

Momotaro; Or, the Peach Boy

Tolerance Theme: Cooperation

Ballard, Susan. "Momotaro; Or, the Peach Boy." *Fairy Tales from Far Japan*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 189-.

"Momotaro; Or, the Peach Boy" is a story from Japan, and the version told by Susan Ballard can be found in her book *Fairy Tales from Far Japan*. This story speaks of four friends: a boy, a dog, a monkey, and a pheasant, who work together to make Japan a safer place. The tale begins with a story of Momotaro's upbringing and how he received his name. As the story progresses, Momotaro adopts the quest of ridding Japan of terrorizing demons. Momotaro meets a dog, a monkey, and a pheasant along his journeys. Despite initial conflicts, the group of four cooperates and defeats the demons. This story promotes cooperation through differences.

The full story is provided below.



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Emily Marie Mader was born on January 21, 1986, in Charleston, South Carolina. Emily moved to Durham, North Carolina, at the age of 6 months and grew up in various North Carolina cities. Emily graduated from Orange Senior High School in Hillsborough, NC, in May of 2004. Emily now attends the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and is a broadcasting/cinema major with a concentration in film and documentary.

Favorite Quote: "Good things come to obsessive-compulsives who fixate"

Favorite Color: Yellow

Favorite Book: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte

Favorite Movies: *Young Frankenstein*, *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, *Evil Dead*, *Clue*,
The Goonies, *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India*, *Baraka*



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Introduction

“Momotaro; Or, the Peach Boy” is a story from Japan, and I have adapted the version told by Susan Ballard in her book *Fairy Tales from Far Japan*. This story speaks of four friends: a boy, a dog, a monkey, and a pheasant, who work together to make Japan a safer place.

Narrative Guide

It was the beginning of summer. O Baa San, which means old woman in Japanese, had gone to the river to wash some clothes. As she sat there by the river peacefully doing her laundry, a peach floated by. O Baa San had never seen a peach so beautiful in all her life. She immediately took the peach out of the water and ran home to show her O Jii San, or old man, the beautiful peach.

Once O Jii San had seen the peach, he exclaimed, “Why, this peach is so large and beautiful. It will make a fine meal.” But, as O Jii San was about to cut the peach, it split open and there sat a small boy. O Baa San and O Jii San did not know what to think of this and nearly fainted in astonishment. The little boy hopped out of the peach and proclaimed, “The Gods saw how dearly you desired a child, and I am sent from them to be your son.” O Baa San and O Jii San were so delighted at hearing this that they did not know what to say. They raised the young boy and named him Momotaro, or Peach Boy.

One day Momotaro approached O Jii San. He said, “O Jii San, I am so thankful to have been raised by you and O Baa San, but I must ask you permission to leave.” O Jii San was much astonished at this and replied, “I will grant you this, but why must you leave.” Momotaro then told O Jii San of a great island of demons just off the coast of Japan. Momotaro wished to fight and defeat these demons and make Japan safe. O Jii San then understood why Momotaro was to leave, and he and O Baa San bid him farewell, giving him much food and supplies.

As Momotaro was making his journey to the island, he stopped to eat some of the food O Baa San had packed for him. As he was about to eat a yam, a dog approached him. The dog growled, “Give me all your food or I will fight you.” Momotaro only scowled at the dog. It was then the dog realized this was no ordinary man: this was Momotaro, sent from the Gods. The dog cowered and said, “Oh, Momotaro, I did not realize it was you. Please allow me to join you on your quest to defeat the demons.” Momotaro agreed to let the dog accompany him, and he gave the dog half a yam.

As Momotaro and the dog were traveling, they came upon a monkey. The monkey hopped in front of Momotaro and said, “Oh, Momotaro, won’t you allow me to accompany you on your journey to defeat the demons?” At this the dog growled back, “I am the only one allowed to accompany Momotaro, go back into the tree from which you came!” Momotaro stepped in and said, “Stop. Do not be so hasty

dog. This monkey is not a bad fellow, and I have decided he may accompany us to defeat the demons.”

Momotaro then gave the monkey half a yam, and they were on their way.

Not very long after they had taken up their journey, a bird appeared in the road before them. The dog quickly ran to the bird and was about to chomp his mouth around him when Momotaro shouted, “Stop! This bird may be of use to us dog.” The bird then introduced himself to Momotaro saying, “I am called the pheasant. Please allow me to accompany you to defeat the demons.”

At this Momotaro gave the pheasant half a yam, but before they were to leave, Momotaro said, “Now listen, if there is the slightest quarreling between you three animals, I will send you back that very moment. If we do not fight together as one, we will never defeat the enemy.” All the animals agreed, and they were on their way.

Soon the travelers came upon the sea. The dog, the monkey, and the pheasant had never before seen these waters, and were immediately afraid. Momotaro looked at the animals and proclaimed, “What is this. Do you fear the ocean? It would have been better to not have had such companions, so I will dismiss you; go on your way!” Now none of the animals wanted to leave Momotaro, so they slowly built up their courage to make a boat and sail the seas of Japan.

Soon the party was upon the island of the demons. “Fly, pheasant, and tell us where to best attack our enemy,” said Momotaro. The pheasant then flew over the island of the demons and shouted down, “Prepare demons, for Momotaro has come to capture you!” The battle then began. The pheasant fought bravely against the demons, but he was outnumbered. It was then that the dog, the monkey, and Momotaro burst through the gates of the demon city and fought to defeat the demons. At last only the head demon was left, and Momotaro lassoed him and placed him with the pile of captured demons to be sent to the prisons of Japan.

Together the dog, the monkey, the pheasant, and Momotaro worked to defeat the most gruesome demons of Japan. They sailed back home and sent the demons to the most heavily guarded prisons in Japan. From then on, all of Japan lived happily ever after.

Annotated Bibliography

Ballard, Susan. “Momotaro; Or, the Peach Boy.” *Fairy Tales from Far Japan*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 189-.

Emily Mader
Art of Storytelling

“Momotaro; Or, the Peach Boy” tells the story of a young man sent to earth from the gods. Momotaro, along with his friends the dog, the monkey, and the pheasant, eradicated demons from an island outside Japan. This story projects the messages of cooperation and unity.