

NING'S PONY

AND OTHER STORIES FROM

AROUND THE WORLD



THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY

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The Flute Player of Beppu

Japan

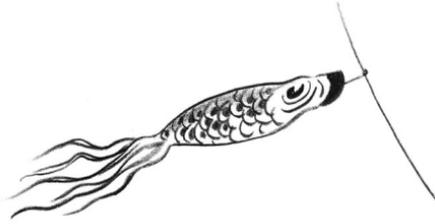
By Kathryn Gallant
Illustrated by Kurt Weise
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FAR away in the country of Japan is a city on the Inland Sea, called Beppu. Of all the good people there, no one was so admired as the flute player. When the flute player put his flute to his lips, out came such strange, sweet music that everyone stopped to listen. The tune was sometimes thin and sometimes round and full. To some it was happy, to others it was sad. But there was no mistaking its splendor.



By day, the flute player wandered up into the hills above the city, along the country roads, past green rice fields and neat farmers' cottages.

Or he followed the wide thoroughfare along the sea that led to the harbor, busy and bustling with the sound and activity of ships loading and unloading.

At night, when Beppu was a city of a thousand lights, the flute player roamed through the narrow, winding streets. Often he stopped outside a bright teahouse.

Wherever the flute player went, people loved the music he played.



One of the many people who waited each day for the flute player was a small Japanese boy named Sato-san. Sato-san lived on his father's farm up in the green hills above the city. He knew the country sounds—of birds, of locusts in late summer, crickets, the songs of farmers as they planted or harvested rice. But best of all, he loved the sound of the flute player's flute. That music made him think of cherry trees, green the year round but pink as a seashell in the spring, of green, damp rice fields in the early morning. It made him think, too, of shining ships in the harbor all ready to sail out into the Inland Sea for the faraway ports of Shikoku, Kobe, and Yokohama, of the jasmine that climbed outside his father's house, and of wood smoke in the autumn.

Each day Sato-san would stand by the side of the road until he heard the strange, sweet music of the flute come out of the distance and saw the flute player's peaked hat come over the hill. Then, because Sato-san was shy, he would hide behind a thick hedge, listening to the wonderful music until the flute player had gone down the road.



At noon one summer day, Sato-san was walking along the road in front of his father's house. His wooden shoes sent small puffs of dust into the air. He stumbled and fell. And there beside him on the road, he saw what looked like a long piece of bamboo. It was a flute! Gently he picked it up. His fingers covered the holes of the flute one by one.



NING'S PONY AND OTHER STORIES FROM

AROUND THE WORLD

Ning's Pony and Other Stories from Around the World is a collection of books that will take you across the globe. You'll follow the stories of children traveling across Japanese mountains, living deep in Filipino jungles, farming in the Chinese countryside, fishing on Portuguese beaches, trading in busy Mexican street markets, and playing in United States suburbs—all while learning valuable lessons about honesty and hard work. So pack your bags and take a trip with these stories from around the world!



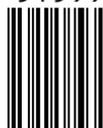

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