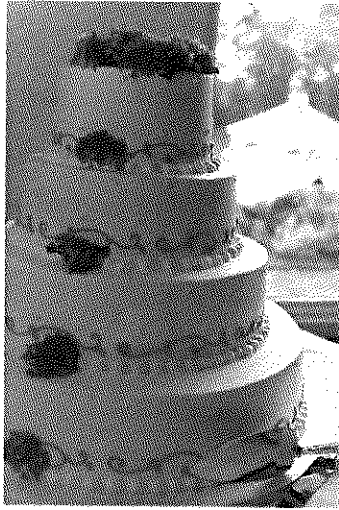


The Mountain

Paired Text to
"The Tree House"



There are four peaks to climb until Manny reaches the top of the mountain. Each ledge is thinner and more dangerous than the last. Thankfully, he has a strong cane. He uses the cane to pull himself up. The climb is cold and snowy.

Day turns to night and back to day again. A strong gust of wind threatens to blow him off-course. But he persists.

The last thing Manny remembers is opening his eyes at the bottom of the mountain. He doesn't remember how he got there. To make things even stranger, he is wearing a fancy tuxedo.

The woman he loves is at the top of the mountain, waiting. He can hear her sweet voice, singing.

He remembers that she is waiting for him, but he doesn't remember anything else. Manny guesses he must have had an accident.

Maybe I hit my head and now I have amnesia! he thinks.

The snow is thick and cold. It gets in his mouth as he climbs. He must be hungry because it tastes sweet like sugar.

“Hello! Is anyone there?” Manny asks.

“Hello! Is anyone there?” he hears back. It’s the sound of his own voice—an echo coming back at him.

“I love you! I’m waiting for you!” he hears. Now this, this is not *his* voice. This is the sound of his love calling for him.

He climbs higher and higher. Closer and closer. His arms ache from pulling. His tuxedo is covered in snow. Manny is soaking wet and exhausted. But he is also determined to get to the top.

“I love you! I’m coming!” he calls back.

He hears what he thinks is the faint sound of laughter. Deep and booming. The laughter of the gods?

Suddenly, the mountain is flooded with light. It’s as if the sun were behind a door that was flung open suddenly.

The mountain begins to spin, and Manny hangs on with all his might.

“Why is this happening?” he cries. But no answer comes.

The mountain spins and spins. The room spins and spins. It’s bright and then dark again. He sees trees and bright lights. Manny closes his eyes and falls off the mountain. He fears this could be the end.

When he lands, it is warm and soft. He feels himself lifted through the air. It is as if fate has saved him. The next words he hears are:

“Whoops, that was a close call. We almost lost our groom!”

“Good catch!” says another voice.

Manny opens his eyes and find himself on top of the mountain. Bella! The woman he loves! He rubs the snow from his eyes. The whirlwind had somehow picked him up and placed him right next to her.

Bella stands in a pile of white snow, wearing a beautiful wedding dress. Manny laughs because he’s soaking wet and dirty, covered in sticky snow.

He kisses her and she giggles. “You taste like candy!” she says. “I’m so glad you’re back! I thought you would miss the wedding!”

“Wedding?” Manny says. “I don’t remember! Are we getting married?”

“Oh no! Not us,” Bella says, laughing. “Them!”

She points to the sky, and for the first time he sees everything. There is a skylight and sunshine. There is music playing. And people. Giant people!

Manny screams and falls back into the snow. Giants! As tall as the mountain! Taller! They come by and put their faces, with huge eyeballs as big as Manny’s head, right up to him.

He thinks back to the laughter he heard before and the sunlight, suddenly so bright. Gods! It’s all the work of Gods.

Suddenly, he is lifted up into the air. A giant hand is coming for him. This is surely the end now.

A giant eye, a giant mouth. He is about to be eaten!

And then he sees it, a giant... napkin?

He hears Bella laughing below him as the soft napkin cleans his ears, his face, and his suit. When he is completely clean, he is placed back on top of the mountain's snowy peak. He stands upright next to Bella, and she holds his hand. The giant walks away as if nothing unusual at all has happened.

"You look beautiful," Bella says. "All clean! Are you ready?"

Music starts to play. Manny hears a voice say: "Introducing the bride and groom!"

The mountain is moving through the air, soaring, rolling. Bella grabs his hand tightly and whispers, "Get ready."

One of the giants leans down and pats his head. He notices she looks just like Bella. She's dressed in a beautiful white gown. This giant is also a bride.

"You're beautiful, little man!" the giant says. At that, she takes out a giant knife.

The mountain tips slightly, as if a slice is being cut out of it. He sees the bride feeding cake to the groom. The groom takes a big bite, and she smears frosting all over his face.

That's why the snow tasted so sweet, Manny thinks. It's not snow at all. It's cake frosting!

The snowy mountain is wheeled back into the corner, and Bella and Manny are finally alone together.

"I love you!" Manny says, and he takes her hand and kisses her sweetly. The kiss is every bit as sweet as the cake they are standing on. Two wedding cake toppers in love.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is "the mountain" in the story?

- A) a wedding cake
- B) a real mountain
- C) a table
- D) a cupcake

2. Where does the story take place?

- A) on a mountain
- B) in a bakery
- C) at a wedding
- D) on Mount Olympus

3. The "mountain" in the story is not a normal mountain. What evidence from the story supports this conclusion?

- A) The "mountain" has four peaks.
- B) The "snow" tastes sweet like sugar.
- C) There are strong gusts of wind.
- D) Manny is wearing a tuxedo.

4. Read the following sentences:

"Manny closes his eyes and falls off the mountain. He fears this could be the end.

"When he lands, it is warm and soft. He feels himself lifted through the air. It is as if fate has saved him. The next words he hears are:

"Whoops, that was a close call. We almost lost our groom!"

What inference can be made about what happens in these sentences?

- A) Manny falls off the cake and lands on the floor.
- B) Manny falls off the mountain and lands in the snow.
- C) Manny falls off the mountain and has a hallucination.
- D) Manny falls off the cake and is caught by a human.

5. What is this story mostly about?

- A) a dangerous, snowy mountain
- B) Manny and Bella’s wedding
- C) the wedding of two gods
- D) two wedding cake toppers in love

6. Read the following sentences:

“He remembers that she is waiting for him, but he doesn’t remember anything else. Manny guesses he must have had an accident.

“Maybe I hit my head and now I have amnesia!” he thinks.”

What does “amnesia” mean as used in this sentence?

- A) blood loss
- B) an accident
- C) memory loss
- D) an injury

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

At the beginning of the story, the setting appears to be on a mountain, _____ by the end of the story, this is not the case.

- A) but
- B) so
- C) also
- D) after

8. Who is getting married in the story?

9. Why are Manny and Bella wearing wedding clothing?

10. In the story, all is not as it originally seems. As the story progresses, the author gradually gives the reader more details and reveals what the story is really about.

Identify and explain the key points in the story where the reader is given clues about what the story is really about.
