

The Bouncing Rice Balls  
A Tale From Japan

1  
Prop  
Final 2

CHARACTERS

NARRATOR  
OLD MAN  
OLD WOMAN  
GREEDY OLD MAN  
MOUSE 1  
MOUSE 2  
MOUSE 3

NARRATOR

*(Enter Old Man and Old Woman from SR)* Once upon a time, there was an Old Man and an Old Woman who lived in the forest. *(Exit Old Woman)* One day, the Old Man set out to gather firewood. At noon, he sat down to eat the rice balls his wife made for him.

As he unwrapped one of the rice balls, it plopped out of his hand and rolled into a hole next to a tree *(Old Man watches rice ball as it rolls away into the hole SR)*. The old man went to the hole and looked down into it. Suddenly, he began to hear tiny voices from below!

MICE

*(In unison)* Bounce little rice ball, bounce bounce bounce!  
For ever and ever, and let no cat meow!

OLD MAN

Hmm... that's very strange.

NARRATOR

Just then, as the old man was listening, he fell into the hole! *(Old Man falls; Enter Mice, SL scurrying around)* When he reached the bottom, there before him was a splendid palace filled with the singing mice scurrying around. They were busy pounding the rice to make rice cakes.

*Bounce little rice ball*

Repeat song - mice

2

OLD MAN

What a surprise!

NARRATOR

The Old Man marveled at the busy mice. At once, the mice scurried up to him.

MOUSE 1

Thank you so much for the rice ball!

MOUSE 2

But Old Man, please do not ever talk about cats.

MOUSE 3

We ~~hate~~ cats!

OLD MAN

Oh, of course. I won't say a thing. Why would I even want to?

NARRATOR

The mice treated the Old Man like a king! He had the grandest feast (*Old Man eats*), and he ate to his heart's content. He then told the mice that it was time for him to return home, so the mice gave him a bag of gold coins and asked him to close his eyes (*exit MICE SL*). The Old Man did as he was told, and when he opened them, he was back at the entrance to the hole. (*Enter Old Woman and Greedy Old Man SR; the three begin conversing*) He went home that day and told everyone about the strange things that happened in the hole.

OLD MAN

...And they gave me this bag of gold and helped me out of the hole in an instant.

OLD WOMAN

Oh my, that is wonderful dear! (*Exit Old Man and Woman SR*)

2

MICE  
close  
their  
your  
eyes

with  
OLD  
IT'S TIME  
FOR  
ME  
TO  
RETURN  
HOME

NARRATOR

Their neighbor, a Greedy Old Man, grew very jealous of the Old Man, and wanted the riches from the mice as well. The Greedy Old Man set out into the mountain forest the next day with rice balls in search of the hole the Old Man spoke of. When he finally found it, he threw a rice ball into the hole, and dived in after it. He reached the bottom and saw the palace ~~before him~~ with many treasures and much gold surrounding it. The mice came up to the Greedy Old Man to greet him. (*Mice scurry in from SL*)

*Mice  
Circle  
on SL*

MOUSE 1

Thank you so very much for the rice ball!

MOUSE 2

But old man, please do not ever talk about cats.

MOUSE 3

We ~~hate~~ cats!

*Do not like  
mouse #4  
NOT AT ALL!*

GREEDY OLD MAN

(*aside*) Hmmm. If I make sounds like a cat, the mice will surely run away scared and leave these great treasures all to me!

NARRATOR

The Greedy Old Man began meowing like a cat, and all the mice ran away, but then everything turned completely black!

GREEDY OLD MAN

(Greedy Old Man goes blind) I can't see anything!

NARRATOR

The old man never found the way out of the hole, and lived the rest of his days underground unable to see anything again.

THE END