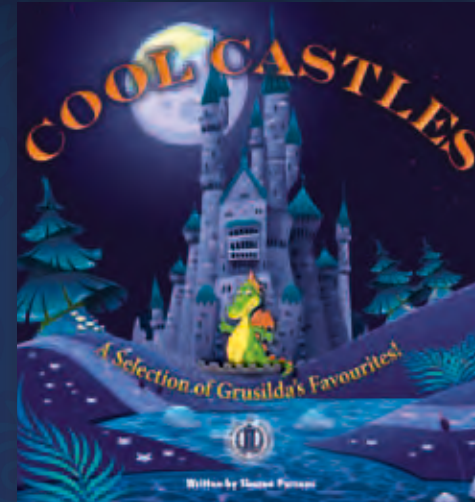


COOL CASTLES

A Selection of Grusilda's Favourites!



Written by Sharon Parsons



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"I love castles! I love towers, moats and drawbridges. But most of all, I love to explore castles and old castle ruins. Here are some of my favourites."

Grusilda xxx





CHAPTER 1

Strong Stone Castles

In the Middle Ages, large stone buildings called castles were built throughout Europe. During that medieval period, castles provided people with safety and protection. Their high stone walls, strong gates and other features protected them from enemies.

If a castle was under attack, people living there often had to survive on their own for many months. Castles were like small towns, with their own stores of food, water supplies, workshops, places for animals, and even their own churches.

Castles were built so strongly that, a thousand years later, some still stand. Visitors today can still see enough features to imagine life all those years ago.

"Middle Ages" and "Medieval" both describe a period of time over 500 years ago. It lasted from the year 500 to 1500.



Wells provided fresh water for people living in castles.

CASTLES PROTECT

Stone Walls and Roofs
Walls and roofs of stone were strong and could not be burned down by enemies.

Tall Watchtower
Lookouts in a watchtower could spot enemies while they were still far away.

Small Windows
Small, narrow windows meant soldiers were protected when shooting arrows at the enemy.

Moat
A water-filled moat surrounding a castle made it difficult for enemies to get too close.

Drawbridge
A drawbridge over a moat could be lifted up or easily defended.



CHAPTER 2

Life Within Castle Walls

We might imagine castles to be grand places to live. But in the Middle Ages, they were dark and cold and there was always work to do.

Castle Life for the Poor

Men and women had different jobs. For example, women were responsible for cooking, cleaning, weaving and sewing. Their tasks also included gathering food and firewood. Men had jobs such as stone masons, blacksmiths and carpenters.



Candles and fires provided a little light and warmth.



Men defended their castle against enemy attack. They practised skills such as sword fighting or archery in tournaments. These competitions were held regularly.



The inside of a castle room from the Middle Ages.

Castle Life for the Rich

Rich people lived more comfortably than poor people. Women did not work. Men owned land and managed the castle. They also had to fight to defend the castle if it was attacked.



Children born into rich families had an easier life than poor children. Many even learnt how to read and write! But for poorer children, life was a lot harder. They had to work just as hard as their parents. There was little time to play and most poor children did not learn how to read or write.





CHAPTER 3

The Oak Forest Castle

After a thousand years, some of Europe's castles are now ruins. But we can still explore castle ruins and imagine how they looked many years ago.

An abandoned castle ruin in England



Visit Castles Today

There are still many castles in good condition, however. People continue to live in them. Many of these castles welcome visitors who want to learn about their history and about how people lived in the past. They are also special places where people can enjoy themselves and have a great day out.

Egeskov Castle, in Denmark, is one of those special places. It was built in a lake in 1554. Its name comes from the Danish word for "oak forest" – as so much oak wood was used to build it above the water!



Egeskov Castle is in Denmark.

Egeskov Castle is a popular place for families to visit. There are many activities for kids to do outside, and many special places to explore inside, too. Shall we take a tour?



Egeskov was built in a lake so it could not be easily attacked. There are two main buildings, connected by a huge wall with secret staircases hidden inside it!





CHAPTER 4

Welcome to the Count's Home

Denmark's Egeskov Castle is a family home. Count Michael Ahlefeldt-Laurvig-Bille and his wife, Countess Caroline, live there with their children.

Activities Everywhere!

The Count and the Countess love having guests at the castle – and they have made sure there are plenty of things to see and do.

In the castle's beautiful farm buildings, there are vintage cars, motorcycles and aeroplanes. There are four mazes, a play forest and a tree-top walk. There are often special-event activities for kids and their families, too.



The Count and Countess (above) want visiting kids to have a great time. The tree-top walk (below) is lots of fun.



Modern "knights" at Egeskov Castle don't need to ride horses. These segways are much more fun!



CHAPTER 5

A Palace Inside a Castle

Of course, you can also go inside Egeskov Castle. Explore many beautiful rooms within the castle, and go upstairs, too.



Upstairs, on the first floor, you will find Titania's Palace. It has an amazing real-life story.

Imagine the Real-Life Story

Imagine that you're a three-year-old English girl over 100 years ago. Your name is Guendolen and you're sure that you saw a fairy in the forest. You tell your father about it. Your story inspires him to design a miniature fairy queen's palace.



Guendolen, age 3.

The Fairy Queen's Palace

In a famous play, Titania was queen of the fairies. So Guendolen's father, Sir Neville Wilkinson (1869–1940) called it Titania's Palace. It became Guendolen's very own dolls' house!

This real-life story began in 1907. Sir Neville Wilkinson worked on the dolls' house for about 15 years. Over time, he collected about 3 000 miniature pieces such as books, figures, furniture, glasses and paintings for Titania's Palace. Sir Neville also painted portraits and the chapel's ceiling. The chapel ceiling took nine months to paint!



Sir Neville Wilkinson

Dolls' House Raises Money for Charities

Sir Neville also wanted his daughter to know that they should help children and families who were either poor or sick. To raise money, he exhibited Titania's Palace in over 160 countries, including Australia and New Zealand. Over the years, the dolls' house raised millions of dollars for children's charities.

What Happened to Titania's Palace?

In 1967, Guendolen sold Titania's Palace and gave all the money to children's charities. Then, in 1978, Titania's Palace was sold to the Lego™ Foundation in Denmark. And now its home is Denmark's Egeskov Castle!



CHAPTER 6

Inside Titania's Palace



By 1980, Egeskov Castle in Denmark was the new home for the precious Titania's Palace.

From time to time, it is still exhibited around the world. When the palace is displayed at Egeskov, it is protected inside a huge glass cabinet.

The Rigborg Room in Egeskov Castle (above) is home to Titania's Palace.

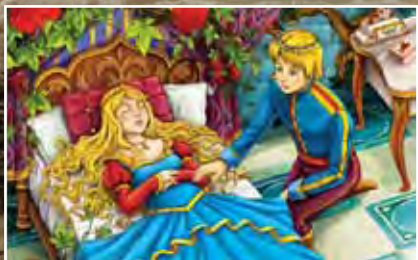
The Rigborg Room is named after the daughter of one of the castle's earliest owners. In the late 1500s, after an argument with her father, Rigborg was locked in this room for five years!



The inside of one of the rooms in Titania's Palace.



The rooms in Titania's Palace are beautifully decorated, right down to the tiniest detail.



CHAPTER 7

Castles Inspire Fairytale

Castles have inspired the imaginations of many authors. Today we enjoy many fairytales featuring characters who live in castles, such as *Sleeping Beauty*.

Author of *Sleeping Beauty*



The Sleeping Beauty was written by a French author called Charles Perrault (1628–1703). Many say that the castle in this famous fairytale was based on a castle in France called Château d'Ussé. A family still lives at Château d'Ussé. Visitors to the castle can see a *Sleeping Beauty* exhibit showing some of the scenes in the story.

*An early illustration from an old copy of *Sleeping Beauty*.*

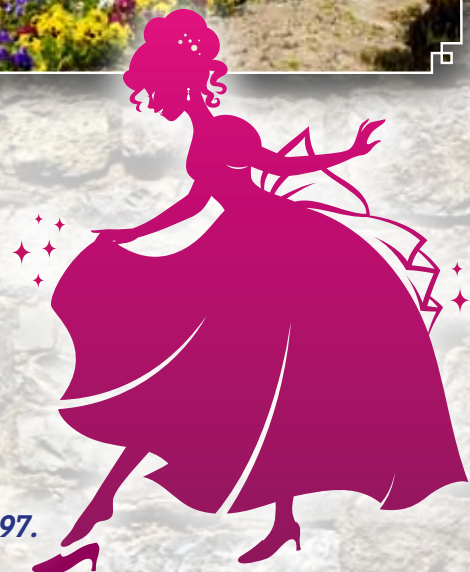


*French castle, Château d'Ussé, was a setting for *The Sleeping Beauty*.*

Perrault's Other Fairytales

Charles Perrault wrote many other fairytales, which were often set in castles. Some of his other stories are *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Puss in Boots*.

Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella were first published in France in 1697.





CHAPTER 8

Castles Inspire Horror Stories



As well as inspiring fairytales, castles have inspired horror stories.

Frankenstein Castle

The Castle of Frankenstein is in Germany. It was built high up on a hill in the town of Darmstadt over 700 years ago.

Frankenstein Castle (left)

Author Writes Frankenstein

English author Mary Shelley (1797–1851) wrote the horror novel *Frankenstein*. It was published in 1818. Mary Shelley was inspired by Frankenstein Castle and a mysterious scientist who lived there in the 1600s.



Bran Castle in Romania.

Is That Dracula's Castle?

Bran Castle is in Romania. Today it is known as Dracula's castle.

Bram Stoker (1847–1912) was an Irish author who wrote the horror novel *Dracula*. The author described Dracula's castle and the surrounding area in the novel. Bran Castle and its surrounding area is exactly like Bram Stoker's description in his novel.



Vlad Drăculea lived from 1431–1476. Some say that the Dracula character is based on him.



CHAPTER 9

Old Castles Inspire New Castles

Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany was built by a shy king called King Ludwig II (1845–1886). He wanted to build a new castle far away from people. Sadly, King Ludwig died six years before his castle was finished.

A Modern Castle

King Ludwig wanted his castle to look like a German medieval castle. But he also wanted it to have new and advanced features. Unlike real medieval castles, there are automatic flushing toilets on every floor and a heating system that heats the whole castle.

Today, more people visit Neuschwanstein than any other castle in Germany.



King Ludwig wanted his castle rooms to look medieval – but have modern features, too.



Neuschwanstein Castle is in Germany.

Inspires a Disneyland Castle

Just as Neuschwanstein Castle was inspired by an old medieval castle, the cartoonist and film-maker Walt Disney (1901–1966) was inspired by King Ludwig's castle.

In 1955, Disney's castle at the original Disneyland in California, USA, was opened. The design is similar to Neuschwanstein and its fairytale setting.



The design of Neuschwanstein inspired Disney's castle in California, USA (above).



CHAPTER 10

Water Castles and a Ship of Stone

Many castles were built on islands, in lakes and even in rivers. Castles surrounded by water were much harder to attack.

A Castle in a River

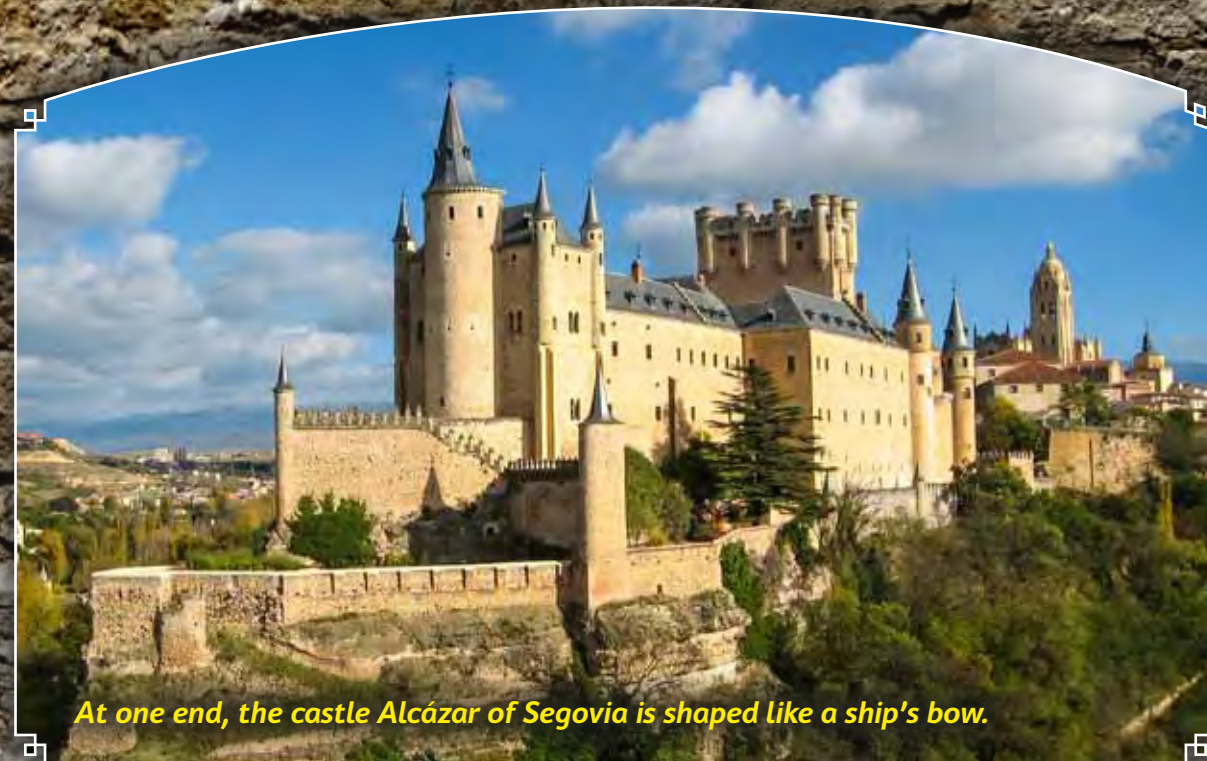
Muiderslot Castle, in the Netherlands, was built in the mouth of a river over 700 years ago. Later, to make it even harder to attack, wide moats were built around the castle.



Muiderslot Castle is surrounded by water.

Water made it easier to keep people out – and to keep people *in*. The castle was later used as a prison, as it was difficult for people to escape across the moat and the river.

Today Muiderslot is a museum and has been used as a medieval set in TV shows, too.



At one end, the castle Alcázar of Segovia is shaped like a ship's bow.

A Ship of Stone in the Mountains

Alcázar of Segovia is one of the most popular castles to visit in Spain. The castle was started in the 1100s and took hundreds of years to complete. At one end, it is shaped like the bow of a ship.

Alcázar's original site was first used by the Romans as a fort, and later, by the Arabs who ruled Spain for many years.



A view of a river from Alcázar of Segovia.



CHAPTER 11

Twin Island Castles

In France and England, there are two castles built on islands. Their setting is quite similar. Both castles can only be reached at low tide. And, amazingly, both castles share the same name!



St Michael's Mount, Cornwall

St Michael's Mount

Close to the coast of Cornwall, England, lies St Michael's Mount. At first, this mountain island castle was a monastery for monks. Later, it was enlarged and turned into a castle.

Once, when the sea level was lower, St Michael's Mount was part of the mainland, surrounded by forest. Its old Cornish name is *Carrek Los yn Cos*, which means "frosty rock in the woodland".



Mont St-Michel, France

Mont St-Michel

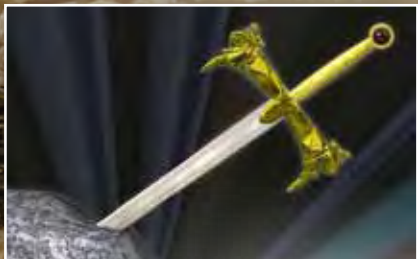
In France, the castle of Mont St-Michel stands 92 metres above the sea. At first, it was a monastery, too.

The bay in which it is built has one of the highest and fastest tides in Europe. Crossing from the mainland to the castle's island can be very dangerous.

A bridge was built in 2014 to make the crossing safer. But in 2015, even this new bridge was completely covered by a strong spring tide!



In French, "Mont" means Mount, and "Michel" is the word for Michael.



CHAPTER 12

Castles in Myths and Legends

Castles are places where history comes alive – and in some cases, where myths and legends were born.

Tintagel Castle, in Cornwall, England, has all but disappeared. But dark sea tunnels, ancient pathways and crumbling stones remain.

This is the mythical birthplace of King Arthur. And, like every castle, its story remains in our imagination – even after its walls and towers have gone.

The legend of King Arthur tells of a king's adventures with the Knights of the Round Table and with Merlin, a wizard.



Crumbling stones and a mysterious sea tunnel at Tintagel Castle, England.

Grusilda's CURRICULUM Checklist

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English	Information Report	Castles from the past and their purposes today.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	Number	Periods of time, e.g. Middle Ages; years, e.g. 100, 500; dates, e.g. 1554, 2015.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Science	Earth and Space Sciences	Water resources had protective purposes for castles in the past, e.g. moats, island castles, and sustaining purposes, e.g. wells for drinking water.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> History	Past in the Present	History of castles as important places in the past and their new purposes today. Castles built in certain environments for protection, e.g. mountains, islands.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geography	Place	Castles are places that changed over time, e.g. from forts to homes or museums. Origin of castle names. World Heritage sites.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Arts	Media Arts	Today, castles are places that educate and entertain visitors, e.g. exhibitions.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technologies	Technology	Today, castles blend old and new technology.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	Economics	Today, castles need to earn money from tourism for costly maintenance.

Location Map

- ① Egeskov Castle, Denmark (pages 6–13)
- ② Château d'Ussé, France (pages 14–15)
- ③ Frankenstein Castle, Germany (page 16)
- ④ Bran Castle, Romania (page 17)
- ⑤ Neuschwanstein Castle, Germany (pages 18–19)
- ⑥ Muiderslot Castle, The Netherlands (page 20)
- ⑦ Alcázar of Segovia, Spain (page 21)
- ⑧ St Michael's Mount, England (page 22)
- ⑨ Mont St-Michel, France (page 23)
- ⑩ Tintagel Castle, England (page 24)

Find the location of all the castles in this book.



"Hi! I'm Grusilda, The Literacy Tower's friendly dragon.

This title is an **information report** that reinforces literacy skills in non-fiction genres. It supports student projects and ongoing enquiry in many areas of the curriculum using a range of informative text conventions and graphics.

I love Chapter 5 because it's about a fairy queen's palace inside a castle in Denmark, Europe. This massive dolls' house is owned by Lego™ in Denmark!"

Grusilda xxx

