

# THE RAT PRINCESS

ADAPTED FROM FRANK RINDER'S OLD WORLD JAPAN

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Once upon a time, there was a Rat Princess, who lived with her father, the Rat King, and her mother, the Rat Queen, in a ricefield in far away Japan. The Rat Princess was so pretty that her father and mother were quite foolishly proud of her, and thought no one good enough to play with her. When she grew up, they would not let any of the rat princes come to visit her, and they decided at last that no one should marry her till they had found the most powerful person in the whole world; no one else was good enough. And the Father Rat started out to find the most powerful person in the whole world. The wisest and oldest rat in the ricefield said that the Sun must be the most powerful person, because he made the rice grow and ripen; so the Rat King went to find the Sun. He climbed up the highest mountain, ran up the path of a rainbow, and travelled and travelled across the sky till he came to the Sun's house.

"What do you want, little brother?" the Sun said, when he saw him.

"I come," said the Rat King, very importantly, "to offer you the hand of my daughter,

the princess, because you are the most powerful person in the world; no one else is good enough."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the jolly round Sun, and winked with his eye. "You are very kind, little brother, but if that is the case the princess is not for me; the Cloud is more powerful than I am; when he passes over me I cannot shine."

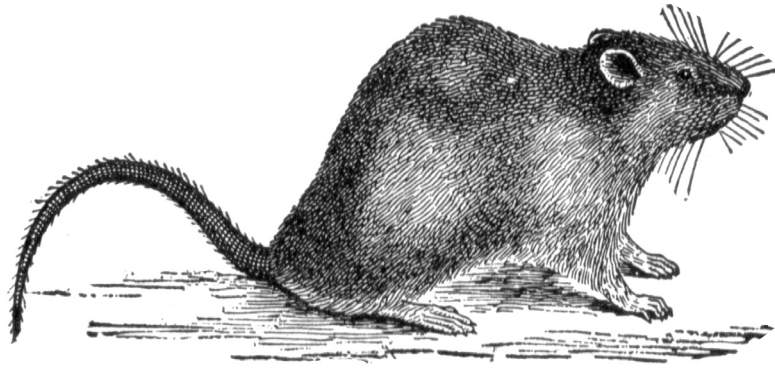
"Oh, indeed,"

said the Rat King, "then you are not my man at all"; and he left the Sun without more words. The Sun laughed and winked to himself. And the Rat King travelled and travelled across the sky till he came to the Cloud's house.

"What do you want, little brother?" sighed the Cloud when he saw him.

"I come to offer you the hand of my daughter, the princess," said the Rat King, "because you are the most powerful person in the world; the Sun said so, and no one else is good enough."

The Cloud sighed again. "I am not the most powerful person," he said; "the Wind is stronger than I,—when he blows, I have to go wherever he sends me."



“Then you are not the person for my daughter,” said the Rat King proudly; and he started at once to find the Wind. He travelled and travelled across the sky, till he came at last to the Wind’s house, at the very edge of the world.

When the Wind saw him coming he laughed a big, gusty laugh, “Ho, ho!” and asked him what he wanted; and when the Rat King told him that he had come to offer him the Rat Princess’s hand because he was the most powerful person in the world, the Wind shouted a great gusty shout, and said, “No, no, I am not the strongest; the Wall that man has made is stronger than I; I cannot make him move, with all my blowing; go to the Wall, little brother!”

And the Rat King climbed down the sky-path again, and travelled and travelled across the earth till he came to the Wall. It was quite near his own ricefield.

“What do you want, little brother?” grumbled the Wall when he saw him.

“I come to offer you the hand of the princess, my daughter, because you are the most powerful person in the world, and no one else is good enough.”

“Ugh, ugh,” grumbled the Wall, “I am not the strongest; the big grey Rat who lives in the cellar is stronger than I. When he gnaws and gnaws at me I crumble and crumble, and at last I fall; go to the Rat, little brother.”

And so, after going all over the world to find the strongest person, the Rat King had

to marry his daughter to a rat, after all; but the princess was very glad of it, for she wanted to marry the grey Rat, all the time.