

Caroline Cottonsoft goes for a flight

Caroline's happiest days were those when she and her entire family would go for a flight through the sky. Cynthia Cottonsoft, her mother, would lead the way - a real beauty in her freshly starched white Sunday blouse, a magnificent Cumulus cloud admired by everyone looking up to her. On her lower edges, she already showed a slight shade of gray, but this made her appearance even more impressive.

Caroline loved her mother very much, and she desired nothing more than being as beautiful and striking a cloud as her one day. Majestically gliding through clean air, followed by her numerous children, she showed them patiently what a Cumulus cloud is supposed to do: Bring restful shadow to where the sun had dried out the land, pick up evaporating humidity and take it to where water was needed, and suck off the air when it had become too warm, carry it to cooler heights and bring it back to the earth as a refreshing breeze.

Cynthia Cottonsoft was a master of all these arts and a great idol to her children.

"One day, I am going to wear such a beautiful blouse and lead my own family across the skies - " Caroline said to herself while watching her mother, "and then - "

"Hey, stop dreaming, Caroline!" her oldest brother Cecil hollered from behind her, "Keep your eyes open, unless you want to get stuck in the mountain forest!" And he pointed to a range of hills right ahead.

"Pff - just a couple of hillocks - big deal! Watch me!" She let herself sink until she could feel the warm stream of upwind underneath the soles of her feet - "Ugh, that tickles!" she giggled. Then she balanced uphill, supported by the thermal, until the first whirls tried to suck her over the hilltop into the downwind, and -

And on the top of the hill, where Caroline had planned to slide down the opposite hillside like on a chute, exactly there, a thin steel radio mast stuck out into the air.

Clouds don't have brakes, and so Caroline twisted and whirled like a whip-top around that iron thing until her head and stomach were completely mixed up. She was alert enough to let herself drift back into the upwind, away from the dark treetops that were dangerously close already, and flew right into her brother's arms. Cecil split his sides with laughing,

"Just a couple of hillocks, see?" he snorted, "that's what happens when you overestimate yourself!"

"Puh!" replied Caroline and freed herself, "It was not so bad after all! Was kind of fun!"

"Oh yeah, I can tell! Your face is all gray from dizziness! Just don't start to drizzle!" her brother sneered and continued his way, shaking with laughter.

Caroline was mad. "Idiot!" she whispered but that meant both Cecil and herself. She took a deep breath to get rid of her dizziness and started trimming her tousled edges, picked from the air some rags of her cloths that had come loose during her twists, and then looked around.

The other clouds were pretty far ahead, only aunt Charlotte was still close by. It was her duty to take care that the little clouds would not get lost.

“Don’t worry, Caroline,” she said, “this can happen to everyone. Humans put those things on the land where they do not belong. You can’t do anything about it!”

She took Caroline by the hand, and together they flew in the direction where the rest of the family had gone.