help of the wand, you will make your own magic. Said Teddy.

That were Merlin said that gave to us. Said Anne. but he didn't say how. Said Jack.

It is very simple. Said Teddy.

The wand has three rules: first, it only works for the good of others, the wand can never be used for selfish reasons.

Second, the wand ropes works that only you have very hardest trages without its help. Said Catherine. Do not tent to use it magic too quickly.

And third, the wand only works under command five words. Said Teddy. So you must choose your words carefully.

Can we review that place? Asked Jack.

Don't worry, I have got it. Said Anne. we have to go, we have to help Merlin as soon as we can. If the tree house take us to do, to go to Japan, all we will go back to Camelot. Jack asked Teddy and Catherine

Teddy and Catherine held their hands and they each were sparkling blue rain. A magic queen will take us home . said Catherine. And This book from Camelot library will bring you back home frog creek . said Teddy. After you have complete your mission,

He picked up another book lying in the corner . it was the book about the Pennsylvanian Jack and Anne should use their first magic tree house adventures.

Thanks said Jack.

Goodbye. Said Anne. take good care of Merlin.

We will try. Said Catherine. She and Teddy raised their magic wind to there lips. They whispered words too softly for Jack and Anne to hear. Then bloomed on the rains. As they bloom the young

sorcerers began to fade into the cool morning air. In the moment, they disappeared completely. Silence filled the tree house. Anne turned to Jack,

Ready? She said.

Jack nodded. He pointed to the cover of the Japan book

I'd wish we could go there. He said.

The tree house started to spin. It spun faster and faster. Then everything was still. Absolutely still.

Chapter 2: the imperial garden

Jack opened his eyes, soft morning light shone across the window of the tree house. Pink flowers bloomed on the branches outside the window. Jack and Anne were wearing brown shaggy baggie pants, and brown silk robes with blue sashes. On their feet, was stiff white socks and straw sandals. Jack's backpack turned into a bird-like bag.

Are we wearing bath robes? Said Jack. Asked Jack.

I think they are called kimonos. Said Anne.

Oh. Right. Said Jack. Where we landed exactly?

Jack and Anne looked out the window, below the tree house was a beautiful garden, build with cherry trees and long leaves willows. A waterful tumble into a sparkling spring pool.

Wow. Said Anne.

Jack opened the Japan book and found the painting looked like the garden. He read a lot to Anne:

In the 1600s, the imperial garden surrounded the imperial palace, in the capital city of Japan the city was called Ito. In the 1800s, its name was changed to Tokyo.

Tokyo? Said Anne. I have always wanted to go to Tokyo.

Me too. Said Jack. He read on:

The late 1600s in Japan were years of busy prosperity. Art and culture, rived. But in the times of the country completely closed to the outside world. No one was allowed to come in . the citizens of Ito were frequently make sure they have passports .

What's the passports exactly? Said Anne.

It's an official booklet tells who you are, said Jack. It also lists the different counties you traveled too. He read more:

Anyone who did not have a passport will be considered as a spy. And punished severely.

Ah..oh.. said Anne. we don't have passports.

Yeah. That's the problem. Said Jack.

Hey! What if we use diandas wand to make us passports? Said Anne.

Good idea. Said Jack.

He picked inside the bag Good, he wanted diandas wand was there.

Wait, wait. Said Anne. we can't. remember the rules. We have to only use the magic wand for the good of others.

Oh..right. said Jack.

And we have to try our hardness before we used one. Said Anne.

We haven't tried anything. Yet. Said Jack.

I guess we just should just looking for the secret of happiness. And hope no one catches us. Said Anne.

Shh.. said Jack. Listen.

A bell was ringing in the distance, the ringing was louder then gave the sound of horses. Jack and Anne crouched down. They raised their heads just the line of picked up the window. Through the flowery tree bench they saw small procession coming to the garden. The man leaving the procession was ringing a bell. Two men walked behind him, holding up the bAnnners. Behind them, four men rode slowly on horseback. They all wore beggie trousers, puffy shirts, their hats were shived, except for nuts, black hair. Each had two swords, a long one and a short one, hanging from their belt. As

the very in the procession, rode a man in the billowing purple robe and small purple hat. Red tassels hang from his large black horse. Jack looked at his research book again. He found the picture looked like the man on the black horse. He read the caption to himself.

In 1600s, the military ruler known as the shogun lived in the central imperial garden in the palace there had hundreds of troops.

That last guy is the shogun. Jack whispered to Anne. he lives in the big palace of the garden.

He kept reading.

Often the shogun's warriors traveled with him. They were called samurai.

Oh. Ma'am. Whispered Jack. Those other guys are samurai.

He and Anne had barely skipped the armored samurai on their earlier trip to Japan.

Samurai were excellent horsemen, war troops to fighting. The code of the samurai was straight: samurai did not show their feelings and had great power in concentration.

They are gone. Said Anne.

Jack looked out the window.

The shogun and his samurai warriors had disappeared down the tree shelter dirt road.

We should get out of the imperial garden fast. Said Jack. We stayed here we just been asked decode.

How do we get out? Asked Anne.

Jack looked at Japan book. He found the mat widow.

Look! He said pointing at the mat. We have to get over this bridge that lead to the way from the imperial garden into the city. the bridge is on the east side of the garden.

The morning sun is over there said Anne squeezing into the sunlight. So that must be east, let's climb down that way.

Good plan. Then we will be walking direction of the samurai. Said Jack.

Right. Said Anne. she started down the rope ladder .

Be careful! Said Jack. We don't want anyone to see us sneaking around the garden

Jack put the Japan book into his bird like bag, and slang the bag over his shoulder as he stepped down the ladder, he nearly trapped on his kimono.

Oh, brother. He said.

He yelled up the clock and carefully climbed down. Jack joined Anne on the wide path, the gust dry wind carried paddles from the jerry trees through the air, the long branches of the willows swing over the grass, Jack and Anne began heading east keeping their

eyes opening for more people . they walked pass flower path, and big rocks. They walked around the pond and swans, they started down the narrow land between glosing cheery trees . just as they came out under the trees, Jack and Anne soft saw four men walking toward them. One man was shorter, and older than the others. He wore straw hat and Teddy brown coat, and used walking stick, the other tree had sharp tight knots, and two swords hang from each of their belts.

Samurai. Whispered Jack.

Yax. Said Anne.

Run! Said Jack.

Jack and Anne turned around, in started running back down the narrow lane. Jack heard the men running after them.

Out! Cried one samurai.

Jack grabbed Anne's hand and they are stumbled to a hole. Held their breath, Jack and Anne hid in the narrow lane. Jack heard the men running after them. Jack heard three samurai rushing toward them.

Who are you? One of the samurai barked. He was holding up his sword. Who are you running from us. Are you spies?

Just as Jack about the Anne answer, he heard a voice shouted,

Bakh..koto.

The man walking sticking wore straw hat, whispering toward them.

Baku..koto..what are you doing here?

He called up to Jack and Anne.

Why did you not wait for me, as you bridge.

Chapter 3: Matsuo Basyou

The three samurai turned to the man with walking stick,

You know them, master? One asked.

Yes of course. The man said.

This boy and girl are baku and koto. My best students.

Hi! Master . said Anne pretending she knew who the man was. We couldn't find bridge so we,,,ah..we..

We cant meadow look for you. Said Jack.

And now you have found me. Said the man.

I am sorry you are afraid by me friends. The samurai put away his sword. Forgive me. He said balling before Jack and Anne.

Sure. No problem . said Anne.

The samurai turned to the small man : will you leave your students now? he said

Thank you. Mutsana Matsuo the most hornored Master. For your

visit with us today.

All three warriors bowed deeply before the man. Then they walked away.

Why did the samurai call the small man Matsuo the master? Jack wondered.

When the samurai were gone, the man turned to Jack and Anne, his eyes twinkled.

I believe you are safe now. he said.

Thanks. Said Anne.

I am afraid I am not baku, koto.

No, you are not. Said the man. But you are not spies, either. Aren't you?

No. said Jack. I did not think so. Said the man. That's why I thought you need help.

Thank you. Said Jack.

You are most welcome. Said the man. Now perhaps you will tell me who you are. Really are. And how you came to be here in the imperial garden.

Our name is Jack and Anne, said Jack. And we....he paused.

It seemed impossible to explain.

Teddy and Catherine to visit , Merlin's sorrow, Morgan's research

book,

We came here to search for the secret of happiness. Said Anne.

The man smiled, I believe that is something we all seek. He said.

but you must be very carefully Jack and Anne.,the shogun did not allow the foreigners into our country. If you do not have passports, you could be port or punished.

We know. Said Anne. what shall we do?

Perhaps the trouble with me. Today. Said the man. You can continue to be my students. Baku and koto.

Good plan. Said Jack.

You must remember sit seek harmony with surroundings. Said the man. Observe the people of Ito, and do what they do. If you do not stand up stand out , you will not be noticed by the samurai.

Got it. Said Anne.

Seek harmony with surrounds. Observe the people of Ito and do what they do . Jack repeated to himself.

Come. Said the man.

He started walking breezily through the garden. Jack and Anne hurried after him.

Excuse me. But what is your name? Anne said.

My friends call me Basyou. The man answered.

Basyou? That's a cute name. said Anne.

Why did samurai call you the most honored master? Asked Jack.

Because I am a teacher. Said Basyou.

What do you teach them? Asked Jack.

Basyou smiled. Today they learned how to listen to a cricket in the wood pal. He said. and how to see thing through frog.

Cool. Said Jack. That those must be weird skills. He thought. Special ways to listen for enemy. Or jump around with sword. He remember their insurance Ninjas use secret natures to find enemy.

Basyou let Jack and Anne through wooden cave and high wall.

They walked over a wide stone bridge that crossed the moto. When they came to the other side of the bridge, followed the path that led to a small boat dog on the river. Three fishermen were loading their baskets into a long flat of boat. Hundreds of little shinning fish was inside of each boat. Basyou walked over to the fishermen,

Good morning. He said.

Good morning. The master Basyou. The fishermen said. all of them bowed. Everyone seems to know Basyou. Jack thought.

May my student sit and ride with you down the river? Asked Basyou.

Oh. Yes. Of course. Master Basyou. One of them said. we would be most honored to carry you on our humble boat.

Thank you. Said Basyou.

Jack and Anne followed the Basyou onto the deck of the boat. And sat next to the wicker of the baskets. One of the fishermen untied the boat, and other used his long post pushed the way from the dock. And the man began pulling down the river,, the fishing boat floating over under the serious bridges. Moving inter shadows and light. As they passed under one of the bridges, its creep above them river. Basyou Jack and Anne frown forward.

Forgive us. Master. One of the fishermen called to Basyou. The river is very shallow. There's been no rain for a long time. Said the other fishermen. It's very worry some to us.

Yes. It worries me too. Said Basyou.

What's everyone worry about. Anne asked Basyou.

When the weather was very dry, the people of Ito worry about the fire. Said Basyou. Twenty five years ago, doing a dry spear, half of our city were destroyed by a terrible fire. Thousands died.

Oh. That's awful. Said Anne.

Yes. Since everyone had worked hard to rebuild the capital, said Basyou, Ito is now even more beautiful than before. In fact a long destroyed bingo who knew castles of samurai. See, there is one hats now.

Basyou pointed at steep rocky cliff above the river bank.

Jack shaded his eyes, as he looked at the curved roof and the high

stone walls of the samurai castle.

This largest room is called the thousand mat hall. Said Basyou.

What does that mean/ ? asked Jack.

It means the room can fill thousand floor mats. Said Basyou.

Cool. Said Anne.

Basyou where do you live?

Basyou smiled. My castle is on the other side of the great bridge.

He said.

Jack wondered how many mats Basyou's castle could hold.

Beyond the steep cliffs the boat could traffic here. Now there were many boats floating on the wide river. Big seal boats, large bar loaded with number and fish passing and passengers holding pare salts. The fishing boat glided toward the crowded darkness to the market. In the market, thousand of glomming fish were lied out tables men and women also sold fish from other secrets. Form baskets and pulls across their shoulders.

Shrimp, tuna,,. Octopus, eel, ...they shouted.

Wait for us, we delivered the fish. Basyou said to Jack and Anne.

Then they were travelling further on the river . the fishermen tied up their boat . Jack and Anne waited as Basyou and fishermen landing, Basyou helped crew on the load the baskets. Then each man pulled back baskets on their head, and started up to the stone steps

leading to the fish markets.

Oh. No. said Anne. look!

She pointed to the other end of the dock. Jack looked. He saw several samurai were getting off the boat.

Quick! To our basket! He said.

Jack and Anne each picked up a basket of fish, as Jack tried to deliver the fish to his head, a couple of fish fell from his head off the dock.

Leave them. Come on. whispered Anne.

Carrying the baskets on their heads, Jack and Anne followed Basyou and the fishermen up-stepped and until deliver the fish to a young woman on one of the tables. Jack lands back the river, the samurai were standing on the landing, checking someone's passport, Jack looked at Basyou, Basyou was watching the samurai too. He turned to the fishermen :

Thank you for the right. Ride. He said calmly. Bang to the men. We will walk from here.

The fishermen nodded and smiled.

Good plan. Jack thought relieved.

Come. Said Basyou

He let Jack and Anne away from the market, soon they came to a busy road, crowed with pedantry and travelers on horseback. As

they walked along the crowd, Jack remembered Basyou's words.

Seek harmony with your surrounds.

He tried to blink by walking his steady pace. Keeping his eyes down, he worried about their mission.

How could we find the secrets of the happiness? He wondered, if we haven't kept dodging the samurai.

Look at this bridge. Said Anne.

Jack glanced up. A high arched bridge span across the river. Hundreds of people were walking across it.

That is the great bridge. Said Basyou. They were led away from the heart of Ito to the bank of the samudware by live.

Great. Said Jack.

He hoped they will be safe away from the heart of the Ito. Then maybe they could focus some search for secret. Jack Anne and Basyou joined the crowd crossing the bridge. They walked single file with the wooden rolling. Jack stared straight at the head, careful not to look at anyone in the eye. He saw people have picnic on the other side of the bridge. Kids were flying kites.

What's that mountain? Said Anne. she pointed to a snow capped mountain looming in the distance. The wide code of the greeve mountain glowed above the fleece roads tended clouds.

That was volcanic mountain called Ma fuji. Said Basyou.

Oh, I ever the Ma fuji. Said Jack. The highest mountain in Japan right?

Yes. And most beautiful. Said Basyou.

It is beautiful. Said Anne.

Jack looked around. Actually. He thought. Everything seemed beautiful that moment. The green and yellow parrots ferried boat the passengers below. The pink cheery trees shivering at the river edge. The red kites and white seagulls were gliding through the sky.

I love Japan. Jack said softly.

I do too. Said Basyou. We call our world the floating world. For since the float the beauty .

It really does. Murmured Jack.

Walking across the great bridge, he found himself were floating through the floating world.

Chapter 4: sushi and sumo

Busho led Jack and Anne off the greatest bridge, and down the crowded road. They passed a huge stacks of lumber, then they came to a low stages built along the river bank. On one stage,

women were dancing. Their faces were painted white. They wore shimmering kimonos, and waved fans. Musicians played on the second stage, they played plat three string guitar, instruments, and blew on bamboo flutes. Their music was high pitched, and strange, but Jack liked it. On the other stage was a pop show. Pop tiers was wearing black cloaks, moved giant dragon pop around the stag. A man stood to the side, hold story to the audience on the back of the crowd, it was hard to hear.

What's he saying . said Anne.

He is telling the legend of the cloud dragon. Said Basyou. The cloud dragon is one of the guard animals of the four directions. She has the power of flat into the man's rain clouds.

Cool. Said Anne.

Basyou let them on past crowd and stalls. People sold bees, kites and paper lanterns. Some boys were holding yo-yo for sell. Jack was surprised to see yo-yo in old Japan. Beyond the quiet stalls, a rolls of ends of cafés. The smell of the specie and growd fish fill in the air.

Yam. Said Anne.

Jack was hungry too.

Would you like to stop at the teahouse ? Basyou asked them.

Yes. Jack and Anne said together.

Basyou let them toward a small building of the open found. At the entrench Basyou slipped the office sados Jack and Anne do the same. Place their sados in the robe as other people had left by the door. Inside the teahouse, cook stirred the steaming pots over the wood birding burning stove. People sat at long low tea tables eating with chopsticks and drinking from small cups. Several customers smiled shyly and bowed before Basyou.

Busho must be a very famout teacher of the samurai. Thought Jack.

May Jack feeling important to be with him. Basyou led them to a table, he sat (inside) crossly aside the strawcap, Jack and Anne did the same. A waiter with the crusher around the head, hurried to the table.

Welcome to our humble teahouse. Master Basyou. He said.

Thank you. Said masho.

Everyone is so polite in Japan . Jack thought.

The waiter handed Jack and Anne and Basyou each a warm wide towels.

Thank you. Said Jack and Anne.

Jack watched Basyou washed his hands on the towel, he and Anne did the same. Then they all gave the towels back to the waiter.

I would like to eat sushi for me and my two students. Please. Said

Basyou.

Thank you. Said the waiter bowing.

While they waited for their food, Jack studied the people in the room. Jack noticed that even the little kids eating with the chopsticks. He and Anne had never had much using chopsticks in restaurants back home. Soon the waiter brought with three small plates of food and sticky rice rampturn dark green pepper like strips. He also brought napkins and three pairs of chopsticks. And waiter had gone. Basyou spoke to Jack and Anne, in soft voice, and no one else could hear,

We call this sushi. He said. it is right with pieces of raw fish in the middle .

Raw fish? Said Jack. He gaped.

And what's this part? Anne pointed at the pepper and ripping.

Seewid. Said Basyou.

Seewid? Said Jack. It is very good. Said Basyou.

Jack was so hungry that he would try anything. Even raw fish or seewid. It's only problem was the chopsticks.

Try it this way, Jack. Said Anne.

She carefully picked up a piece of sushi between the wood ends of the chopsticks Jack copied her. But they both tried to bring their food to their mouths, their pieces of sushi fell onto the table. Jack

and Anne laughed and tried the second time. Anne was successful but Jack dropped the sushi again. Without thinking he grabbed with his finger and porked it into his mouth.

mmm..said Jack.

The vinegar tasting rice the raw fish and green sauces were delicious.

But Jack stopped and mit you. Two samurai at other table were glaring at him, one of them had a big scar on his face. The other had fear stock eyes. Jack threw with eyes they swallowed.

They saw me missing with my chopsticks. He thought. They can tell them all that we came to Japan.

He picked up another sushi with chopsticks, he glanced again at the samurai , they were watching him like hocks, Jack's hands felt shaky, he tried to stick calm. He remembered the passage on their research book : samurai did not show their feelings. They have great power of concentration. Jack tried very hard now, he showed his fear. He concentrated , holding the sushi with chopsticks , he raised the sushi to his mouth, and eat ate it calmly. He lowed his chopsticks and picked up another piece of sushi , he ate it calmly . when Jack looked back at the samurai, they were no longer watching him, Jack led out his breath, he picked up last piece of sushi with chopsticks and ate it calmly.

Very good. Said Basyou smiling .

Thanks. Said Jack.

Let's go now. said Basyou.

Basyou folded his napkin neatly beside his plate, Jack and Anne did the same. Basyou paid for their meals, and they stopped at the entrance's way. And put on their shoes, as they stepped outside, a dawn began bidding loudly. A huge crowd are gathered at the grassy river bank .

What's happening? Anne asked.

Come. I will show you. Said Basyou.

People moved beside Basyou could lead Jack and Anne to the front of the crowd. A large rain began to merge out on the ground with straw. In the middle of the circle, two enormously fat men squatted at obesity of the rain. Each man looked as if weight more than four hundred pounds. They clasped their hands, then each began stumping his feet,

Who are they? Said Anne. her eyes were wide.

Sumo wrestlers. Said Basyou.

Sumo wrestling has been our most popular sport for over a thousand years. The two wrestlers are now perfectly still. Crouching down, with clenched faces, they were glaring at one another, the whole

crowd seemed hold their breath. As the wrestlers stared at each other's eyes, suddenly, one wrestler launched forward and grabbed the other. Then the huge fat men began pushing each other around.

They are trying to push off the other off the ring. Said Basyou Grounding in growing. The two men moved back and forward and specked cheered wildly. Then one wrestler made a quick move and shack his wavier out the circle. The crowd roared. Jack found himself cheering too. When the noise died down, Basyou turned to Jack and Anne, The first magic is over. He said . shall we go now? Before Jack and Anne could answer him, two samurai stepped in front of them. One had a big scare on his face, the other had fear stock eyes.

Excuse me. The scared face man said. may we see your passports, please?

Chapter 5: an excellent student?

Jack froze. Basyou stepped forward. When the two samurai sighed, they bowed,

Good afternoon. Master. One of them said.

Good afternoon. Said Basyou. This is my students koto and baku. I am afraid they left their passports at home today.

They are your students? Said the samurai with the scar.

Yes. Excellent students. Said Basyou. They have mush nature talent.

Ah... the two samurai looked at Jack and Anne with interest.

Would you share your talent with us? One asked smiling.

What talent? Jack wondered frantically.

Some samurai war art talent?

Busho saw Jack's confusion. Perhaps you watched each way side when of your poems. He said.

One of our poems? Squired Jack. What kind of samurai tell us that?

He wondered . the samurai will you have the poems?

Sure. Said Anne.

There are poems. There is a poem. She took a deep breath and then receded.

Twinkle Twinkle little star

How I wonder what you are

All above the world so high

Like a diamond in the sky

The samurai with the scar nodded, very good koto. He said. the little star twinkles. Like a diamond, the other samurai closed his

eyes, as if he was seeing the star .

Yes, yes. Very good. He said. the sparkling diamond high above the world.

Excellent.

Both samurai turned to Jack, and you? Baku? One said.

Jack stared at them. He couldn't remember any poems. Not even the nursery rhythm.

Ah.. a poem. Right. Said Jack.

Am.. let's see.

Ok. He took a deep breath and said:

I love Japan

Oh ma'am I really love Japan

The land of Japan is cool

Jack bits his lips, he knew his poem is bad,, he glanced at Anne, she looked him as if she was not trying to laugh. The dark eyed samurai turned to Basyou.

An excellent student? He said.

Basyou nodded. Well, yes. Baku has a ...special talent. He needs words but his talent is there.

The samurai was frowned.

You see he left his passport at home? Master Basyou? Where is his home?

Just then the drably started again. The samurai turned to look. A new sumo match was beginning. The two samurai moved more closer to get a better look. Basyou turned to Jack and Anne
We should leave now. he said calmly. And I will take you to my home where you will be safe.

Jack Anne and Basyou quickly left the sumo crowd, and blended shorter and choppers walking down the street. ???peddlers Carried long poles over their shoulders. With Baskets swing on their ends. They shouted about their weird. Jews and socks, to histories, open twine. One on the large boxes on her back,
Books books! She shouted.

No, thank you. Said Jack he loved books but they kept going.
Even the fraid of samurai might shout begin any moment. A boy carried bird cages shouted
Birds, birds!

Suddenly Jack heard and felt a hand on his shoulder and nearly a hard attack. It was just Basyou.

I live that way. Said Basyou pointing.

Over the bridge, Jack and Anne walked follow Basyou. Over a small narrow bridge, crossed the canal, Basyou lifted his feet tempo, Basyou let them pass the tempo, and passed the small bamboo houses with chicken in their yards. Little children were

spending tops on the dusty ground. One called out:

Hello! Master Basyou!

Busho smiled and waved. Then Jack and Anne walked with Basyou along the dirt pass, bordering the river, tall pine trees along the river bank, and a dry wind blew leaves and pine into the shallows. Jack started to move more easily. He felt safer now. the trees grew more narrow, the sun slipped behind the tops of the trees. Jack was eager to get to Basyou's castle. He looked for a steep roof and high stone walls of the castle of samurai. Through the deep in shadow of the twilight, Basyou led them to a clearing now far from the river . at the center of the clearing, was a pine with weeds, in the far saddle of the pine, mask covered stone back to the door of a tiny hut. The hut was made of bamboo, and have a roof with wood shingles. Next to the small hut was a large plain with ruby green leaves. Welcome to my castle. Said Basyou.

Chapter 6: the banana tree

This is your castle? Said Jack.

Basyou smiled. In my heart my humble cottage is grander than all the castles of samurai. He explained and my banana tree is more

beautiful to me than all the beauties in imperial garden.

Jack and Anne stared to large plain with long ruby lieaves.

I like this tree so much, and I have taken my name from it. Said Basyou. Basyou means banana tree.

Cool. Said Anne.

She looked around, it's nice here.

Not really. Thought Jack. The cottage was shabby and ruby banana tree looked squinty and sad to him.

Please, come inside. Said Basyou.

He slipped off his sados and left them outside. He picked up the bondle of the wood, and then dark through the low door, and let them into the hut. Jack and Anne took off their shoes too, and followed Basyou into his small shadowy room. Basyou opened his shatters and let in the evening air.

Please, sit. He said.

Thank you. Said Jack and Anne.

Jack looked around room for cheers, he wanted Anne. the only furniture was a long wooden table and bamboo chest. Three strong mats covered the earthen floor. Jack and Anne sat down at one of the mats. Basyou let the small oil land then he made a fire , a fireplace.

I will prepare tea for us. He said. rest I will draw water form the river.

He picked up with two wooden buckets near the door and headed outside. When Basyou was gone, Jack and Anne looked at each other,

I guess this is the three mat house. Said Anne..

Jack nodded. You think the famous teacher of samurai will have not a hundred mat house, or at least a fifty mat house? He said .

I like this house though. Said Anne. It's cozy.

I wonder who Basyou is exactly. Said Jack.

If he is famous, maybe he is in our book. Said Anne. looking him up.

Good idea. Said Jack.

He pulled the research book from his bag, by the light of the crackling fire he looked up Basyou in the index.

Yes he is here.

Jack turned to the right page and read aloud:

Basyou is one of Japan 's greatest poets. He wrote sure beautiful poems that speaking people as clear as today they did appeared in the Ito Japan.

Basyou is a great poet? Said Anne. that explains everything!

Sure . said Jack. Explains why we had to recite poems before the samurai. But it doesn't explain why Basyou lives in this dinggy house.

Basyou opened the door and came in with his bucket. Jack closed book and slipped it back in his bag. Basyou poured the river water into an iron pot over the fire. He pulled three tiny bowls and a small cloth bag from the bamboo chest, he took loose green tea from the bag and dropped into the pot. And then he waited patiently for water to boil. Jack and Anne wait patiently too. Listening to the soft flushing sound of the river outside, Jack started to feel peaceful at first time all day. When the water was hot, Basyou poured some in each of the teapots and then he handed the warm pots to Anne and Jack.

Thank you. Said Anne.

Thank you. said Jack.

You're welcome. Said Basyou.

Jack carefully took the safe from the sting pot. The green tea tasted bitter, but he didn't mind it mmm..interesting taste. Said Anne. Basyou Jack was wonder if you are a famous poet, why do you live in a stinky house.

Anne! said Jack embarrassed. She is kidding, I wasn't really wonder that...

Busho laughed. Long ago I dreamed to be a samurai, he said, but I was not happy, all I wanted to do is write poetry. a poet did not need

to live in a castle, a poet need to live with the wind and clouds, the flowers and birds, here I have a small garden, and my banana tree, I have the sand river all day long, here I have everything I need to write my poems.

What did you write about? Asked Anne..

Small things . said Basyou.

A crow peaking snails out of mud, a wood-packer hammering the tree, pine needles scattered by the wind. A poem wands beauty in all the small tings. He said.

And you teach poetries to samurai? Asked Jack.

Yes. The samurai greatly honored their art of poetry. said Basyou.

Poetry had focus on their mind. The samurai believe that true live brave warrior should be able to compose poem even in the midst of earthquake or facing enemies at battlefield.

Can you say one of your poems for us? Asked Anne.

Let me think. Said Basyou. Well I was working on the new poem yesterday.

He reached for the wooden box under the table. He took a small piece of delicate paper from the box and read aloud:

An old pond

A fog jumps in

The sound of water

Basyou looked up and Jack and Anne

mmm.. said Jack nice beginning

it is not just the beginning , said Basyou, it is the whole poem. A small moment in time.

I think this is great. Said Anne. I love fogs. You poem make me love them even more.

Would you read it again please? Jack said.

If you like it, you must miss something.

Basyou read again.

An old pond, a frog jumps in, the sound of water,.

Jack nodded thoughtfully, good , he said. it's really good. And mended poem made them feel as if he himself been right there. By that pond, hearing the frog flashing into the water , breaking the silence.

If you like it, you may have it. Said Basyou.

He handed the paper to Jack.

Thanks . said Jack.

As he put poems back in his bag, the bell rang softly in the distance.

Ah! the temple bells. Said Basyou. He stood up, it's time to rest. I will take a mat in sleep outside. I enjoy sleeping under the stars.

And now,, because the poems recited Anne, I shall think of them the diamonds in the sky.

Anne smiled.

You can stay inside covering yourself from the mosquitoes' bites. Said Basyou. He put some nets on the bamboo mats, and handed them to Jack and Anne.

But do not worry. In my small house there are only small mosquitoes. Not giant ones like goats in the imperials palace.

Jack and Anne laughed at Basyou's joke. He gave nuts each of them, then he picked up one of the mat from the floor and put it outside closing the door behind them. The fire and fireplace died down. The light from the oil lamp nearly died out gone out too. Jack and Anne lied on the straw mats, covered themselves with mosquitoes nets. The quake cheeped oath. Jack noticed the patch of the light on the floor, he realize it was the moon light through the open window, Jack reached out form the under of net, and put his hand on the square pale moon light, he could hear the rustling of the banana plain to the breeze. Half-sleep, he imagined himself swing with long broad leaves.

This stinky hut is much nice than the castle. Anne murmured. I feel like a tiny cricket going to sleep.

Yeah. I feel like a whole moon at my hand. Said Jack, in like I am

a..banana leaf...dancing in the wind.

Sounds like a poem. Said Anne.

Yeah. Maybe I should read it down. Said Jack. But instead he fell fast into sleep .

Chapter 7: cling, cling cling,

cling, cling cling, Jack opened his eyes.

The sound of the bells filled the night. Not the gentle ringing of the tempo bells, but a harsh cling. Jack smiled smoke, he and Anne threw out their mosquitoes nets and stumble to the door. Basyou was standing in the yard looking at the dawn sky. It was black with smoke. Bells kept clinging.

Is there a fire? Asked Jack.

Yes. Said Basyou. It must be very big. But the bell do not stop ringing from the watch tower. This is what we have feared most. I must be going to help the firefighters.

We will help too. Said Jack.

No. stay here. Said Basyou. He put on his Saxon sandos and grabbed wooden bucket by the .door.

If the fire gets close, waiting to the river where you will be safe.

But we want to help. Said Anne.

Yes. Wait for us. Said Jack.

He and Anne put on their saxon sandos.

Come then. Said Basyou. But if the fire begin spread you must promise return here to the river.

We promise. Said Anne.

Then bring the other bucket and follow me. Said Basyou.

I will get it. Said Jack.

He hurried into the hut and grabbed the wooden bucket by the hearth. It was heavy even without water in it. Jack hug the bucket to his chest and rushed to back outside. Jack and Anne followed Basyou through the pine forest. They pasted farmer house where two small children outside looking at the fire sky.

Out father says the number yards near the river was burning. The boy shouted to Basyou.

He has gone to fight the fire. Said the girl. Great palaces' wood are burning.

The fire bells kept clinging. As Basyou Jack and Anne ran pass the temple and across the narrow float bridge, they hurried one of the pass. Until they came to the shopping market, the smoky red dawn people were pushing cards piled high with .. they were running away from the fire. But Basyou Jack and Anne ran towards the fire.

The air grew hotter and smokier, near the teahouse and the performance stages. Sparkles flew through the sky, tiles and roof tops were catching fire and scratching on the ground. Basyou let Jack and Anne followed him ...faraway from the smoke until they came to the number yard. The fire roared and burnt piles of blocks, flames rows higher into the sky. Firefighters were passing buckets of water upline from the river to the fire. Others waved huge fans to bit back the wind blown flames. While the most scaring works were hoarsen tracks separated the burning temper.

Help the bucket bukit! Basyou said to Jack and Anne . get water from the river.

Basyou rushed to help the man beating fire with fans, while Jack and Anne hurried down to the river. Jack felt that their wooden bucket with water inside, it was so heavy that he couldn't lift it.

Do it together! Said Anne

Right . said Jack.

Using all their strength, Jack and Anne carried their bucket to the bank of the river. As they stumbled along they tired no to split the water. Jack could hardly breath through the smoke of the filled air, his throat felt the air burnt. His face felt red and hot. Finally , when they thought they could find another step, they got to the bucket gave. They gave their bucket pouring into the end, who gave them

an empty bucket,

Get more. He said.

Jack and Anne hurried back to the river with the empty bucket, they filled it with water and struggled back to the bank. Over and over, Jack and Anne held buckets of water, back and forth through the river bank along with the firefighters. Everyone worked hard to battle the great flames. But the flames kept shooting into the sky and eventually the flames fire lifted over the river and the temper and the far bank getting to burn.

Oh! No! cried a woman. All our Ito catch fire now.

The retch houses were burnt out. Said a man. The harvest will be destroyed .

Several people began to weeping, Jack felt like crime too. Right in front of his eyes, the beautiful floating world of Ito were about to go up with flames.

This is hopeless. He said to Anne.

No. it's not. Anne said. the wand. We can use the wand.

Of course. Cried Jack. But it's in my bag, my bag is in Basyou's house.

We have to get it. Said Anne

She shouted to Basyou.

Basyou, we are going to back to your castle.

Yes! Run for safety. Called Basyou. Jump in to the river.

Right. Cried Jack.

Be careful. Anne shouted to Basyou.

Then she and Jack started to run as fast as they could. They ran across the past market, they ran across the foot bridge, passed the temple and the farmers' houses and through the grow of the pines to Basyou's house. Jack and Anne ran inside the tiny hut, Jack grabbed his bag, and pulled out the wand, he waved it through the air,

Do something that make the fire stop. He shouted.

Jack held his breath and waited.

Let me try. Said Anne.

She took the wand and waved it.

Stop the fire in the lto now! she shouted.

Jack and Anne waited again. It's not working. Cried Jack . we must be doing something wrong.

But this is for the good of everyone. Said Anne.

I know, I know. Said Jack. Let me try it hardest. Said Anne.
everyone has.

Five words! Said Jack. We have to use five words.

Oh! Right. Said Anne.

She wave the wand to the air again,

Pull the all the fire she yelled.

One more word! Cried Jack.

Please. Shouted Anne.

Jack and Anne were blasted by a blinding light, Jack felt himself shooting through brazenness, sting darkness and back to light. And icy wind blow the air was crystal clear. Early sun light flashed on rock. Jack and Anne were standing on the edge of a mountain.

Chapter 8: in the red dawn

Are you, are you ok? Anne asked Jack.

She was still holding the wand. A peak of blue and bright wind.

Yeah. Yeah but what happened? Said Jack. Dizz, he was freezing out of death. Where are we?

I don't know . whispered Anne.

Jack shield his eyes with brilliant light of the red dawn. And looked around. Pink clouds loaded through the air like piles of cotton candy, through a gap of clouds, he saw heels swords and black smoke below. Beneath the smoke, flames rose from the city of Ito.

I think we were on Mon Fuji. Said Anne .

Mon Fuji? Said Jack. That's crazy, where why we were are here?

He stopped catch his breath, he felt dizzy and light headed. Ito's burning, we should be there.

Maybe the wand didn't understand. Said Anne. maybe the wand is trying to save us by taking us far away from the fire.

Suddenly, a great mass of clouds piled up raining the mountain top like a war. The clouds swirled and tumbled and changed color from rose to gold to grey to white .

What's going on. cried Jack .

The head of the gigantic monster rose from the bubbling clouds .

Ah.. Jack and Anne screamed. They grabbed each other and crouched down to the rocky ledge. The monster had spiky eyebrows and long curved whiskers. It has the horn of the deer, the foot tone of the snake, and firry breath of the dragon. Through the swirling clouds Jack and Anne could see the dragon snake-like body curling through the clouds and down the mountain side. It's back with covered shining scales, its pan had row of shackle like fans, the dragon witched out the clouds, they were like the clouds ego, only a thousand times bigger. The clouds crept the side of the mountain, Jack made himself as small as he could. He covered his head, but Anne jumped to her feet.

I got it. She cried. I know what's happening. Thank you for coming .

Anne get down. Jack shouted.

Jack! It's the cloud dragon. Said Anne. the pop show remember.

The wand sent her here.

What? Why? Cried Jack.

She makes rain. Don't you remember? Rain. Cried Anne. she commands the rain clouds.

The dragon lowed her giant head, stretching over the mountain ledge, her scales glittered honey gold and dawn light. She was still, very still. As if she was waiting for something.

Come on, we have to climb on her back. shouted Anne.

Why ? cried Jack.

We have to go with her. Said Anne. the wand brought us the dragon , now its time for us to show her what to do.

Ok, ok, said Jack.

Anne climbed onto the back of the cloud dragon. She sat between the two of the dragon's shark-like fans, Jack climbed on behind her, he grabbed the fan in front of him. As if they were holding the horn of the saddle.

Fly over the fire. Yelled Anne . make rain. Lots of it. Shouted Jack .

The cloud dragon slit off from the mountain ledge, Jack trembled with cold, as the monster blizzard through the freezing sea of the clouds, like the snake through the path. Above Ito, Jack looked

down, billowing black smoking, red flames shouted dawn sky,

Now, rain. Now! Jack said.

The cloud dragon whirled back her head, grey black clouds floured from her mouth, the clouds spread across the sky, there was crack of thunder, and flash of lighting, then rain began to pour down on the city. The dragon twisted her head this way in that, more clouds blurred from her mouth and more rain fell on the burning city of Ito. As the dragon sleazed through sky, breaching mountain of storm clouds. Rain fell on the flat lands, and rice fields, and imperial garden. The samurai castles and the fishermen market. And great bridge. Rain fell on the floating world of stages, teahouses,, temples and farms. Rain fell on the temple yard and pine forest, and canals, slowly the rain washed the way off all the smoking flames. Even after the fire the Ito was no longer flicked, cloud dragon read more black clouds, and the rain kept falling. Falling steadily, soaking the gardens and fields and falling on shallow rivers and dried ponds.

The fire's out! Jack shouted .

Take us to Basyou's . Anne yelled to the dragon.

The cloud dragon twisted her giant body , she slided to the dark clouds, then she reared up until Jack and Anne could hold on any

longer, and they were falling backward. Some sorting through the air, .

Splash! Splash! Jack sank to the bottom of the river. He flayed him arms struggle to the surface, his head popped up, he split the water and gasped for air. He lost his glasses, he dove back down to find them from the river bottom and then swam back to the surface. Trading water, he wiped his glasses and put them on,.

Hi! Anne yelled. She was holding the wand there above the water.

Hi! Jack yelled back.

Jack and Anne swam toward the bank of the river. They swam until their feet could touch the bottom. Then they dragged themselves out of the water and claps on the muddy bank. They had lost their Saxon sandos. Their soaked kimonos clung their bodies, tripping wet, they gasped for breath and looked up at sky. Big drops of rain splashed on their faces. There was no sign of clouds dragon but the cool rain kept falling. Brazing , the floating world of Ito.

Chapter 9: flowers of Ito

We did it. Said Anne. we made our own magic.

Yeah. We got the cloud dragon to put off the fire. Breezed Jack. He

felt dazed. Do you think we are near Basyou's house?

I think so . said Anne.

We asked the cloud dragon to take us there so I think she did.

Come on, let's find Basyou.

Jack and Anne stood up, and they started walking along the edge of the river, they walked barefoot through the mud, until they came to dripping trees.

Hey! There is the clearing. Said Anne.

Jack and Anne headed towards the clearing beyond the trees, and tall grass,

Oh, no. cried Anne. look!

In the clearing, rain must be falling on the charge ruins of Basyou's house. The single roof and bamboo walls of the little hut had burnt and clasped.

Where is Basyou. Said Jack scared.

There. Said Anne.

The famous poet sat along next to the banana tree in the green rain.

His clothes were blackened, his face was covered with surd, he clutched his writing box .

Basyou! Yelled Anne.

Basyou looked up, the smile crossed his dirty face.

I looked for you be the river but didn't see you. He said. and now

I'm glad you are safe.

We are glad you are safe too. Said Jack.

But your castle? Your castle burnt down. Said Anne .

Yes. It burnt before the miracle of the rain. Said Basyou sighing.

Jack and Anne sat along next to him. Through the smoky whistle they all stared at the rubble. Trees and plants striped with the rain, a peahen cooled. For a long moment no one spoke. Then Anne broke the silence.

I'm glad that you still have your banana tree. She said. I like the sound the rain falling on the leaves.

Basyou looked up but didn't say anything.

Yeah. And I like the sound of the river. Said Jack. It's louder now, since the rain came.

Basyou tilt his head as if listening to the rain on the leaves of the banana plant and the steady rushing songs of the river. His face softened,

Yes. I like those things too. He said.

He held up his wooden box, and I still have my poems.

Don't worry Basyou, said Anne. everything can be build again.

And your castle would even more beautiful than before. Said Jack.

Basyou smiled, I suppose that is why the ancients call our fires – the flowers of Ito. He said.

What do you mean? Asked Jack.

After something is destroyed by fire, a good new thing often takes its place. Said Basyou. Just as after the blinks of the winter, beautiful flowers return with spring.

I'm sure you make many beautiful flowers . said Anne.

Thank you. Said Basyou . I am sorry though you and Jack not have place to stay now.

Don't worry, said Anne. we have to travel back to our own house.

Not far away is that. Asked Basyou?

Very far ...said Anne.

She and Jack stood up, but we just need to get back to the imperial garden. We will know the way from there.

Good. Said Basyou.

He stood up.

Come, I will come with you back to the garden.

Thanks ! that would be great. Said Jack.

Basyou picked up his walking stick, then he led Jack and Anne along the bank of the river. Through the light drizzle they saw fire bolt moving up stream, Basyou waved. On the palace stared the boat, sure, Jack and Anne followed Basyou unto the fiery. The three of them sat together on the wooden bench, the other passenger stared at them, many had ashes on their clothes and

scar on their faces. Jack was relived to see that no samurai around the boat.

Greetings. Master Basyou. The palace said. the other passengers nodded respect to Basyou. They smiled at the present great poet, leaving them hope.

The rains were a miracle, were they not? Mastet Basyou? An old women said.

Indeed they were. Said Basyou.

I guess the cloud dragon saved us just in time said Anne.

Anne...whispered Jack.

Basyou smiled at her.

I am afraid that no one believe that cloud dragon any more, Anne.

he said. but it is lovely to pretend, is it not?

Yes, it is lovely. Said Anne..

The rain stopped as the fairy boat traveled on up the river. Mist rose from the water, and birds began to sing. When they passed the teahouses Jack and Anne saw firefighters were cleaning up the fire, sweeping up the broken tiles and squaring the walkways. Waiters were bringing them tea, the sun was shinning but time past the pop stage charge number yard. Whistle of smoke was still rose from the black piles of burnt logs. The fairy boat floated on to the bright

morning, it glided under the great bridge, and passed the crowded fish market. Fishermen were holding their catch on the night before, by the time they moved by the samurai castles, in came near the moat of the imperial garden. The sun had completely dried out Jack and Anne's kimonos, the boat pulled up to the landing, Basyou helped Jack and Anne onto the dock. They waved goodbye to the passengers.

Jack Anne and Basyou walked over the stone bridge when they crossed the moat, they walked through the message gate and high wall. Then they followed the path of the imperial garden around the big rocks and the pond with the swans. Jack kept an eye for horses and samurai warriors, but the garden was as peaceful as they were first landed. It was filled with birds song. The willow swayed, water from the waterfall tumbled into the green pool. Jack caught sight of the sun, shining on the tree house and in the cheery tree. Jack stopped walking.

We know we will be home from here. He said to Basyou.

Are you certain? Asked Basyou.

He didn't seem to know the tree house in the cheery tree.

We are sure. Said Anne. once we started our way the trip would be easy.

Basyou nodded , you remind me of the famous saying of the samurai. Musashi. He said.

A journey of thousand miles.

Begins with one step.

Did you ever saying that before? Said Jack.

Words can leave their creators. Said Basyou. So I would be never as so lucky as to have mine poems leave me.

Don't be too sure about that. Said Anne.

Basyou gave them a little smile. I hope you both will return to Ito someday. He said. look for me, when you come back. I should have a lovely new castle under river by then.

Thanks! Said Jack.

Goodbye. Said Anne.

They both bowed to Basyou. Basyou bowed to them. Then the great poet turned and left them. Following cheery blossoms and floated wind as he walked away.

Jack and Anne watched Basyou until they no longer see him. Then they turned to go. Just as they started walking, a man stepped out from the shadow of the garden, the man wore blue coat, and two swords hanging from his belt,

Excuse me. Said the samurai. May I see you a passports, please?

Chapater ten: journey of thousand miles

Jack couldn't speak.

Our passports? Said Anne.

They..amm.. they got...ruined destroyed in the fire. On the other side of the great bridge. The samurai nodded his eyes.

Your passports burnt? He said. why are you on the other side of the great bridge?

We were with master Basyou. Said Jack.

Master Basyou? Said samurai.

Yes. Said Anne. we are students of his.

Ah... the samurai's expression brightened. So you study poetry with master Basyou?

Yes. Said Anne. would you like to hear some poems?

Oh!@ no! no m,thought Jack, that again!

Yes, please. Said the samurai.

No problem. Anne thought for a moment. And then said: use a little simple poems. She recited.

Rain falls outside,

But the tiny crick on the heart,

Is dry tonight.

The samurai nodded, mmm,,,,yeah! Very simple but very lovely.

Thank you. Said Anne.

The man turned to Jack,

Jack could hardly believe that man was blink. He looked at Anne for help. But Anne just smiled, waiting for his poem.

Jack cleared throat. He tried to stay calm. He closed his eyes, and let his mind roam over the visit to Japan he opened his eyes, he looked up at the cloudy sky, and said:

The sun shinning,

The day is hot,

But moon light

cool breeze

still filled my heart.

Left over from last night.

Wow! Whispered Anne. good.

That's very good. Said samurai. He looked sky, the moonlight, the cool breeze, he mused , left over from the night. Very good. Master Basyou had taught you very well.

The samurai stroke away, shaking his head murmuring to himself,

he led out a happy life. As if delighted with the day.

Jack couldn't believe it.

They were free. Hurry. Let's go. He said. before someone else see us.

Jack and Anne ran to the rope ladder, and started up. As soon as they climbed inside the tree house, Jack grabbed the Pennsylvania book. He found the picture of the frog creek woods, as the famous samurai once said: A journey of thousands miles began with the one step. Said Jack.

Or a one sentence. Said Anne.

Right. Said Jack.

He pointed at the picture, I wish we could go home.

Anne gasped , wait a minute. She said. we've forgot our mission.

What? Said Jack.

But the wind started to blow. The tree house started to spin. It span faster and faster. Then everything was still. Absolutely still.

The early morning wind was cold, Jack and Anne were back to frog creek. Wearing their own clothes, Jack pulled up their bag with backpack again, they looked themselves to make sure that the wand of diandas was there. It was. And Basyou's frog poem was there too.

I can't believe it. Said Anne. we just looked for secret of happiness for Merlin, how could we forget that!

Oh..ma'am. said Jack. We're so busy worrying about the samurai. Putting off the fire, we forgot our mission.

How could we Morgan to say? Said Anne. we've never forgot our mission before. And this one is the most important one we've ever had. To help save Merlin. Anne was with their tears.

Wait, wait. Calm down. Said Jack. Let's think a minute. Maybe we actually found the secret of happiness. Maybe we just know no way to find it.

You mean..like,,,were we..actually happy anytime? Asked Anne.

Yeah. Of course it is. Said Jack.

Were we?

I don't know. And you? Said Anne.

I think a few times. Said Jack.

By queen? By then? Said Anne.

By queen we were crossing the bridges with Basyou, I felt so happy then. Said Jack .

Me too. Said Anne. and I was pretty happy eating sushi.

Yeah. But I got scared when I saw the samurai watching us. Said Jack.

What about the sumo wrestling match? Asked Anne.

That was fun. Said Jack. But I don't know it really made me happy.

Riding the dragon putting off the fire? Said Anne.

That was great. Said Jack . but I was too worried about the saving the city to be happy.

Making a poem for the samurai? Said Anne.

Too nervous said Jack.

But when were you purely happy? Said Anne.

I think was one..Jack stopped. He felt silly shame what about to say.

Go ahead. Said Anne.

I think when I was lying on the mat in Basyou's house, said Jack.

And he touched the little patch moon on the floor, and I listened to the banana leaves in the wind.

Oh. Yes. Said Anne. before we fall asleep. And I heard a cricket and felt I was a cricket myself, going to sleep at the cozy place.

Yeah. Like that. Said Jack.

Is that Basyou says: finding beauty in the small things of nature?

Said Anne. like the poem about the fog. Splashing in the water.

I think that's is. Said Jack. The secret of happiness is paying really close attention to the small things in nature.

Wow. Said Anne. I think that's a great secret to share with Merlin.

It is. Said Jack. And Basyou's poem help Merlin understand.

Right. Said Anne.

Let's go. Said Jack.

Anne climbed down the rope ladder, Jack put his pack on his bag and followed her. As Jack and Anne started through the chilly woods together, Jack noticed things he hadn't seen before. He saw tiny blue wild flowers, sprouting up from the winter vary ground, he saw fresh anthills in the dirt, he saw leaf bards on the twigs and green moss on the rock, bright in the March sunlight.

I fell that I see these things for the first time. Said Jack.

Me too. Said Anne.

Not just for the first time this year, said Jack. But for the first time in my whole life.

Me too. Said Anne.

Jack felt happy, really happy, as he and Anne headed for home in the sparkling morning light.

The end