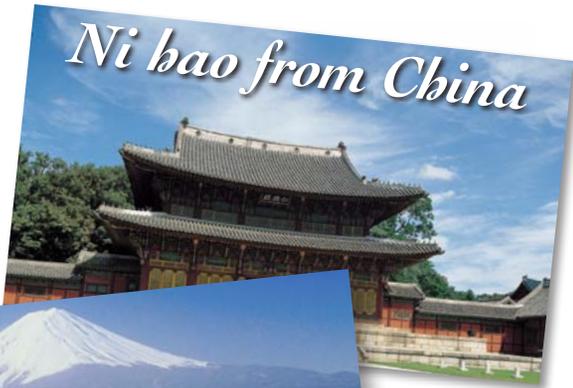


Cali and Wanda Lou

A Reading A-Z Level T Leveled Book

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Cali and Wanda Lou



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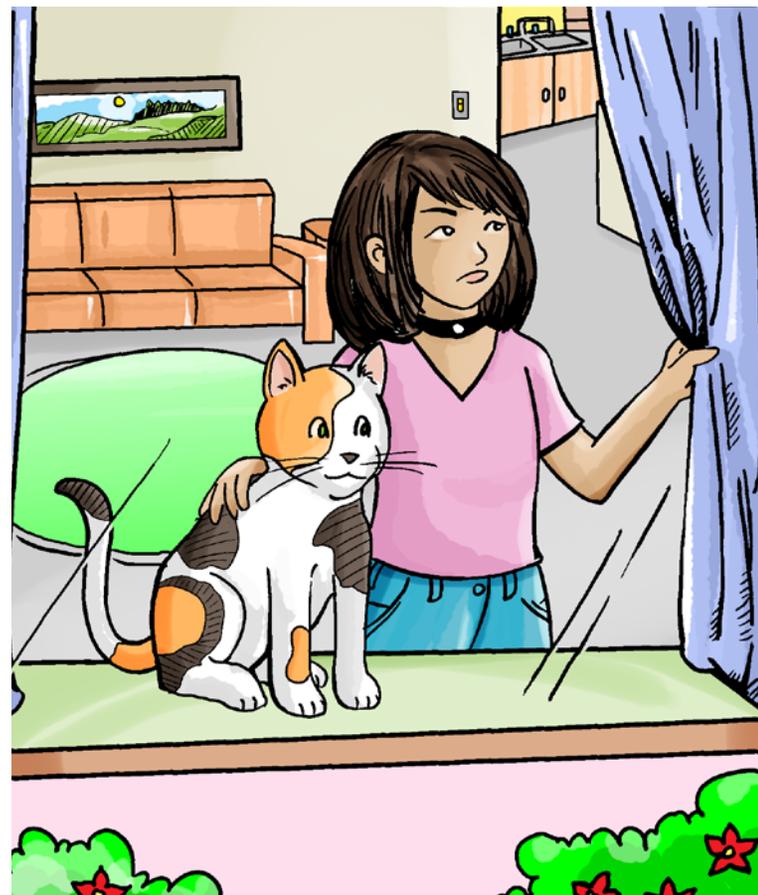
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We're On Our Way

My name is Cali. My owner, Wanda Lou named me Cali because I'm a calico cat from California. We live in a little house on a quiet street where everybody knows everybody and nothing unusual ever happens. That's why Wanda Lou loves to travel.



Wanda Lou likes mysterious places, strange sights, and rare animals.

When she takes her suitcase and my purple carpetbag out of the closet and tacks a list on the refrigerator of things to pack, I know we're on our way. This time we are going to Asia. First stop: Japan.

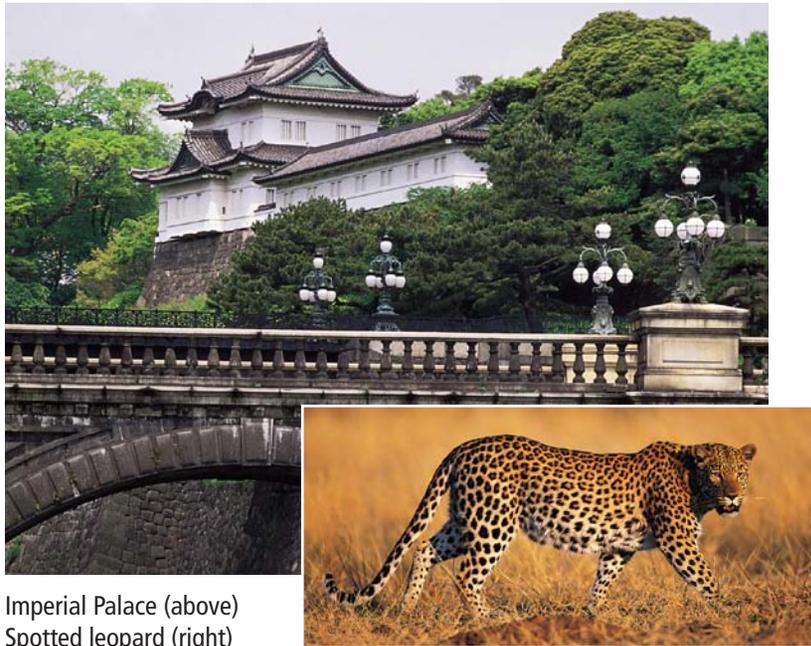


Tokyo: City of Electric Lights

The flight from Los Angeles to Tokyo, the capital of Japan, takes ten hours. It seemed like forever to me. I cuddled up on Wanda Lou's lap and took a long nap.

Finally, we arrived at Narita airport. Since we are not citizens of Japan, we were considered **foreigners**. Wanda Lou had to stand in line to show her **passport**. It gave me a chance to get my first look at Japan. There were people walking everywhere in every direction. They bowed when they greeted each other, and they spoke in a language I didn't understand.

The first place we visited in Tokyo was the Imperial Palace. It is surrounded by a moat and a huge stone wall. Tourists are not allowed inside because the royal family lives there. So, we walked around the outside and saw the beautiful gardens.



Imperial Palace (above)
Spotted leopard (right)

Next, we took a monorail around the Tokyo Zoo. I saw a huge spotted leopard that looked like one of my relatives. He must have frightened Wanda Lou because she squeezed me. I meowed at him. He growled back.

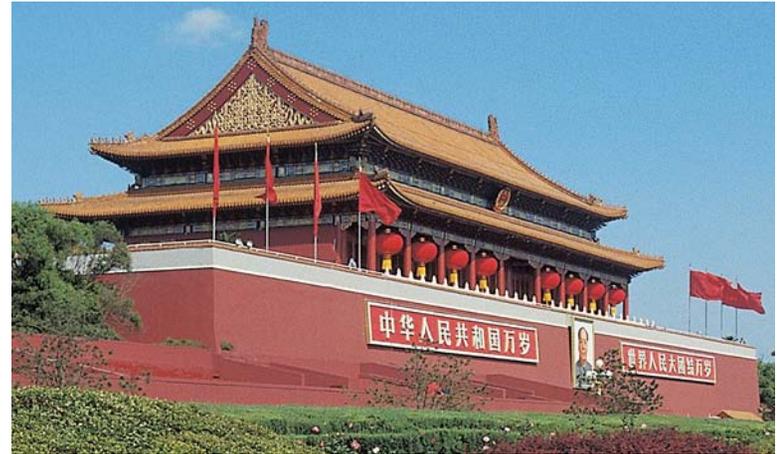


That evening, we went shopping in the Ginza district, where there were tall buildings, modern stores, and a lot of neon signs. Wanda Lou bought a red **kimono** and a pink **obi** for herself. And a yellow silk scarf for me. I felt like one cool cat.

“Mmm! Something smells wonderful,” said Wanda Lou as she sniffed the delicious aroma of **tempura** coming from a nearby restaurant. I heard her stomach growl as she looked at the menu posted outside. The menu was written in Japanese, but she could tell from the pictures that they served **sushi** made with squid, eel, and octopus. We went inside. Wanda Lou ate tuna with ivory chopsticks. She offered some to me.



Though we liked Tokyo, it was time to leave. Wanda Lou bowed and said *sayonara* to our server, and we hopped on a plane to China.



Tiananmen Gate is the main way people enter the Forbidden City.

Beijing: City of Extremes

Beijing, the capital of China, is a large, old, and mysterious place. Wanda Lou was excited to see everything. Then, in the wink of a cat’s eye, we were off to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City.

Tiananmen Square is one of the largest public meeting places in the world—big enough for a million people to gather. Nearby is the Forbidden City where emperors and their families lived and ruled for 500 years. Now it is open to visitors and thousands of them wander through the 9,999 rooms.

Some tourists were rude and shoved and pushed us, and I fell out of my carpetbag without Wanda Lou noticing. I tried to call her, but there were so many people and so much noise that she didn't hear me. I was alone under a **pagoda** in the Forbidden City. I was sad. I wondered whether Wanda Lou would ever find me.



I waited and waited and tried not to be seen, but a Miss Chang saw me and picked me up. I was frightened. I didn't want a new owner. And then, Miss Chang held me up and said, "Here she is. Here's your lost kitty." Wanda Lou came running. She hugged and kissed me. I didn't even mind getting wet from her tears.



Miss Chang felt so sorry for Wanda Lou that she invited us to a Peking duck lunch. At lunch, she told us about some unusual Chinese customs. She said, in China, it is impolite to point the spout of a teapot at your guest. And it's bad luck to drop your chopsticks or place them on top of your bowl.

"That's very interesting," Wanda Lou said as she took her chopsticks off her bowl and was careful not to drop them.

After lunch, Miss Chang took us to the Great Wall of China, which looks like a gigantic dragon winding 4,163 miles up and down mountains and across deserts. She told us it was built 2,000 years ago to defend China from its enemies.

As we walked along the wall, a little girl named Li saw me and said in English that was hard to understand, “That kitty is so cute. Can I hold her?” Wanda Lou said yes. Li carried me halfway up the hill. I liked Beijing.



Wow! Look at how long the Great Wall is.



Pandas eat tons of bamboo.

“Before leaving Beijing,” Miss Chang told Wanda Lou, “you must see the giant pandas. Perhaps Li would like to join us.” Li was delighted to go to the Beijing Zoo. So were we. We watched the roly-poly bears munch on bamboo, do somersaults, and wrestle with each other.

I thought they would be fun to play with, but Wanda Lou said it was time to go. We said *zai jian* to Miss Chang and boarded a plane for Bangkok, Thailand.

Bangkok: City of Angels

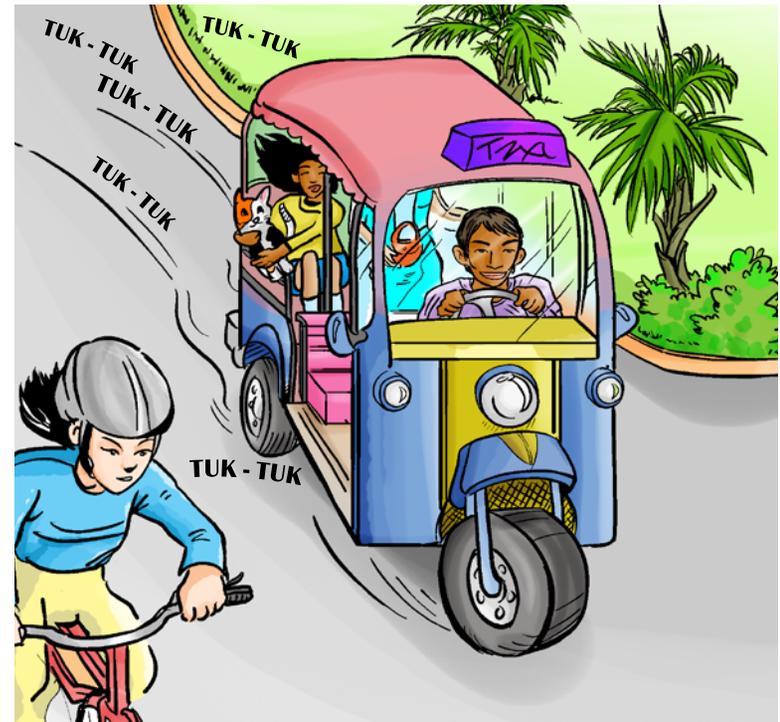
People in Thailand call Bangkok the “City of Angels”—the same as Los Angeles. I thought it looked like a picture from a book of fairy tales. The Grand Palace has golden **spires**, glittering mosaics, and mystical statues. There are statues of fat cats and skinny dogs and ferocious demons.

Then there is the Reclining Buddha that is so huge he looks like a gold jet plane, lying on his side. The Emerald Buddha is much smaller but very beautiful. He’s carved out of one piece of jade. The Thai people love him so much that they dress him in different clothes according to the season.



The Reclining Buddha is about the length of half a football field.

Getting around Bangkok was quite easy for Wanda Lou and me. There were taxis, buses, an air-conditioned sky train, and boats on the river. We took a **tuk-tuk** to Suan Lumpini. It’s a park where people fly kites, jog, and lift weights. A tuk-tuk is a noisy three-wheeled taxi that swerves from left to right. It went so fast that Wanda Lou had to hold onto me so I wouldn’t fall out.



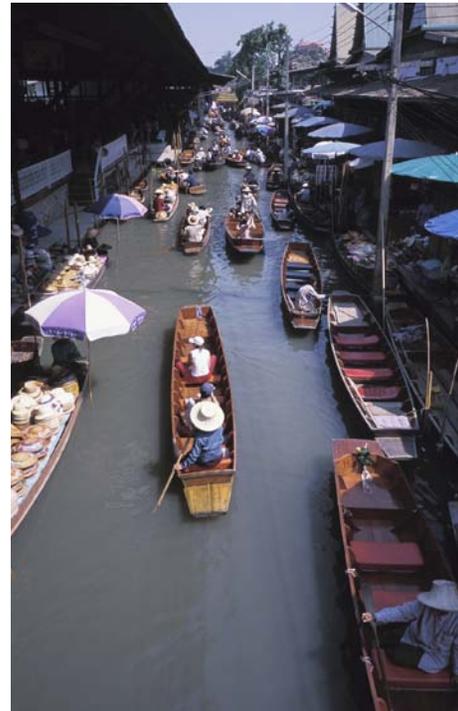


Workers milk a king cobra for its venom.

In Suan Lumpini, we went to the Snake Farm. We saw boas, pythons, and vipers. But it was the king cobras that scared me the most. They were so huge. I think they could swallow me down in one gulp. Actually, these snakes are very valuable because their **venom** is used for antivenom to cure snakebites.

Some people in Bangkok live in the modern part of the city. Others live on the river. That's where we headed next.

We boarded a long-tailed boat and sailed down a **klong**. People live in homes on the banks of the canal. We saw them washing



A klong

their clothes, bathing their babies, cooking their meals—even watching television and talking on cell phones. Vendors paddled their floating shops from home to home selling all sorts of things. They sold handwoven fabrics, tropical fruits like uglis that are smelly but sweet, and steaming bowls of noodle soup. The people were so friendly. I was deciding I liked Bangkok best of all when Wanda Lou said, “Time to go home, Cali.”

As the plane took off, we sadly said farewell—*sayonara* to Japan, *zai jian* to China, and *sawatdi* to Thailand.

There's No Place Like Home

Finally, we were at home in our little house, which is no Imperial Palace, on our narrow street, which is no Great Wall, where there are no boas or cobras and nothing unusual like floating shops. I concluded that traveling with Wanda Lou is great and meeting people from other parts of the world is fun, but there's still no place like home.



Glossary

foreigners	people from another country (p. 6)
kimono	a Japanese robe or gown (p. 8)
klong	a canal in Thailand (p. 18)
moat	a deep, wide ditch around a building, often filled with water (p. 7)
obi	a sash worn with a kimono (p. 8)
pagoda	a tower with a curving roof (p. 11)
passport	a government document needed to enter another country (p. 6)
sawatdi	Thai for “hello” or “good-bye” (p. 18)
sayonara	Japanese for “good-bye” (p. 9)
spires	pointed tops of buildings or towers (p. 15)
sushi	a bite-sized block of rice topped with raw fish (p. 9)
tempura	battered, fried fish or vegetables (p. 9)
tuk-tuk	a three-wheeled taxi in Thailand (p. 16)
venom	poison, usually from a snake (p. 17)
zai jian	Mandarin Chinese for “good-bye” (p. 14)