

The Rabbit in the Moon

A Tale from Japan

Adapted by Gabe Donohue

Narrator: Long ago, the Old Man in the Moon would soar above the earth, watching the people and the animals of all the land. One night, the Old Man looked over a forest in Japan. There he saw three different animals, a monkey, a fox, and a rabbit, all living in peace and harmony together.

Old Man: What great friends these creatures must be. I wonder which of these friends is the kindest. Hmm... I think I will go down and see!

Narrator: And so the old man came down from the sky, and transformed himself into an old beggar. The Man in the Moon then approached the three animals. The rabbit was the first to notice him, and greeted him brightly.

Rabbit: How do you do sir!

Old Man: Oh, I am not doing well! I am old and poor, and quite hungry.

Monkey: Worry not dear friend!

Fox: Yes! We will search the forest for food for you!

Narrator: The three scurried off at once, and the Old Man waited for them to return. It wasn't long before Monkey came back with an armful of fruits and berries.

Monkey: Here you are! I have brought you pears and bananas and more! Please accept my gift!

Narrator: The old man graciously accepted, and just then, the Fox returned with a large fish for the man.

Fox: For you sir! This was the fattest fish I could catch in the nearby stream. Please accept my gift!

Old Man: You are both so kind! I never knew how kind the animals of the forest could be!

Narrator: Just then, the Rabbit returned to the group. He had nothing to offer the Old Man in the Moon, and was sad. Then, the Rabbit had an idea.

Rabbit: Please Monkey, will you gather a bundle of firewood for me? And Fox, will you make a fire when Monkey returns?

Narrator: The two friends did just that, and soon there was a roaring fire in the clearing of the forest. The rabbit turned to the Old Man and said:

Rabbit: I have nothing to give you. So I'll put myself in this fire, and when I'm cooked you can eat me!

Narrator: But then, as the rabbit was just about to leap into the fire, the Old Man suddenly transformed back into the Old Man in the Moon before the three animals.

Old Man: Do not be afraid! I wish you no harm, especially you, kind Rabbit. You see, I am more than a beggar, and I have seen that your kindness is beyond price. Please understand that I do not want you to sacrifice yourself for my comfort. As a reward for your kindness, I will take you home to live with me!

Narrator: And so the Old Man in the Moon took the Rabbit in his arms, and together they soared into the sky. This is why when you see the moon shining bright in the sky, you can also see the rabbit the Old Man brought there so long ago. And that was...

THE END

Or as they say in Japan,

OSHIMAI