

MOMOTARO
The Peach Boy
Inspired by the traditional Japanese folktale

By

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MOMOTARO - The Peach Boy

CHARACTERS

STORYTELLER

OLD WOMAN / PHEASANT / DEMON GUARD

OLD MAN / MONKEY / DEMON GUARD

DOG / DEMON KING

MOMOTARO

Designed for doubling

STORYTELLER (sings)

Some years ago in old Japan,
There lived a woman and a man.
For years they prayed to have son
But the gods would give them none
Until one day, out of her reach,
While washing clothes, she saw a peach:
Much larger than she'd ever seen
As if it were born of a dream.
She sang to it and hence it came
Towards its destiny of fame.
She brought it home to show her mate
And journey forward into fate.

(OLD WOMAN sings and the peach comes to her. She is then inside her humble home as the OLD MAN comes home from work.)

OLD MAN

What's for lunch?

OLD WOMAN

Take a look!

OLD MAN

What is this?

OLD WOMAN

What does it look like?

OLD MAN

That's the biggest peach I've ever seen!

OLD WOMAN

Here, take this and cut it open. *(OLD MAN takes a knife and cuts it open. As he does a boy, MOMOTARO springs forth.)*

OLD MAN
Heavens! A boy!

OLD WOMAN
A boy from a peach!

OLD MAN
We shall call him Peach Boy! Momotaro!

OLD WOMAN
Momotaro!

MOMOTARO
Momotaro!

STORYTELLER (sings)
So Momotaro was his name
Destined was he for certain fame.
He was the boy they'd dreamt about:
The answer to their prayers devout.
He grew up quickly and so strong
And then he would leave them ere long.
For gifted was he with a sword:
He headed out to slay a horde
Of foreign demons from an isle
Who wracked the land with deeds so vile.
With millet cakes packed in his sack
He told his parents he'd be back.

(MOMOTARO walks along the road and encounters a DOG.)

DOG
Bow! Wow! Woof! Woof! Stop! No one shall pass!

MOMOTARO
Oh, dog! You startled me!

DOG
No one shall pass! Go back the way you came!

MOMOTARO
I can't do that, I'm afraid. I must go to slay the red-faced demons who are troubling Japan.

DOG
Huh? Red-faced demons? You're just a boy! How can you face them alone?

MOMOTARO
I'm not just any boy. I'm Momotaro!

DOG

Momotaro? The famous peach boy?

MOMOTARO

The very same.

DOG

Ah. Well. I can't just let you pass. I guard this road and no one shall get by. If I let you go, you'll ruin my reputation as the best guard dog in all Japan.

MOMOTARO

You look hungry. Here, try one of these cakes. My mother made them special. *(He throws DOG one of the millet cakes. The DOG eagerly snaps it up)*

DOG

Oishi! Delicious!

MOMOTARO

I have an idea, dog. Since you are so clever and the best guard dog in the land, why don't you come with me to slay the demons? That way you won't lose your reputation and you can become part of history!

DOG

Hmm. Part of history. Will you share more of those cakes with me?

MOMOTARO

Certainly!

DOG

Okay then. It's a deal!

STORYTELLER *(sings)*

So Momotaro made a friend
Who'd follow him to journey's end.
Together over hill and dale
They'd soon traverse all without fail.
Towards the sea they headed East
To ruin the red demon's feast.
Until they spotted in a tree
A demon so they thought, you see.
They called for it to come right down
And face them both there on the ground.
And so they learned, within this dream,
That things aren't always as they seem.

DOG

Bow! Wow! Woof! Woof!

MOMOTARO (*drawing his sword*)
What is it dog?

DOG
Look! There in the tree! It's a demon!

MOMOTARO
Demon! Come down and show yourself! You can't hide from us in that tree!

MONKEY
(*coming down from the tree*)
Demon! Where? Where is it?

MOMOTARO
Ah! A monkey!

DOG
I'll tear him limb from limb just the same!

MONKEY
Ha! A stupid dog? You can't catch me! You're not clever enough. (*DOG chases the MONKEY round. The MONKEY is much smarter than the DOG so the DOG can't catch him.*)

MOMOTARO
Dog! Stop chasing him. Here! (*he throws him a millet cake.*) Whoa! Monkey you are very clever, indeed. Here's a cake for you too.

MONKEY
Thank you! But I never accept gifts from strangers.

MOMOTARO
That's very wise, monkey. My name is Momotaro.

MONKEY
Ah! The famous peach boy! Now you are no stranger. (*he eats the millet cake*)

MOMOTARO
It's a shame you two can't get along. You looked so much like a demon, you could prove useful to us in our quest.

MONKEY
What quest is that?

MOMOTARO
We are going to slay the red-faced demons.

MONKEY
Sounds like fun!

MOMOTARO

Then why don't you join us, if my friend here doesn't mind.

DOG

I can tolerate him...if you give me another cake!

MOMOTARO

Ha! Ha! Very well. *(he tosses another cake to both the DOG and MONKEY and they continue on together)*

STORYTELLER *(sings)*

The three new friends went towards the sea
To slay the demons and be free.
But soon they stopped to take a rest
Where they espied a small bird's nest.
The dog gave monkey a wee boost
So then they all could raid the roost.
And so the monkey climbed the tree
To gather a delicacy.
But then from miles up in the sky
Dove a pheasant from on high.
Swooping down with stealthy dread
And landed on the monkey's head!

(PHEASANT swoops in and lands on MONKEY's shoulders and pecks at his head. MONKEY flails around trying to shake the bird. MOMOTARO and DOG chase him round.)

MONKEY

Help! Help! Get it off me!

PHEASANT

Stay away from my eggs! Didn't anyone ever tell you not to take things that don't belong to you?

MOMOTARO

We are sorry, bird.

PHEASANT

Thank you for the apology, boy.

DOG

Why don't you let me at him? I'll tear him apart! Woof!

MOMOTARO

Easy dog. My name is Momotaro.

PHEASANT

The peach boy! Ah, I have heard tales of you flying all over this land. I hear you are going to slay the demons to the east.

MOMOTARO

That's true! Please have one of these cakes my mother made. We're sorry to have disturbed your nest. *(throws him a cake)*

PHEASANT

Yum! Delicious!

MOMOTARO

I do wish I could fly like you, bird. Maybe if you three could get along, you could help us on our quest.

MONKEY

We'd be foolish not to use his special talent.

DOG

I'd do anything for another cake.

MOMOTARO

Very well then. What do you say bird?

PHEASANT

All right. I'll join you. It's not every day that one gets to become part of a legend!

STORYTELLER *(sings)*

With the boy born from a peach
The three new friends came to a beach
Where they hopped into a boat
But struggled they to keep afloat.
The waves would toss them to and fro
While the wicked winds would blow.
But soon they came upon an isle
Plagued by demons red and vile.
In a fortress strong and tall
Made ready did they for a brawl.
Our hero led them with out fear
With the belief they'd persevere.

MOMOTARO

Look! There's the demon's fortress.

DOG

They guard the gate! I will charge them! Woof!

MONKEY

Shh! Quiet dog, or you'll attract them all.

MOMOTARO

Monkey's right. We need a better plan. I've got an idea. Bird, can you fly up over the wall to the other side and open the gate?

PHEASANT
Of course.

MOMOTARO
Very good. Monkey, since you look a little like one of them, climb up to the gate and persuade the guards to follow you. Tell them that someone has invaded the island and is down at the beach. Then you can evade them by swinging from vine to vine in the trees.

MONKEY
Very well.

DOG
Then I will run inside and bite them all! Let me at 'em!

MOMOTARO
You'll be eaten for sure! No, Dog, with your loud voice, I want you to run in the fortress and bark, bark, bark! This will alarm all the demons. Then they will all come after you.

DOG
Then I will fight them all!

MOMOTARO
Very brave, Dog, but better to be clever than brave some times. I want you to let them chase you outside through the gate, outside the castle.

DOG
If you insist.

PHEASANT
What will you do then, Momotaro?

MOMOTARO
As they rush out, I shall sneak in. You close the gates behind me and I shall face the demon king alone.

MONKEY
An excellent plan, general.

STORYTELLER (*sings*)
And so they went on with their plan
To defeat the demon clan.
The pheasant soared up in the sky
And opened the gate from on high.
Then monkey went and played his part
And duped the guards by being smart.

Then Dog, with courage, darted in
Creating a tumultuous din.
With lightning speed, he lured them out,
Emboldened by a heart so stout.
STORYTELLER (cot'd)
So Momotaro, now alone
Could face the demon on his throne.

(MOMOTARO searches the throne room in darkness and finds the DEMON KING)

DEMON KING
What were you thinking foolish boy?
That you would face me all alone?
Come guards, and play you with this toy!
His brain I think is made of stone!
(the DEMON GUARDS fight MOMOTARO and he defeats them)
You show some prowess with that sword.
But surely now you must have known
For you this day there's no reward
I'll eat your meat and lick the bone.
I'll turn your liver to a paste
Your eyes will be a tasty treat
No part of you will go to waste
Oh little boys! I love to eat!

MOMOTARO
Oh hear me now you demon fool!
You needs learn from another school.
I am the peach boy, can't you see?
Defeating you's my destiny.
You've robbed and pillaged long enough.
I'll leave you dead and take the stuff
You've stolen from all of Japan
And prove to you that I'm a man!
(MOMOTARO and the DEMON KING fight. The duel rages back and forth, but MOMOTARO trips the DEMON KING and puts his sword to the DEMON KING's throat.)

DEMON KING
O mercy! Mercy! Mercy! Please!
I beg of you on bended knees.
Peach boy, you've the upper hand
We'll not again invade your land.
The treasure's in that room, you see.
Let me live—I'll give the key!
Take all our riches and our gold
If you'll release this death man's hold.

STORYTELLER *(sings)*
And seeing he could slay his foe

Good Momotaro let him go.
He took all of Japan's wealth back
And friends told of his great attack.
In every village and every town
STORYTELLER (cot'd)
His friends and he, with great renown,
Were greeted and rewarded straight
For changing all their desperate fate.
All who asked him heard him say
That it was friendship saved the day.
All Japan hailed their new hero:
The peach boy named Momotaro.

[END]