



A BLAST from the Past



Ms. Jenkins, the grade 4 teacher, arranged a visit to the Museum of Civilization with her class. The students had been studying the Middle Ages for a few weeks. They were all looking forward to the visit.

"Don't touch anything unless I say it's okay," Ms. Jenkins said with a smile, "and stay with the group."

The students all said.

"Follow me. We will start with the Medieval Room," she said.

Ms. Jenkins led her students to a miniature model of a castle at the back of the room. Tamara and her best friend, Rick, stopped before they got there. They were intrigued by a suit of armour standing in the middle of the room.

"Look, Tammy, it's a knight's armour."

"Don't touch it, Rick!"

It was too late. Rick already had his hand on one of the gloves. Tamara reached out to try to pull his hand away from the armour. Strangely, they both started to feel dizzy. Tamara tried not to lose her balance as she held on to Rick. The room started to spin around them. They were so dizzy that they barely could keep their eyes open. Then, as suddenly as it had started, the spinning stopped.

"Okay, what was that?" Tamara asked.

"I don't know, but I'm glad it's over," Rick answered.

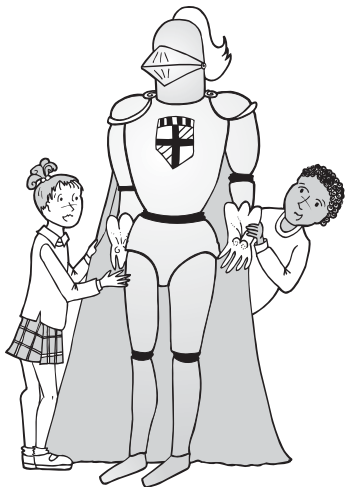
They looked at each other. "What are you wearing?"

Rick was wearing woollen leggings fastened with leather strips and a large shirt belted at the waist. The hem of his shirt was embroidered. Tamara wore a long woollen dress trimmed with white linen. A cape was draped loosely over her dress, and a linen bonnet covered her head. Both were surprised by their new clothes. Tamara could not help but laugh.

"I have never seen you in a miniskirt."

"Very funny, Tamara. It's not a skirt, it's a tunic. Don't you remember? We saw pictures of people dressed up like this in social studies."

"Oh yeah," she answered. "I remember. I'll tell you, though, I never thought that their clothes would be so heavy. I feel like I'm carrying a few extra kilograms on my shoulders."



"It's because the clothes are made out of wool. Wool is a pretty heavy material, compared to cotton or silk."

"Enough with the history lesson, Rick, where are we? How did we get here? Why are we dressed like this?"

"I don't know. Look around us, the walls have been replaced by walls made of rocks."

Rick walked along the wall. He finally found a spot over which he could see.

"Cool! I think we're at the top of the keep. You know . . . the biggest tower of a castle. I can see a big wall around the castle, two courtyards and the drawbridge!" Rick exclaimed as Tamara looked through a narrow slit in the tower wall.

She joined him and looked downward.

"Hey, there are many people down there. Wait! I think it's a tournament."

"You're right, Tammy. I can see knights wearing armour just like the one in the museum. Let's go down."

"Wait, Rick. How did we get here! We have to find a way back to the museum."

"Who cares how we got here! This is great! We can see all the things about castles we learned in class. We can find a way back later."

Tamara decided to stay and enjoy the experience. Soon, they found a staircase.

"That window sure is small," Rick said, pointing to a small hole in the wall.

"It's an arrow loop," Tamara informed him. "The guards shoot arrows through them when the castle is under attack. We saw this in class."

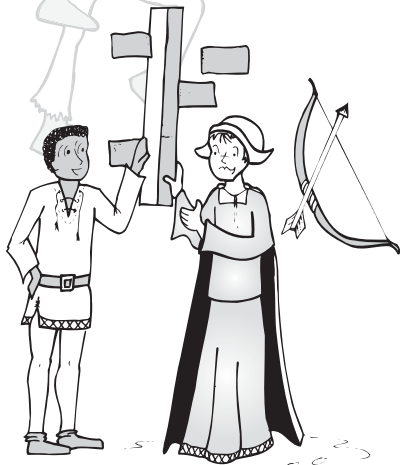
They walked past a few closed doors on the way down, but then stopped in front of a large, empty room with many long tables and wooden benches.

"That must be the Great Hall!" they said in amazement, as they peered through the open door. They also passed by the kitchen where a pig was being roasted over the fire. Finally, they came out of the tower and joined the rest of the crowd watching the knights. Two of the knights started to joust. In the first round, both their lances broke, but they managed to stay on their horses. During the second round, one of the knights was hit hard, causing him to lose his lance and his shield as he fell.

"Ouch! That must really hurt. This seems very violent." Tamara squirmed in her seat.

Rick noticed a knight standing apart from the crowd. The knight waved at them. Rick grabbed Tamara's hand and moved to get closer.

"My lady," the knight said to Tamara, bowing his head. "Excuse me, Sir," he said to Rick, "would you be so kind as to help me put on my gloves?"



"Sure," Rick answered. "Help me out, Tamara."

They each grabbed one side of the metal glove and started pulling it over the knight's left hand. Suddenly, they became dizzy once again. Everything around them started to spin.

"Oh no!" Tamara yelled.

"Here we go again!" Rick cried out.

A few seconds later, they opened their eyes, and carefully looked around.

"We're back!" Tamara exclaimed.

They were back in front of the armour. Thankfully, they were wearing their own clothes again. Rick and Tamara looked at each other. Had they dreamed about the whole thing or had they really travelled back in time? Rick touched the glove on the armour again, but nothing happened.

"We must have been dreaming," Rick said, shaking his head in disbelief.

"I guess..." Tamara replied, confused.

"Tamara, Rick, where have you been?" Ms. Jenkins was annoyed. "We have been looking for you for 10 minutes. From now on, follow the rest of the class. Don't you want to see the castle?"

"But we were in the..." Rick started. Tamara tugged at his shirt and signalled him to be quiet.

"You were in the what?" Ms. Jenkins snapped.

"Oh nothing, Ms. Jenkins, we were in the bathroom," Tamara quickly answered.

"All right, then, let's join the rest of the class," Ms. Jenkins finished.

Rick and Tamara joined the class. They never talked about the incident again; but, when Rick got home that night, he found a small strip of leather tied around his leg.

