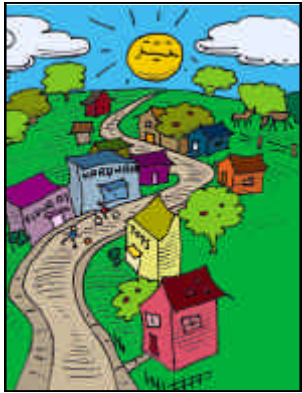


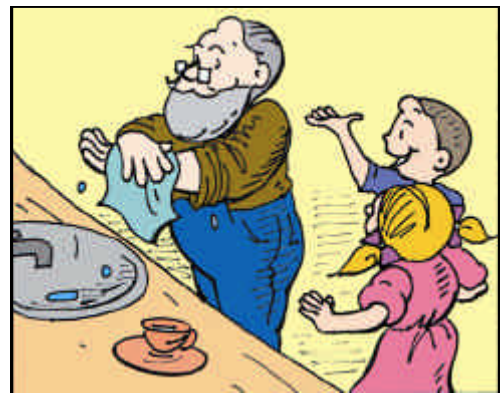
# The Origin of TerraCuddles



Grandpa Clay was a potter who made fine terra cotta pots. He also made wonderful clay vases, lamps and sculptures of all kinds. He was known throughout the land for his beautiful terra cotta artwork. He was also well known for telling stories.

Grandpa Clay's two grandchildren, Dusty and Celeste, especially liked to listen to his stories. Grandpa Clay! Grandpa Clay! Please tell us a story! the children pleaded as he came in from his pottery shop.

Grandpa Clay went to the kitchen to wash his hands. A story, you say, he replied slowly. He dried his hands and turned to the children. What kind of story would you like to hear? he asked.



Daddy said you used to tell him a bedtime story about little angels. Tell us a story about the angels, said Celeste.

Grandpa Clay pulled out a chair from the kitchen table and sat down. The children sat on the floor at his feet.

Well, let's see. You want to hear a story about the little angels. Very well then, Grandpa Clay said. He thought for a moment and then began.

Once upon a time in a land not far from here, there lived an old man, who was a wonderful potter, Grandpa Clay started.



Like you, Grandpa Clay? interrupted Dusty.

Yes, like me, Grandpa Clay went on. This old potter was known far and wide for his beautiful pottery. He was also a very kind man and always looked for and hoped for the best in everyone. He taught many young boys and girls his craft of terra cotta. He expected great things from his students, and he showed great love and patience with them as they learned his beloved craft. He taught them about making pottery, but he also taught them about life. He took delight in watching his students and the people outside his shop windows, but sometimes this also made him sad.

Why would he be sad? asked Celeste.

Well, Grandpa Clay explained, he was sad to see how people sometimes treated each other. Most people were good most of the time. But, it seemed that everyone had problems being good all the time. People were not nice all the time, and they sometimes hurt each other. Sometimes they hurt others physically. Sometimes they hurt their feelings. Every hurt caused a pain or loss to someone. Some people lost their property, some lost their trust, and others lost hope or love. It seemed that people just had problems seeing right from wrong sometimes, and their behavior reflected it."

"This made the old potter very sad, Grandpa Clay said slowly.

Had something happened to make the people act that way? questioned Celeste.

No. The old potter recognized that people of his town had always acted this way, just as their parents and their parent s parents had before them, Grandpa Clay replied.

In fact, as the old potter reflected on it, he realized that people had been wrestling with making the right decisions since the beginning of time. The old potter remembered that as a child, he had been told stories about Adam and Eve disobeying God and being banished from the Garden of Eden, and about Noah s Ark as God attempted to cleanse the earth of humans and start over. Still, it seemed that people all over the earth were still hurting each other sometimes at home, sometimes in town, and sometimes in wars. He wondered if people would ever learn. And this is what made him sad.

What did the potter do? asked Dusty.



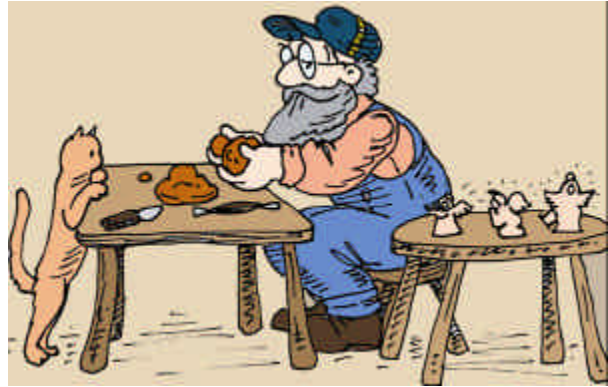
Well, Grandpa Clay continued, as the old man got ready for bed one night, he decided to ask God for some help. He turned to the Master Potter for guidance. The old man wished he could encourage the townsfolk to be better people through his gift of terra cotta. He prayed that he would be given a gift to make his wish come true.

While he slept that night, the Angel Camille came to visit the old potter in his dreams," Grandpa Clay said with wonder in his voice. "Old Potter, said Angel Camille very softly, your prayer has been heard. Your mastery of pottery is unsurpassed. Even more important, your heart is kind. Your wish has been granted. From now on, the clay you touch will carry your love and hope around the world. The truths that you know in your heart will mix with your clay. You will make your fine pottery, but you will also make a difference. Then the angel went away.



What happened next? asked Dusty.

Excited by his dream, the potter got up early the next morning and went right to work, Grandpa Clay continued. He worked and molded and sculpted the clay until it took the shapes of little angels. Each angel had a perfect pair of wings and a tiny little halo. Grandpa Clay smiled. One angel held a bell. Another knelt in prayer. Yet another played the flute. Every little angel was different, yet each was a work of art. He worked for days to perfect his little creations.



Customers would come to his store and watch him work like they had never seen him work before, Grandpa Clay said with excitement. They loved the little angels. They could tell that the old potter did, too. Little did they know how those little angels were about to change their lives.

How? What happened? the children cried.

Well, when the potter finished each little angel, the wings on the angels sparkled like the stars! Grandpa Clay said with wonderment in his voice. The old potter could not believe his eyes! He picked up one of the figurines and his hands began to tingle and his heart felt warm. The old potter knew then that he had been granted a very special gift indeed. His new creations would help his neighbors to feel what he had felt only moments before.

That night before he went to bed, he thanked the Master Potter again for the very special gift he had received, Grandpa Clay went on. "He hoped that the townspeople would share his gift and feel the love and hope that went into each little creation."



The next day, the people who had been watching the potter work for days on the little angels gathered in a large crowd outside his shop. The potter then put his little angels out on the counter for his customers to see, he continued.

They were amazed by the beautiful little angels with their sparkling wings. As they touched an angel, they felt the little tingle of warmth just as the potter had. They didn't yet know what it was, but the customers knew they liked them. Very quickly the angels were shared all over town.

What happened then? asked Dusty. Did the potter's little angels make a difference?



It was hard to tell, at first, replied Grandpa Clay, but changes began to slowly appear. Two children who had fought for years became good friends. A bicycle that had been stolen months ago reappeared on the front porch of the girl who had lost it. A young boy held the door open for his mother. A father found work that he desperately needed. People smiled more. The whole town seemed to share a warmth and love that it had never seen before. The old potter was very pleased.

Grandpa Clay sat back in his chair. As the years passed, the old potter worked hard and created many new and different little angelic figures.

When the old potter went to bed one night, he said another prayer of thanks for his special gift of creation. That night the old potter saw Angel Camille once again. But this time it was not in his dreams. The old man had gone to heaven because his work on earth was done.



That s so sad, Celeste said sadly, wiping tears from her cheeks.

Why it s not sad at all, Grandpa Clay reassured her. The old potter had lived a long life that he made sure was full of goodness. He had made a wish for the world that actually came true. He wished he could do something to help others and he did.

The old potter was rewarded for all his goodness, Grandpa Clay continued. From heaven, the potter and Angel Camille could look down to see all the good that he had done.

So what did the old potter call these little angels? asked Dusty. They are, after all, very special and they need a name.



Well, said Grandpa Clay, They are made of clay which comes from terra, another word for earth. And they give people a cuddled feeling of warmth like a hug. So the old potter called them *TerraCuddles!*

TerraCuddles is an excellent name! exclaimed Celeste. How did the TerraCuddles help the townspeople live better? she asked.

TerraCuddles are messengers of the truths that boys and girls and men and women need to live by on earth, answered Grandpa Clay. "These truths of the earth include values like generosity, forgiveness and truthfulness that we need to live good lives. Because they are truths of the earth, they are called TerraTruths, and all who follow their ways will

have great CharacTerra\* character of the earth." Grandpa Clay paused for a moment to let the children think about what he had said.\*



That s wonderful! exclaimed Celeste. Is the whole earth a better place now that the TerraCuddles are bringing TerraTruths to people? Dusty asked.

Well, each of the little angels continued to spread their special gift of character to everyone who touched them, replied Grandpa Clay. The townspeople became better people. However, the old potter had not made enough little angels for everyone in the world. In fact, he was barely able to make enough for his own town.

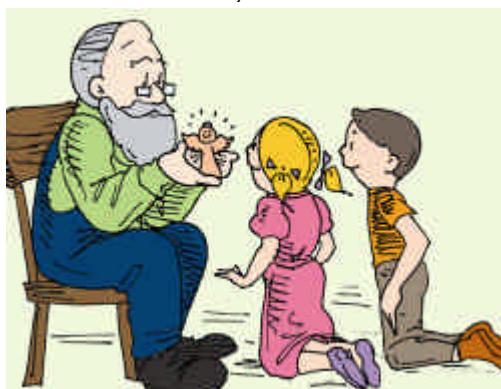
But now that the old potter has died, Celeste said sadly. he can t make any more TerraCuddles.

No, he can t, continued Grandpa Clay, but remember that the old potter had students. In fact, I was one of his students. The old potter was my teacher. He taught me the fine art of making terra cotta and of living a good life. He said I was his best student. I dearly loved that gentle man. He shared everything he knew with me. He shared his life with me also."

For, you see, this old potter was also my father, whispered Grandpa Clay.



Dusty and Celeste could see tiny tears in their Grandpa s eyes as he told this part of the story. Your father? they cried. The wonderful old potter was your father?



I m proud to say he was, answered Grandpa Clay. My father s gifts have been shared with me also, you see. I know the warm feelings that TerraCuddles bring. I have also seen the great good that CharacTerra can have on people who apply TerraTruths in their lives.

Grandpa Clay, inquired Dusty, will we ever get to see any of the TerraCuddles?

Why I just happen to have one right here! Grandpa Clay reached into his overalls and pulled out a tiny little angel holding a bell. This is Belle, the first TerraCuddle my father created, said Grandpa Clay. She reminds us to ring true in all we say and do. Would you like me to tell you her story about Truthfulness?

\* \* CharacTerra has been shortened in most common usage today, and is generally referred to simply as "character."

Yes!, they shouted.

But just then their father came into the room. Time for bed, kids!, he said.

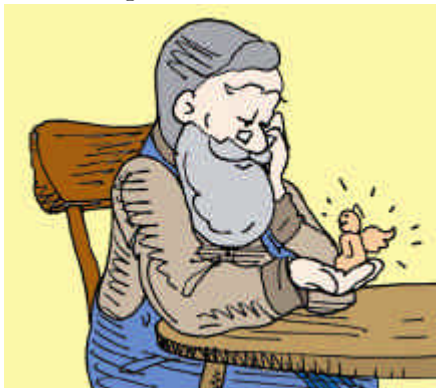
But we want to hear more about Grandpa Clay's little angel, argued Dusty. We want to hear more about the TerraCuddles.

There will be plenty of time for that tomorrow, replied their father. Now, both of you, off to bed. Turning to the potter, he said, You and your stories. You always seem to have a never-ending supply of them.



Well, Grandpa Clay replied as he looked at the little angel in his hands, I have good suppliers.

Good night, Dad, said the children's father. See you in the morning.



Good night to you, my son, said Grandpa Clay quietly.

Grandpa Clay sat in the kitchen for quite awhile looking down at the little angel in his hands. Finally he put the tiny figure back in his pocket and went off to his room. Before he went to sleep, he said a special prayer. He gave thanks for the wonderful gifts he had been given, and prayed that as his little angels spread their wings around the earth, they would continue to make a difference in every life they touched.

## The End

Learn more about the Institute for Character Enrichment and TerraCuddles at [www.TerraCuddles.com](http://www.TerraCuddles.com).